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JACQUELINE COCHRAN

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## INTERVIEW I

DATE: April 7, 1974

INTERVIEWEE: JACQUELINE COCHRAN

INTERVIEWER: Joe B. Frantz

PLACE: Ms. Cochran's residence outside Indio, California

### Part 1 of 2

- F: Let's go back, very briefly, to when you first did become aware that there was a Lyndon Johnson in the world.
- C: Well, in 1937, I think--we'll have to check the date.
- F: That's the year he was elected to Congress for the first time, if that means anything.
- C: Well, he had not taken office then. He was still with [Rep. Richard] Kleberg, or something.
- F: Yes. Very briefly, on his [Johnson's] career: he went with Kleberg in 1931, and he stayed with him until 1935, and then he became the state director of the National Youth Administration, until he quit that to run for Congress. [Inaudible] He ran in late 1937--and he took his seat, as I recall--no, he ran in the spring of 1937 and took his seat a little later in that year.
- C: Well, anyway, that's when I met Lyndon Johnson. And the [Robert J.] Collier Trophy at that time was about the finest thing we had to award a person for aeronautical achievement, and it was not only just for flying; it could be for engineering, it could be for all kinds of things. I was on the committee, and I was very surprised. Dr. [George]

Lewis of NACA [National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics], which is now NASA, was the chairman of the committee. And General [Henry H. "Hap"] Arnold was at the meeting, [and] Donald Douglas--just the cream of aviation was on that committee. I was surprised, at my age, that I was invited to be on the committee.

F: Of course, by this time, you were an established flyer. You had already been in transcontinental races.

C: No, I had flown in the Australian race, and then I had also flown a famous plane called *Gee Bee*, which--anybody who flew that was the greatest pilot in America, in fact in the world, in the minds of the people, because each of the aircraft averaged, I think, about three lives each except for the one I owned. I was the only person who ever flew one and owned one who was not killed, but, anyway, that--maybe that's why they invited me on the committee.

Anyway, I was on the committee, and I was sitting next to a friend of mine, who said, "Jackie, you've never been this quiet in your life." He said, "What have you got up your sleeve?" I said, "Oh, I've got a cute bombshell." Well, I had found out--when I was in England, in 1934, I had met Dr. Benton [?], who did some of the early top-flight research in what is called aviation medicine today. Then I knew a German that was a very good friend of mine, supposedly shot himself in Hitler's office. His name was [Ernst] Udet. And Udet was a number-one ace in World War I.

F: Yes, I remember the name.

C: And Udet never married. So, anyway, I figured that we had to have something done in this country along that line, that we hadn't done anything. In the meantime, I had heard

all kinds of stories of work that was being done at Mayo's [Clinic], but I hadn't witnessed it or been a part of it. So when they got around to me, I asked permission of the floor for five minutes from the chairman, and I said, "Mr. Douglas here is trying to build an airplane to go to forty thousand feet. No way!" I said, "I've been pretty high; I've done more flying, probably, above twenty thousand feet already with a pipe stem [?] than most people in the country." I said, "We have to do something about it and get some work done. Now, there's a man out at"--I said he *was* out at Wright-Pat--Wright-Patterson Air Force Base--and I said he was Dr. [Harry G.] Armstrong, and I had flown quite a number of chickens for him up to twenty-five thousand feet, [as] high as I could get the plane. And, I said, I had flown mice, and I refused to fly a billy goat--(Laughter)--I tried to laugh--and I said I refused to fly a snake! I couldn't stand the idea of it in a box, in an airplane, with me in close proximity. But I flew all the minor animals for him; I did quite a bit, and I said it was fabulous. I said, "He's done this on his own, and with volunteers helping him; he's just a doctor in the air force.

So, I said, "I understand they're doing this unbelievable research out in Mayo's, where they have chambers that you go in, and they deprive you of oxygen--and I don't judge who's doing the work--and they're going to come out with a mask." I said, "I think it behooves this committee to investigate this thoroughly, and if you can find a hook to hang your hat on, for heaven's sakes, give it to these doctors for research!" You would think--it was supposed to have culminated whatever you started out to do before you get the trophy. It couldn't be halfway down the road. And I said, "Surely there's something that they've done down the road that you could consider a finished project"--a product,

rather--"and be able to hang this trophy around their necks and bring some attention to an area that needs very much attention--that needs it very much at this point," I said, "because I think we're going to war." [I'll] never forget it. So I said, "That's all I have to say."

Well, there was one man there--there's always one on a committee who has a commercial idea that he wants people to get it for, you know. [Inaudible] very worthy of being chair [?]. So he started arguing that that could come along next year, and why did it take a vote. So, nobody said anything, and I didn't say anything more. One, I didn't know any of the people; I was only talking for a needed project, and recognition for it and help for it. And anyone--all the people at the table realized it. Arnold realized it. He was just completely unaware. That's how I became General Arnold's assistant later, during the war, because of some of the early work that I did and the attention that I brought to bear on important areas.

I just didn't say anything more. The chairman stood up and said, "Well, gentlemen, I take a vote to postpone this meeting--and I want to know if I can get a second--for at least a month to six weeks, and appoint Miss Cochran as a committee of one, to go out--and anybody who wants to can join her in this investigation; I'm sure she'd be delighted to have their help. At least she is interested enough; she's going to do a thorough job of it." I don't know why the old boy said it, but he did. "And then reconvene." Well, anybody as powerful as [NACA director] Dr. Lewis--I mean, they didn't dare. None of these men.

(Interruption)



C: So I called up--you probably think this is far afield of Lyndon Johnson--

F: No.

C: --he comes into the picture.

F: I'm a great appreciator of setting a proper framework for things.

C: Well, all right, I'm glad you do, because I don't want to either bore you or--

F: No, no, don't.

C: You can cut that out, these remarks.

So I got on the phone, and I wanted to talk to Dr. Mayo; I just believed there was still a Mayo there. And the girl was *so* rude! I said, "I'm not ill, for heaven's sake! I'm trying to get him--to talk about something that's important to them." And I said, "Young lady, you should put me on to somebody important in that outfit, and I just would like to a Mayo if there is one." This is funny. I said, "I don't care whether"--"Mayo is no longer in charge. This is a big institution." I said, "Well, is there a Mayo there?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Let me talk to him." Finally--it took me about three days. I was about to fly out there and go to the door and knock on it and say, "Now, come on. Talk to me!" I got Dr. Charles Mayo, who became--we were dyed-in-the-wool friends until he got killed. I explained to him what had happened, and I said, "I have to be lined up with the proper person"--I told him how hard it was. He said, "I'm just a hired doctor out here just like anyone else!" I said, "Still, you're a Mayo!" (Laughter)

He said, "The man who's doing this research is our youngest senior surgeon, and he's doing it as a hobby, as an avocation, not as part of his medical career. And Dr. [Walter M.] Boothby is spending his whole time"--who was the father of basal

metabolisms, which comes into the oxygen picture--and he said, "You come out here, and there will be a red carpet all the way from here to the airport. And we'll give you any assistance we can." And I said, "Well, I won't go any further, then, on long-distance, and take your time," and I said, "Weather permitting, I've got a racing plane. It won't take ice." It was the fall of the year, you see. "It just won't take ice; there's just no way."

So I said, "Therefore, I won't set this date, and I don't want to make a specific appointment, and I have enough time [so that] I can wait if the people are not free to talk to me." He said, "We'll make them free. Now, Dr. [William Randolph] Lovelace has a heavy schedule of surgery, but he's so fascinated with this project that he'll see you, don't worry." Any further [?] we can get with it. And the first important research done in the country was done with private funds. Isn't this interesting? Not government funds at all. And not where anyone would receive anything from it, strangely enough.

So I got out there, and I met these people, and they had the mask completed. They had a portable tank, [a] low-pressure tank, and Randy Lovelace and Dr. Boothby brought the low-pressure tank to Washington. I got in it, before all these people had sat down, and went up to--I don't know, forty thousand. Maybe I didn't go that high; I don't recall. This would be in the Mayo's records; but, anyway, it's not important. I was the first woman to ever go in the tank. Well Arnold was just so impressed, and he was just--"The most fantastic thing I've ever seen!"

F: What were you trying to do, see what you could take, or--?

C: Well, they were trying to find a way to make a mask--they weren't thinking about pressurization in those days; they hadn't got even near pressurization for a cockpit or a

cabin. Everything was unpressurized. But they were trying to prove that you could take this mask and put it on your face, over your nose, and then this was open, this part--like a little beard. I have the original one here; it's going to a museum, as a matter of fact.

Also--I'll digress. I was--perhaps the primary thing, that I was inducted into the Society of Experimental Test Pilots, the first woman, for this particular work. Of course, it was secret ballot. One held out. So they made it unanimous.

And on the seventeenth day of December, we went to the White House. And [Franklin D.] Roosevelt was president. I had never been crazy about Roosevelt--I mean, as a public figure; I didn't like the things he was doing to our country. I don't dislike any president as a person. But I disagreed with his policies. So we were--it must have been sixty people that went into the room, the big oval room. Or maybe it was in the Cabinet Room that he received us. Anyway, it was a very large room. And he said, "By Jove! I've been giving"--and in this business you always hit the desk when he said, "By Jove!"--"I've been giving this trophy for a great many years. But what kind of doctors are these?" And nobody spoke up. I said--so Dr. Boothby, who idolized this man, said, "We are medical doctors, Mr. President." Boothby was a very gregarious, wonderfully charming man, a little man, filled with charm. And he said, "Well, what are medical doctors getting this thing for?" Well, Dr. Lewis looked straight at the President and said, "Mr. President, Miss Cochran did this single-handedly, to bring our attention to this great piece of work that's been done. It's going to change the face of aviation," which, of course, it did eventually. "And it's been done by private people with private funds. And I think Miss Cochran should tell you about this project."

I said, "Mr. President, I don't believe--it would take at least thirty minutes for you to hear the story of where it started, what they're doing in Europe," and I said, "These are things that certainly you should be apprised of, if you're not, and I doubt if you are." Isn't that fresh?

F: Yes!

C: Well, it didn't--I didn't mean it that way; I didn't realize till it was out! And I'll never forget what I said, and I think that's almost a quote, if they were taping in those days. So I said, "I think Dr. Boothby is the person"--he was older, he loved him, and he was very able to--and I said, "You might as well either make another appointment for these gentlemen to come back, or you better pull up some chairs and let everyone sit down." Because I knew Boothby was going to go to town on this for thirty or forty minutes. And very interestingly, not where he'd bore you.

I never saw him push a button, but this navy [army] man they called [Edwin M.] Pa Watson--

F: Yes.

C: He was in the room. He [Roosevelt] said, "Pa, have chairs brought in." And chairs just appeared. I don't know how they--I guess they had a magic wand. And we sat down, and he said, "Change my appointments." And for about thirty minutes, Boothby held forth. I had an envelope up under my arm, so I went over to this navy man who was there--[who] turned out to be Pa Watson--I said, "I have something that I want to give to the President and the President only. He may do with it as he sees fit. I don't know anything about our intelligence structure or anything else, but I have documentary proof of forty laboratories

in Germany, the fact that they have had a mask more than five years, the fact that they're even getting some pressure in a cabin, that they have built a suit to take care of the centrifugal force on the body"--which we call Gs. And I said, "I want to make sure that he gets it, he opens it, that he looks at it, and then he can dispose of it however he wants to. Because this is what it is; it's absolutely--the facts are accurate."

Well, I had gotten this from Udet, because he knew his country was going to war and he was trying to stop it--[which] is another story. See, I got the DSM [Distinguished Service Medal] in 1944; it was for some of this kind of work that I did, some intelligence work that I did. But I didn't know I was doing intelligence--you know what I mean?

F: Yes.

C: So, the President was just absolutely fascinated with that, just intrigued, completely intrigued with it. And he asked a lot of probing, very intelligent questions, and he made him go back and repeat some things. And--so that day, or within a day or two, a large sum of money out of the presidential fund--that was the first time I ever knew that the President was automatically voted a fund by Congress to spend on shoe tacks if he wanted to.

F: Yes.

C: That was divided between the air force and the navy. Incidentally, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Boothby, and Dr. Lovelace were the three who received the trophy [the 1939 Robert J. Collier Trophy], because I insisted that Armstrong get in on it because he did some of the really early work on his own. And I helped him fly--I flew the animals for him; most of

the flying I did for him. I'd go up and spend four or five days at Wright-Patterson, flying animals for this man. Everybody thought I was a nut, but--

F: "Well, what's she doing, tooling around up there, in the cabin--with a bunch of chickens?"

(Laughter)

C: Yes. And, see, the chickens would explode. You know what happens to them. It's pretty messy.

F: Yes.

C: And there was a great variance in how the chickens would behave, and their age, and maybe their state of health. But you didn't know much about the health of the chickens. And it was a very interesting thing to do.

So, this was over; it was December-January. Right--brand new, right when Congress convened, I took myself down to Washington. I thought, "They'll forget all about this now. Now they'll start fighting for appropriations; they'll start fighting to get a bill through Congress. And I'm going to start it off and help it.

Sure enough, I found out the President hadn't made any recommendation for any legislation--for funds to fund this kind of a project, whatever it was, \$30 or \$40 million or something that he had given. Now, those figures people can always find out about.

F: Yes.

C: It's just peanuts, to start up a big project of that type.

So I decided to go call on all the congressmen. And the first one I went to--I thought, "Well, Texas is a big state. It has Randolph Field. It has"--the first school of medicine for aviation was--I think it was called that. What was it called now?

F: Is that Lackland?

C: No, it was at Randolph; I think it was Randolph. It's not important; it's one of the fields, anyway, down in San Antonio.

F: Would it be Kelly, or Randolph?

C: It wasn't Kelly. It was Randolph. I would say that, almost unequivocally, that that's correct.

And that--the Texan people should be very interested in it. And I just happened to pick Johnson at random, and I called up the Senate office building and said, "Could I get a list of the Texan congressmen?" I didn't know they call them delegations, even. And somewhere or another, I got Johnson, or could get the first appointment with him; I don't know. But I thought it was his--that he was the executive assistant that I saw. I still think it was. But he was already in office in January, then--1938.

F: In January 1938 he was in office. He was brand new.

C: Well, all right then. He was a brand new congressman. Because I didn't remember that detail, actually. But he said--he was just terribly interested. He listened for--he asked and asked and asked questions, and I blurted out to him what I had found out about in Germany. I said, "I'm fairly certain that they're doing some extraordinary things in Germany." And, you see, in 1937--I think it was--the *Athenia* was sunk [September 3, 1939]. Am I correct?

F: I think you're early, but--

C: All right. Was it 1939?

F: Yes.

C: [In] 1939, it was sunk. After that. But I figured we were going to war with Germany.

So, he said, "I will give it every single thing I have. And we'll see if we can't get your aviation school of medicine funded and done properly." He said, "You know, this is refreshing, to have a person come in on a thing of this magnitude, and," he said, "you are very young!" I said, "I look younger than I am, probably." So, I said, "I've been around a long time, working. And this needs very badly to be done."

Then, all of a sudden, he said, "You fly too, don't you?" I said, "Oh, yes, sir, I fly." So a friendship started right then. There was no ifs nor ands about it. Well, I'm sure that the President must have recommended, later, something about legislation. But I certainly was the one who sparked it first on the Hill. And I saw maybe a dozen or a dozen and a half congressmen, told my story. I know I got to somebody on the Military Affairs Committee--they didn't have an air committee in those days, or anything pertaining to it.

So, then, that was done. And, somehow, later, I met Lady Bird. And then I met--I was at their house many times when the children were small. I remember I was out there for a brunch one Sunday; I could no more tell you the date or the year, even. I took one of the children, and she was making breakfast, and she made some spoonbread. She was cooking the meal, and Sam Rayburn was there. That was the first time I met Sam Rayburn, and I got to be very close to Mr. Sam. I don't know why; I think everybody, instead of calling him the Speaker, called him affectionately Mr. Sam.

F: Yes, right.



C: I think it was quite appropriate to call him that. I got him to squire me around Washington when Floyd [Odlum, Cochran's husband] was not there, to parties and things that we were both going to.

F: He could be very--old-fashioned gallantry.

C: Oh, he was just so charming! He was just so lovely. And he loved the Johnsons. I know that he just idolized Lyndon Johnson. No question about it in my mind. Just the way he looked at him! There was a very deep thing between them.

I remember picking up one of the little girls--I don't know which one it was any more--and took her off into a room and cleaned her up and brought her back, and--well, it was very homely, you know. Little children have to be taken care of. She was in one of these "crib bed" kind of things, jumping up and down, playing, and [her] mama was cooking, and they didn't have any help. But we had a fine, fine meal, about eleven o'clock, and I helped to clean up all the dishes and clean the place up, and played with the babies, and went on my way. The only person at that breakfast--I'm sure that Mrs. Johnson won't remember it--but there was just Rayburn, and the family, and myself. I don't even know how I'd gotten to know them well enough to be invited, it's been so long ago.

