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CARTER PRESIDENCY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES KIRBO

January 5, 1983

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YOUNG: We are very grateful to Mr. Kirbo for giving us this time. I'm glad it turned out that we're able to talk to you after we've talked to so many others. We're a little bit more educated than we were at the beginning about some of the puzzles of the Carter Presidency. I talked with Mr. Kirbo a little while before the meeting to inform him of the way we proceed. It's informal, and as we all know, it's off the record. All of the people here have participated in a number of other sessions, so we're well aware of the need for that kind of confidentiality and candidness that the off-the-record nature of the session makes possible and requires.

I'd like to start out, after any preliminary observations you might want to make, perhaps somewhat historically about the Carter Presidency and about Carter as a President-to-be, and then run through the development of his administration to the end. I'd love to have you just make any observations, if you are so inclined, at the beginning. Otherwise, we can start out with some questions.

KIRBO: I didn't know Jimmy. I got to know him some time in 1962. He had a cousin named Don Carter who later was an editor of a Macon paper, and at that time he was around 19. He was in college with me at the same time. But I moved up here from Bainbridge, which is down near Tallahassee, near the Florida line, south of Plains. I was familiar with all of that area. I had a lot of practice all over that section. Some of it was during an election contest. That was back when they didn't use the secret ballot. It had a lot of flaws, but it had one good thing about it: You could go into the box and find your ballot, and if somebody had committed a fraud, you could catch it.

Shortly after I was here, I joined a firm. A Superior Court judge down in Americus had an election contest and got me to go around and represent him, and we were successful. Then Jimmy ran for the Senate, and he got into a different type of thing. It was just absolute fraud—attempting to switch the ballots. They would print the ballots and hold them and swap them. That's the way they operated. Don called me and said Jimmy wanted me to represent him. I didn't really want to get into it, and I decided not to. Then somebody got Griffin Bell to talk with me. Anyway, the firm thought I ought to go down there, so I did get in it.

That's when I first got to know Jimmy. I got to know his family. After it was all over, for various reasons I felt like I had gotten to know an unusual person. He was a person who exuded more

confidence and consequence than anybody I had ever known. It wasn't a reasoned thing, just sort of a gut feeling I had. He was simple, but then he was also sophisticated. The family set -up they had—I had never seen a family work together the way they worked, and yet they lived very simply. They had a lot of nice things, but he was tight and very careful with his money.

I knew afterwards it was really a stroke of luck that we had won. Jimmy always figures things out, but the truth of the matter is—I told him he didn't have much of a chance, that they more than likely had put fresh ballots in there, the exact number that they withdrew—and unless there was some flaw in the ballots he could detect, we didn't have a chance. When we opened up the ballot box, I nearly fainted. They had both in there. The ones they had put in there—I think there were 131 too many ballots, and the fraudulent ones were all voted the same way. And even with that we had difficulty with the judge, because the rule he had always gone by (and most judges go by) is that you go in the ballot box, and the guy who has the most votes is the fellow who wins. Anyway, it ended up in our favor.

There was a good deal more to it. After you get that, you've got a time element to get the certification changed. You have to go through the party and all that sort of thing. After we got the Secretary of State to certify one night, the election was going to be a day and a half later, and Jimmy's name was not on the ballot. It had to be changed. So I called Jimmy and told him. He had some stamps printed to take to each Court of Ordinary. He said, "I've already got all of that set up. I'm just waiting to hear from you." He had it organized to a "T," and I would say at about 10:00 the next morning every one of the ballots had been changed. But from then on, I would just run into him every now and then. He was in the Senate, and he contacted me once or twice on some legislation.

In '65 or '66, he came in and wanted to run for Governor. One of the leading candidates had had a heart attack or something. Jimmy was running for Congress, and then he switched over to the Governor's race. Out of the entire firm, I got two other lawyers to go in with me. We were some of the few in Atlanta who supported him initially. He was a great campaigner, but that's another story. I was really impressed with him. I knew when I watched him he was going to be elected to office sometime. He came within a hair of getting elected that time. Nobody knew him, but he was organized to a "T." He was defeated, but he handled himself very well. There were two computers. WSB had one, and the other station had one. One of them showed Jimmy in the runoff, and the other showed him out. It went on until about 4:00 the next afternoon when he was finally out of it. But then and in his later campaign for Governor, I got the feeling he would go further. He was so well organized.

He had a friend named Ford Spinks, a senator from Tifton whom I tried to get to support Jimmy. He was a realist and a politician and didn't want to get tangled up with anybody who couldn't get elected. So I told him to just go with him and make up his own mind about that. Jimmy went down there, picked Ford up, and took him around. He has a little file that he carried with him. He would leave home, his wife would fix his lunch, and he would go to small towns two or three times a week to speak to the Rotary, Lions Club, or anything that would listen to him.

Before he would get to the town, he would stop outside and eat his lunch. He would get out his files and see what jokes he had told and the subjects he had spoken on in that city. It was a little

more detailed than that. Ford called me up after he got back and he said, "All right, he's got me now. Anybody who would go to all that trouble, I believe, is going to get elected." Jimmy could talk to most of his customers. Most of his friends were farmers, peanut farmers, and agribusiness people, all of them sensitive to the race situation, and it was pretty sharp then. He was the only fellow I knew who could talk to them and tell them they were wrong, that he disagreed with them, and that they were going to have to adjust in part on a religious basis. But they wouldn't get mad at him. If anybody else had talked the way he talked, they would have told him to go to hell, but he had a way of dealing with them. He didn't make any bones about it.

I don't think anybody running for Governor in Georgia had ever really campaigned in the black community. He didn't have a black leader for him or anything like a black leader except one or two sort of jackleg preachers and a guy named Horace Tate who was an educator, a substantial man. But over the objections of some of our staff, he would go right to all the black beer joints and everything, shaking hands. The TV followed, and they would show it on TV. All the TV stations and newspapers were against him. They showed all that stuff, and as it turned out, it didn't hurt him at all. The blacks didn't vote for him the first go-round, but from then on they were with him.

I had an interest myself in seeing a lot of things done that Jimmy also wanted to do, and I concluded that I wasn't suited to be a successful politician. I knew in my own mind—although I didn't discuss it with him—that he had ambition higher than just being Governor. And after a while, I felt he was capable of being President and probably capable of being elected. He knew more about more subjects than anybody I ever knew, and he wouldn't pretend that he knew a subject like most of us do. At least would disclose if he didn't know.

If he was interested in a subject, he would learn all there was to know about it. That's a habit and a policy he continued while he was President. It slowed him down some, but he seldom agreed to anything that he didn't think he understood or had access to. He knew how to find information, even when he was living at Plains. He knew people all over the country. How he got to know all of them, I don't know. In the religious field and all other fields—most any subject he wanted to get more information on, he could get on the telephone and develop it.

That's the way he got tangled up with [Stuart] Eizenstat. Eizenstat was a well-informed, studious, research-type person, and further in our relationship Eizenstat appeared—I don't know just when, but he developed the issues. Jimmy determined what issues he was interested in, and Jimmy would either give him the names or Eizenstat would get the names of people or the person who was supposed to know more about it than anyone else in the country. Then he would come up with a paper on the thing.

While he was Governor, most of my clients were either conservative businessmen or Republicans, but they all supported Carl Sanders, who was the former Governor and a good Governor. He was out of the business community. They were accustomed to dealing with the Governor when they would go over there and say, "We've decided we ought to do thus and so," without explaining or going into any detail about it.

The first time they went over to see Carter, he began to ask them questions about whether it was in the interest of the state to do it and that sort of thing, how they would pay for it, etc. They had a little problem. It really angered them. But after a while, they learned that they could sell him on something that was justified, and they would get prepared and go over there. He generally would try to find out what the purpose of the meeting was and would be prepared. I know I had a client who owned a lot of land in Savannah River and wanted to mine it. I established a policy with him when he was Governor that any time I had an interest in something I would tell him. Then I could get out of it.

They wanted me to arrange a conference with him, so he asked me to get up all the data for him, what they wanted to do, and all that sort of stuff. I didn't read the stuff myself. I gave it to him. They came over to see him, and he read the thing, and he told them he didn't believe while he was Governor there would be any kind of development, whatever they did. They were displeased about it, but they told me that was the first time they had talked with anybody on a subject like that who knew what he was talking about. They disagreed with him, but they didn't want to be heard anymore if they thought he understood it.

I had developed a relationship with him during those times based mainly on memoranda. If I had anything I wanted to tell him, advice I wanted to give him, I would hastily dictate a little memo and send it to him. Most of it was political advice. It continued until sometime during the campaign for the Presidency. One of the problems you have with the campaign is that everyone wants to be with the candidate all the time. People who are anxious for him to succeed understand. You could talk to them and explain that to them, and they would leave him alone except when necessary. But there were a lot of them who never got the message.

I spent less time with him, actually, than most. I spent most of my time with staff. He had a habit that continues to this day. When you send him a memo or paper, he goes through it, and he writes in the margin and comments on it and usually sends you a copy of that. But I learned that he was ambitious and determined to get to the top of the political structure. He was absolutely free from corruption. There wasn't any way you could get him to try to profit. He wouldn't permit anybody around him to cheat. He had a policy that I didn't like, of being open with everything. If he had a problem or scandal of some type, he would just lay it out. I spent about half of my time patching up holes that were created by this openness. A lot of times, it served no purpose and was nonproductive. It helped nobody, but that was his policy.

As far as fiscal matters are concerned, he is as conservative as anybody in a sound way. He doesn't talk about it like [Ronald] Reagan does all the time; it's just a part of him. To spend a dollar, he tries to see if he can get something for 95 cents and keep a nickel of it. At the same time, he's compassionate and wants to help people whether they appear to deserve it or not. He also understands something that many people don't that is purely economic: to educate people and to correct the best you can their shortcomings in terms of health and diet and whatever their problems are.

But I decided in my own mind that it would be good for the state, and it would be good for the country if he succeeded, and I guess I figured maybe it would be good for me. I was certain about it, and I tried to help him. Always in campaigns and most everything else, and in our

situation, the best people weren't available. It appeared to be that the people you wanted to run something were the ones you couldn't get. You had to use young people.

When he was elected Governor, he never had a campaign manager. He never could get anybody to take it. We started off the same way in the presidential campaign with Hamilton [Jordan], and it had me looking for somebody all the time. The truth of the matter is you don't really need one, particularly in a state race. They create as many problems as they bring because you commit yourself to Joe Jones and everybody that helps is secondary. We always had 50 or 100 people who thought maybe they might be the campaign manager, but he didn't have one.

YOUNG: This has been a very interesting preliminary. Why don't we ask some questions about the period that you have just been going over, about the Governorship and about the convictions on his part, and on yours as well, that he was headed for the top of the political structure. Dave, do you have a question?