F: I was wondering, one place you could have continued to stay in touch--one was that young Congressman Johnson, on the make, was very good at keeping contacts with people whom he had met, that he thought were interesting people who might themselves be doing something that he'd like to know [about] down the line. The other thing is that

he went on the Naval Affairs Committee, and then ended up--you know, he was the first congressman to go on active duty following Pearl Harbor--

C: Yes, I know.

F: And then Roosevelt ordered everybody home, after about six months. So he came back. And he went onto the Naval Affairs Committee with Carl Vinson. So it's quite possible that in your own role, that you may either have--he asked your advice, or you contacted him then--

C: Well, we just saw each other, a great deal of each other, from that time on. I don't know--and it's annoyed me, and I meant to ask Mrs. Johnson about it when I had a fairly good opportunity, but, as always, when you are around people like that, there's too much to talk about, too many things to do, and you never have an appropriate opportunity to ask that kind of question. But from the time I saw him, when I was on the Hill, lobbying, if you want--I don't like the word--but trying to persuade them to get this thing done, in a good fashion. And, by the way, this intelligence that I turned in to the President of the United States became, beyond doubt, more valuable than you can describe, as the war got under way. Because nobody believed that they had what they had. And, you know, General Charles Yeager, who made the first Mach 1 flight in the world--he shot down the first jet that was shot down in World War II, I think probably the only one. And, of course, they were already on to pressurization, and all of this stuff.

So, anyway, I continued to know these people, and very well. And I saw a lot of them, and I would see them certainly once a month, or I don't know how frequently. And always there were very interesting people around them, very stimulating people. I

remember one night, after the war, I was still in Washington, going to a fairly small dinner. It got started late because Mr. Johnson was late in the House, you see. You know how these people always are; dinner waits until--they practically have to boil all their food so they just keep it hot for them.

F: (Laughter) Right.

C: So, anyway, Mr. Johnson was late, or Sam Rayburn was late. I don't think I was ever at their house for anything that he wasn't present, which I think is kind of interesting. Now, I don't want to infer [imply] that I was in the Johnson house every month.

F: Yes, I know.

C: But I would see them at a party, or I would be with them, or they would take me home, or they would do something nice with me.

F: You were basically basing in Washington all during the war?

C: No, not all during the war. You see, I went to England in 1941. And--let's see, did I go in 1940--anyway, I was in England. And then I stayed internally for eleven months and ferried [planes], and I took twenty-five American women over to work in the war. And, again, Lyndon Johnson was helpful to me. I went up to talk to him about seeing if I couldn't get passports for these women. See, we didn't have an appeal of our embargo at that time, and I always found myself going to Lyndon Johnson when I wanted to get something done. But I never in my life have asked a personal favor of any person in high office or in any position of influence, in my life. Neither has my husband. I don't believe in it. I think one should be able to get along on their own. But if there's something that affects a lot of people, that's important to us, then I'll work very hard for it.

So, they wanted me to take these women pilots. One got the George Medal. And I said, "I'm not going to take them if I can't get a passport for them! No way am I going to leave these women there, and, if the country is invaded, have them shot as spies!" And I said, "If you don't have some legal right to be there, then that's just too bad! I want a backdated post--passport for them. Otherwise, I'm not going to take them." Well, he helped me on that project. He had a lot of influence around Washington, what I consider--now, I don't want that to be misunderstood--a wholesome influence, a really just completely clean, wholesome influence.

F: He knew whom to contact, and--

C: Yes, and how to put a little pressure on.

F: A little push here and there.

C: And he felt this should be done--he felt they should have passports. I thought they should go to England; he--I don't know what he thought about that, didn't ask him. But it was very helpful for these women to ferry airplanes inside of England.

In those early days, I didn't keep my correspondence--I didn't know how valuable it would be--as much as I should have. But I know that when I flew the bomber to England, I got a congratulatory telegram, or letter, or something--maybe I have, but I don't know.

F: When you were dealing with the women's pilot training program, did that throw you into any kind of a contest with Mrs. [Oveta Culp] Hobby?

C: Oh! Oh, my gosh, you know, we had a knock-down and drag-out. Now, Lyndon comes into--Johnson comes into the picture again. You see, the army had its WAACs [the

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps]--Mrs. Hobby's outfit. The navy had the WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service]. Now, the coast guard, in time of war, is part of the navy. They had their coast guard women. The marine corps is a part of the navy. And they had the marine corps girls. So, therefore, there was a precedent for the army air forces, which was a part of the army, to have their women as a separate, autonomous group. And--I'm sorry, I can't remember the name of the man who--he should have been a priest, he was a great guy--that introduced the bill in the House.

F: I don't remember either.

C: And I was--at that time, I had gone down and worked about six months in Fort Worth with the [Flying] Training Command, and I was called back in to Washington by General Arnold, and was an assistant to him while I--I wore two or three hats--until the year after the war was over.

So before the bill was introduced, I--and I was down in Texas--I got a call from General Arnold. He said to come up to Washington. And he had put the message through--I was down at the field in Sweetwater and they couldn't find me. General [Barton K.] Yount, who was head of the Training Command, sent someone looking for me, and he said, "Get to Washington as fast as you can!" I said, "Well, there's no airline tonight," and I said, "Would tomorrow morning--what does he want?" He said, "We don't ask General Arnold what he wants." I said, "Well, I would!" (Laughter) "Did you ask him whether it was urgent, whether he wanted me yesterday, or tomorrow?" He said, "No, I didn't." I was a civilian, and just a kid, doing a job, and I was kind of fresh with him. I said, "Well, look, I don't have anything to fly. My racer [?] is not going to

take"--you see, I sold my plane to the government for a dollar, and they signed it back to me. I said, "It won't take the weather. I have to fly tonight." "Well," he said, "you've been wanting to fly the B-25. Take it!" I was qualified on everything from B-29, the B-17s, the works. So--I had a green co-pilot; I had very little time in the aircraft. And I flew to Washington that night in the worst weather you have ever seen in your life! Just ghastly.

Well, I knew that Floyd's company had an apartment in the Mayflower Hotel. I went to the Mayflower. It was occupied. And I began to think I was going to have to sleep on a couch in the lobby, till the hotel people finally found a little corner room somewhere for me, a dirty little thing.

F: A sample room, probably.

C: Yes, and there I got a couple of hours' sleep, and got cleaned up, and it was seven o'clock in Arnold's office. So he said, "How did you get here so fast?" I said, "I flew all night, in the lousiest weather you ever saw in your life. It better be important!" "Well," he said, "it's very important. Have some coffee." He was just the greatest guy, you know; I just adored him. So I waited for him to tell me. He said, "How would you like to have your girls as part of the WAAFs [Women's Auxiliary Air Force]?" I said, "How would you like to be back in the Signal Corps?" (Laughter) He said, "Don't get fresh with me!" I said, "I am fresh with you!" I said, "No way! Over my dead body." See, we were civilian. I said, "In fact, I was going to come up here and ask you if you wouldn't see that legislation was introduced to make them a part of the army air forces"--army air corps, it was called, not "forces."

He said, "Well, Mrs. Hobby is extremely interested in having your girls." I said, "Okay, sir. But she's not going to get them." And I said, "Neither you nor anyone else are going to put those girls in that outfit." I said, "It's the sorriest"--I said, "I know there are many fine women in it, many. But the bad apples make the rest of it smell so badly," I said, "that it's just disgusting! On the bases they patrol, and"--I said, "They're having all kinds of things happen. It's just not proper! And they just have a terrible reputation. She's gone in for quantity and not quality, and there's no control over it, and it's a mess. No way are you going to put those girls in that!" He said, "Well, you'd better talk to her." I said, "When I go to the hotel, and I go to bed, and I get a long sleep, I'll be ready to tangle with her. But I'm not going to see her today, thank you. And I can promise you I wouldn't have flown all night in weather just to come up here"--(Laughter)--"and prattle with Mrs. Hobby!" He said, "She's Colonel Hobby." I said, "All right, Colonel Hobby."

So he put on his squawk box, and got--he didn't get Mrs. Hobby, he got her assistant. Now, I don't know what you think of this woman, but I don't think much of her. I'm talking about a public person, now, and things that she did that was wrong in our country, both in the Eisenhower Administration and during the war.

He said, "Miss Cochran will be available to see Mrs. Hobby at Mrs. Hobby's convenience tomorrow"--"Colonel Hobby's," he said. So there was a long wait, and they finally called back. Can you imagine, a man as important as General Arnold, that he had to go through channels like that to get to a--?

F: To a colonel.

C: Yes. So they said, "Well, she has to go to a luncheon." They gave her whole itinerary for the day over the squawk box. "But, yes, she could see her--she'll come at, we'll say, two o'clock. She shouldn't have to keep her waiting, and she will see her at two. No later than two-fifteen. But tell her to be here at two." So I was supposed to go there and sit all day and twiddle my thumbs! Well, I think I was worth as much to the country as she was. And I thought I was just as important as she was. It's only the privilege of kings to be on time. So I made up my mind that [if] she wasn't there, I wasn't going to wait very long. Right then.

Arnold laughed, and we talked about the B-26, and that's when we decided to put the--he brought out a letter, or an endorsement on his own letter that he had sent to an old friend that was--they were at the academy together--saying, "What do you think of the B-26?" He wrote back and said, "It's a prostitute and will never substitute for an airplane. [It] has no visible means of support." (Laughter) He said, "Isn't that terrible? We're having an awful time." So that's when the program was built for the girls to go in the B-26.

So, he had a colonel--I wish I could remember his name; I've tried so hard--that had just come back--he was quite an ace--from the European theater. He came into the general's office, you know, working in the general's office. He sent him with me. Charming man--who later was shot down in a B-29, I think the first one, over Asia, and stayed in a prison camp for the rest of the war. But he couldn't stand the Pentagon, and the Hobbys, like me! He was a nice guy. So, I was there about five minutes to two. I always think it's good manners to be in a little early if you can; it can't do any harm. I put



on my best French suit, and I put on my finest mink coat, and it was cold, and it was snowing. And I had to fly that afternoon back to Texas. So, we sat down, and I went over to a desk. I've never seen so many people--the outer office was, I don't think I'd exaggerate to say, twice or maybe three times as large as General Arnold's outer office. It was just incredible! Absolutely incredible. In fact, her office was probably better than the secretary of air. Mr. [Robert] Lovett was [under] secretary of [war for] air at that time. And I was astounded--there were all these civilians and all these military working. No one offered to take my coat, or told me where I could put my coat. They simply said, "Sit down. Mrs. Hobby will be in in a little while." So I sat down. And I always carry a large purse; I don't like to see women with briefcases, and I make a purse into a briefcase. So I had some things I wanted to read, and so I started reading them. Some information actually had been given [to] me on the B-26, some of its performance data, which General Arnold had asked me to look into. I sat there, and sat there. I looked at my watch, and I had been waiting about twenty-five, thirty minutes from the two-o'clock period, say. And I took a personal card out of my purse, and I went over and I said, "Dear Mrs. Hobby: I have been waiting for thirty minutes. I have to fly back to Texas tonight. And if you would like to see me, I will be available down there any time at your convenience." In other words, I am not waiting any longer! And I handed this woman, this civilian woman--I didn't go to the military desk. "Oh!" she says. "You're Miss Cochran!" I said, "Well, who did you think I was?" And--"Oh," she said, "this is terrible. The person who had charge of your appointment today"--well, they weren't there. And she said, "I didn't realize"--and I had taken her information over--she said, "Why, I am dreadfully sorry." I

was hot in my coat, but I wouldn't take it off, unless someone asked me to! I wouldn't sit down unless someone asked me to! Would you?

F: No.

C: So, she said, "Oh, we're just dreadfully sorry." I said, "Will you just give her this card? I'm not going to wait any longer. I've got to fly back to Texas, and the weather is getting not better but worse. I'm sure whatever she has to say to me is not very important anyway. It was she who sought the appointment; I didn't seek it." I thought I'd just let the office hear what I was saying. I said, "She requested the appointment we had; I didn't ask for an appointment with her." I guess my chip was showing rather badly, on my shoulder.

About that time, she walked in. One woman went and took her gloves; one took her coat; another took her hat and scarf! (Laughter) Three people! And she looked around, [and] ignored us completely. Now, I've never been so publicized that I am recognized instantly on the street, or anything like that, but I am usually recognized by many people that read the newspapers, or--

F: Besides, she knew you were coming.

C: Yes, I'm sure she had seen my picture somewhere, sometime. And I had the appointment with her, and she was thirty minutes late! Now, this is the truth: three people! And I just sat there. I told the woman I would wait another five minutes; I said, "I won't wait any more." So I sat back down. And I just--I was never so angry! I thought, "This stupid woman, wanting to take my girls over!"

So she went in--she marched into her office. She had a long way to walk. And I started out the door. About the time she got to her office, I managed to reach the door.

There was sort of a little place for people to sit, near her office; I guess she kept them waiting often, I don't know. But the woman ran after me and said, "Mrs. Hobby will see you right away! She's very sorry." And I said, "Well, she had better see me fast." And I turned around and walked back. This colonel was just absolutely--we hadn't even visited with each other, she was just--I felt sorry for him, frankly.

And I went in, and she did not stand up from her desk. I think that's common courtesy for anyone coming into your office, for an appointment. Or do you agree with that?

F: I agree.

C: And--it's nice to be agreed with.

F: Right.

C: So, I said, "I'm Jacqueline Cochran. This is Colonel"--whatever his name was. And she said, "Please sit down." She didn't say a thing about my coat! (Laughter) I still had on my mink coat. And I was so darned hot at that point, in more ways than one, I just slipped it off my shoulders.

F: (Laughter) You were generating your own heat!

C: I sure was. And I just sat there, and I did not open my mouth. There is nothing on earth more disconcerting, I don't think, to a person, if you can really just shut up and not show a muscle and just let them start.

So, she looked at me, and she was at a terrible disadvantage; she just didn't know what to say. She said, "You know, I just admire what you've done so much"--she started this damned chitchat. She said, "I just think it's marvelous!" And she said, "I have a little

boy," seven or eight, whatever it was, "and he is so crazy about airplanes. He went down to, literally, a dime store, and bought wallpaper with airplanes on it. He insisted on having it in his room."

F: He is now the lieutenant governor of Texas.

C: Yes! Well, that makes me feel old.

(Laughter)

So she rattled on about that for a little while. I still didn't open my mouth. She said, "As for me, I don't know one end of an airplane from another." I just let her rattle on. I said, "Mrs. Hobby, I have to fly back to Texas tonight." And I said, "If you want me to discuss anything of importance, we have to get it over with, because I really have to return tonight, and I flew in bad weather coming up here, and it is still with us, and I don't want night flying going back if I can help it, not too much of it anyway, not with this kind of weather."

C: And she looked at me. I'm not going to open the subject; I'm going to make her do it. "Well," she said, "I thought I should tell you that we've decided to take over your WASPs [Women's Airforce Service Pilots]." I said, "Who are *we*?" "Oh," she said, "at a high level, it's been decided." I said, "Well, I wasn't consulted." And I never saw her push a button, but a Philadelphia attack lawyer came in. And I said, "I don't know who *we* are, but, Mrs. Hobby, if you force the issue of taking these girls over, you're going to be very sorry." I said, "I'm not trying to blackmail you. But I think you'll be sorry. You'll regret it." I said, "In the first place, I don't believe they'll join your outfit. They are of too high a caliber." (Laughter) Below the belt!

F: (Laughter) Yes.

C: And I said, "You just admitted, voluntarily, that you didn't know one end of an airplane to"--oh, I forgot. She said, "Of course, we expect you to come in and be their direct commander"--in the command. But I said, "I wouldn't work for a woman who didn't know one end of an airplane from another!" I said, "You wouldn't know what it's all about! You wouldn't know how to deal with these people. They're a different breed of cat." I said, "No way are you going to get these girls. If you think you want to clean up your own outfit by bringing a little glam into it," I said, "I have news for you! I'm not about to."

She said, "General Arnold told me that you have 35,000 applications." I said, "I have." And I thought it was in confidence; I didn't know he was a blab mouth. Oh, I was angry! And I said, "They all claimed to have the equivalent of two years of college, I'll have you know." I said, "Thirty-five thousand have applied. It's cost these women a minimum of three hundred dollars to get into this program." She said, "The government can't charge people to get in a program." I said, "I can have regulations, and I have them, and they're legal!" And she said, "What are they?" I said, "I don't think it's important to discuss them here. But it cost the individual--you know, I made them have thirty-five hours of certified flying time to get in. That eliminated airsick girls, these people who are afraid of heights--they think they're not, but they are!

F: Yes. The ones who just thought it would be something glamorous to do, or something, or a thrill.