TRUMAN: I would be curious to know when this became open between you two. You obviously sensed that this would go farther along before he was talking about it to you, but how soon did it actually come out?

KIRBO: I think it went on with both of us knowing until after he was settled in the Governor's office. He and I never really sat down and talked about it in the sense that you're thinking about. When he first came to me and wanted to run for Governor—it wasn't just me, he was going around to several people—he told me he wanted to be Governor and thought he could get elected. I don't believe we ever discussed it that frankly again. And in terms of communication, we operated on that basis about most everything. We generally had the same goals and the same reaction. When something came up, very often I would handle it. People wouldn't know whether I was acting on my own or whether it was Jimmy talking. I don't think I ever did anything when we had a disagreement about having done it wrong, although maybe the way we did it might not have been the right way to go about it. He and I just generally saw alike.

We were doing things all the time that were consistent with his running for President. The first I recall talking about it was when Bert Lance showed up. I didn't know Bert until just before the election, since he was not campaigning when Jimmy was elected Governor. The first time I ever saw him, he walked up in the campaign office after Jimmy had gotten the nomination—which was tantamount to the election—and introduced himself. I had heard about him from my banking friends, and everybody I had ever discussed him with thought well of Bert. He's a fine looking man. The banking people just thought he was top-notch.

Bert and I got to be close when Jimmy had his reorganization of the state government, which he had right down to a "T." He wanted to reorganize everything. It was tough. He had some friends in the Senate—about a third of them—but in the House there were nine people out of 190 who supported him in the race. But the Speaker, George Smith—who's dead now—was a good friend of mine, and he didn't really know Jimmy. But he voted for him because he knew Carl would throw him out. We worked up a relationship with George. It ended up Carter was strong in the House and weak in the Senate. Lester Maddox presented a problem, and we had to fight him. Bert and I ended up whenever it was about to be voted on fighting with a bunch of jerks.

Bert and I began to talk, and one day—I guess it was probably the latter part of the first or some time in the second year as Governor—Bert asked me if I thought Jimmy was running for President. I said I thought he had that in mind, and he said, "Well, I think he's got a chance, don't you?" I said I had been thinking that for some time, or something like that. Bert wanted to talk about it a lot, but we never did. It always sort of distracts from a new Governor when he gets to acting like he's running for President, and I'm sure Jimmy knew that. I think he kept quiet on what our plans were.

Hamilton, Jimmy, and I started planning that with Bob Strauss. Bob was an innocent victim. He later was glad he was an innocent victim. Jimmy arranged to—Well, he got Bob to arrange for Jimmy to get a job nobody wanted, and that's the chairman of the campaign committee for Congress. They never had anybody who had really done as good a job as Jimmy. Jimmy got hold of that thing and got Eizenstat. He got all the issues and surveyed all the states and districts and found out what the issues were and prepared booklets on the issues and helped all of the congressmen and candidates. About two-thirds of the way, Strauss and the Senate leadership and the House leadership realized what had happened, but it was too late.

Let me tell you one other remarkable thing that I saw him do, and I want to help you understand. Jimmy had worked up his reorganization plan, and it was well thought out. He got the business community to furnish a lot of the talent. He knew what he wanted to do, and he steered them through it. It was well thought out, but it was complete and complex. He had talked it all over the state, and the people wanted to do it. The legislature didn't want to do it, but they began to feel like maybe they ought to on account of the political pressure.

The press was buying the thing. It got out in the press and around the state that they would like to support him, but they didn't understand it. They were scared of it. So I talked to Jimmy about it and told him that we needed some way to explain it. He sat down and worked out a plan and talked to the leaders of the House and the Senate, something nobody had ever done before. They just had an informal meeting of each body, and he got up there and presented one issue at a time and let them ask questions. He reviewed the whole thing.

I know that's when George Smith really signed up with Carter. He supported anything he wanted to do from then on. He and I were sitting together, but Jimmy was explaining the thing. About the middle of the afternoon George told me, "I have never seen anybody do as fine a job as that boy has done," and said he knew more about the state than anybody else in the state. From then on, whatever Jimmy wanted to do about reorganization, all he had to do was tell George he was ready to do it. He didn't want it explained to him.

Carter explained the plan in a simple way. He leaned on the podium, and they asked him questions about it, and he calmly explained the whole program to them. About two-thirds of the way through, they were beginning to say, "Well, we've learned all we want to learn about the thing. We'll just vote for the rest of it." I know one of the questions they were asking him somehow brought in the question the structure of the Capitol and what it was. He gave them a lecture on the history of the building. He told them how the hallway over there was a basement constructed for carriages to come through there and had been added on to and fixed. Just sort of

kidding, he said he was thinking about maybe getting it back where they could get carriages in there so a lot of his friends from South Georgia could use it.

But that's pretty well typical of him. The other day, he and I were fishing. We were out at Wyoming on Charlie Duncan's place. We were fly-fishing, and I started telling him about how we used to catch fish with willow flies. Near the water where these willow trees grow at a certain time of the year, particularly if there was light around, willow flies were just everywhere. You could catch them, and they were the finest kind of bait. But he gave me about a forty-five minute lecture on the life of a willow fly. It was a long one and not particularly interesting to me.

YOUNG: Were there any times either when he was Governor or when he was President when this quality of thoroughness and mastery of the details became a handicap to his performance rather than an asset?

KIRBO: That's hard to say. There were a lot of people who thought it did. The reactions to him knowing so much about a subject annoy people who don't. Most of the legislators don't have time or information to study that much. The first part of the Presidency, he did study and read a lot, and you could say that time could have been used for something else. But I believe one of the biggest problems is that so much legislation is passed that is deliberately deceiving and not doing what it was said to do.

I learned that first in the state government. I've seen them get up a bill to cut the interest rates down to a certain amount, and everybody would be in favor of that. They would compromise here and there. When it passed, it would only cut the short-loan interest, which at that time was separate from the banks. They finally all got into the short-loan business. They would cut here and raise the rest of it, and everybody would think they had done a good job.

I know Jimmy spent an awful lot of time studying the energy issue, and from the outside, I got tangled up in the thing. There was a disagreement among the independent oil people and the major oil people. I heard different ones. Some gave me information so I could learn how the senators stood. It was sometimes better from them than Jimmy could get from his own people.

At one point they got near agreement on the numbers on the tax. It got down to the difference between five and seven, and a friend of mine in the gas business called me and tried to help us work it out. There were gas people saying that Jimmy wouldn't come down at all and wouldn't give any, so I went in and talked with Jimmy about it and said it looked to me like they were just a half a point apart or something like that. He worked it out and said I just didn't understand it. He said a tenth of a point is about $10 billion. Really, when we get two points apart, we're really a long way apart.

They fought over it a long time. I was with some of them, and they told me the worst thing that happened was not to have agreed to the Carter plan. They said Carter had the thing figured out where they would benefit. He was treating them fairly, and they didn't realize it. So it would have come out better if they had agreed with him. The independent oil fellow who was fishing with us out there was one of the biggest independents, which is much different than the major oil companies. He said the worst thing they did was to get Reagan to deregulate that thing.

Everybody was set up to gradually go down, and there would be no bumps. He lost millions the day that he eliminated it. Within twelve months, he had lost $26 million. He just hadn't studied the thing.

To get back to your point, there are arguments you can make that he studied too much. He did that for the first six or eight months. He studied quite a lot.

YOUNG: Including the budget, wasn't it? He studied that very closely the first time around.

KIRBO: Oh, yes. He sat in at the beginning on the budget hearings. He spent some time at it. The first time he met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on budget matters, he got Charlie Duncan, who is a deputy in the Defense Department, to handle procurement. That was his main job. He was supposed to try to cut down the cost. Charlie is a very studious, sophisticated businessman himself. He's a chemical engineer, and I guess it was easy for him to study weaponry and all that as soon as he knew he was going to be deputy.

Jimmy told me that they had a meeting, and they discussed weapons and the cost of weapons and said they only had two people who knew what the cost of certain weapons was—he and Charlie Duncan. I think he had one general plan halfway in mind to select the chief of staff. He learned how the different services operated. He decided to select the chief from the service that did the best job in procurement. I suspect there were times when he spent too much on some subjects, but I believe he's probably the first President we've had who did that and knew as much about issues as he did.

It might not be a bad idea for all of them to be that way. I think maybe every other one ought to be that way. Reagan is passing on matters now that he knows absolutely nothing about. [Gerald] Ford was a consensus President. Whatever the leadership in the House or the Senate agreed on, he would sign. He didn't do a particularly bad job unless you say—and some people do—that there's no way that a man can really understand what's going on in the Presidency. There's no substitute that I know of for understanding the stuff yourself. You can't get away from special interests.

When you talk about it and you criticize it, you sound like you're against the banks, against the Jews, or against rednecks, or blacks, or something you can't talk about, but it's really a part of our system. It leads you down bad trails. One of the surprising things I heard Herman Talmadge say the other day. He said somebody asked him about his business supporters—that he had substantial businessmen in the state, and he said yes. Some way or another they asked him about their relationship with him, and he said, "Well, they all want the budget balanced in every area but the area they're interested in."

Jimmy told me after about six months in office to come up there, that he was considering vetoing the appropriations bill or to think about it a little. All the political advice was to not veto, and so I went up there, and we talked about it a while, and he told me then, he said, "I had looked forward to working with the business community. I've been hearing talk about how they're going to balance the budget." He said the biggest force against balancing the budget is the business

community. And it's almost impossible to overcome it. I asked about the blacks and all that and he said, "Well, that's a factor, but there's nothing like the business community."

Of course a lot of that is in defense. I think, too, to get back to your question, it brings up a lot of other questions. If Carter had eight years, it would make more sense for him to spend the time. But if he had known he was just going to serve four years, it might be a waste to some extent. But I think it's normal for a President to think he's going to serve two terms although there's no historical basis for it.

HARGROVE: Did Carter study people? Was he curious about people and their relations?

KIRBO: Oh, yes.

HARGROVE: I understand Russell Long would have helped him as much on energy or welfare legislation as understanding the issues. Did he have that kind of curiosity?

KIRBO: Yes, and he understood Russell Long as well as anybody understood Russell. But Russell is an unusual person. He didn't want to be understood a lot of times. He was interested in the price of sugar and the price of gasoline and oil. He had a sort of carryover from Huey Long, and he had a plan that he talked to everyone about, where he was going to make everybody a stockholder in the oil business, have corporate stock and give it to them instead of welfare and all that sort of thing. But he's a factor to be dealt with. He understands the way the committee works and understands the tax structure, what is helpful with his interest and what isn't.