C: Yes. And they had to get it in a fairly concentrated period of time. I didn't care if it was dual. I didn't care whether it was solo or not. But they had to have thirty-five hours of certified. They had to come in with four character letters. I didn't say anything about religion, because you don't bring that in; I don't think one should. But we investigated every one of these girls. And every single girl that was in the program was interviewed personally by one of us. And we never had and never have had a single scandal surrounding a single girl--woman, they are now--'til this day, and practically all of them are well placed in life, through marriage or position. One of them has her doctorate--aeronautical engineer and works for Bell in helicopters, and--they all did great things. Just a fabulous bunch of women. I've never seen anything like it. And I'm so proud of them.

I had one girl--one!--that got into trouble. And I got her married to a little boy at Kelly--no, it was--what's the name of it? Not Kelly.

F: Lackland.

C: No, the one in Houston.

F: Ellington?

C: Ellington. It was a training school. And I don't think her husband ever knew she was in trouble, and they've lived happily ever since. Because--well, it's the truth. I just never had anything happen. It was just--the percentage was no more than you would get in good families. And I took them, you see, at eighteen; I was the only one who did. The average age was about twenty-one, twenty-two.

So, Mrs. Hobby said, "Well, I don't think you will have anything to do with it, Miss Cochran." I said, "I'll have a hell of a lot to do with it! And when I get through fighting--you've just never seen a woman in your life that can fight as dirty as I can! I can play your game, dear, just as well as you can." I stood up and I said, "You are not going to take these women into the WAAC! And don't you forget it!" And I said, "I have nothing more to say to you. Good day." And I walked out of her office.

Well, the battle was on! I went back and reported the meeting to General Arnold. I think he is still chuckling. I've never seen anybody so amused. He laughed and laughed and laughed. And I said, "Her office is larger than yours--twice as large in size. Who does she think she is?"

"Anyway, you said she's a very powerful woman. Well, I'm not powerful, but I'm going to be felt before this thing is over." So, I had a few friends, too.

So we got the bill introduced right away. And I went down to Mr. Johnson, my friend in the House. And the man that was the head of the civil service [committee], [Robert] Ramspeck--he was the chairman of the civil service committee--he had been giving me a lot of static and a lot of trouble, from the time I saw Mrs. Hobby. So I knew that there was a tie-in with it. It's always obvious, when you've had no trouble before, and all of a sudden trouble spots start to crop up, whether this was legal or that was legal. And I said, "I don't know, a lot of things are being done illegally here in the war."

I went down to see, again, Mr. Johnson. I always would go and call on him. And always I would walk in, and he would put his arm around me, and was just--had all the time in the world to just sit and listen to your problems. I've never in my

life--never--used anybody's time, because it's immoral, in my--it's the only thing people have that's really valuable, is time, and the intellect to use it. And when I visit people, I go in and get it all down, and even then I'd be so afraid, I'd go so fast--I would say, "I want fifteen minutes," and I wouldn't stay longer than that. I'd do it and get it over with. That's why I could always have appointments any time I wanted them with people, because I had something to say, whether they were interested or not, and I said it and got out. And I went in and I said, "I'm going to tell you the story, and it's going to take about ten minutes, fifteen minutes, and I'll hit the high spots." Well, he laughed and laughed and laughed. I don't know what his--I never have known what his relations were with Mrs. Hobby. But he really laughed about it. He said, "Well, that should have taken her down a peg or two!" I said, "I have no idea, but I think she's put Ramspeck up to this thing. And, when the war is over, I'm going to deal with him!" I did, too.

So then, Congressman--I got [Robert] Wilson in San Diego, I threw him out of Congress. [Edouard] Izac.

F: Yes.

C: On the floor--see, I wasn't in Washington when the bill went on the floor. I think there were 411 votes, and we lost by eleven votes. It was one of the largest bills--largest vote there had ever been on a comparatively unimportant bill, because it didn't make any difference where they put them, and all these other branches of the service had their women in their uniform. And so, in a way, it was just a completely unimportant thing. So I wasn't there, but I sent a very, very fine person who could take shorthand at the level--the like of which I have never seen. And she went into the galleries and took down



all the proceedings. And this fellow Izac got up and he slandered my character. He talked as though--by that time, you see, I had moved into Washington, the time this came around--as though I was Arnold's girlfriend, or something worse, and that I would look at all the generals with my big brown eyes, and whatever I wanted to do, they did it.

F: (Laughter) Yes.

C: Well, this is terrible!

F: Yes.

C: Because I have never been criticized in the press. I've always had--my friendships have been equal with the men and the women that I've known, their wives. Now, maybe I would work more with the husbands in this case, but I've never had any problems. And I never sought them, and I never looked for them. I had a wonderful husband, and everything I wanted in life, practically. Except, perhaps, good health, which I've never had--sounds strange, but true.

So this man really just assassinated my character, and talked about General Arnold, said he should have been court-martialed years before, that he was absolutely unworthy to be the head of the air force.

F: He's just getting all his spikes out at once, wasn't he?

C: Well, he really let it fly. Well, it turned out later that he was on--I think it was the *Kansas City Star*, anyway, an important paper--when Billy Mitchell was court-martialed, and he tried to get Arnold court-martialed at the same time. And he hated Arnold, and he found a vehicle in which to spill his spleen. Now, most of that was all taken out when the congressional directory [*Congressional Record*]-it was cleaned up, and all of those other

things got taken out. So it didn't go down in history, except from us, and whoever was sitting there listening to it.

F: He had the pleasure of saying it without being branded.

C: Well, you see, you can't sue a congressman, which I don't think is right. I think they should be subject to assassination of character as much as anybody else in the country. Why do they have the privilege to stand in the House of the highest order of law in the country and assassinate a person's character when they can't defend it? Do you think that's right? I don't.

F: No.

C: I can't find anything in the Constitution that permits it! Do you?

F: I've never researched it.

C: Well, you just search it for that, because I did after that, and I had people smarter than I am and with better education than I have, and there is no place where it says that anybody can do that to another. But they get away with it, on some kind of a law that I guess the Supreme Court established.

F: They probably just passed it on their own, and so set it up.

C: So, anyway, I thought, "Well, I'm getting"--I was out of town. I was defeated. There was no point to reintroduce it; that was it. So then Mrs. Hobby was more determined than ever to get these women. I said, "You can't do it! I'm the director." Now--oh, in the meantime, I had a relation, Secretary [of War Robert P.] Patterson and his wife, that was just incredible. I mean, it's the only home I've ever gone by without bothering to telephone ahead of time, and knocked on the door, and said, "I'm here, I want to see you

for a minute," or--I mean, the relation was just like *that*. And Bob said, "I'll fight for you on this," quietly, privately. He said, "When the chips are down, I'm the secretary of war, and I'll say no." So I knew she couldn't get them then!

So that was that battle, and I won the round, and so on December 4 I went to--oh, this is the part where Mr. Johnson comes in. I went to him, and I said--and he got Mr. Rayburn. The three of us sat down, and the Speaker said, "I will put Ramspeck in the chair, and therefore he can't open his mouth during the proceedings." And Mr. Johnson said, "I will do everything I can to help with the bill," and he did. He spoke very highly of it and tried to put it across. And it meant a lot to have him say something about it, you know. It was just wonderful. But we didn't know that this Izac was going to do this terrible thing. He was absolutely out of--

F: He had just been kind of lying about--

C: A bogeyman in the closet we didn't know about. So we didn't do anything with him.

F: And [he had] been waiting fifteen years to get at Arnold.

C: Yes, and he got at him, through that. And they said people laughed, and even the congressmen laughed when they described him, because I knew so many of these people. I was just not a woman that just ever thought about--that I had any influence, from the standpoint of a man and a woman deal.

Well, anyway, on December 20, 1944, I deactivated the women--there was no need for them--and then went to Asia. But, again, Mr. Johnson came into my life through this story, and tried very hard and asked the Speaker to help me, and interceded. And, again, I would keep seeing these people all through the years. And I wasn't registered as

anything but an Independent until I registered to help Eisenhower. And I sent him quite a handsome contribution on one of his campaigns; he was having some troubles down in his district, so they--

F: Johnson?

C: Yes.

(Interruption)

F: Had you had any contact with Congressman Johnson during that senatorial campaign of 1948? You were in Dallas strictly because Stuart Symington was there, the way I picked up the story.

C: Well, this is the exact story. In the meantime, I continued to see the Johnsons; I had been at a small dinner at their house--I think maybe I said this before--and we were only a very small number, and we got to--we were late sitting down to dinner, and we talked until the wee hours of the morning, and it must have been one o'clock, and the Speaker was there and he took me down to the airport, and I got on an airplane, because I had to go to a directors' meeting of a company I was serving, and be in Florida. I remember him personally taking me, and he was able to drive me out on the airport, to the steps, so I wouldn't have to walk! What--the privileges that they are accorded. And I remember getting some pillows and some blankets and lying down on the floor back of the pilot's seat, and sleeping all the way down to Florida! (Laughter) Oh, I would do these kinds of things! So there was a very--closeness with us. In the meantime, I became one of I think it was three people that was considered a consultant to Mr. Symington, the secretary. And we actually did do--I did do a lot of work with him, in a lot of areas. And I was

home, here at the ranch, when I received a call from Mr. Symington, the secretary, and he said, "Jackie, I'm going to be down in Dallas." They were going to have either a Dallas Day or a Texas Day for him, declared by the governor. I don't know which one it was; you'll have to--

F: Probably Beauford Jester.

C: What?

F: I think it was Beauford Jester.

C: No, but I don't know whether it was for the state, Symington Day, or just for Dallas. Anyway, they had Symington Day. And I don't know whether it was done by the governor or the mayor--whatever it was. And, he said, "There's going to be quite a party, and quite a clambake." And I said, "Mr. Secretary, you're just going down to help your friend Lyndon, and I think that's fine. So far, I've always stayed out of politics; I've never gotten mixed into them. And I'm not even registered [for] a party." And I said, "I don't think I want to do this." "Oh," he said, "come on, be a good girl." He actually said, "Add a little glamour to the party." I said, "Well, I'll think it over and call you back."

So, I've never done anything that's really important. And I consider a woman going down to a district like that, with already a famous man running a hot contest for the Senate--and Mr. Symington was pretty famous in his own right, as the first secretary of the air force--it's not only a great honor, but also it's something to give some thought to. I was always very careful with my department, because I never wanted people to think anything wrong, or misconstrue any of my actions. And if there are some out in the public, you have to be very careful or you can easily get yourself in an awkward situation.

And I have always consulted my husband about that kind of thing. If I want to do something that's honorable, just like flying an airplane, I never ask his consent; I just--it's my right and I go do it. If I want to go on a safari, I go on a safari. If he were sick, I wouldn't leave him. But anything important, I consult him. And I was with him, and I said, "I just got this call from Mr. Symington, the secretary, he wants me to come down to Dallas." Floyd said, "Well, I think you're foolish not to do it." I said, "Well, I don't know whether I'm not--I don't see what I could add to it, [or] see how I would add anything to anything." He said, "Well, you're very fond of the Johnsons, aren't you?" I said, "Of course I am. Respect them, deeply fond of them. I've been seeing them constantly through the years, and meeting--having social meetings with them, and this kind of thing." But there had never been any deep kind of a friendship between us, except I would run to him when I got into any kind of things that he could be helpful with.

F: Yes. He was there when you had to have him.

C: Yes. And I always felt he was there, strangely enough, from the first time that I met him, when I was lobbying for the aviation medicine thing.

Floyd said, "Well, if I were you, I would go." So I got over on the phone, I checked the weather, and I called Mr. Symington back. I didn't even bother to go to him. I called Mrs. Laird, who has worked for him forever; I guess she's still there. And I said, "Mrs. Laird, tell the Secretary that I will be down there, and if you would get the schedule for me, and tell me what I am supposed to do and when, I'd appreciate it, and I won't have to bother you." She said, "Oh, I think he wants to talk to you, Miss Cochran." I said, "Well, fine, put him on." I always try to avoid taking the time of busy people or people in

important jobs. So he came on, and he said, "Oh, I think that's great." So he started telling me what it was going to be, a luncheon--I think it was the next day, but anyway, that was the first thing on the agenda. I remember how long it was he called me ahead of time.

I always travel with a maid or a secretary or both. Part of the reason I do that--I would always have a suite with two bedrooms, all the rooms connecting, and it gave a stability--if you had people in your room, you weren't there alone. Now, that might sound peculiar to you, but I did this the whole twenty-five years in business. All of my traveling, there was always a third person present, or in the next room, and people knew they were there. And I think for a woman, that's very proper.

F: Yes.

C: So, I made a reservation. I think it was at the Baker Hotel; I don't remember. And I just took my maid with me. And, incidentally, she's been with me thirty-seven years, and she's still here. She was on the famous flight.

F: Which one is she?

C: Ellen. She's the one who is not in uniform. She's a ladies' maid, and she's now as part of the family--in a way; I mean, she doesn't dine with us. But she's a very fine person, very well educated and intelligent.

So, I just took Ellen, and--in fact, I didn't have a secretary at the ranch; we had come out for a little rest. You see, I was running a very big business until I sold it. I had about a thousand employees, and I was doing about \$18 million gross, which is nothing to be sneezed at.

So I said, "I'll be there in time for the luncheon." I went into Abilene, and slept, because I didn't want to get into the parties the night before. That might sound funny to you, but I just didn't. And I got up the next morning, and I dressed in my plane; I had a perfect place to dress, and everything, a makeup table in it, all concealed, the works.

F: This was the Lodestar.

C: Lockheed Lodestar, yes. And I had a bed that was seven feet long, right back of the cockpit, the left-hand side, and it was on the right-hand side looking back, as you go forward to the cockpit. So there was just my co-pilot, flight engineer--in fact, he was not a co-pilot; he had less than ten hours of flying time, but a very fine flight engineer. That was before they had the rule that you must have a co-pilot with a certain weight, if you are going to haul passengers. Only if you took passengers. Which was a good rule they put in. At that time, you didn't have to have it.

Now, this was in the spring of the year. And I don't--

F: In May.

C: Well, I don't remember the month.

F: Yes, it was in May.

C: Because I know it was in the spring; you never know whether to take warm clothes or hot [weather] clothes.

F: Yes. It's a bad season.

C: Yes. And the luncheon was at the hotel opposite the one I was staying, and you know how the Baker and the other one was--

F: The Adolphus.



C: Yes, how they're that way--

F: Cross the street from each other.

C: So whichever one I wasn't staying in, that's where the luncheon was.

So I got to my room, and I got all tidied up--and another thing: I assumed that I was probably--as I am so very often--the only woman at the luncheon, and I was. It must have been, I don't know, four or five hundred men there, just a packed room. They were having cocktails. And I always go very late, time enough to sit down at the table, but not to wander around with the men while they're telling their stories and having their drinks. So I walked in the room, and, you know, Mr. Symington is very tall, and a very handsome man. And he sort of towers ahead of everybody, and he was surrounded--when you see the biggest group of people, you know that's the most important person. And he just cleared out, and he said, "Miss Jackie! How are you? I thought you were never going to get here!" And I said, "Oh, I told you I would be here in time for the luncheon. Thank you for inviting me. How are you, Mr. Secretary?" I was always very formal with people, unless we were in our home and this kind of thing. And he says, "Well, now I've turned out to be your mailman." I said, "You're a pretty handsome one!" (Laughter) And so he handed me an envelope. I just put it in my purse, and I looked around to see if I could see Mr. Johnson. No Mr. Johnson in sight. I looked around to see if I could see Mrs. Johnson; I assumed that she would be at the luncheon, that we'd probably be the only two women, or maybe I would be the only woman, I didn't know which.

And the papers had been full of the contest for the seat of the Senate, because he had made such a name for himself in the Congress, and a good name. So I went out [to] a

private place and I read the note. It said, "Lyndon is"--the note said, "Jackie, Lyndon is in XYZ hospital"--I don't remember the name of the hospital.

F: Medical Arts Hospital.

C: Well, I don't know. "You can go to the back of the hospital, and there are some steps you can walk up, and he's in room number so-and-so, on the second floor." And he said, "Please don't announce yourself, just go and find out, because I am afraid I might get recognized." I thought that was kind of laughable; I was kind of recognized in Dallas myself, having been around Texas a whole lot--

F: (Laughter) Right.

C: And, "Find out what happened, and what we can do. They're trying to keep his illness a secret."

So, I left the luncheon before it was over. I turned to the person that was the host, or master of ceremonies, whatever you call it, and I said, "I would like very much to be excused." I said, "I have a headache," and I wasn't lying. I'll always--I just won't tell a lie. I did have a headache, but it wasn't even for that reason. The room was full of smoke, and it was stuffy, and I was a little tired, and I said, "May I be excused?" So I left before all the speeches started, because I--all of a sudden, I realized that I had a deep feeling of affection for these people. You know, you sometimes never know that until something happens that triggers it in your mind, and you analyze what your feeling really is for the person. I thought of the many, many favors, the many courtesies that he extended to me, and the many nice things that Mrs. Johnson had done, and things I had been included in, in a social way, and the Sunday that was such a homey thing, when I

had picked up the little girl to take care of her while she was cooking breakfast--well, brunch. And, I don't know--all this kind of went through my mind; I thought, "My goodness, they may need help!" And maybe that's a pretty biggety thing to say, that you can go help a man of his stature, but you never know.

So I excused myself and I took off. I decided that I shouldn't go out there in a taxi, that I had better go rent a car. I went down the lobby to some place very nearby, rented a "U-Drive-It," got in it, found the hospital--found it on a map, looked it up in the telephone book--and drove myself out there, and went to the back and parked. I've always been very security-conscious, and I have never--for instance, I'll digress here. My word of honor, I have never repeated a conversation between myself and another person that was in private unless I asked their permission. I consider anything that's said to me in confidence unless--if it has any importance. Like the conversation we were having a few minutes ago, I wouldn't repeat that unless I had your permission. This kind of thing. And I think it was terribly important. So, I thought, "Well, I was told to keep it in confidence," so I would do everything I could to cover my tracks going out there. And I walked up these back steps. It was really [an] emergency exit, was what it amounted to. Not a fire escape, but sort of an emergency exit kind of thing, I think; it didn't look very used, but the door was open. And it said, "Exit," so it had something to do with fire, and they had to leave it open!

F: (Laughter) Right.

C: And I went to the door, and I knocked very quietly. And Mr. [Warren] Woodward came to the door and cracked it. I said, "I'm here for Mr. Symington. Jackie Cochran." He opened the door and sort of pulled me inside.

F: (Laughter) Just like Santa Claus, coming down the chimney.

C: Yes. So, Lady Bird was sitting there in a chair. There were two connecting rooms. They both looked as though they had been dragged through the old proverbial knothole. I've never seen two more exhausted human beings in my life. And Mr. Johnson was in the other room, and he was moaning, in terrible pain. I said, "My goodness, what's the matter?"

So Mrs. Johnson started to tell. She said, "Lyndon has had these"--

F: Kidney stones.

C: --"kidney stones. This has been going on"--I think they said four days; don't hold me to time. Woodward may remember it, probably, better than I. "And he won't have anyone but our local family doctor. And he's very, very ill, and we don't know what to do." I said, "May I go in and see him?" She said, "Sure," and I went in, and--oh, he was sick. Oh, he was sick! His color was bad, there was a bad odor in the room, and I picked up his pulse and it was like--oh, incidentally, I had trained as a nurse. And I picked up his pulse, and it was like a baby's pulse, fluttering instead of beating. It was just so fast, you couldn't count it.

F: Did you train as a nurse before you got into aviation?

C: I was only fifteen years old when I went and trained. That's another story. The first woman to run for public office in the state of Alabama put me in, Miss Lerton [?], S. H. Lerton.

So, anyway, I looked at him, and I looked at his eyes, and he felt--the skin felt terrible. You can touch the skin with your eyes shut and tell when a person is very ill. And I went out and I just quietly closed the door and I said--I actually said, "Lady Bird"--I might as well say the way I said it, because we were very friendly, and she wasn't then the First Lady. I didn't know Woodward. I said, "I hate to say a thing like this. You're either going to get proper medical aid for this man, or he's going to be dead within another twenty-four hours, maybe if he makes it, as strong as he is." I said, "I think he's practically dying now." And I said, "I am told that it's the most excruciating pain one can have." I said, "What have they done?" She said, "Our family doctor has taken these X-rays. He's also done a cystoscope, but with no success." Well, he didn't know how to do it, probably. He's not a urologist, and he had set up a pretty serious trauma, which I found out later.

And I said, "Well, there's a doctor in Mayo's." Now, I would never recommend a medical person, because he's just a doctor, but *a* big institution like that which is one of the finest in the world, which helped to bring our level of excellence in medicine from about seventh place in the world in 1922, I think it was, up to equal any other country in their medicine. And I had been out there on this aviation medicine thing, and I was so impressed with them as an institution, and Floyd--

F: And the personnel.

C: And Floyd had had a very large stone in his bladder, and I watched the operation take place, [done] by this doctor, Gershom Thompson. In the meantime, when I have overwhelming respect for people, I find a way to become friends with them. And Gershom Thompson and Maxine, his wife, and we were just very close friends, and he was one of the unique men in the world of medicine, in that department. He and a doctor in England had developed, pretty well at the same time, without knowing each other, the same procedure for removing these stones without physical surgery, through the urethra and so forth. He did--I think it was fifteen hundred of these a year, or something. I mean, it was something astronomical. He just did them all day long. And, as I said, they had stayed with us in New York, and I had flown them someplace one time, and I had gotten to know them very well. So, when I said--she said, "Oh," I said, "Why don't you get your family doctor over here and let's talk to him about it." I said, "I have all afternoon, if there's anything I can do." She said, "Oh, please, make Lyndon do something." He was pretty stubborn.

F: Yes, he was.

C: And he didn't want this to get out to anyone.

F: He was "not sick"--(Laughter)--I know, but he wasn't going to admit publicly that he was sick. He was in a campaign, and he sure wasn't going to take out time for an operation that--

C: Well, I don't know if you know, but they make an incision from the backbone around to the navel, and then they separate all the muscles to get into the urethra and the bladder, the kidneys. Did you know that?

F: No.

C: It's one of the most difficult pieces of surgery that is performed. And it's a long, drawn-out thing, and it usually takes three months to get back on your feet. It's a terrible piece of surgery, ghastly.

So, I said, "Maybe this man can't do anything, but why don't we at least consult him? Maybe he would just come out here." Whereupon the doctor came, whose name I don't remember. We should get the name for me as a matter of fact. So we got Gershom on the phone, and I was lucky enough to get him between operations; you know, they scrub up for the next one. And our friendship was such that he would always come on the phone if he humanly could. And I knew that, so I didn't have any fear about calling. Then he got on the phone, and we got both of these telephones tied in. No, we didn't. No, we didn't. I told Gershom Thompson--I said, "This is in the strictest confidence. Dr. So-and-so is here, and he wants to talk to you, and this man is very important in the country; he's done a great job in the Congress. He's running for the Senate. He can't afford to become ill in the middle of the campaign. That will probably knock him off; it's a tough campaign." And I said, "We're looking for help. Can you come here?" He said, "Well, if I did, I couldn't do anything for him. You know, Jackie, you saw me do one of these things. I have all this equipment, this tip table. It takes practically six of us to do it, the handling of the human being." And he said, "Put him in your plane and bring him out here. It won't hurt him." I said, "I think he'll die in twelve hours if we move him around. He's so sick, I don't think he's going to live." Now, we were in the room with Lady Bird;

we closed the door of the room [with] Lyndon. And he let out a yell, and they gave him more sedation. He was terribly sedated, really heavily sedated.

So the doctor got on the phone, and he knew his reputation. His reputation was just world-known. Oh, he went to Egypt, even, to operate on King Farouk's mother.

(Interruption)

F: You mentioned King Farouk's mother.

C: Yes, Dr. Thompson had even gone to Egypt to operate on her. And he was just fabulous.

So he talked to this doctor for a long time. I don't know how long they talked; quite a long period. So he said, "He wants to talk to you again." He said, "Jackie, it can't do any harm. Maybe it might even make the stones move, by themselves, out of the position they're in. According to this doctor, they haven't moved"--I don't think they had moved since the attack. And they were not in the lower urethra; they were in the upper, between the kidney and the bladder. Not from the bladder out; if they get stuck in there, it's relatively easy and simple. He said, "I'm not sure, [from the] description, [that] I can do it anyway without surgery." But, he said, "the only thing to do is to get him out here, just as fast as you can."

Well, by that time, it must have been four o'clock in the afternoon. And I said, "Look, Gersh, I'd rather they'd get a commercial plane. Surely they can get one that would do this, and keep it in confidence." He said, "You bring him out here! You have that great big bed, and it's just so simple for you to do it. If they want it kept in confidence, we'll keep it in confidence. If you say he's worthy of it, I believe you." This



is the truth. I said, "Well, I'll talk about it, and we'll get him there as fast as we can." It was already decided that he was going to go.

So I sat down with this doctor and Mr. Woodward and Mrs. Johnson. And I said, "I swear, I don't think--this man may not live getting from here to Mayo's. I think he's that sick." I said, "What about it, doctor?" He said, "Well, you're getting awfully close to it. He can't take much more." I said, "Well, look at his pulse!" And I said, "I feel frightened to take him. I don't even have a co-pilot. I only have a flight engineer." And there wasn't any point in me going out and trying to find one. But I said, "Could we get a nurse? Or could you go with us?"

(Interruption)

C: The doctor said he had patients, that it was just impossible. And he said, "There wouldn't be anything I could do for him that you can't do."

So, I said, "Well who's going?" Lady Bird and Mr. Woodward said they would go. So I got on the phone and I called this maid of mine at the hotel. First I went to the telephone and I checked the weather. The weather was so bad that not even airlines were flying over part of the country we had to go over--see, it was more than a six-hour flight, at--oh, I cruise about 235 [miles per hour]. So it was a pretty good distance. But the blessing--I had enough fuel to go non-stop. You see, I had flown this plane across the ocean several times. And this big tank where I had this bed held 210 gallons of gas, extra gas. We were very lightly loaded. We were going to have headwinds. I said, "The weather is so awful that I doubt if an airline with a full crew would take off in a DC-3 in this." And I said, "I just don't think we can go before about daylight in the morning."

So--I've had an amazing rapport with the people in the weather bureau, and the people in the tower. I don't know what it is, but they just are so wonderful to me that it's completely incredible. Always have been.

F: Probably, they recognize--one pro talking to another.

C: Well, also, I'll go make speeches for them, and I do things for them, and I'd give them a ride if they wanted a ride somewhere. I carried all the insurance in the world. Or I'd take their families someplace. I was never too busy to do something nice for somebody who needed to have it done, good, honest working people. And I think it builds a good relation. I wasn't doing it trying to buy their friendship, or anything. But I guess it gets around.

So, anyway, I called and I said, "Something very, very urgent has happened, and it's extremely urgent, extremely important, that I have to be in Minneapolis." I didn't want to say Rochester; they're right together. And I said, "I just have to be there, and I have to be there as soon as I can get off the ground. And I don't have a co-pilot, or anybody to help me with any of my charts, or anything. I don't want the going too rough, and I don't want it too turbulent. I don't want to be forced up too high, either." And I said, "Now, please, give me a rundown as you've never given a rundown, and I'll call you back in about twenty minutes to get your prognosis." And in the meantime, I started talking to Lady Bird and the doctor. And Woodward didn't say anything. He just sat there.

I got on the phone and I called my maid, and I said, "You go to a store and you buy four sheets, single sheets." I said, "You buy two pillow cases, and you buy some big

soft bath towels. You take a taxi and go to one of these laundries, and you put them in the machine and you wash them. Don't bother about the ironing or anything"--they just didn't have drip-dry in those days. "And you fold them up, and you buy me a plastic pan, a fairly decent-sized dish pan." And she's so intelligent. She never asked me [why] I wanted some screwball thing. She never asked any questions. She said, "Yes, Miss Cochran." And I said, "Oh, yes. Go and buy two quarts of alcohol, rubbing alcohol." And I said, "Do we have the big blankets aboard?" Because I went out in such a hurry from the ranch that probably things had been taken out to be dry-cleaned; I wasn't sure what I had aboard, except we had little light blankets that--because I had these little 100-percent cashmere things for people to use around their shoulders, and little wool things for their feet, and this kind of thing. The plane was well heated. But you just never know, and you've got to be prepared. And pneumonia is one of the most dangerous things in the world is a patient, a sick person.

And, I said, "I'll tell you what you'd better do. You'd better buy a couple of blankets, just in case I don't have the big blankets aboard. Just make sure you have everything--I don't know if I have the big pillows aboard. So buy a couple of pillows." I was going to be prepared! And she wrote the list [down] and read it back to me, and I said, "Have all that stuff ready. I'll be there, probably to dress for this dinner, but I may be leaving. So you'd better get me packed." I said, "Oh, yes, get a hold of Steve and tell Steve to stand by." And my crew figured when they were on a trip with me, they were on duty. They either had to be with the airplane or in their room where I could get them. So I said, "Call Steve and tell him to go to the airport and check everything from one end to

the other on that airplane. Just don't leave anything undone. Fill it completely with fuel, full of--everything aboard full."

F: Steve is your flying engineer.

C: Yes.

F: Steve who?

C: Steve Brody. And he was the most wonderful man. He was killed by a pilot that I hired who was a freshie [?]. He should be punished for killing this man, because he--for disobeying.

Well, anyway, to get back on my story, I said, "Tell him to try to find some way to heat the plane." It was cold in Dallas. We had a very, very cold spell. It was real cold for that time of the year. And--I think it must have been earlier than May.

F: I don't think so.

C: You don't? Well, I don't know.

F: You can have some late-season--

C: Well, it was cold, I remember that. Well, I don't mean I wanted a fur coat, or anything like that, but it was chilly. And it was also windy, and we also had a cold front coming through, too. That was part of the problem.

I called the weather man back, and I said, "Tell Steve to stand by, when he gets all this done, to report right back to the hotel to you, and stand at a phone till I'm ready for him."

And Woodward was just kind of watching me, for some reason. I think I have been very efficient and very organized in what I did, with my flying and my life. I guess I had to have been.

So--I mean, to remember the rubbing alcohol. The doctor looked at me so funny, and I just acted as though I'd got him in competent hands. And I said, "Well, now, what do we do if he gets in terrible pain?" He said, "Well, have you ever given an injection?" I said, "Oh, yes, sir, I trained as a nurse." He said, "You did!" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I thought it was funny when you started talking about his pulse, and the way the skin felt, and so forth."

F: Probably the pulse was running--any idea?

C: You couldn't count them! I tell you, it was like taking a child's pulse. You can't take a baby's pulse. Did you know that?

F: No.

C: Well, you can't. Some day, you take a small little fellow, up until--before he's a year old, and you cannot--it's just a flutter. But it's not a pulse that's a definite beat. And his pulse was literally--they were so exhausted, they were just beating so fast, and just fluttering. They just didn't feel like a pulse. And the same thing in his neck--you could get it there, but you couldn't get it in his wrist.

So, it was decided that we would take off at four o'clock in the morning. That was just before daylight, and we thought the front would have passed, and the roughness and the turbulence and what have you. And that if it passed earlier, I would leave word with

the weather man to call me. I had always had acquaintances in those places. Well it didn't.

So, about--oh, I guess it was three in the morning, Steve, myself, and Ellen went to the hospital. In the meantime, he had already gone out; he had slept in the plane that night.

F: LBJ had, or--?

C: No, no, my flight engineer.

F: Steve.

C: So he'd be handy. And he had arranged to get a hot thing, to heat it up, you know, and these blowers you stick in the door. And he had managed to get it around behind a hangar, completely out of sight of people. There was nobody around at that time of the morning. All the servicing was done, all pre-flighting was done. All of that was done.

F: Nothing to do but take off.

C: Just warm it up. It took very little time to warm up and take off, because it was all ready.

And then he had to come into town, take this rented car that I had. Then we went to the hospital, and we used that car! This is very interesting. And we went to the back door, and we went upstairs, and Lady Bird and Woodward--

F: Had you told LBJ by now what's up, or--?

C: I don't know, I guess they talked to him. Because I don't remember there was any arguing. I went in and I said, "You're going to Mayo's. And I'm going to fly you there." I didn't ask him would he go. And I said, "You're very ill, and you're going to die if you don't do something for yourself. And it's been decided, with your doctor and with Lady

Bird, that I fly you to a great, great urologist at Mayo's, and I'll promise you it will never be in the press. And we're going to take you off in the middle of the night so nobody will know it." And all he did was squeeze my hand, and made no resistance. I had no argument on my hand at all. Nothing. All he would do is take my hand and squeeze it. Isn't that funny? With no--he was so sick, he could hardly talk. He was at the verge of tears. I mean, this man was in great pain.

F: [At that] moment, he probably didn't care. I mean, at that stage--

C: Yes. I said, "We're going to come and get you down."

So they got a bathrobe on him. You know, he was so mammoth! And Steve was a big, strong, husky--Woodward's not; he's a rather slight person. But between Woodward and Steve--and he could walk, but very little. And I--I don't know whether I want to tell this part in here, but anyway--

F: Okay, hold it a minute.

(Interruption)

C: Well, when I went in to see him, I said, "You're in bad shape!" And he said, "It won't--nobody will find it out?" I said, "Forget it! You're going to die anyway unless--something has to be done for you. And if there's any way to keep this secret, I think I've been able to do it. And we're going to take off during the night."

So, when we went to get him, Steve was so big and so strong, he was just a wonderful man. He was killed later in an airplane accident. And he just--could almost carry him down the steps. Because he had--there had been so much trauma, with this

doctor that set up trying to do a cystoscope. I don't see how the man walked. I've never seen such human courage.

F: I would think each step would have just jarred the daylight out of him.

C: Oh! I mean, he was in just such agony that he had bitten his lips! He had chewed his lips to keep from screaming.