He'll talk one way one day and another way the next, but he has usually made up his mind in the beginning, and it's going to be that way to the end. He and Carter socially got along fine, but Carter never got very far with him. He was like Senator [Robert] Byrd—whenever you get him on your side, he was great. If they weren't, you were in a fix.

YOUNG: But Carter did try to understand the peculiarities of the individual? He was curious about the political ramifications of issues?

KIRBO: Yes, he understood that. Now he didn't always do what was politically wise. That was a relative thing. The Senators were a little more demanding. They all have special things. It's like my friend Sam Nunn. He's a big trim-the-budget man, but you try to close down some of the Georgia air bases, he just raises Cain. If you want their wholehearted support, you've got to compromise on things that they consider important to their state, and if you do all that like Lyndon Johnson did, then expenditures go up and up. A lot of them want you to do things that are bad, so far as budget is concerned. If you ever get into that business, you're just a bad President.

I've talked to him some about the political problems developed from his actions. He was aware of them, and I would talk to him about it. He was getting crossed up with the Jewish community and about the Israelis—which means pretty soon you're crossed up with the *New York Times* and other sources. It's not a special interest in the general sense of the word, but it's just that people

you get crossed up with have influence, and they do the same as anybody else when they have a matter they're interested in and they can get involved.

He was on the wrong side politically with those interests. As the thing went further on—Scoop [Henry M.] Jackson, the Defense Department—pretty soon he was crossed up again by cutting them back. With some exceptions he was getting crossed up with the business community, really about the budget. One of the really big exceptions was [Thomas] Murphy with General Motors, who generally supported Jimmy. But by and large businessmen have a sort of consensus, and their views start at the very top and go down just like any other area.

I represent businessmen in state and out of state, and I've told him about their views. One of the biggest critics Jimmy had was Vernon Jordan. Things that he said were the views of the businessman. He's on six or eight boards. Where it was hurting Carter was with the black people, and pretty soon what black people were saying was Jimmy was inept, the same thing the business community was saying. I never had heard that before from blacks until Vernon Jordan began criticizing the President. I talked to him about what they were saying, and I never have tried to persuade him. But I'd tell him the negative things that I'm hearing and seeing.

He told me on one occasion, "I've decided I'm doing what's right, and I'm President, and nobody can keep me from being President. I made up my mind I'm going to do what I think is right, and if I get beat, I'll just get beat." But he would always be optimistic and say, "This one will be passed, and later on we can get them back in line," or something like that. He was correct about the black people. He pretty well got them back on his side.

STRONG: When Carter was Governor and later President and you were sending him memoranda or having conversations with him, were the subjects you were talking about usually things that you initiated, or was he asking for specific advice and recommendations?

KIRBO: Both. He asked for advice about different subjects, and then if he didn't get any memoranda for a while, he would say, "I haven't heard from you lately." After he got to be President, there would be times when I would be there in my law practice on something else he had me working on, and I wouldn't go up there. He would call me up and want to know when I was coming. If I were talking to him on the phone, he would say, "I haven't seen any memoranda lately."

Some mornings he would wake me up at 5:00 a.m. He was bad about calling you early in the morning and saying, "What the heck you doing in bed this time of day?" It was usually when he had a problem. I told him it looked like every time I went up there, they would start a crisis. I walked in there one day and walked right into the Bert Lance crisis. Thought I never would get through with that. He said, "The trouble is we have a crisis up here every day, any day you come." We never had planned sessions and that sort of thing. Any time I called him, he would talk with me or he would call me back in a very short period of time. I enjoy being with him, and he enjoys being with me. We have a good time.

He has a fine sense of humor. It's a sort of southern type humor that doesn't go over too well in some places. We understand each other and enjoy each other. He talks about things that he

doesn't usually talk about to other people. I spent more time with the staff. We started off in '66. Jody [Powell] was just a boy and so was Hamilton. They needed some help, and I spent a lot of time with them, and later Jack Watson, Frank Moore. They had a lot of problems themselves, sometimes personal problems. I got involved in all that stuff; financial problems. I enjoyed talking to Frank Moore.

Generally, they had a hard life in the campaign. There was a lot of confusion. There were a lot of women, a lot of young black people. And a lot of problems developed during that campaign. They had the campaign office north of here. I would come down in the morning for an hour and maybe stop by there and be on the phone with him a lot. And then about 3:00 in the afternoon, I would go out there and stay until about 6:00 p.m. I had no title or anything. But in both campaigns I did that, and they would get arguments, fusses going on, and I would end up in it and the same way in the White House.

I see some of this stuff going on in Reagan's White House, and I feel sorry for him. I know what it is, a clash of personalities. One of the problems that you've got in a campaign you've got in the White House. What is best for you, loyalty or efficiency? You can sit down and think of a lot of good competent people to put in a campaign. The more competent they are, the more certain there's going to be a row. You'll get more than one in there, and there's a problem about who will run things. You can bet that some of them are looking out for their own interest and some other interest other than the candidate's or the Presidency and government.

Under normal circumstances, they may attend to their own business, but if something comes in there—not a corrupt thing, but of a philosophical nature—then away they go. So you've got that very serious problem. It's not like the military where you've got the job where you punish somebody or fire them. They're political. You could fire them, but you have to be very careful about that.

YOUNG: Did this trouble Carter, or did it surprise him? Did it trouble him when he was in the Presidency? I have the impression that as Governor he did a lot of things himself, did a lot of the planning and never relied on a large and complex kind of staff operation that he had in the White House, that any President would have.

KIRBO: It troubled him somewhat, but he's not a worrier. When he had a problem, in the nature of things a certain amount of that is just like grease in a garage. He just got grease around him, and you've got problems. You hear the business community talking about that, that they're up to their neck in it too. But they deny that they've got it. So there's a certain amount of it that you have to learn to tolerate, and he's not a fellow that if something goes wrong he worries about it a week or two afterwards. He goes and straightens it out and gets rid of it, or tells me to go do it. He doesn't worry about it. He goes on to something else, and that's a nice way to be.

He learned that there are people in government you can't control. They could just do things, and there's not a thing you can do about it. He tolerates that pretty well. I never could get over things like that myself. I worried about them and kept trying to figure out how you can do something about it. He'd cuss it and then just go ahead and accept it.

One of the problems he had in this area, which he took on knowingly—there was something that he and I discussed before he got into it—he made up his mind that he was going to have women and blacks and Mexicans, and that they might not be as sophisticated and as competent. I don't know if he expressed it in this same way; but also as judges, and that was going to be a problem. But his view was—and I accepted it then and do now—that it's a matter of degree.

With the whites you always have some errors in people you select. It would always be if you accepted that you had to get the most competent person available, you never would get started with the women and blacks. And that's particularly true with judges. And there are some sorry white judges. So you're going to have to accept some of it. He carried out his plan for the most part, but we caught hell because of it. Some of the women did well, but some in the various departments who had not exercised authority before caused some serious political problems. But after a while most settled down. They seemed to aggravate lobbyists.

One of Jimmy's plans to save money was with dams. It ended up with this hit list thing a young lady put out. It was never intended as a hit list; anyway, I got into that thing, and it turned out to be one of their biggest problems with Congress. Most of the dams ought not to have been built from the economical standpoint.

TRUMAN: You had a good deal to do with what the press has reported about the selection of the key people in the administration after the screening and the transition period. Can you tell us anything about how you went about that? You've already mentioned that the President had a strong feeling about placing blacks, women, and Hispanics in some of these spots even if there were consequences that he didn't altogether like. But nevertheless he was in favor of it.

KIRBO: The main thing I did, that I spent more time on, was the Vice Presidency. Jimmy and I talked to the staff—say Hamilton. Jimmy and I and various other people had talked casually over a period of time about the Vice President. Everybody had picked a Vice President, mainly somebody they thought would help him get elected President. After we had enough delegates to assure the nomination—and I think it was a kind of sure thing—he gave me a list that he wanted me to interview—some six, or something like that and later expanded it. Some of them were serious and some not. It got to be a status symbol to be interviewed for Vice President. Some of them or their staff complained that they thought they ought to be interviewed. He did some of that. But most of them were people he was seriously considering. Jimmy always wants something done in a hurry.

I went up to Washington and operated out of Senator Talmadge's office. I had his secretary make appointments for me. It was a very interesting experience. I would go in see the person and let them talk. I didn't make any notes then. I figured they would talk more freely. Then I had maybe an hour where I would leave and go somewhere and sit down and make some notes and write down my own reaction. I must say, some of them I didn't know except from a distance. But nearly everybody I talked to I had a pretty good feeling about, that they really weren't bad people.

There were a lot of them I didn't want to have as Vice President. As time went on, I completed that in a matter of days for the vice presidential position with the exception that every time I

went to Jimmy, he said he had one or two more, so I would see them. Then we would sit down and talk about each one of them, and I would give him my reaction to them. I never did try to sell any particular one. But I learned from past experience that you should never go into a situation where you might end up at the last minute and not have anybody. It happened to us one time on a board, a simple thing, but it really screwed us up, and we ended up getting somebody we didn't want.

I told him that as far as I was concerned, I thought we could live with Scoop Jackson, that he had some liberal views and he was also basically conservative and that he knew enough about the government that if he had to be President he would be responsible. He probably wouldn't be the first choice, but he was someone I thought we ought to keep on the burner. In retrospect, I think it wouldn't have been a bad idea. But he gave us as much trouble in the Senate as anybody else we had, although we came close to him, and at times he helped. I kept close contact with him. He just had special interests in defense and other things. Anyway, we kept Scoop on the burner. Other than that, I never did really have a candidate. I left him alone. It never had been my policy to try to push my judgment.

Somewhere down the line it became apparent that it was going to be [Walter] Mondale. I figured it was headed in that direction. Then he got interested in [Edmund] Muskie. I must say that back then Muskie didn't look bad. I talked with him at length a couple of times. Later on, I was glad that we didn't select Muskie, for no particular reason. I just thought Mondale was the better one under the circumstances. At the convention, it was the day before he was going to announce it. I did some serious investigation on all of them. I picked up things that needed investigating. One of them was that Mondale had given me some information about his health. He had high blood pressure. I got information from his doctor, who was just a regular family doctor.

I felt content with that until that day I got to thinking about the thing and I figured, *Well, it's going to be Mondale. I better get a little more information about that*. So I did, and then I got the complete information, what medicine they were giving him, what the diagnosis was, and all that. Then I called a doctor down here I knew that was his area. He was highly competent, and I asked him to explain to me what it meant, to get his views on whether it would interfere if he were President.