And we got to the plane, and he managed to shuffle--

F: He sat up in the car then, all the way out there.

C: Well, we put him in the back seat, and we all crowded in with him, and Lady Bird, as I recall, took his head in her lap, I'm not sure. Maybe he sat up. I'm not certain. But I know that myself and Steve and Woodward sat in the front, and put them in the back.

F: Yes. [Inaudible]

C: What?

F: The trip just out to the airport must have been sheer murder.

C: Yes. And I had a horrible time trying to--I didn't know what the hell I was going to do with the car! I had this rented car. And I parked it, and I gave it to--

F: Where are you going to turn it in that time of the morning?

C: No, I just parked it, and I said to this boy, "When the place opens up in the morning, you give them the keys." I was at Air Research--I think that was the name of it. Anyway, I was at a very good place. And I said, "Tell them to turn this car in for me. The papers are all in this"--I guess it got turned in. I never heard from them. I was trying not to attract attention! But some things you have to finish up. I almost just left it sitting there and took the keys with me. But I thought, "No, I'll get rid of this."



F: Nobody saw you leave the hospital?

C: Nobody saw us leave the hospital. I guess the doctor took--oh, the doctor was there. And he came and helped us, too. I'd forgotten that. So he was there, and he gave me a--two or three injections. I said, "You'd better give me a lot more than I need. Suppose I have motor trouble, suppose I'm forced down." I'm the kind of a person that's always thought of all of the things that can happen before they happen, and try to be prepared for it. And I said, "I may have a forced landing, I may need--I don't know. Tell me what I can give him, how much I can give him, and so forth." And I don't know what it was, dilaudin, or what it was. It was a narcotic. I didn't even ask. They were all done up in sterile towels and ready to go.

I remember I said, "Don't [inaudible]--I'll have to leave my cockpit if I have to do one of these things, with no pilot. So be sure that it's ready, I mean, and it's wrapped in a sterile towel, and then a sterile something waterproof on the outside of that," I said, "because I can't fiddle around with one of these fix-it-yourself kind of things." So, I don't know, I had several, because I just turned them over to Gersh Thompson when I got there. I used two.

So, we got him in this bed, and I put the strap on him. It was an engineer's seat, with a table about this size on the opposite side of the bed. So Ellen sat down there. And the seats up front, you could--I had two--only had six or eight seats. There was lots of space. And one would come down and sort of make a bed up there, you know, where your feet were up and you were reclining. So I fixed that for both of them; I had it all

ready before we got aboard. And then they could either sit there, where they were feet-up and reclining, or they could go back and sit in an upright seat.

They were asleep before I got off the ground!

F: (Laughter) I see!

C: I was taxiing, I looked back to make sure they had their belts on, put on the belt sign.

They were both sound asleep.

F: Just dead to the world.

C: Just completely dead. They just said, "We're rid of it now. Here." It's just like a crying baby. "You take it!"

And I said, "Lyndon, you're okay?" He didn't give me an answer. And I thought, "Maybe he's asleep," because the doctor had given him an injection. And I started rolling down the runway, and the ceiling was just a minimum ceiling for takeoff. And I realize now that--after these heart attacks, nobody should fly alone, really, without a co-pilot.

And I started rolling, and I started--it was cold! I picked up a little ice, in a cloud. And I got to nine--about nine or ten thousand feet, and bingo! Oh, I forgot. I always kept a full supply of oxygen. I had enough oxygen for everybody aboard for eight hours. And I put on oxygen mask on him, and I said, "Now keep it on! You just must." I said, "It will help you breathe better. You'll feel better, and I'll feel better and safer. Keep it on!" I strapped this on him, and I strapped him in pretty tight. I said, "As soon as we're off, we'll loosen it." I told Ellen how much to loosen it. "When we're off the ground."

So, we rolled down the runway, and--bingo. It was that time of the morning. There was no traffic. I filed my flight plan. I said, "Will you program me on course

instantly? I'm in a desperate emergency to get out to my destination," and I said, "I'd appreciate greatly"--they didn't know whether I had family, or what. I said, "Now, please, program me immediately on course, as fast as you can." See, there's nothing around Dallas to hit, so you can program pretty fast on course. So I programmed, and climbed out, and it was the most beautiful weather on top you've ever seen. Daylight was coming, and the sun was coming up. And I was able continually to lower my altitude, because I wanted to get the mask off of him, as soon as I could. But I didn't want to do it unless I stayed around five or six thousand.

F: What time of day was this?

C: Well, we were rolling at four o'clock in the morning, so by the time we were programmed and on course--I couldn't answer. Because I know it took us about six hours and fifteen minutes.

Well, we were out--I don't know how long we had been out. And everything was quiet, and he was quiet. Ellen was dozing, lying over on the table, and no one was saying anything. The flight was going perfectly. And I decided to put it—I rarely put my plane on automatic pilot. I just put it on enough to keep it exercised, and make sure it worked. Because I bought it [the plane?] to fly it, not to let a mechanical genius fly it.

F: To replace you, right. (Laughter)

C: So, I thought, "Well, I'd better put it on automatic pilot, and get it all programmed and on course, just in case." So I said, "Steve, if I have to leave this cockpit, I won't be farther than where Mr. Johnson is, but," I said, "I think I've taught you enough about simulated performance"--and you just don't quit instantly. But, I said, "if anything rattles, you pull

that throttle back, and I'll be in that cockpit faster than you can breathe." And I was so agile; I never walked--I was just as agile as anything you've ever seen in your life. And I said, "I hope I don't have to leave the cockpit, but if I do" . . .

F: Yes.

C: We were out about two or three hours when a scream that you could hear on the ground pierced the air. You have never heard such a rending scream come out of a human being's mouth in your life! And he had torn his mask off; he had reared up in bed. And I jumped out of the cockpit--I said, "Watch it, boy!" Lady Bird and Woodward--before God, they never woke up! They were just dead. You see, they had been nursing him, I think, for about four days. I don't know the exact time; in fact, I would like to know. And I just sat on him, and I said, "Be quiet!"

Well, what had happened, according to Gersh Thompson, [was that] these things had moved a fraction. And that's when the great pain happens, just something incredible. See, he had a doubleheader. Wasn't one; he had two, two [stones]. And he just was pouring with sweat, he was soaking wet--not wet, but, I mean, he didn't--it was just as though you had poured a bucket of water on him. And I wasn't very dainty about it; I just undressed him, pulled everything off, got the dry sheets--Ellen was helping me--and dry blankets, and started pouring alcohol and turned him over, and I gave him a shot, and just held him.

F: You were just [inaudible].

C: And then he started to be sick. Thank God for the pan, it didn't do much good! And so--

F: You needed a barrel!

C: At least I'm probably the only woman that's been vomited on by a former president--pre-president.

F: Future president.

C: Yes, a future president.

But these things don't bother me with sick people. And I was able to handle it. The only thing I didn't want [was for] him to get cold. And I had lots of these little blankets. I just stripped his pajamas off, he didn't have a stitch of clothes on, and wet him with alcohol and wrapped him in all these blankets, to keep--because if he got pneumonia, he had it. And he was in a pretty weakened condition. I'm not exaggerating this, you know. I'd love to have Lady Bird and Woodward even listen to this tape, because this is a very accurate, verbatim.

But I have never heard such a scream. And the thing that was interesting--see, the door was open. Or maybe I had closed it; I'm not sure whether I did. It was much quieter if you did close that door. Anyway, they didn't hear it.

I said to Ellen, "Put yourself over here and hold him down." I would go back to the cockpit, and everything looked all right, and I'd go back with him. I kept this up for probably fifteen or twenty minutes. Very nervous, being out of the cockpit, because if anything happens--see, you always think a fuel line can break, an oil line can break. You can ruin your engine forever. You've got to be there to take care of--to shut it down, to trim the aircraft, to put it on one engine, and--blah blah.

So, he started to calm, a little bit. I've never seen such sweat pour out of a human body. Just--wow! And he was as white as a sheet, and I didn't think he was going to live

until I got there. I didn't know what to do. I kept thinking, "My gosh, should I go down and take him to a hospital? Just forget it? What is the moral thing to do? What is the right thing to do?"

I guess the door was closed, because I had Ellen open it, and I looked back, and I didn't have the heart to call these people.

F: They slept through the scream, too?

C: They slept through everything. They slept till we got to Rochester. I don't think they ever woke up. Because I'd had Steve put some food aboard, and nobody ever ate it, and I told him--I said, "I think Ellen better sit here and keep her seat." See, I was afraid he would fall out of that narrow bed, too. That bed wasn't very wide, and he's a very big man. If a belt was off and he fell off, he could break something. It was pretty high from the floor.

F: And you didn't need that!

C: No, I didn't need that. I needed somebody there, and I didn't want her to leave that room. And I didn't want to ask one of them to do it, which would have been the normal thing. But they were just exhausted.

F: Did you know that Woodward had been a pilot?

C: No, I didn't know that.

F: In World War II.

C: I didn't know that. He didn't look that old. He looked so young. I never got to know him! That is the only time I ever met him.

F: I see! (Laughter)

C: Never met him afterward, never met him before, to my knowledge. I think I met him at some affair one night--he said, "I remember having a great ride with you!" And he just didn't say what, but I recognized it.

But, anyway, he was just as white, and his skin just felt like the skin of a dead person. And I went up, and I thought, "Oh, dear God, if this wind would just change, if I just could get a tailwind, if I just could get there a little faster." So--I don't like to abuse my airplane, but you have certain limits you can go. So I pushed her up a little bit; I had lots and lots of gas, just tons of gas, and the weather was perfect in Rochester. So I pushed it right up as high as I could, not to hurt my engines, because you don't want to get in trouble that way either. And that speeded me up, and pretty soon the wind died down. I didn't have any headwind. So I was getting, truly, about two-thirty, true speed, ground speed.

And I had given my tail number, because you have to, and Gersh was keeping up with the tail number, and how I was going to land. He was at the airport with an ambulance. I parked way away from the administration building, because the ambulance--he had arranged that. Nobody--because many famous people went in there, and they didn't--and the papers were very cooperative, you know, with--

[Isn't] that funny? I am perspiring.

F: (Laughter)

C: I'm just dripping in perspiration, thinking about this terribly emotional experience I was having. No idea--taking that kind of a decision, you're taking a decision on the life of a

human being. And I didn't want to fly him in the first place. There just didn't seem to be any alternative if they wanted to keep this thing quiet.

So, Gersh was there. They wrapped him up. It was cold and windy, just freezing, in Rochester. You know, it can be, at that time of the year. It was really cold. I don't mean snowing, but a sharp, sharp wind that was a real cold wind, and he was wet. And so I went out to Gersh and I said, "Let's move him as fast as we can. But he doesn't have any clothes on," so I said, "He's got to be handled pretty carefully. I wouldn't try to put them on him, either. He's a very sick man. I think he's going to die." He said, "Oh, he's not going to die. I'm going to take care of him." So Gersh came in.

F: I bet Rochester looked good to you when you saw it coming up on the horizon!

C: I understand, when human beings are out in the ocean lost, they come in and kiss the ground. I felt like that. I just couldn't wait to get this man in the hospital.

F: And Thompson probably looked even better.

C: Oh, yes, because he was so--

F: Turn him over to somebody who knows what he's doing, and--

C: Honestly, well, Dr. Frantz, you have no idea what this meant. I mean, really, you just can't. And maybe I'm overdoing it now, but it was really that dramatic.

But I said, "If I were you, I'd put Mrs. Johnson in the hospital," which they did. I said--because she has been on this thing for days, and she was a very tired and very sick woman, I think, also, who needed some kind of physical attention. And they put her in the hospital. Isn't this cute?

F: Yes.



C: I don't know whether they put her in a room next to him, or what.

But, anyway, I said, "Gersh, I'm going to take off for Minneapolis as fast as I can get off the ground. I'm not even going to refuel, or anything. I'll go to a hotel and I'll call you, in a little while; I want to know what's happening." But I said, "I will be in XYZ hotel, and if anything unforeseen happens, get Maxine or get somebody to call me, to phone me right away, fast." I didn't say anything to Lady Bird; I didn't say anything to Woodward. I didn't say anything to any of them. I had been efficient; I had gotten the thing done.

F: Got off the plane, got back on the plane, and went off.

C: I got back on the plane, and got him with them as fast as I could. They came with some sheets and things, and the doctor brought it in, and we got him all covered up, and wrapped up, no clothes on. They took him to the hospital naked. I'm not kidding.

F: (Laughter) Like he came in the world.

C: Well, there's nothing wrong with that!

F: No, right, right.

C: They didn't have time to try to put pajamas on this man, or do these kinds of things. And there's nothing improper about a naked human being.

F: It would have been an extra exertion for him, too. [Inaudible]

C: And I had no intention of doing it. All I was trying to do was to keep him dry, and keep him warm, and pray to God he didn't get pneumonia, and that we got him there alive.

So I went to the hotel, and Ellen and I and Steve--we all went to our rooms, and we went to bed. I had a meal. I was starved; I had forgotten to eat anything, I was just so

busy on the flight. And I didn't eat anything till four o'clock. I had had nothing to eat except a half meal the night before. Oh, I forgot, I didn't go to the banquet.

F: No, I'm sure you didn't.

C: No, I didn't go. I didn't even make an appearance. I sent Stu a note, and I said, "I'm"--

F: He didn't have any idea what was going on, though. He just gave it to you--

C: No. And I was afraid to telephone him. So I wrote a note, and I sent it down to his room.

And I said, "You must deliver it to him, personally," with Ellen, my mainstay. And I said, "I am flying our friend out of here tonight, to a famous hospital. And I'm going to bed. I have to get up at midnight, and I can't tell you any more now." And that was it! I didn't think it was wise to start telephone conversations about it. You never know who's listening.

F: Or call any names.

C: Or putting--having a telephone operator listen in. And if the people are sort of well known--you know, there was a great big thing in the paper, "Jackie Cochran arrives for the luncheon honoring Secretary Symington." So, it was just that brief. If he wanted to know any more, he could go and find it out for himself. I didn't have time to sit down and write him a letter of particulars.

F: Yes, right.

C: So, I said, "I won't be at the dinner, and somebody should make my excuses." I've forgotten even how I handled it. I probably just called and said I didn't feel well and wouldn't be there. At that point, I didn't feel well! (Laughter) So, they wouldn't exaggerate--

F: And you were going to feel worse.

C: It wouldn't help that I would feel a lot worse before the day was over!

So, I went to sleep. See, I got in there about--let's see, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Around ten o'clock in the morning. But I don't know whether there's a change in time.

F: No, it's the same time.

C: It's--as I said, I don't remember whether there's a change in time.

F: No, it's the same.

C: It was about six hours and fifteen minutes in flight. So I got in there a little after ten.

Well, I got over to Minneapolis and went to the hotel, and I had a big account there in one of the big stores; it was normal of me to come in there. But if I stuck around Rochester, I didn't have any business in Rochester. Somebody would get on my--

F: Somebody somewhere would ask questions. "What's she doing here?"

C: Yes, that's right. But Minneapolis was normal for me to go to.

I am now perspiring, just like Mr. Johnson was perspiring. It's funny how emotions can come back. And they were running very high. I was really feeling so desperate when I landed.

I had to give him another shot. We had a second episode about an hour before we got in, that we had about two hours after we'd taken off. I'd given him--and I had also discharged half of the next dose of the sedation, because I hoped that that would hold him till I could get there, he was in so much pain. Because it's dangerous to give so much of that stuff. I was overdoing it a little bit.

And so I went to sleep. Nobody bothered me, nobody phoned. I didn't--I cut off my phone to everything but long distance. And they said no, I hadn't had any calls, and I thought, "Well, this is funny." It was about six o'clock. So I called the hospital. First I called--a person-to-person call to Gersh Thompson to chase him down; it was an emergency. That's the way you get them to do something for you. And where do you think I found Gersh? I found him in Lyndon's bedroom. He said, "Do you want to talk to your friend?" I said, "I sure do!" He said, "Maybe you'd better talk a little later. He's had his light refreshment." I said, "Is everything all right?" And he said, "Well, let's put it this way. I've done sufficient." See, one of those stones he was never able to get. Did you know that?

F: No.

C: They finally had to do surgery to get it. You knew that, didn't you?

F: No, I had forgotten that. They crushed it, or something, in there.

C: Well, no, they crush them; that's the way they do it. See, they fill the bladder with water, on up into the kidney area, and then they go in with these little things with lights on them. I've watched them do it. And then they crush it, and they fish it out. But there was one--it was embedded, and they couldn't get it out. But that wasn't the one that was giving him trouble. If it stays still, it doesn't hurt. You get to live with it, like you would with a crooked knee, or an injured something that's healed. But one of those things probably was there till he died, I don't know. Or they may have taken it out by surgery. I know he went back there again. And I know he took Gersh Thompson on a trip, a foreign trip, with him. Did you know that?

F: No.

C: Oh, yes. This is a wonderful story.