As for [John] Glenn, he had a lot of business interests and partners. I had all of that checked out to see if he had any problems that might be embarrassing. Then there were some rumors around about almost everybody. We began to get information and checked those things out. I know when I made up my mind I went over and told Jimmy. He was across the hall from me, and I told him that I checked out Mondale further and that I was not disturbed about the medical part of the thing. I gave him the information from the doctor I knew. The next morning I thought I would trick him. I was going to go in there and tell him that I just had a call from the doctor and he decided that Mondale's thing was too bad. I walked over there and went in his room, and he walked out and said, "It's Mondale." So I didn't get to try it on him. So that was it for Vice President.

For a long period of time before he was elected President, in practicing law, as I ran into lawyers around the country I would make a note of them if I thought they were extraordinary. Also, I

learned from Jimmy how difficult it is to get good people in the government. In the first place, you don't know where they are. You hear people say, "Well, there are a lot of good engineers. There is a lot of this." You get the names of ten of them and call them, and they talk like they're interested until they find out what they're going to get paid. And they don't know how long it's going to last, and they talk to their wives, and for various reasons they say they just can't do it.

So I had kept lists of people I thought were good people around the country. Then Jimmy set up out at the Governor's mansion. George Busbee was in the mansion then, and he let us use his place out there to start interviewing people. He invited Griffin Bell out, and he gave us some names for Attorney General. He had some he was interested in. One of them was a very able Mexican district court judge from Texas. He declined the job.

Griffin was recommended. Some of the Senators Jimmy had talked to had mentioned Griffin to him. Griffin had known Jimmy longer than I had. Griffin was my partner. Jimmy knew him as well as I did, and he wanted him. But there were different people who had either applied for the job or had people recommend them. Jimmy wanted to see them. He would have them fly in here, and he and I sometimes handled it, maybe somebody else. There's a lot in how people look that goes into your thinking after a while—not that they're good looking, but there are people who you get a feeling when you're talking to them that you'll be comfortable with them, which is something the President needs. That's an important thing, and by no means excluded.

One of the Senators from Mississippi was in to see Jimmy about something. He came over, and Griffin brought him out. He came in and talked to us and told Jimmy— Jimmy asked him about the Attorney General, and he said, "I don't know why you're looking for an Attorney General when you've got a good one right here in Atlanta."

After that was over, Jimmy told me he was about the third or fourth Senator who had told him that. I didn't say anything. Later that afternoon, he called me and said, "How about checking on Griffin and seeing if he wants to be Attorney General?" Griffin had just joined the firm. He had resigned from the Circuit Court. He had run out of money. I think he was back about five or six months. But anyway, I figured he would take it if he were asked. He was out of the office. I told Jimmy he wouldn't be in until night, and that I would talk to him and let him know the next morning.

He called and got him on the phone and finally located him somewhere and got him over there early the next morning. He called me and told me he thought he was going to quit looking and probably make it Griffin. Then I guess we saw twelve or fifteen different ones. We rated them, and then a lot of them came to Plains.

One of the jobs Jimmy had difficulty with was the Secretary of Defense. It was two or three people who were really competent. He liked [Harold] Brown, but his view was that the key to his budgetary problems would be in procurement in the Defense Department. He had ambitions to make it more efficient, and he had also planned—thought he could cut down the expenditures and at the same time improve the efficiency of it, which was a big ambition. He told me that he had just racked his brains, and he thought he would make the Deputy head of the procurement and wanted somebody who could do that.

He just couldn't think of anybody or find anybody. He hadn't made up his mind about the others, but he was leaning toward Brown for the Secretary. I went over my list. I called and checked on people, and I couldn't think of anybody different or closer to competent. I asked businessmen around the country to get me some names.

In the meantime, I was walking down the street coming into the office, and I ran into one of my partners. He said Charlie Duncan was coming in, and he would be doing some work for him in a little while, and if I could see him, to come by. Charlie fit the bill. He had all kinds of business experience. Charlie is not a colorful fellow, but he's independently wealthy. He sold his company to Coca-Cola. He had a good background of executive performance.

So I called Jimmy. Jimmy knew him better than I did. He said, "Why didn't I think of Charlie?" I called Charlie, and Charlie flew over here. We had a little private plane, and he and I flew down to Plains. We went in to see Jimmy. Of course, Charlie wanted to be the Secretary. It worked out that he came to be the Deputy.

After Griffin got to be Attorney General, I gave him this list of lawyers. Jack Anderson and [William] Safire and all of those people said I selected Griffin and all of his appointees over there, but I think I selected three or four out of the list that I had and gave them to Griffin. He didn't know any of them. I had two on there who are the two best lawyers I had worked with. And when I say best lawyers, I'm talking about the best men. One of them was John Schwabe from Portland, and Ben Civiletti from Baltimore. My first choice was John Schwabe, and John turned him down. Civiletti first turned it down, and then he talked him into taking it. Griffin selected his own people. He requested recommendations from me and selected only Civiletti from my list.

I talked with businessmen I knew were competent, particularly when you're looking for women who had some background or experience. One of them was J. B. Fuqua, who was a big businessman. He had national experience, and he recommended Juanita Kreps. That generally was the way we would go about it. I talked to Paul Austin and Bob Woodruff. I talked to some of the Senators and respected businessmen around the country, and so did Jimmy. That was mostly with the Cabinet.

Now with the campaign, there was Jack Watson, who was a partner of mine who was an extraordinary fellow, highly competent and well educated. He's from Arkansas, and when he came to the firm he worked with me for what would have been two or three years, but he was with me about six or eight months, and he was so good he didn't need to go through the usual process of watching a lawyer and supervising. He was just the best we had developed here. After about three or four years, we just turned him loose, and he would try any kind of case we had. He is social-minded and interested in politics. He served as chairman of the Department of Human Resources when Jimmy was Governor. He helped in the campaign.

During the campaign, and after Jimmy got the nomination, there began to be rumors about difficulty between Jack and Hamilton, which was not uncommon. When Jimmy was running for Governor, he had a fellow out there named Bill Lynch in addition to Hamilton. One of my jobs

was to umpire between Lynch and Hamilton. But it didn't seem real to me that they would be having difficulties. Anyway, there began to be a little in the papers about it, and I talked to Hamilton and talked to Jack and thought about getting them together. Both of them assured me there wasn't any problem, but I continued to hear the rumors. Not about them, but the people working around them developed some sort of interest in each one of them, which is, I learned, typical. Jack handled the transition, and then I didn't hear any more about that, until they got to Washington. Then I heard some more about it, but I never did take any position. Just what position on either one of them could I take?

Jimmy and I first talked about the White House. His views were the same as mine. I thought Hamilton ought to be his chief advisor on a sort of wild card, and I thought he didn't want to have a Chief of Staff at that time. But I thought Jack ought to have a very prominent—if not a leading—position on the staff. I didn't tell him that. Jack was a partner of mine, and Hamilton and Jody were young boys who hadn't fully developed. I thought it would destroy the effectiveness of my role if I got involved on behalf of a partner.

There was a lot to be said if you took the most important service to Jimmy in the past and in the future for Hamilton. He was dedicated. He was very smart. He was a great planner. He was a great writer. He would lay out his plans. If you haven't seen his plan for the campaign, you ought to see it. It's not altogether his thoughts, but it's a combination of the thoughts he developed from talking and calculating with others, and it is his writing, all of it. And he was important to Jimmy because he had a good sense of politics in the broadest term, complete depths of what you could do, how you ought to go about doing things from a political standpoint. He was absolutely loyal and willing to work twenty-four hours a day every day.

Jack is more sophisticated and better organized and understands issues and knows more substantive people. Jimmy wrote out a little plan in freehand for the skeleton of the White House, which was similar to my views. Part of his plan was for me to go to Washington. He was so sure he was going to get elected or get nominated that he began to talk to me about it. I thought I would go, but it was a bigger project than I thought it was when I got to analyzing it.

[redacted]

But basically I found out that I would have to sell my home and my farms and everything or I would get into serious trouble up there trying to service a debt. My family all voted against it. I finally had to tell him that I couldn't do it then. I would try to work it out. I got swamped in other things, and I had very little time. I didn't follow up what was done in the White House, and I must say I didn't think it was as important—thought you could shift the thing around whenever you got ready. I had a lot of advice from people—particularly from some Republican friends I had—that you needed to get in there, not only in the White House but everywhere else, people your people can absolutely control. That wouldn't have been a bad practice, but it's not the type of government set-up that Carter would have wanted. He encourages people from different views.

One other important character was Bert Lance. Jimmy talked to me about Bert wanting to be Secretary of the Treasury. I had confidence in Bert. I assumed he was rich. He acted like a rich

man. He was not gaudy or a braggart or anything like that. He had interests in a lot of banks, and people understood he was in good shape and was a fine banker. And I had had a good experience with him. Jimmy and I talked about it, and we decided that the budget was an area where Jimmy needed to have somebody he had absolute confidence in and was compatible with. Bert understood money, and I felt relieved. I felt a little guilty because I wasn't going up to Washington. I wanted to go in a way, and Jimmy thought he needed me worse than he did.

TRUMAN: Did you talk about a position in this stage or just in general?

KIRBO: No, he asked me what I wanted to do. One time he asked me—when he got a little concerned about the staff up there—if I would be Chief of Staff. I said I couldn't go up there. What I had wanted to do—my preference if I had been independently wealthy—I'd like to have gone on up there and not work for the government, and I'd have a job. That wouldn't have been practical either, but if I could have gone I would have just been an advisor without any title. I would have, in effect, been a sort of Chief of Staff without the responsibility of running the White House. That would be what it would have amounted to, which would have suited me because I didn't want to get tangled up in who had this space and all that.

One of the ways they could really increase the efficiency of the government is to build that wall about fifty acres over and just have everything part of the White House. The territory is an important thing, and the White House is not an efficient building for carrying on business. Some of the offices are too big, and the rest of them are too little. There are really not enough people there. They put them over in the Executive Office Building, which is a fine place to be. That's where I would have wanted to be if I had gone there.

Jimmy set aside [Richard] Nixon's old office over there where he got in trouble for me, but I never did take it. But I wouldn't have minded being over there. It was just like sending somebody to Siberia to move them out of the White House to some people. That was Jimmy's biggest disappointment and my biggest disappointment—that Bert's thing didn't work out. Jimmy had this conflict of interest standard set up, and I looked at Bert's financial statement over there. We had a little committee that I was on, and we got Bert in, and I told him that I thought he ought to sell the Calhoun Bank stock immediately and all of his National Bank stock. He did owe a good deal of money, but the evaluations he had on his bank stock and other property still put him in a good position. But it turned out that the Calhoun Bank stock really wasn't so hot. Then he made a valid case that he really didn't have any cost basis in any of that Calhoun Bank stock. Sell, and the taxes on the profits would nearly wipe him out.

Actually it turned out—I think later we discussed his situation, and, in fact, there wasn't all that value in the bank stock. Technically, the Budget Director has a conflict of interest in most anything. Nearly everything you can imagine comes up in that office. But it was particularly sensitive as to bank stock, so they told me, and he had presented a serious tax problem. I told him finally that he could probably get by with the Calhoun Bank stock, but he had to get rid of the other stock. He was nice about it, but he didn't like it. I know he was talking to the press after he said I told him he was going to have to get out of everything but the Methodist Church. He thought he could stay in the Methodist Church. But anyway, it worked out, and I didn't really have anything further to do with it, as I recall. I think maybe Jimmy got me to go over and talk

with the Senate about letting him have a year or two to dispose of the stock, and then we stopped there, and we can take up the problems he got into later.

It was a disappointment to me—and I'm sure it was to Jimmy—that I didn't go up there, although he may very well have been better off without me. But I felt better about it because Bert was going to be there, and I felt Bert should probably do better. He wasn't as old as I was, and he was in some ways more capable and experienced than I was, particularly in financial matters and in handling people.

One of the questions that we have discussed so far is that the President put Jack Watson in one area and put Hamilton in another area, and didn't make either one of them Chief of Staff. But Hamilton was more in that position than Jack was. Hamilton could have done very well as Chief of Staff if he had gotten himself a good deputy to handle the details. And he did in some ways do that without help. He didn't get anybody with enough force to do as well as they ought to have done.

But later on, Hamilton began to wonder about his own position and whether his job was to do just what I wanted him to do—that's to be a chief advisor on a broad area. And that's where he spent most of his time. But we were getting a lot of reaction we hadn't anticipated in Washington. Some of it was justified. A great deal of it was unjustified. He and I talked about it once or twice, and he indicated he was willing to do whatever we thought ought to be done. I'm not sure about the time, about what time it was.

I talked to Jimmy about Jack Watson. Jack, wherever he is, feels like he hasn't got enough to do, and he's not using his talents sufficiently. So I talked to Jimmy about that, and Jimmy gave him a broader area, added it on to what he already had. Later I talked to him about the possibility of doing something about Hamilton, and he said he had no problem about that. You have to have an alternative. He wants to better himself. He's going to do something about that. I talked to him about Jack, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you the truth. One of the most important areas I've got now from the standpoint of government—and from the standpoint of politics, too—is getting along with the Governors, the mayors, and local officials. That's Jack's job. Everywhere I go I get praise. They're happy. That's the only place in the government where I don't worry." And he said, "I'll be damned if I don't know about changing that because it's really important."

YOUNG: This was after Jack had already been given intergovernmental relations and the Cabinet secretary role, getting on into the middle or later part of the administration?

KIRBO: He said, "I never have anybody tell me that Jack did something wrong or he's not taking care of this or that." So I said, "Well, we'd better leave that alone." Then somewhere along there or before then, Bert left. You can go back and say, "Would you have been better off not to have used Hamilton in that spot?" Well, if I had known Bert was going to leave, I might have felt differently about it. I think Jimmy would too.

But with Bert gone, that had made more sense to do something, plus it was, strangely enough, two years' time—it was just about the time to start qualifying for the primaries in the states, which is Hamilton's job. It's a place where you didn't need to be in a position of authority for

anyone to handle those things. My own theory is that I'm sure there were some things we could have done to have been more efficient before and after Hamilton served in that capacity. But Jimmy was running the White House, and I think that while sometimes it was best to have Hamilton there, sometimes it would have been better if he had been in another position.

Overall, I don't think that was what caused any great damage, but it did cause damage as far as politics was concerned. Hamilton and Jody both were bad about not answering telephone calls. They had a good excuse for that, but they didn't have a good excuse for not having a number two person to do it for them. They did it. If you had to do that, they did it to some fine people, not answering their call, I tell you that. And there are some real bastards whose calls you have to return. But I have worried a little about that, since I felt maybe I should have done something myself. But there was no serious damage done there. There were places in other areas that took us too long to find out, particularly outside of the White House. Some people weren't doing a good job, which I think is inevitable with as many people as you have out there. But for the main part, the White House was running the way Jimmy wanted to run it. He stayed pretty well on top of things.

I learned fairly early that you can't be effective up there by dropping in every week or so. A day is a long time in Washington, and when things come up, unless you're there and you move on it—or somebody else moves on it—things just don't wait. So I learned that they couldn't depend on me to tell them what to do. They called me down here, but very often I didn't have enough background that I wanted to make a judgment on the thing, and all I could do was go up there.

But he had awfully good people up there. Bob Strauss has good judgment. His judgment and his primary functions are political. Frank Moore has good judgment and turned out to be one of the best people we had up there, but he got caught up in this criticism in the press. One of the criticisms they had of Frank was that everybody he had working for him was better than he was. Somebody brought that up to Jimmy in a meeting he had up there. He said, "Well, I wish I had about ten more who had enough sense to hire people smarter than they were."

TRUMAN: You mentioned in connection with Bert Lance that his financial skills were a matter of major interest to you and to the President. Was his departure from the administration a loss primarily in that area, or were there other kinds of roles that he played in the White House?

KIRBO: We didn't miss his financial skills as much as we did his management of problems like budget problems. You have all different sides and arguments about the thing and when to do it and all that. Bert could grapple with those things and work them out pretty well to the point where Jimmy just had the issue to pass on.

Furthermore, most any person—and particularly the businessperson—was comfortable with Bert. He knew how to deal with big shots and people who had money, and he served a good purpose in that. He understood the budgets—i.e., the organization of the government and who to contact—much more than I would have and much better than some of the people who were already in the government. He also had a way of inspiring people to work hard and do good work, and to get things done. He had Jimmy's confidence, so we missed him in a good many areas.

Had I been up there, I would have been doing some of those things. He knew pretty well how to pick people to do a particular job and was a very thoughtful person. He would just do the most unusual things to demonstrate to the people under him that he was interested in them—with little gifts and little things. He could sing pretty well. I know he went around over to the Highway Department one time. He would go in the office and sing little Christmas things and have some music with it. He would call you up on your birthday—he kept a record of people's birthdays. Some of that is sort of self-serving and all that, but he did a lot of real nice things when people had problems. In retrospect, I guess he was in about the same shape I was in about whether I ought to go.

You can make a pretty good case that what he did wrong was make a judgment to go up there. He wanted to help Jimmy, and he was ambitious himself. He took a chance. I understand why he went and why I didn't because he was a bold, confident fellow, as he demonstrated. He just doesn't give up, and he was confident that he could then make enough money and work everything out. And I was pretty sure I'd lose my shirt if I went up there. So I understand it, and it was a very sad thing. I knew I had to get involved in the thing, and I went up there. I was up there when it first started, and I got it started, it in a way.

Jimmy called me up there, so I went up there, and he had a letter addressed to the Senate Committee, asking for an extension of a year for him to sell his stock. It was a perfectly fair and just request, and I kidded [Abraham] Ribicoff—who was a nice person—explained it to him. We thought maybe he could do it in a perfunctory manner by just calling some of the committee to go ahead with it. There wouldn't be anything to it. And he said, "Yes, but I can't work this out without having to have a committee meeting."

That's when the trouble started. They first approved it, and then it was one thing after another. But I thought we had it in pretty good shape, and I went home, and the phone was ringing. Hamilton knew how all that was going, so I watched it on TV for a while, and I figured I'd better go up there. I went up, went in, and chatted with Jimmy, and that's all he had on his mind. And then we talked about it at dinner that night. One of the things he told me was that he wanted to fight it. He thought they were mistreating Bert, and they were. It wasn't a Cabinet member, but it was one of his people who started the thing. But he told me that 75 percent of his time—a large amount of time—was going toward the Lance problem. Bert Lance was finished as Director. One other thing he told me was when he had a press conference, "I really have some important items that I needed to discuss. I was expecting questions about it. I needed to get it out in the open. The only thing they asked me about was Bert Lance." So I knew in my own mind when I left that Bert had to go.

Some of the things that they accused him of were accurate but not criminal. These were things that bankers regularly do. And some of it was overdrafts, which bankers handle between themselves. He had some serious problems that he couldn't control, but he could straighten out. I understand that. But they had some awfully strong people after Bert, and I just knew that he had to go. Now it was my job, too, and I told Bert he needed to get somebody to advise him. I thought the thing was at a serious state, and he needed to leave. The timing might be important.

He said that he always relied on me for things like that. He had—in the little relationship we had in Carter matters—he relied on me, and we had gotten closer as time went on. He relied on me, and I was relying on him in more areas of business and things of that sort. I told him, "Well, Bert, my primary responsibility is Jimmy, and I'm not sure that your interest and his are compatible." And I never have really felt as comfortable as I used to be with him, for he was so disappointed. He wanted to fight, and Jimmy wanted to fight, but it just wasn't in the cards to fight that thing out.

TRUMAN: Before he left, to what extent was Bert a source of political advice and legislative bits in relation with the Hill? Was that a part of what he did?

KIRBO: Yes. He was very accommodating to the Senators over there in many ways. He was a big man, a position rang a bell with him. If a Senator or somebody called—or somebody he expected to get something out of later on—he moved right in. He was extra good in that, and he was not in a more—

Bob Strauss, you know, is effective in that, but Bert had a different method of dealing with people than Strauss. I'm not saying that's not good, but there was a difference. Strauss was somewhat—You get the impression that it's altogether political. With Bert, there was evidence of genuine interest in you—And he did, he enjoyed knowing everybody, and he was very skillful at it and would follow up. He had the time and the energy to entertain in meaningful ways.

YOUNG: After he left, there was nobody in the White House, was there, who could do that for the President? In a way, that's kind of protecting the President's flanks. I don't think that was President Carter's forte, having people like that.

KIRBO: Well, he did a lot of that, and he was well organized in that area. It took some time to develop that, but there was nothing lacking in that area. Now they didn't do as good a job in the press as they should have. That's where they can be faulted, I would think, for not filling out an image. And we got a lot of those things through the Senate and the House, and we didn't fall down because we didn't have good people, in my judgment.

As for what we did and the problem, Reagan is having some of it now, but he hasn't gotten a full dose of it because there are not as many Republican prospective candidates in the Senate as there are Democrats. Now you got Senator Byrd, Senator Muskie, who was one of the nicest one of them. You've got [Frank] Church, [Edward] Kennedy—Hubert Humphrey was in there. But Humphrey was not this way. He was a team man, a real help. Two or three more in there who wanted to be President: Scoop Jackson. Scoop loved Jimmy in a way, but he just couldn't seem to adjust to him being President. Most of them, with the exception of Muskie, were in favor of an open convention after Jimmy got the nomination. That tells you something.