F: Maybe I'll see Thompson. Is he still going?

C: Well, I have to tell you something. I won't tell it on this.

Anyway, he said, "Oh, well, he can leave that egg alone." He was teasing me, Gersh was. And I said, "How are you?" Called him by name. He said, "Oh! I feel so wonderful." He said, "I just feel marvelous." I said, "How is your girlfriend?" "Oh, she's wonderful." She came on the phone, she said, "Oh, Jackie, this is marvelous! Thank you, thank you, thank you." "Don't thank me! Thank one of the great medical men of the country. He's a seven-wonder, Dr. Gersh Thompson." And I just went right back to sleep. I had something to eat, and then I slept until the next morning. And then I left, and I said, "Now, if you want me to come back and get you, I'll do it. But I'm sure you can get someone, or find a way out," and so forth. Because I had no desire to fly all the way back out there. There was no reason. I had done my--

F: You had no further business in Texas.

C: No, and I had no further business in Minnesota!

F: (Laughter) You'd missed all of the luncheon.

C: I missed all the fun!

So, the next morning, I called Lady Bird before I left. I was afraid I might disturb him, or they would not put me through to the room. And she said, "I've already been in there. He's had a good breakfast. And he just feels wonderful, and there's practically no

problem or blood, and all the pain is gone, and he's just--is just weak." And seven days later he was back in his district.

So, I read, or someone told me--I'm not sure which--that when he had his victory meeting with the press, when he became "Landslide" Johnson, with the eighty-four votes or something--

F: Eighty-seven, yes.

C: Somebody asked him who did the most for him in his campaign. And he said, "A woman who is not my wife!" And got everybody's curiosity up.

F: (Laughter) Yes.

C: But he wouldn't answer it. And I never knew this story had been told. I had no idea. I even came back home, and I didn't even tell my husband. And I swore Ellen and this fellow [Steve Brody] to secrecy. If you've got a secret--I said I had to go to Mayo's. I went places all the time. Didn't make any difference. Isn't that amazing?

F: Yes.

C: And, I mean, I really keep a secret when I'm going to keep it. Look at that.

F: It's also a good man who'll let you.

C: Well--

F: He won't say, "Okay, now, what did you do at Mayo's?"

C: No, we never do that with each other. I just--I don't pry into his affairs either. Because we have a habit. I always call him every night, wherever I am. Even in Europe, he used to insist, when we could phone back and forth every two or three days, to have a phone call.

And so--this is amazing! Isn't that funny?

F: (Laughter)

C: And so I didn't see him again for--oh, I don't know. And I came back to Washington very, very often, very frequently. Because I reorganized the WAAFs for [General Hoyt] Vandenberg. I got involved with the space program, as a consultant to the administrator, and really was active in it. And I've always liked doing the things that pertained to our well-being, in our country.

And, in February 1958, he was still a senator.

F: Right. Senate majority leader.

C: He was senator then. I got a call from Senator Johnson himself; I didn't get it from his secretary. And he said, "I'm giving a luncheon to honor the man of the Congress who will be the first chairman of the space committees. And, in addition to that, we're going to have this sergeant here that they have had in voluntary isolation for"--a very long period of time. It was something just perfectly fascinating, what this man had gone through, on a voluntary basis, for research, toward our space program. Those kind of things they learned a lot of things from, these people and their mental reaction, their physical reaction, and trying to simulate conditions and this kind of thing. "And we're going to have him here." And I said, "Well, how very kind of you. I'd just love to come." And he said, "Well, you come to the Senate office. Come to my office; I'll take you up myself." Just like Lyndon, Mr. Lyndon.

And I went to his office, and I'm one of these people that--unless it's an act of God that I can't do anything about, I'm always five minutes early. I'm never late for an

appointment. I'm just not! I mean, I don't think people should be. I think [if] they make appointments, they should keep them, whether they want to or not. Oh, I mean, you can get into a traffic jam that can--you know, fires break out, or things happen. But I've been very lucky; I've always been able to keep my appointments.

So, I arrived. I had no idea what it was like. Well, he had about 250 men at the luncheon. Maybe not that many, but there were an awful lot of men. Because it was February 1958--I remember that date very well, because I was getting ready for the FAI [*Fédération Aéronautique Internationale*] conference, and raising the money for it and doing this kind of thing.

So, Eisenhower was in office then. Am I right?

F: Yes. He was there until January of 1961.

C: So, I went to his office, and everybody was very cordial. They always are with me; they are--his people are that way. I think a person sets the rapport for the--behavior for their staff. Don't you?

F: Yes.

C: And so, he said, "Miss Jackie, you look mighty pretty this morning!" He was always saying nice, complimentary--and he always, wherever I was, it didn't make any difference, whether there were five thousand in the room, or one hundred in the room. After this incident, of the flight to Mayo's, he would put his arms around me, and kiss me, very tenderly and very lovingly. Not man-and-woman kissing.

F: Yes.

C: It didn't make any difference.



F: Just somebody who had saved his life. (Laughter)

C: Well, I don't--that's what he'd say. But no, only God saves your life. I only saved your career!

I think Lady Bird has a very warm, tender spot in her heart for me.

F: She does indeed.

C: I think she does. I don't see how she could help but have.

So, we went down to this luncheon. And it was--I've never seen so many people at a luncheon. And they had--the only people he seated was myself--I don't think Lady Bird was at the luncheon. I'm almost sure she wasn't.

F: Is this in the Senate, or--?

C: Yes, it was in the Senate—this is the dining room that's used by the vice president, and majority leader, and people like that. It will seat a lot of people.

F: Right.

C: And he seated me on his right, and the Secretary of Defense on his--I mean, he seated me on his left, and the Secretary on his right. And everybody else--he said, "Gentlemen, just find your seats." And I looked down, and lunch consisted of a steak, and salad, and we started right off with the main course. I looked down, and I said, "Lyndon, when did you fall in love with Russia?" He said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Well, that's a map of Russia." The steaks had been cut in the shape of Texas. But they were upside-down, and when you turn the map of Texas upside-down, it looks like Russia! Have you ever tried it?

F: (Laughter) No, I never thought of that.

C: Well, it's the truth, though. You look at it. I mean, it comes down--

F: Yes, I can see that.

C: I mean, it's not identical, but it's enough that you would be fooled. And I knew exactly what he had tried to do. And nobody can have studied maps as much as I have--hundreds of hours--without being very familiar with the shape of states. Unless they're just those square things, you know. But if they have any unusual thing about them—and there aren't but just two or three states that have anything unusual, and Texas is one of them. California is one. You know, we're long, and funny, and peculiar.

F: Right, with that dogleg in there.

C: Yes, we're a peculiar shape on the map. And, of course, Florida, with its peninsula.

And so it's very distinctive. Well, he got up out of his seat, he turned my steak over, and he went down turning these steaks over!

F: (Laughter) I see!

C: This is the truth! There were a lot of people at that luncheon. And they'll verify this. This was another side to him.

And he said, "Jackie tells me here that this steak looks like Russia. It's supposed to look like Texas. Turn it over before you eat it!"

F: (Laughter) That got the luncheon off to a good start!

C: I said to him, "Why in the world did you invite me to this luncheon?" He said, "Because when I learned how to spell 'space,' you taught me." Going back, I guess, to the aviation medicine days. I said, "I've really been that useful to you? In encouraging you, with things that pertain to the"--I think the security of our country. I said, "I believe that air

power is peace power." I had put that on my plane right after the war, when I was racing, and record-breaking.

So it was a very, very stimulating, interesting lunch, very nice lunch. And--so then I didn't see very much of them. I was--I'm trying to think what year I sold my business.

F: Well, [inaudible] in 1962, didn't you?

C: I don't know.

(Interruption)

C: --in 1958, and then in 1959 I chaired the international conference, in Moscow, where we set the rules and regulations, at that conference, for timing man in space. But that really doesn't have anything to do with Mr. Johnson, so I'll lay off of that one. It's a long story.

But I was riding pretty high on the crest in aviation in those days, where all of the various organizations--I was the president of our national aero club, and from that--I gave it up and I became the--was voted the--the year I ran for Congress, in 1956, and was defeated, Lyndon called me on the phone and offered to come and campaign for me. Yes. And I said, "I don't know if it would work or not. Because the Democrats wanted me so badly. They waited upon me. They wanted me to go with their ticket. I'm afraid now, if I lose, I'll always regret that I didn't." And I said, "You and Mr. Rayburn and all of you tried to get me to run on the Democratic ticket. I was a fool. I should have done it, probably, because," I said, "I'm afraid I'm going to lose--to a Hindu." See, I lost to a Hindu, born in Punjab, India. And he was illegally in the country [Saund's biography states that he became a U.S. citizen in 1949]. But he had run out the statute of

limitation--that's when they had one. It's been repealed since then, and there is no statute anymore. It goes on forever, if you're illegally in the country.

F: What was his name?

C: Dalip Singh Saund. And--he was a card-toting Communist. Beat me by seven hundred votes. But I think this is a remarkable thing, that Mr. Johnson would call and offer this. Oh, they felt so badly when I didn't win! They really did. He called me, and the Speaker called me, and--

F: You were one Republican they were rooting for.

C: Yes, they were rooting for me. And I should have run on the Democratic ticket, and I'll always regret that I didn't. But I felt we needed Eisenhower, and we got Eisenhower, and I think he was a great president. I still think so.

F: Incidentally, did you ever hear Eisenhower comment on Johnson?

C: Well, I was going to get to the meeting that they had in our home. See, they had a joint meeting, in February, before he wrote the famous letter--"I don't choose"--or gave the announcement. In March, I think [March 31, 1968]. But they spent two and a half hours in our house. And Floyd and I were the only two people privy to the confidence. That's another story. I haven't gotten to that one yet! We mustn't forget it.

But anyway, I kept seeing them, sporadically, or I would meet them at a party. I didn't stay in Washington very much, and therefore I didn't go to their house anymore, because I was not there long enough. I would go up for specific things, or we would meet at some public goings-on. I had just gotten out of the chair, of being the head of FAI. Or maybe I was still the head. I'd have to look at my own records to be sure.

I was invited to go out to Seattle, Washington, and appear on a program with Mr. [John] Glenn, who had been orbited--Colonel Glenn. And Dr. [John D.] Odegard and I--I've never been able to figure out why they would take an astronaut, just kind of an ordinary woman, and one of the great historians of the country, to get on a program together. That's sort of an odd one. But we had a good time. And that's when Glenn found out that I had put up part of the money, and raised half the money, to document his flight, because I didn't think [Yuri I.] Gagarin had flown. But Gagarin was there. And who arrives? They got their lines all crossed. Vice President Johnson--and Mr. [Nelson] Rockefeller, who was getting ready to run against him, if he could get nominated, on the Republican ticket.

And they had this dinner that night, in the largest room that they had in the city, which was very large. I don't know how many it seated, but I don't think I'd go wrong to say fifteen hundred. A lot of people. And they had the largest podium that I have ever seen on a dais in my life! They had a triple dais. You've seen those triples?

F: Yes, a stair step.

C: Yes. And I was seated to the right of the mayor. Looking from the audience, I would have been to the left, you see, of the hierarchy guy on the other side. And--no. The Vice President was seated to the right, naturally. And then they had put Nelson Rockefeller over on the other side of the podium. So they were trying to separate them.

F: Yes.

C: And then it was the man that was--some important man there, the mayor, I think it was. And then Vice President, and then Glenn, and then myself. I'm not sure of this statement,

but I think I was probably the only woman on the dais that night. But I'm not certain; I'd have to check it out.

But it was a very odd dinner. And when we came in, they started walking all over [to?] Glenn. Well, when the Vice President came in, when everybody was seated, he saw me, and before he did anything else, he came and put his arms around me, and kissed me on both cheeks. And I mean, he puts his arms all the way around you!

F: Yes. (Laughter) He could envelop.

C: And he said, "Wonderful to see you," just whispered it. And that was--and everybody applauded, and they looked, and I became a hero for the evening. When people started to get the autographs, there were two lines. Of course, the Vice President left, and was escorted out by the security people. Glenn said, "What do you do with a thing like this?" I said, "Fame is very short-lived. Probably in ten years from now, nobody will know who orbited first. Except we who are deeply interested in it." And I said, "You're just an idol now. And let the people idolize you. They're entitled to it. It was their money that put you into space. Let them see you, get your signature."

And I said, "What I've always done, when I have done something extraordinary, like winning the Bendix, or"--he said, "You've got a line as long as I have!" I said, "Oh, I always have a line. I'm an old favorite with them." And I said, "I just say that I can do this for ten minutes, and that's all I can do, and do it very quietly, and do what I can, and sign my name as fast as I can, and then say, 'I'm sorry, girls and boys, but I have to go.' Then you don't hurt anyone's feelings. You tried." And then, during the evening, one of these veterans with the caps on--you know how they wear them, a Marine--came up and

said, "We have at the--at our unit"--retired unit, or whatever it was--"a very special gift we want to give to you." And Glenn was trying to kiss him off; he said, "I'll have my aide see you in a little while." By that time he had an aide. I said, "You're dumb! I wouldn't accept a toothpick from any organization unless I knew the organization. No way! Because they're always trying to frame people who are in the press, these subversive organizations." But, I said, "When you know the Marine is all right, and you know the Red Cross, and the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Scouts, and the Camp Fire Girls--when they offer you something, take it!" And I said, "Appreciate it, too!"

That was quite an evening. I later told the Vice President about--what I thought about Gagarin. So then, to carry on about the space program, we had--let's see, it was Bob White--I can't think of the names of the other two men.

(Interruption)

C: I had been studying the profile, and I happened to have been at Edwards Air Force Base on the day that Bob White [Robert Michael White] went to--oh, about--I think it was around 200,000 feet. I mean, it was very high for a human being to go. He went six thousand miles an hour. All of these things should be verified for this record, because I--it can be done. I'm giving round figures, my memory of it.

Anyway, what he did was so extraordinary, you couldn't believe it. I took off in a T-38, and I went up and saw the launch, the drop. And the minute he was launched, I headed back to the field, and landed on the lake bed, waiting for him to land. And he shattered his windshield. I don't know how the man ever got the craft down. And I sat there, and I decided--I had been very much involved with the space program--that these

men had--after General Yeager's Mach 1 flight, which was the all-time breakthrough, that these men actually had made space possible for these people. Well, I had chosen what space was, by accident at the meeting in Moscow. It wasn't very high; it was only 100 kilometers, sixty-two miles. So, I thought, "My God, this man is a superman! This is just wonderful." Now, they should have some special honor. They should have a--astronaut wings. I didn't see any reason why they shouldn't have them. There should be a--establish some criteria for giving it to them.

So I took myself off to Washington. I loved excuses to fly. I tried to always fly a minimum of forty hours a month. See, I logged over fifteen thousand hours. I was only happy when I was in an airplane, completely. So, I went in town, and I had lots of other appointments that I wanted to keep. I also had been on the board of George Washington University for many, many years, about fifteen--fourteen or fifteen.

Well, I was still lying in bed, resting. I had gotten in late the night before, and I was very tired. And I called the Vice President's office. And I got a Mrs. [Evelyn] Lincoln on the phone. And she seemed to know me! And I said--you see, Lyndon and I never had any correspondence. Isn't this peculiar?

F: You just called each other.

C: Call each other? I had a special phone put in for him to call me, when he was in the White House!

F: Yes.

C: Which is true, and, I mean, I might as well record it. But it's--after all, his aides and all the people saw me coming in there continuously. So, might as well record it.



You know, I spent more than fifty hours with him in the last two years he was in office, sitting in his office.

F: Hmm!

C: Oh, yes.

F: They must have it off the record.

C: Well, I think this should be put off the record, the whole thing.

F: Yes. But I mean--

C: I mean, I want even that statement put off the record and closed. But, I don't really care--if Lady Bird wanted to see it, I wouldn't care. Not really. Because--well, I don't see any reason why not, really. What in the hell I'd have to offer to console a president in great trouble I wouldn't know, but I apparently had it!

But anyway, to make a long story short, I called and I said, "I wonder if you'd be kind enough to submit my name to the Vice President, and tell him I will be here for, I think, three days. And I have these appointments that I would hate very badly to not keep, to have to cancel, but naturally, if it suits his convenience, I'll cancel anything. And I'd be deeply appreciative if he could see me for half an hour." She never asked me what I wanted to see him about. She said, "Well, certainly, Miss Cochran. Well, hold on! Maybe I can put him on." I said, "Oh, no, I don't want to bother him." And I--I have a very deep respect for important positions, and busy people. I've said this several times, and I do. A deep regard for it. And I don't like to waste anyone's time. So--she says, "Oh, I'm sure he'd want to talk to you, Miss Cochran." I said, "Well, fine."