And Senator Byrd, who brought some good qualities whenever he agreed with us—and he did it in some unusual circumstances on occasion, and did a great job—most of the time he took a pass on things important to us. He had a press conference for the last two years every Saturday, and he hit Jimmy, too, every Saturday. He was the only one who had a press conference on Saturday, so it always got in the press. But generally those were the people who had to be dealt with. Now

Reagan is getting it with some of his folks over there. It's a serious problem, but it's part of the system, and it's not like when you can call somebody over there and they say, "This is a party line." Finally, Carter was about the only one who could get those people over there and hope to get anything out of them.

I worried about that setup, and we were pretty successful right at the front end. A little while later, we had a bad period. I got involved in not so much participating in it, just sitting down and seeing how it was growing. But we were growing all right.

STRONG: Sitting in on the congressional meetings?

KIRBO: We would have a meeting pretty early every morning and get a report on congressional problems, whatever happened to be on the skillet then. We would find out what the problems were and what they needed to do about them, and he would get after them. He had to report on these national interest/defense things, and he finally got to where he had to horse trade on local issues to get them through. He knew how to do that, but he despised doing it.

[redacted]

HARGROVE: I'm not satisfied yet that I fully understand what Hamilton Jordan did day to day for the President. I know he wrote memos to him. I know he was the general sounding board. What kind of advice and what value did the President derive from that advice, and how did he act on it?

KIRBO: Well, the memos— Hamilton's memo writing—I didn't mean to put an importance on that while he was in the White House—and the memoranda and plans before the campaign were of great importance. When he was in the White House and it began, he was somewhat in the position of a Chief of Staff. Memos came to him. He set up the schedules and was supposed to meet with the staff the first thing in the morning, and he would share information with the staff. He and Jody and Frank Moore worked as a committee of some sort, an informal committee. He had very little to do with Jack Watson's operation. Jack just ran that himself. They dealt with each a good bit, but as equals.

HARGROVE: How about the Eizenstat operation?

KIRBO: The Eizenstat operation was the largest operation there. It was complex. It was a lot of help and a lot of trouble.

HARGROVE: Was Jordan in the thick of that to any extent?

KIRBO: Well, he dealt directly with Eizenstat, and normally he probably discussed Eizenstat's problems with Hamilton and worked them out, and then they would go to Jimmy. Now Eizenstat and his crowd were a memo-writing crowd. They'd fill you up with memoranda and studies and all that, and that was a source of a lot of good work. It was also a source of a lot of leaks—not

Eizenstat, but his staff. Of course, all of them had some leaks sometime. He had a big crowd, and he was smart with talented people, issue-oriented and all that. But Hamilton was the nearest thing to a Chief of Staff.

HARGROVE: Jordan was giving the President what we might broadly call political advice?

KIRBO: On anything.

HARGROVE: On anything. Presumably the President—

KIRBO: All right, now when you say political advice, you may think what we're talking about is running for office, but that's not what I'm talking about. Everything you do is of some political significance either with the Senate or the House, who you notify in advance, and all kinds of ramifications that I would keep mixed up myself all the time if I were running. You could forget to let Senator Byrd know something in advance, and you'd pay heavily for it, and I mean on big matters. That's just an unpardonable sin.

HARGROVE: And you say Jordan concerned himself with that kind of thing?

KIRBO: He concerned himself with that, not only with the President, but other heads of different sections. Jordan was not a neglectful fellow at all; he was a full-time employee. He worked just as late as was necessary. If anything of any sort came up, it didn't matter where it was, if it concerned the government or Carter, he'd get involved in it. He might call me down here, depending on what it was. So he was busy over there.

After he got that fellow [Alonzo] McDonald over there—now McDonald was something we badly needed. We got more of it than we needed. I found out in the Army—I used to be a company commander in the Army many years ago—the physical layout of an operation is essential: where the telephone sits, and who sits closest to it, and that sort of thing. It's very important. They were just like they were when Ford had it. But you couldn't have gotten a setup that to me was more unsatisfactory, and it always bugged me. It's really a detail, and I'm making more out of it. But that's one thing I told McDonald when he came in there: "For God's sakes, get the offices where you aren't stuck either being by yourself or having a convention." But he did a good job of that and without a lot of expense.

HARGROVE: Can I go back just a minute? A number of people have said that when receiving policy advice, Carter didn't want to hear about politics.

KIRBO: Didn't want to hear about—?

HARGROVE: About the political angle, say from the Eizenstat staff. He didn't want to hear about the political angle. But on the other hand, he seems to have valued political advice from other sources like you, like Lance, like Jordan, that he compartmentalized—expert advice on one hand, political advice on the other.

YOUNG: You know, one of the mysteries is—this is in backstopping of your question. One of the problems we've wrestled with is we have this image of a President who's alternately portrayed as doing nothing that isn't political, and who's all political. You find periods when the press is characterizing him that way—the hostage crisis and everything. Then, on the other hand, you have this directly opposite notion that Carter was not a politician, that he was against it or something. And we try to figure out these ways of working, and how he factored political advice, and whether he compartmentalized or what. How were these things factored in? One of the reasons for these questions about Hamilton is that everybody defines him as somebody who gave the President general political advice.

HARGROVE: But nobody's very sure about just what it was.

YOUNG: We're not quite sure what that means or whether that was really his essential role. It's a problem we try to figure out. There seem to be two sides to it.

KIRBO: It's just a large bucket when you talk about political advice. I understand it thoroughly. I understand why it baffles you, but it doesn't baffle me. I don't know that I can help you with it. I can tell you, give you some examples. You have an appointment open, say it's a Deputy Secretary of State, or a member of a commission. A list is developed. He usually requires three names and would select one of the three. But the names would go to Hamilton, and on occasion, to me for my views. You had to make sure the President had a choice. If just one of the three was well qualified, he did not.

You consider where people are from, perhaps a religion, Democratic or Republican. Ordinarily, religion would make no difference, but you would not want all or most of a commission to be of one religion. You need to look at all of those things. It was once called to my attention where a commission of three had two members from the same college, and another had been recommended from the same school. It's not really bad, but that just shouldn't be done.

You may have a fellow on that list who may be very popular with the Senate, but he may infuriate everybody in the House. Now Hamilton and Frank Moore would know that. That doesn't necessarily disqualify him. You may have somebody on there that you couldn't get approved over there, that the Black Caucus or the Republicans would be absolutely opposed to—for some maybe good reason. So there's a whole swarm of things that you would call politics. What's distasteful, generally, is where a President or a politician does something obviously designed to help him politically when it's a controversial thing. That's what I think you all are talking about.

HARGROVE: That's the area I'm pulling for. Can I just ask one more question?

KIRBO: Let me give you one example now that Jimmy will do sometimes, at least as I construe it. I don't ever ask him about what his motive is or anything like that, but I have pretty good eyes. For instance, in the energy situation where he had all these self-interest things over there going against him. The vote is close, and he may have a press conference or in a speech somewhere talk about the big oil companies. He says it's going to hurt the little guy, or he wants some money for the poor, or something like that—not trying to get himself reelected, but trying

to put pressure on the Senate. Now that's arguable whether you ought to do it or not, but you have to take out after the guys and make it uncomfortable for them to do things.

There are a lot of things in that category. But don't misunderstand me. Jimmy tried to act in a way so that people would want to reelect him. I would say he did that on everything. But sometimes, as I have told you, where it's just obvious, like the Panama Canal, he knew very well that—particularly in the South—that was bad, yet so obviously in the national interest that he got more support from a lot of people for that same reason.

HARGROVE: So it's not that he was oblivious to political advice or didn't welcome it. He would just disregard it sometimes.

KIRBO: That's right, just disregard it.

HARGROVE: It sounds like it would be a good example.

YOUNG: You get the impression—tell me if I'm incorrect—that he would try to start out, usually start out from other considerations than the political ones. If you'd had political considerations totally in mind, you probably wouldn't want to try reorganization in Georgia.

KIRBO: Now getting back to Hamilton, for instance. He ended up in charge of the Panama Canal operation, and he was doing what I visualized. While that was going on, he wasn't running the staff like he would have if he'd have been the Chief of Staff. And there's a lot to be said, to tell you the truth, for not having a Chief of Staff. It gives him a hell of a lot of power, and unless you're absolutely certain about who you have, you can come to some bad ends.

It looked to me as if you can use a name rather loosely, and that's what I think I'd do if I was President. I would call them that if Washington wanted them called Chief of Staff. But I'd let it be known that they had a limitation on what they could do. But a lot of things can go on (and I'm sure go on) in all governmental setups that are not in the President's interest or in the government's interest.

It's not always bad people who are doing it. They think it's in the government's interest because it might be in their interest. There's a lot of payoff going on between the press and the people in the White House or in the Cabinet, and they sort of sang for their supper, both of them. Bob Strauss is an expert on it. He knows how to criticize a little bit to where he's newsworthy. I don't believe he can talk about his wife without saying a little something in there that would be printable. But he stays within a legitimate line, and he's loyal to whoever he's working with. If you tell him it's got to be this way on something, he doesn't ask any questions. But that's not true with a lot of them.

You'll see an article—Jack Anderson's column or somebody else's column—bragging about somebody in the White House. The *Washington Post*—they're saying what a good job this guy's doing. You know that so and so has just given a leak or something, and it just goes on and on. Some of it is not all that bad. It's happening to Reagan and them now. When somebody is opposed to something, after you get up a policy on it, they let out a leak.

STRONG: Is that what you meant earlier when you said you fault the administration for not handling its press relations well and protecting its image? Or were you thinking of something different?

KIRBO: No, I was just comparing it with Reagan. There's just a continuous stream of stories coming out of there about what a great government it is. It's really little stuff that simple people could understand. It's got something to do with popularity. I know I saw in there the other day where they quoted him as saying that when you get up to your ankles in alligators, you should remember that the purpose was to drain the swamp. They were saying that in the army when I was there about forty years ago. It was something new of his that he said very often. A lot of little things like that are meaningful.

STRONG: Were there periods when the administration considered these kinds of problems and tried to make some changes? I wonder if maybe you could tell us something about the Camp David meetings in the summer of '79.

YOUNG: I'd be interested in knowing that connection, what the analysis was of the situation the President made of it, and how he saw that situation. He had so much from the press—second-guessing it and all—and it does appear to me that this was a point in which—not the first time, but the most public time the President tried to come to grips with a whole barrel of problems.

KIRBO: Well, I'm not sure I can help you out. I think what started the thing was Jimmy was getting a lot of complaints around the country about the government. The blacks were giving him heck about the way they were being treated. They were really being treated pretty well, but they were complaining. This Moral Majority thing was beginning to quietly get involved in politics. I was beginning to see that. I'd watch these religious services on TV sometimes on Sunday morning. I like to hear these gospel songs, and sometimes you had to listen to [Jerry] Falwell before they got to that. But I began to see some of that stuff and began to hear all around the country they were giving Jimmy trouble about one thing or another.

Pat Caddell came in with some bad stuff about people's attitudes. The staff was reporting about some of the departments—the Secretary of the Treasury's office, at Califano's place—something about disloyalty, and about a guy in the Department of Transportation. So there was grim-looking information about what people were thinking sent back. One of the things I remember is that everybody thought the government—politicians and everybody—was trying to screw them. They were just down on the government.

The best I could tell, Jimmy got to thinking about that and thinking, *Well, maybe that's my fault, and something needs to be done. Maybe I'm not doing as good a job as I ought to be.* He knew that it's an important factor in war and in peace to have the support of the people. I think he decided that he needed to get out of Washington and sit down and look at the thing. I think he had talked to several people, and most of them advised him not to do it. He called me up and asked me to come up there and plan to stay a week.

Another thing was the energy crisis. He hadn't been able to get a focus on what ought to be done, and in the back of my mind, as this thing progressed, I got to feeling that maybe the main purpose was to try to get a consensus on what the government ought to do and to get the people behind it. One of the main items was energy, because that was killing business, and it was killing Carter two ways.

It was about to break the warehouse, but it was hurting him politically. I didn't have any strong feelings about it when I got up there, and he wanted to do it, and he didn't have a program. He just wanted to address certain issues. And particularly on the energy thing, I thought it was a great thing. He got a consensus on what ought to be done and had all the interests pretty well represented up there. I know we got some Senators in there—[Wendell H.] Ford from Kentucky was one of them. He was sometimes sort of difficult. He got in there and lined up with us, but it was an interesting meeting. I didn't say a lot. I just sat in and took in all the discussions. It was interesting that he'd speak about it in his book.

One night after he got through with all the formal meetings, we had a crowd over there, eight or ten of us, over at his quarters. We sat on the floor. He had two or three of these, but this was the best one, and he just told everybody "Now I want you to tell me how you feel about the government, and I don't want you to pull any punches. You just say whatever you want to say about it." This black man, Jackson from Chicago—was his first name Jesse?—was there, and he was never at a loss for words. That sort of floored ole Jesse, and he said, "Now if you got anybody you don't like you think's doing bad in government, just go right ahead and tell me about it right now. I might not pay any attention to you, and I might." So we just talked on and on and on. I really enjoyed it, and learned a lot.

He hated to fire Califano. He was a strong man in a tough place over there. In some respects he was doing a good job, but he had his own kingdom, and he did some things and got some reports. He was sort of like [Henry] Kissinger when he went out on a trip. He had an entourage and that sort of thing. It was a little different style than Carter liked. He was somewhat reluctant with all that.

[redacted]

JONES: Did you reconsider coming to Washington at this point? Was that ever raised? Did the President ever ask you in all the discussions about reshuffling?

KIRBO: No, I think he passed me on that. It turned out maybe it was the best thing after all. I don't think he lost any management by me not being up there. Maybe I could have helped out some in politics. Jimmy needed me. Where he needed protection was with the Congress so that he could be more conservative like he wanted to be. He didn't have enough support up there. Congress was a Democratic Congress, basically liberal, overpoweringly liberal. And, you know, you just fight so long on those things and don't get anywhere.

I think maybe I could have helped him some. I kept talking with him about that. One thing I couldn't figure out—and nobody else could—was how to deal with the Moral Majority. I saw that thing getting really rough on the TV hour. Falwell had a Senator on one of the stations, and talked about—the others would, too—about conservatism in government and in getting into those things. You could tell they were aimed right at Carter. I talked with him about that. Rosalynn did too. But I finally quit talking about it. There really was not a thing you could do. You couldn't jump on the church, or jump on the preacher, or anything like that. A lot of those people were people who supported Jimmy, and if they knew the true facts, they'd still support him. That's what hurt us. It hurt him. He knew it was a serious problem. He was talking with Rosalynn and me about it and said, "Well, you don't want me to get out, do you? Because I'm going to run."

But there was no discussion about me going up there. When I'd get up there I'd want to stay and help him, and then I'd get down here and get tangled up. [redacted] Then someone got out the rumor that we financed the campaign out of the warehouse. It meant a grand jury investigation. I spent several hundred hours fooling around with that thing and appeared before the grand jury here and in Washington. And that darned Jack Anderson thing about me and this Vesco, that crazy thing. I had to go through that. I just had my cork pulled; but he would have been in quite a fix if I hadn't been there to hold that warehouse.

TRUMAN: There was a time during that retreat up at Camp David when the President sent the staff out of the room when the discussion was about the White House staff. As I remember, he even mentions that in his book, but he doesn't go into any detail about what the discussions were about, what the criticisms and the evaluations were about. Was that a session where you were present?

KIRBO: I think I was there. I really don't recall. I do remember that he told them—He got all of the staff out, and he told them they could criticize the staff. By that time, the staff had gotten to where they were getting along pretty well with most of the people, and I don't recall any significant things being said about the staff.

HARGROVE: Did you have a hand in bringing Lloyd Cutler into the government after that?

KIRBO: Well, some. Jimmy talked about it. We had decided a good deal earlier to get somebody else. It was hard to get anybody. We were hoping to get somebody outside of Washington, and I don't know who put Lloyd's name in there. But when I saw it, I knew Lloyd would be all right, and I talked it over with him and two or three others. To my surprise, Lloyd was willing to come. That's one of the jobs that I might have considered if I went up there, although I wanted to be free and to trouble-shoot rather than have any particular responsibility.

HARGROVE: I remember a story describing a meeting that you held with Clark Clifford, perhaps Cutler—I'm not sure—a number of Democratic status types, about the President. You were trying to find out what they thought, and they were critical of him. Do you remember this meeting? Did you hold more than one of these, and were these useful?

KIRBO: I can't remember who all was there.

HARGROVE: Clifford was one name that I do remember.

KIRBO: Yes, I know I met with him a good bit. I remember one or more of those meetings. You've got one thing about Washington: You never got diverse views. They were standard stories that you can hear anywhere in Washington. The standard story you hear out of them is that there are a lot of wise men here in Washington. And the trouble with Carter is he doesn't have a kitchen cabinet and calling them the wise men, that was it. They would tell about the complaints that they were hearing from the Senators about Hamilton, Frank, or somebody over in the White House, and things of that sort. Really, other than saying we had poor public relations people in Washington, they really weren't saying we ought to advise Joe Blow or the Secretary of State how to do a good job or something like that.

Now I'll tell you the truth. I don't really find many people who conclude that Carter had made many policy decisions that weren't correct. As a matter of fact, Reagan is begrudgingly having a problem of being right in the same rut, although he's given it a little different name. But he really gave careful consideration. He got a lot of good advice on policy, basic policy, and when we did a poor job, everybody thought we were making decisions, and the businessmen didn't know a thing about it. I'll bet you there were more businessmen running into the White House when Carter was in the government than they have had in the last five Presidents: the steel people, the oil people, all kinds of people.

They would come in there, and they'd have a meeting. Sometimes there would be three, and sometimes there would be thirty. Nobody would ever hear about it. They just didn't do a good job. It wasn't on only that. It was in all kinds of areas: blacks, Jews, Mexicans. I even met with the catfish farmers and had a very interesting meeting. They got heard, but those people's idea of a satisfactory meeting is where you agree to give them whatever they want. That's the way I thought of that operation up there more than anything else. Having a steady, constant look at what the President was doing and putting it out on TV, or the paper, or whatever in an appetizing way—that would give dignity and interest to the people. I think Reagan and his people are doing a good job of that. Of course, Reagan knows better how to do that himself.

HARGROVE: That was something I was going to ask. Is this a matter of personal talent or a dramatic person?

KIRBO: A lot of that is talent with Reagan, but a lot of it is—Carter had a policy about not making somebody else say the bad things. He'd get up there, just like at the failure of the rescue mission. He got up early in the morning and got on the thing, and I almost cried when I found out about him and saw him getting up there. With Reagan, they probably wouldn't have awakened him. They would probably get the Secretary of Defense to announce the thing. But he would do that. On a lot of things he ought to let somebody else take the thing, but he just had a practice that if there was something bad happening, he thought the head man ought to do it.

YOUNG: He never dumped on anybody, did he?

KIRBO: You know, that's a fault he had. Many people who really had treated him badly. I forget the name of this fellow we had on the staff; he was really a competent, skillful fellow. But he didn't resign, He was fired, and Jimmy protected him. He went around—I really don't want to use his name—but Jimmy called him in twice before he had to leave and let him resign.

He went around and made money lecturing, telling what a solid fellow he was for resigning on the basis of conscience. But he had helped us, and I tell you what Jimmy does have is somewhat like [Harry S.] Truman. If a person ever really does something for him and helps him, even if they mistreat him later on, he never says anything bad about them.

Bob Woodruff is that way out at the Coca-Cola plant. Once a fellow ever gets to be a good friend of Bob's, he won't die in poverty. If he's in trouble, he comes to Bob, he remembers him for his help. Well, Jimmy's that way, and he really doesn't want to hurt anybody. I like that about him. I never have seen him set out and say, "Well, I'm going to work on that idiot," or something like that. He'd just wipe a fellow off the list and forget about him. But I sure did hate to see that.

TRUMAN: On the area of public policy, I was interested in some of the press reports that you had been involved in the screening process at the time of the new chairman of the board of the Federal Reserve, Paul Volcker. I'm just curious, partly because some of the conversations we've had raised questions, at least in my mind, about just how knowledgeable the President was with respect to large-scale economic problems. What kinds of considerations in what order went into the selection of Volcker? Were these kinds of things discussed?

KIRBO: I would only know about my conversation with him. When something like that came up, even before it came up, he got into the question of [Arthur F.] Burns. There were a lot of people, particularly banking people, who were interested in who got that, and there was some politicking about it, particularly with Burns. I don't know about Volcker. But I had people talk to me about Volcker. Volcker was pretty well accepted in the banking community as sound, conservative, nonpolitical—more or less nonpolitical—and acceptable to the people in the financial community.

I talked to Jimmy about it, and I got the impression that he had already made up his mind, and it was going to be Volcker. The conservative thing wouldn't bother him. For the most part, I think he was happy with Volcker. During the campaign, I called Jimmy up one morning, and I told him I thought Volcker was—There began to be some feeling around from some of the people I was in touch with that he had just decided not to do anything during the campaign regardless. They thought the time had come to cut and start the interest rates down some—whatever the money supply or something or other had happened—and he was holding off on that account. And I told him I thought he ought to get after him about it. I think he popped off publicly once or twice about it, and I don't know if he did anything or not. I had really no reason to know who ought to be on the thing, to tell you the truth. I had the feeling that they needed somebody other than Burns. I didn't particularly dislike Burns, but I just thought he had served his term.