And I said, "Mr. Vice President?" I didn't call him Lyndon; I always had before. "I've asked your secretary if I could see you for a few minutes, and I hope it will be possible. I'm going to be here for three days, but I can stay a little longer." He said, "Well, come right on over!" I said, "Well, sir, I'm in bed, I'm not dressed!" He said, "Well, fine! I'll come over." (Laughter) Just kidding! He was just very cute--if you recorded it, it would sound terrible, in a way.

F: Yes, but it--

C: Oh, no, he didn't mean anything by it.

F: No, I know, but--

C: And I said--he says, "Well?" He said, "How fast can you get dressed?" I said, "It doesn't take me very long to get ready." He said, "Well, just come on over. I'll be waiting for you." Well, I thought, my goodness alive, a man just can't be waiting for somebody--I knew he had appointments.

I dressed and I went over. I have never seen so many people in an outer office in my life! I'll bet there were twenty-five out there. Some of them were standing; there weren't chairs enough for them. I walked in; she said, "Can you wait just five minutes? Sit down in my chair." The girl! And she went in, and about two minutes later, a man walked out, and she took me right in. And the same routine, the little embrace, and he said, "My, you're looking wonderful!" And he started talking about his things, and I just let him talk on. Then I said, "Look, sir, Mr. Vice President, I came here to tell *you* something. I want you to do something that's very worthwhile, and I hope you *can* do it and *will* do it, and will believe that--the importance of it, or have it thoroughly

investigated." My word of honor, he said, "Whatever you want me to do, I know, will be honorable, and if it can be done, I'll do it." He had not heard what my request was. I had one other great man say this to me. It was Secretary Douglas [?], where I used his name on the wire.

And I said, "I thank you. Well, this is what I want. One of these men, I wouldn't know if I met him in the street. The other one--I know him very casually. One of them I know very well; I play golf with him. He's a great pilot. I think they should get astronaut wings. The program should be set up to honor anyone who's going to do the same thing on a manned craft. I think it's going to be more--I think it's more difficult for them to do that than to be flown, actually, in a capsule." And I said, "I don't want to bore you with details, but I think they should be given astronaut wings. You're the titular head of space, and I think you could order it." He said, "Of course I can, and I will." I said, "I want these men flown--to be flown to the Capitol. I want you to present it"--[inaudible]--"and set the precedent for this. And I want their wives to be invited with them--these lesser-ranked men." See, they were only about lieutenant colonels, that kind of thing, captains. I said, "They never take their wives anywhere, because they can't. When some nice honor comes to them, their wives never see it, except in photographs." And I said, "When a woman stays home with her small children, while her husband is crashing windshields, fifty miles in the air, it's time something was done for the women, occasionally." He said, "Right you are. Whatever you want, it will be done."

Well, the day that the Vice President was going to present--the night before, they all arrived, the wives and the astronauts and the--because they were going to be

astronauts! I gave a little dinner party, and I invited in the chief of staff of the air force, and--these were air force types. One of them was civilian, I think there was. I'm not even sure of that--we'll have to go back on that record, because it will be there.

I gave a dinner. There was no place in Washington to give a dinner. It was in--I think it was July. Oh, it was hot! July or August; it was right in the middle of the summer. And all the good clubs--I know the F Street Club was closed. The--a great women's club that I belonged to, the Sulgrave Club, was closed. So it had to be July and August, that's when the clubs--had to be one or the other. So there was no place, no place to find--where you would have any privacy and have a dinner. I had about twenty, or maybe twenty-four; about the size of the dinner I gave last night. And they took one of the bars at the Statler Hotel, and closed it to the public that night, and set up my tables and let me have it in there. It was just as cute as could be.

F: Oh, good!

C: Well, I knew the hotel people. At one time, Floyd's company had control of the Statler chain. And I had lived in this fabulous apartment on top of the building--or not on the top, it was next to the top--for four years during the war. It was a fantastic place to live, that Floyd furnished me.

So, they were pretty good to me, and they said, "We'll just close the bar for that day. We don't sell that many drinks anyway." And they closed the bar, and they set up my dinner. So I called Mrs. Johnson and I said I was having this very impromptu, quickly gotten-together dinner, and I guessed it was--I didn't even know if it was proper to ask a vice president and his wife to a little private affair. I said, "I really don't know." But, I

said, "It would be so nice if you could--*could* come." She said, "We are going to the White House, to a dinner, tonight. But we will come early and meet you for drinks." I said, "I've got a sitting room, but it will be kind of crowded. We've been given this room downstairs, in the bar, that's closed to the public. Would you mind coming in there? Because it'll be cooler, and more room." They came and stayed almost an hour.

F: Hmm! That's great.

C: Well, it's just fantastic! And then, the next day, when he started to present the wings--I've forgotten what room it was in, but it was in one of these big rooms that they use for these kinds of things for the vice president. And Dr. [Hugh L.] Dryden and I were at a meeting, together, and we got to running late. He was the one that was late; I wasn't. And we got in, before the ceremony started. I didn't know I was to be on the platform.

F: Yes.

C: Before the presentations were to take place, I started to sit down in a chair, and somebody came up and got Dr. Dryden, put us in a chair up on this little thing, past the Vice President. I got on the platform. The embrace took place--he never saw me! Never once. Didn't matter whether it was two, or two hundred, or two thousand people--he put his arms around me, wherever, whenever he [inaudible].

F: [Inaudible]

C: No, there was something very tender, and very moving about this.

F: Yes, right.

C: I think that he overemphasized what I had done for him. On the other hand, I am convinced that, if he had taken the surgery, no other doctor could have done for him what Gershom Thompson did. So, no, I don't know what it was.

Well, Lady Bird's--Mrs. Johnson is very--you should see a letter that she wrote me. I'll show you--you should have copies of some of these letters for your files, I think. Maybe it would be appropriate to give them to your library. I don't know. You know, my papers are going to the Eisenhower Library, and so [are] Floyd's. And they don't want to be robbed of anything.

F: Right.

C: So, whatever is appropriate, and proper--

F: Might do Xeroxes.

C: I think they should be in there. She wrote me a letter in November, December, and sent me two books. A beautiful letter. It said, "I heard through a mutual friend that you're ill again." Because I had had another pacer [pacemaker] put in, in November.

Let's have a cool drink.

(Interruption)

C: I mean, it would be all right if he were here, but I don't think it's necessary. Because he wasn't involved--as involved with that as I was--as Vi [Strauss Pistell] was with the visit to the Ranch, how it came about, and so forth.

F: Okay, you had this dinner in New York that involved the twelfth year of the Arthritis Foundation--

C: Twentieth.

F: Twentieth.

C: Yes, twentieth anniversary. And people came from thirty states, covering Hawaii.

F: That's May 20, 1968, to get it into the record.

C: Right. And that was also the time that I was going to the White House very, very--I don't mean the White House; the office. Very frequently. It was just almost unreasonable. And I was down on one of my calls, at his request, naturally; you don't go see the President unless he asks you to come. And he said, "Jackie, what's this thing about--this dinner that's being given in Floyd's honor?" I said, "Oh, you mean the Arthritis [Foundation] dinner. Well, you know, he founded it, put up the seed money for it, has worked like hired help for twenty years, and many millions of people have been aided and helped." And I said, "You haven't time to listen to this, but they're just honoring him with a dinner on the twentieth anniversary, in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria. And," I said, "one of the people told me the other day that there would probably be people there from twenty-five or thirty states." So they were finally there from thirty states, and as far away as Hawaii, just purely to pay their respects. And he said, "Is it a fundraising dinner?" And I said, "I'm sure it isn't. I haven't asked anyone, but I don't--I don't know what the price of the tickets would be, or anything like that. So I really--I'm not sure I can answer it. But I don't think it's fundraising." "Well," he said, "I want to know if it is." And he said, "Because I'm going to go, if it's not fundraising. If it's fundraising, I can't go." No president could show up to a fundraising event. I guess they never have, unless it would be for war bonds, or something.

F: Right.

C: So, he said, "You let Miss"--I've forgotten what the secretary's name was.

F: Juanita Roberts?

C: I don't know. You see, I usually contacted either [Jim] Jones or [Marvin] Watson--

F: Jim Jones?

C: Yes--or another guy, I can't think of his name. And also Operator 18 was the long-distance operator for the White House. And I sort of was out of the secretarial area; I was at a little higher echelon, on being phoned and phoning back and this kind of thing.

And he said, "Let one of the boys know." That was a favorite expression of his--or I think it was. Is that right or wrong, among friends?

F: Yes, that's right.

C: All right. So, I said, "Well, I will." Well, I was back down there in a few days, at his request. And, in the meantime, I'm not sure whether I phoned or not, but I said--it was quite a little distance away, you know, a couple of weeks or something. And I said, "The dinner is not fundraising. In fact, they're probably going to lose money on it. I think it's twenty-five dollars a plate, or something." [Inaudible] And I said, "They have an orchestra, and they're putting on quite a fanfare and quite a show." He said, "Well, unless something unbelievable happens, Lady Bird and I will be there." And he said, "You go tell Floyd I'm coming. And you can tell three other people, no more. I don't want any fanfare made out of it. But we're going to be there." I said, "Well, I'll tell you what, Mr. President," and he said, "Will you please, please stop calling me Mr. President?" He said, "I'm Lyndon to you, I will always be Lyndon to you." I said, "But you are the president! I'll call you 'it'!"



F: Yes. (Laughter)

C: It was a funny little argument we had. I said, "You're our president, and I have to call you Mr. President." And I said, "If it displeases you, then I'll try to refrain from using the word." And I just did. I didn't call him anything, if I could avoid it. And our meetings were such--it was usually he wanted me to read something, or he wanted to talk. Just wanted to talk--had a lot to do with it.

So I said, "I'll tell you, I'm not going to tell anyone but Floyd. And then there won't be a lot of disappointed people at the last minute if you can't come, or if you're not feeling well, or the pressure is too heavy and too hot here on you, and this kind of thing."

So, Floyd said, "You call him up and tell him he has no business to do that. The president of the United States should not waste his time on such an unimportant thing as a dinner in--in a common citizen's honor." I said, "You're not a common citizen. I don't know of anyone, including the President, who's done more for this country than you have, and young people, and for education, and for medicine, and everything else." And I said, "The heck with him. He owes it to you anyway, and I'll do nothing of the sort." I said, "If you don't want him to come, you call him up and tell him so." And he said, "I think it's ridiculous! I think it's ridiculous, you running down there all the time!"

(Laughter)

C: "And he's always talking with you about things." He said, "It must be a waste of time. What can you do for the country at that level?" I said, "I have no idea. Ask him."

As a matter of fact, it started way back, before he was elected, too, as president, in his own right. Because I remember the dinner that we were having, and--for the navy. I

worked for all the services. And I was co-chairman, with Jocko--Admiral Jocko [J. J. Clark]--for the Navy League--not the Navy League, it's the welfare organization of the navy. And I got [Francis Joseph] Cardinal Spellman to come to it. And they showed the picture of a man and his flying machine, and--about right at dinnertime I was--a call that said, "Would you be at the White House at eight o'clock in the morning?" Well, it was true, you just don't ask questions! You go!

F: Yes.

C: And so it--it started back a long time. I even wish I knew the dates of the--I didn't keep a--I probably have it in one of my calendars, my little personal calendar, that I had gone to Washington, and--I wasn't too public about it.

F: Did you tend always to fly your own plane up there, or did you--?

C: Not always. Sometimes I took an airliner; sometimes I flew my own plane. If I had time, I flew my own. But I had to be in Washington fairly often anyway, because of my university work, with George Washington University, and--

F: You were on their board.

C: Yes, I've been on their board of trustees for about fifteen years, I think it is. Maybe thirteen years. Don't hold me to it.

And then I was on the board of Northeast Airlines for twenty-six years, which took me to Boston. I'd come into Washington; sometimes I'd go in there and mosey around to help them a little bit.

(Interruption)

C: --that any time I was in Washington I was supposed to telephone. It's very awkward to telephone the president of the United States and say, "I'm in Washington!" (Laughter)

F: Yes, you feel like that's almost presumptuous, isn't it?

C: Well, it's just dumb!

F: Yes.

C: And I still don't know--I think the man trusted me in the first place, and he--you see, he's not the first man I've been a sounding board for. But no one that important. I've been a sounding board for General Arnold. I was a--

F: Must have been one for General [Hoyt] Vandenberg.

C: No, Van and I argued a lot. I worked a lot for Van. But I think I was very useful to Arnold during World War II, primarily as a sounding board. I've been a sounding board for Symington, to some extent. I think Symington has told me things he's probably never told anybody else.

So, it's not the only man that I've had this very peculiar relation with, which is very unusual. And at no time, not even remotely, based on man and woman.

F: Yes.

C: So, anyway, I was back down there, and--I'm sorry I get to rambling now, and mucking things up a little bit.

F: No. I know.

C: So, I said, "Floyd doesn't think that you should come to this dinner, that it would be a gross waste of your valuable time, and the time you need to give to our nation. He's

honored and he's pleased, but," I said, "he really feels that way about it. And I avoided saying, Mr. President."

F: Yes.

C: He said, "What you and Floyd have done for me I can never repay. And this is the one opportunity that's ever presented itself to show my deep respect and affection for a great man."

And I said, "Well, I agree, he's a great man, and you know how deeply I love Floyd." And I said, "I think it's wonderful you're coming, and I hope you do come. And you can tell Floyd I said that." I said, "I certainly wouldn't have asked you to come, and I was amazed you got an invitation." "Oh," he said, "I get an invitation to everyone's fundraising dinner and everything that goes on!" "But," I said, "how did the invitation reach you?" "Well," he said, "because my staff knows that I'm very close with you, and you're Mrs. Odlum, actually. It's just--it would be abnormal if it didn't reach me." Which I guess is true.

I said, "Well, I didn't realize I rated that high around the place. Thank you very much." He said, "I'll tell you how high you rate." The time, I think, before the White House was burned--now, this part of the story I'm not--you can get as a historian--but at some time, with some of the early presidents, there was a form of patronage where--that the president either lunched--I guess he lunched in public, on a gallery. And these cards, I have one--he gave out two of those. I don't know who got the other one. Do you know?

F: No. I don't know what you're talking about, Jackie.

C: It's a card, in there on that table. I said, "I'll talk to you about it."

F: Oh, yes. On the--the gallery.

C: It's undated. It is undated, it is not limited, although there's a place for all these things.

(Interruption)

F: This card.

C: He said the President handed this out as a form of patronage. And on certain days of the week, it was announced that he would be sitting on the gallery, eating, having his dinner, which they probably had in the middle of the day, in those days. And the people who had these cards could pass along this gallery, and talk with the President. See the President, spend a couple of minutes with him. And the card was given out for a limited period. And he said, "This card is for as long as I occupy the White House."

F: How nice.

C: "And it will let you into every gate, every gallery, that I am entitled to, including the Senate." I never used it. Never.

And I said, "You know, you amaze me sometimes. The very wonderful small things you do to show your friendship." So I went back to New York, at that time. I had come from California, again, to see him. The dinner wasn't on yet. And I said to Floyd, "He's definitely coming." So one of the boys will call, or one of the men--probably secretaries or assistants, or whatever you call them, that stay around the President--call and say, "Mrs. Cochran, the President and Mrs. Johnson are really coming up for this--this dinner." And I said, "Well, I'll wait till the last day." It's very simple to add a president to a head table, and his wife! (Laughter) You shove everybody aside, if need be. I said, "I'm just not going to tell anyone till the last minute."

F: A lot of people coming who didn't know what they were going to get!

C: That's right.

So, about--I think the day before, Dr. [Richard] Freyberg--one of the greatest specialists in arthritis diseases, I think, in the country. He was a very great man, a wonderful man, and he had helped Floyd in forming and making an organization structure which is the most unique of any institution, by the way, in the world--I mean, in America, of this type. Because, I think, 65 per cent of the money that is collected, say, in Indio, where we're sitting, will be left here to aid the people that are ill with the disease. And the rest of it is taken in for research, this type of thing. And doctors are very much involved, they're on the board, and--it's very well done. They've had the least overhead for their--what they do, than, I think, almost any of these national organizations. Do-good organizations, I call them.

F: Yes.

C: So, I said to Dr. Freyberg, "You know, the President is coming." And he looked so completely flabbergasted and startled.

F: (Laughter) I'll bet he did!

C: I'm not sure he'd ever met a president before. Someday I'm going to ask him. He's out here now.

And I said, "And his lady. They are going to be here. And I want you and Floyd to tell me whom I should tell. He will only permit four or five people to come down to the door and meet him as he gets out of the car. It's easier on his"--now, you see, this is another--I told you he had great courage, to accept this tremendous pain. He could accept

anything for what he was trying to do, when he was ill. I've witnessed that. I've never seen greater physical courage, than when he was so ill, on the trip to Mayo's. He was thoughtful of his secret service people. He didn't push them around, like--or thoughtless of them, like a lot of these people. And I've been around other presidents, you know. We had an ex-president for seven years in our home! And--his office was there, where he spent most of his time--let's put it that way.

F: Yes.

C: More than he spent in his own home, unless he was asleep. Waking hours.

So, I said, "Whom should we choose? I think I almost have to go down. Floyd can't, because you know how infirm Floyd is."

F: He had already been slowed down, by then?

C: Oh, he's been slowed down for twenty-five years. He ran his businesses out of wheelchairs. We just, by sheer grit, kept--you know, that man walks on raw bone on his feet! He doesn't have any cartilage on his feet. He's walking on bone and skin when he starts to hobble. And they pain him, and it hurts. It's a terrible disease; it's more frightening than any disease I know of.

So--oh, sure, for instance, he's taken so much cortisone that, that night, people shaking hands, and doing that—with their thumb on your hand? He was bleeding. And Dr. Freyberg had to go out and bandage it up, before the evening was over. You see, there were probably two thousand people there that evening, because the ballroom holds--it was [inaudible] from the ceiling.

F: And probably most of them would have liked to have shaken his hand.

C: And most of them, I think, did.

(Laughter)

C: So, I said, "I think this Mr. Faircloth [?] seems to be such a fine person and has worked so hard, and this man from California"--I can't think of his name, who was pretty pushy; I'm glad I can't think of his name now. "But, nevertheless, he means well. I think we should just choose the people that have been really special, super." And Dr. Freyberg said, "Well, you know what I wish you'd do? I wish *you* would choose the people. That lets all of us out."

I said, "He didn't come here for me; he came here to honor Floyd." And Floyd said, "Well, I suspect that Jackie's fine hand was in it." And I said, "No, I had nothing to do with it. I told you how it happened." And then I repeated the story to Dr. Freyberg, exactly how it came about. I said I was in the President's office, and he asked me about it, and he asked me about it again. I didn't say why I was there, or what took place. And Dr. Freyberg looked at me so funny. "Well, did you run down to the President's office every five days?" Well, practically, yes!

F: (Laughter) Just about!

C: Just about. I didn't miss too many weeks! For a long period.

So, I said, "He's going to be here, unless something happens." They called me at one o'clock. See, the dinner was on, say, for seven in the evening; I don't remember the exact time--the reception. And they called me again at two o'clock, at three o'clock, at four o'clock.

F: "They" being the White House?



C: Yes. Either Jones, or one of the men in the White House. Funny, I never had a woman call me, never. It was always one of these men that would call me.

So, I said, "Now we have to tell them." So we went to the paid director--who was also a doctor; I don't remember his name. In fact, I wasn't too enamored with him, one way or another; he was very dictatorial. I don't like people like that. So, I said, "Five people--four people besides myself may go down to the door, and greet the President of the United States and his wife. He's coming here this evening. Would you see to it that proper arrangements are made at the table?" And there have to be certain chairs to put so-and-so in. They didn't send any Secret Service men, obviously, prior to it. He did that, also, so beautifully, that although secret service men had been in the hotel that afternoon, and the manager of the hotel knew it, and they knew the President was coming--I don't know whether they knew what he was coming to, but I guess they had to know that it was for that particular dinner in the ballroom. But, they certainly had, I'm sure, inspected the place, because there was no obvious precautions about it--like some of the presidents, where they make all this fanfare, and they send a forward guard, and all that foolishness. Which is not foolishness, it's real, I mean, it has to be done.

So I don't remember, to this day, who went down. Oh, I think I said, "I insist that Dr. Freyberg be one of these people. And the other three--you can go choose them, I don't care." So down to the two men that I had recommended go to the door--they were left out of the pattern anyway.

F: I see. (Laughter)

C: [Inaudible] And down to the door. We were standing there waiting, as sirens screamed up. Lady Bird got out of the car, and Lyndon helped her out--I mean, he helped her out; nobody else did. And I walked out the door--I was sort of in the background, and she put her arms around me, and he put his arms around me, and--right out on the sidewalk. And there was a little love feast. And then they had a secret way of taking him through halls, from the seventh floor--I thought it was kind of foolishness. And we went to the ballroom, and everyone was assembled.

And I guess he waited for twenty minutes or so, till everyone was seated. And the band struck up the--

F: "Hail to the Chief."

C: Yes, "Hail to the Chief."

F: Must have been a surprised group!

C: It was just the most startling, it was the most moving thing you have ever seen in your life! All the people were looking, they started to come to their feet, and he came in. Lady Bird was--she's never looked prettier in her life than she did that evening. She's a great lady, you know. And she has a presence about her, a dignity, that's just marvelous. And she was beautifully gowned. And he just looked so wonderful that evening, he looked as though he didn't have a care in the world, and--"I feel good, and I'm happy, and I'm pleased to be doing what I'm doing." The only way he could express it. And the people started to applaud, and they started--these are well-mannered people. Most of them are well-heeled people, if you know what I mean!

F: Right.

C: And they got to stomping. They were so excited, having the President there. And he just let it go on and on, just stood there and laughed, and thoroughly enjoyed himself. And finally he held up his hand, and he sat down. And nobody sort of knew what to do. I went over--and they were seated side by side, naturally, between the president of the outfit and Floyd, is what it amounted to. Or maybe Floyd was between the two of them--we'll have to look on the dais and see whether I'm telling the truth or not, from memory.

F: This must have been a real emotional moment for Floyd.

C: Oh, it was incredible. He couldn't even keep his tears back! And I went over, and--went over the back of a chair, and out of view--I hate that kind of thing--and I said, "Do you plan to stay for dinner? Nobody asked. Are you going to make your speech—are you going to make a speech? If you're going to make a speech, when do you want to make it?" And I avoided saying, "Mr. President." I don't think I ever called him "Mr. President" again, actually.

He says, "We'll stay for dinner, and I'll make a speech." So they brought them a drink, to the table, and asked them if they wanted anything--it was so beautifully handled by the waiters, and so beautifully handled by everyone. I know that they each wanted some kind of a drink, and they brought it very carefully, and put it down. I was just watching everything, naturally. And they ate a very hearty meal. And it was a fine dinner, beautifully done.

And he got up, and he made the finest speech that I have ever listened to. I'm sure you have it in the Library, don't you?

F: Yes.

C: And he delivered it well, and the warmth and the ovation that he received from the room was incredible. He could have been elected ten times president, if that had been the total voting population, that night. It was just marvelous. Beautifully done.

They stayed until everything was finished. They waited for the other speeches. Now, can you believe this?

F: (Laughter) Should have made a few speakers a little nervous!

C: No, they didn't have much--they didn't plan to. I would say the other speeches amounted to less than ten minutes.

F: Yes, very short.

C: Oh, just nothing. I mean, some of the important people that had done so much for the organization said how thrilled they were to honor Mr. Odlum, and, of course, they were doubly honored to have the President and the First Lady with us, and--no, there were not any speeches. It was supposed to be just an honor night, and I'm sure that they had a lot of things planned that didn't go off that night, because it had already been done by the President. And his speech was quite long; I think it was almost twenty minutes. I don't know who prepared it, and I don't know whether he had anything to do with it, but it was beautifully done. And they had done some really fine research on the Arthritis Foundation itself.

And they listened to all of that, and when the music started, they got up, and they bid good night to Floyd, and he went down the line, the part that was in his way going out, and shook hands with every person, and so did she. Just--they didn't do the whole

table, they did what was in front of them. I left the table, and nobody else knew what to do. And I grabbed Dick Freyberg and I said, "Come down with me." That's Dr. Freyberg. And we went down to the door, and I thought it was just as well that nobody else go. You know, people don't know what to do in these circumstances!

F: No, they don't. Most of them have no prior experience, and they're--they just kind of stay frozen.

C: You see, he was very fond of Floyd.

F: Yes.

C: But it was an amazing thing to happen!

F: Yes.

C: Because he wasn't campaigning for anything.

Well, that's the end of that story.

F: That's a good story. He flew back to Washington that night?

C: Oh, I guess they went back. I don't know where they went. I didn't ask, and I assumed they did. They left the hotel, and that was the last--I went all the way down the car with them. We had a little love feast on the sidewalk, and that was it.

F: What a night.

Where did--did Floyd ever actually work for him in any way?

C: No. You see, Floyd really was a Democrat at heart, I think. But I know he's made contributions to Lyndon's campaigns. But these are perfectly legal--

F: Yes.

C: --things to do, when you're interested in a good man, and--you see, I think he was a very, very fine public servant. I don't know--I mean, they talk about all this vote [?] mess, I mean, this is public knowledge. But the thing I don't understand is--I just don't think this man was ever dishonest. I don't think he ever took any handouts from people, or took money for himself, that he shouldn't have taken. I don't think he did. Now, this--I may be biased. But I don't think those kinds of things meant that much to him.

Now, I don't know about this Ranch. Did he inherit that Ranch? I'll ask you a question too.

F: No, he went back and bought it. It had been the old place and had gone out of the family. And so then he--when he began to get a little money ahead, he went back and bought back into it.

C: You see, I stayed at the Ranch, one night. And there was certainly no large amount of money that had been spent on fixing it up.

F: Yes. It was very--

C: Very modest, very down-to-earth.

F: He took any number of foreign visitors out there, and they were always surprised at the fact that it was a nice, comfortable home, where people lived, you know, rather than a--

C: Instead of--sort of an added-onto, like--oh, I don't know, maybe another room for two more children, and--

F: Yes, kind of like a lot of those old New England houses where, when the family got a little bigger, they--

C: Put up another room.

F: --stuck something down on the end. Right.

C: And I never saw any evidence of any great government money being expended on it, anyplace. Did you?

F: Only in what they had in the way of runways, and that kind of thing.

C: Well, I don't--they have to do that for presidents!

F: Yes, right. But, I mean, that's the only thing. But I never saw any evidence of their personal--

C: Oh, as a matter of fact, you should see the elaborate things they do for an ex-president! Don't forget, I was exposed to it for seven years!

F: Yes, I can imagine. And I know some of them.

C: Well, General Eisenhower got a toy! They had a helicopter sitting out there on our croquet court, waiting for him. Or it would move over to the--I guess somewhere near Eldorado, I don't know whether it parked over there. I'm a member there, but I've never asked. But I know that on two or three occasions, we had a helicopter sitting outside. I forgot to tell John that.

And if he just wasn't feeling well, there was just somebody at beck and call. It was a tremendous expense to the taxpayer. They had--I don't know, but my ballpark guess is they had six or seven Secret Service men. And there were always two wherever he was, and on duty. So they'd have had to have about eight, or maybe more.

[Inaudible] People would come out there, the army would come out and put in all these telephones--after he was just an ex-president!--and lay on all of these things every fall, before he came out. And the thing that was so darn funny--I said, "Well, nobody's

going to use these buildings through the summer. Why don't you leave all these things?"

They would come and take them all out! (Laughter) And then, in the fall, reinstall them.

Now, can you answer that?

F: Come back and--fly back and forth across the country.

C: I don't know what the devil they did with it. But they put all of these telephones in, they would put in all of these lines, and all of this foolishness, special lights, and all of these things, every fall, and take them down. They were afraid I'd use them during the summer, I guess! (Laughter) And I wasn't even there!

Oh, Dr. Frantz, I've had a great life, with great people, you know. It's just been--

(Interruption)

F: You played host to a president and a former president out here, one time? Both Eisenhower and Johnson?

C: Well, you know, Dr. Frantz, this is something I would love to have verified, and you, being a great historian--I'll give you a little chore, now, since you're taking my time--with a feeling of great honor on my part. But, anyway, I think this might perhaps be the first time that an ex-president of the Republican Party [and] a reigning president from the Democratic Party held a conference in a private home, and permitted the couple who owned the home to sit present during the conference! I don't think this has ever happened before. Do you?

F: I can't pull up an example, quickly, if it ever happened.

C: Well, I think it might be very difficult to find. And I'm usually out playing golf on Sunday. I had been working very hard all that week; I've forgotten what I was doing. But



whatever it was, I had been at it pretty hard. And I was exhausted over something, which--I think I was kind of bored and tired because I have worked so hard all my life.

F: You don't let it stop you.

C: Well, not too much.

F: [Inaudible] This was February 18, 1968?--date of the conference?

C: So I said to the housekeeper--I didn't have this wonderful Mrs. Strauss with me, as the hostess, any longer. I had this housekeeper that I didn't like very much. She was a Scotswoman, and facetious, and pushy, and aggravating, and annoying. I said, "Mr. Odlum is going to have milk toast for dinner. I'm going to have maybe a scrambled egg or something. And you can stay here and answer the phone"--because our office was closed, naturally, on a Sunday, and the switchboard was closed. And I was told by Rusty that the General would be coming over that weekend, that he had a distinguished visitor--I didn't even know who it was. We saw in this--and Saturday and Sunday, Floyd and I decided we would just spend it alone, with no houseguest--now, this was the rarest thing in the world. I'll bet in our total married life, that there hasn't been somebody in our home, a guest, even as you're a guest now--somebody, or something going on. And for us to get two days--and there were some things I wanted to talk to him about, and I had just returned from some kind of a trip, I think. Anyway, I was dirty, and my hair was dirty, and I was feeling kind of miserable. To me, this is a part of the story--to make any sense [for] you--to tell that part.

But, I said, "Now, I'm going to stay in bed Sunday quite a long time, and I'm going to catch up with some of my reading." I love to read in bed. We didn't expect anybody to

come to the ranch. And we were out, to everyone, unless it was somebody we had to talk to. When, lo and behold, the phone rang, and I--the housekeeper, whose name I can't even remember, she came trotting into my bedroom, and she said, "General Eisenhower is on the telephone." I said, "Oh, no, he's not on the telephone, he's away, I think, this weekend." We had seen that Johnson, President Johnson, was at [Camp] Pendleton, welcoming some people off, or back, or something, that Friday, and we assumed that he was going to come over and call on Eisenhower. But we didn't expect to get involved in it.

And I picked up the phone. It was one of the Secret Service men. He was calling for the President--that's what he said--for the General. No--it was for the President!

F: For the President!

C: Yes. And he said--but it was one of General Eisenhower's Secret Service men, not one of Mr. Johnson's.

F: Probably even then, you halfway thought it was General Eisenhower.

C: Yes. And he said, "I'm calling for the President, Miss Cochran." He said, "He and General Eisenhower want to know if it would be convenient for you and Mr. Odium to receive them over at your house." I said, "Oh, Lord! How fast?" And he said, "Well, I don't know, they may be over in an hour." (Laughter)

I said, "I'm in bed, with grease in my hair, and just not in a physical condition to receive anyone!" I said, "Floyd can get a move on himself more easily than I can. And of course they are welcome in our home, and I'll just do the best I can. But," I said, "Jeepers! Can't you do something to hold them off, for just a couple of hours?" "Well,"

he said, "they may just decide to go play golf. They're trying to decide. They just finished lunch." He said, "We'll call you right back." And this was one of the nicer of the Secret Service men that came around there all the time.

This may sound funny to you--I never got all those people's names that were around our place for seven years. I was just indifferent to it! Not indifferent, [but] not snoop about who was there, and what they were there for. I gave him privacy. The only thing that I had--

F: You didn't try to know everything that was going on.

C: No, I didn't have any interest in it. That was with Eisenhower, I mean.

So, I said, "Well, please, in fact, you can get them playing cards. Anything! Just hold them." And I just ran, and started washing my hair, and, fortunately, it's curly, and I don't have to do too much. I can just dry it, and put a headband on, and let it go that way if I want to. And I cleaned up, and I showered, and I got a dress on, and said to the housekeeper, "Get some fresh dates to put out," and do a few things. Well, she was hell-bent and determined and did get into the picture, on their arrival. It's in there on the wall.

F: Yes. (Laughter)

C: I never gave her one, either.

F: She was going to have her moment in history, huh?

C: She's--no question about it.

So, they were about two and a half hours before they came. It was one of the kind of days in the desert where the temperature was about seventy-four degrees, or seventy-

five, not a breath of air, and just fresh and beautiful, and a high-pressure area--you could see for miles. It was just lovely.

And so they called and said, "They're on their way." I said, "Well, for goodness' sakes, tell them to come to the front door. Everybody comes to our back door. And I don't want the President of the United States coming to my back door anymore. The ex-President can do it, but not the President!"

F: Yes. Johnson had never been to see you before?

C: No, he had never been in our home in--now he had been, in New York. In fact, they stayed with us, I know, one night in New York, as I recall. Some big [inaudible] or something was going on, I don't know; I didn't pay much attention to it. I guess he was in the Congress then. I told you there was this off-and-on social contact, all the time, very pleasant, but not a regular thing.

So, there was a lot of steps to walk up at that front gate, but they were very shallow. But it was a beautiful entrance. You saw it, earlier today.

F: Yes.

C: That's the same entrance that was there before. From the front--so, the cars pulled up, and there was one car that the General--the General's car, General Eisenhower's car. The Johnsons were in there together. And there were two Secret Service cars. The General's Secret Service men was in one, and Johnson's were in the other. [Inaudible]

And I ran down the steps, and General Eisenhower still had his golf shoes on. He took his shoes off, and came up in his socks!

F: (Laughter)

End of Interview I