TRUMAN: Well, [G. William] Miller had of course been in there anyhow before Volcker.

KIRBO: I liked Miller, and Jimmy did, too. We were very satisfied with Miller. And I really believe the transition would have been smoother with Miller than with Volcker. But I didn't have any particular candidate, and Jimmy was very concerned about that because he was very concerned about the economy. As you always do, you get five different areas of opposite advice about what ought to be done.

HARGROVE: I asked him a question about it, that he was frustrated by this conflicting economic advice. Did he convey that to you?

KIRBO: Yes. Now he generally liked to get conflicting advice, but he got more than he could stand on the economy. And I must say it hasn't changed a damn bit. I'm sure Reagan is getting the same.

I'll tell you something else he did that you might be interested in. If he had something on his mind or something about the automobile business, he would call the operator and tell her to get the head of General Motors if it was eleven o'clock at night or six o'clock in the morning. Or the Ford Motor Company. He would say, "I want to know what the answer to this is. Tell me about it." He'd talk with them a while, and eventually they'd probably send a man down to the White House and tell him all about it. If it was a labor problem, he'd call up the head of some labor union. If it was an agriculture problem, he'd probably call D. W. Brooks in Atlanta. A banking matter, he'd call the head of some bank. And he'd call all around the country talking to people about that thing. Whatever the issues were that were troubling, he got a pretty good consensus on the thing.

HARGROVE: This was not known. The impression was probably the opposite.

YOUNG: Yet I have heard businessmen favorably compare their access to the White House under Carter with Reagan. Why do these impressions—Why do they get such currency that they didn't know what he was doing?

KIRBO: I think that's absolutely true. I don't think it did a lot of good with anything. They began to tell me before he was elected—you know during the campaign I worked on them a lot because most of them were not inclined to support him—but a lot of them, the oil people, the trucking people, the airplane people, all said, "Well, we can't get heard. They just don't know what goes on outside." By the second year they began to tell me, "Well, I don't want to get heard any more. We've been heard all we want to. He just won't do what we want him to."

But there are a lot of great things—not great things, but interesting things—about his relationship with different people. I remember there was always something bad in the press about [Helmut] Schmidt of Germany—that he and Schmidt didn't get along. A lot of times we'd go to watch a movie or something down in the White House, just the two of us and Rosalynn. Sometimes it would be bowling, and Schmidt would call him and we'd have to stop the movie. They'd sit there and talk twenty to thirty minutes and laugh. It seemed to me they were getting along fine and then—

Well, I wish he had made it another term, but it didn't seem to be in the cards.

JONES: Would it have been in the cards if it had not been for the hostage crisis?

KIRBO: It was two things, I believe, that got him. I watched the polls very carefully and was always confident because there were always more than fifty percent of the people who thought he was honest and was trying to do a good job. After a period of time, there was so much written and on the TV about ineptitude and that sort of thing, but among practically everybody, there was a wide agreement that he was working hard, he was honest, and all this sort of thing. They had a good feeling about that. My experience with polls is that as long as you've got that, it's difficult to beat a fellow because when the issues are joined and they get to wondering about this and that, they have to say, "Well, this guy's clean. I think I want to go with him." Carter has always won on close races, and that's one of the things that I think has saved him.

But the Kennedy thing, and the party, and the hostage thing—all of those things, and [John B.] Anderson. We were strong enough to beat Kennedy, but I don't know whether you realize it, but you can get worn out in a campaign. That is, your people who are working for you get worn out, money can run out. But more importantly, people can get tired of hearing about you. And very often you see a fellow get the nomination and then run, and he goes down; people just get tired of hearing about Joe Blow being a good man. They finally get fed up.

Where we ran against Kennedy—and if he had gotten out when people always get out in the past, when you've got more than enough votes to nominate you, they would have supported Jimmy. If our people had been rested up, we would have had several million dollars more money. But we had to continue to run, and then we had to fight in the convention. And we unwisely agreed to some planks in there that really hurt us—to satisfy the Kennedy people, and then gave him half a million dollars of our money that satisfied his staff, and then didn't get a bit of help out of it. We just never got over that, those people. Then right on top of that, that hostage thing. The pattern ran till it just ran out. There toward the end, Jimmy started easing back up, and it would look like it was a good chance that the people were saying, "Well, the hell with it. He's a good guy. We're going to go on like that." But it just went up like that, and then all of a sudden the thing started to go on down.

Anderson was part of the thing. If he hadn't been in there—a lot of these Kennedy people voted for Anderson to give them an out on it. If they were faced with not voting at all or voting for Reagan, they'd have probably voted for Carter. They could have. It's easy to say one or two things, but I think people—as they very often do—just wanted to try something else. They just got enough of that. Later on, they might have changed their minds, but for the time being, they got all they wanted to hear about it, whatever that happened to be. I doubt if there would have been a lot of difference. I think if Carter could have gotten control of the Congress, he would have been trying to balance the budget. I think he would have done it the same way he was doing the energy thing—that is, gradually.

I think in the long run, what's going on is really uneconomical, and we are going to have to pay for it because we are developing more and more, particularly black people, who are not qualified and not educated. That problem is going to get bigger, and it was moving a little bit in the other direction, not much. Something that Carter knew—and I'm not sure Reagan knows—is that you

can—in doing the budget or anything else—you can just get people so low, and then you are going to have Miami's and the like. I hope we don't get those things.

TRUMAN: I've received an impression from a number of our conversations that raised a question in my mind, again a somewhat hypothetical one. The President, the people immediately around him—many of whom I did not interview, but I did get to sit in on the interview we had with Jody Powell, whom I liked very much, and who seemed to be obviously a very bright man. But I've had the impression that one of the handicaps the President may have had was particularly the view there only now and again and after Bert Lance left that there was nobody close to him who was senior in age and had that kind of long experience and maturity. There was an age gap, if you will, between the President and the key group of Jordan, Powell, and Eizenstat. There was a gap in there that they were too young to be able to fill adequately to help the President. He needed somebody of your maturity or Bert Lance's maturity—not that your contributions could be in any sense identical, but comparable in some way—to help him.

KIRBO: Well, that may be, and maybe in the operation of the White House that has validity. On issues and actions, Hamilton and Jody had really nothing—and Frank—had nothing to do with decisions about what would be done in the economy, what would be done with respect to welfare or military decisions and things like that. He had people in each area that he relied on. For instance, in the Secretary of State area, as time went on, it turned out that the deputy was a sound, strong, good man. He relied on him more and more as time went on.

HARGROVE: Deputy Secretary [Warren] Christopher.

KIRBO: Christopher. And that's an area where you can get into a sort of a—where he made a political judgment there that might interest you. All of us really wanted to appoint Christopher, but we had a political problem over in the Senate, and we had a stature problem in Europe about who took that position. [Cyrus] Vance had been sick a good bit of the time, and Jimmy had been relying on Christopher a good bit. The political judgment was that it would stabilize things for Muskie to be in there, and he'd had various positions and was well-known. It turned out that it was accurate. He got good press all over the world.

Hamilton was very close to Christopher. He wanted Christopher, but he recognized that it was the best thing to do to go with Muskie, and they would try to talk Christopher into staying, which he did. One area in which he had so much advice was economy, but the budget director was sick, too. But I don't think he had that, so far as mature judgment on the issues and projects and things of that sort, but on day-to-day things that I guess you were talking about.

TRUMAN: I was thinking of day-to-day things in the White House and was thinking of the point that you yourself have raised about the problem of the President's image, how the President used his press time, so to speak. To give my own biases, I have always felt that the poorest advice that President Carter could have had was to give a television speech, because he didn't give a good one. He ought to have had press conferences all the time, because these press conferences were brilliant. The contrast between Carter and Reagan shows up in the press conferences, because Carter knew what he was talking about, and he spoke the English language like a master. His choice of words was brilliant, and he could run circles around anybody in the

Washington press corps who was in that room. That was the way it seemed to me. More of that would have been far more effective than formal speech making.

KIRBO: That was an issue. There are two sides to that: One is that in a press conference you can't control what comes out, except when you make your own little speech. But a press conference also reaches a limited audience that you can get on prime time on TV on a big issue—if you can get them on there, and you can get pretty good time. That was something we debated all the time. We had a difference of opinion about the debate. I don't think we would have ever debated Reagan—the second time, I mean—but we did actually debate him. I don't think we would have done that but for the fact that Bob Strauss jumped the gun on me. He was the campaign manager.

I know I was sure—We felt like in the beginning that the President ought to be willing to debate an issue. And Reagan procrastinated that he didn't want to do it unless Anderson was on there or something like that. And then later on, at the last minute, Reagan decided he wanted the debate. But I figured, as we used to do, we'd have time to chat about that. The first thing I knew, Bob Strauss had announced that everyone wanted to hear the President speak. So he sort of had it going, and Carter must have agreed.

But I didn't want him to debate then. I thought that Jimmy would say, "Well, he's had his opportunity to debate, and I've got other things scheduled and am working on this hostage thing, and it just won't do." However, Jimmy gave me a copy of Governor [Pat] Brown's—the older Brown—book that he wrote about Reagan's campaign, which was a constant complaint of him being outdone by Reagan by little, petty tricks and things rather than substance. I'm accustomed to running up against lawyers. When you get one who's intellectually dishonest, there isn't a single thing you can do about it. You just can either do it yourself, or you can just leave it off. But a lot of times, you can't leave it off. You just do the best you can.

Carter was aware of that; he read it. We were over there practicing for the debate, and I remember they were all telling him what to say about this and what to say about that. And he said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing. I've got an answer to everything, but there's one statement that he makes that I haven't been able to think up a good answer to." I had the same trouble. That is, why is it better for the government to spend money than the people to spend it? Most anybody can understand it. It sounds true, but it might not have any meaning at all.

Well, that's one of the things Reagan had. It gave him a chance, though, that he badly needed to explain to the people that he wasn't dangerous. It was all in the polls. That's what disturbed them; indeed most of the Jewish people were disturbed about that. And he did an excellent job. It was bound to be calculated to clear that up, and that was one of the things that showed in the poll the next morning. They didn't feel he was dangerous. They thought he was a pretty nice fellow who was interested in people and things like that. But if you do not debate, and you get beaten, you figure, well, that's where you went wrong: You didn't debate.

YOUNG: Do you think, in retrospect, that Carter's political flanks could have been protected better for him than they were?

KIRBO: I think so.

HARGROVE: That's part of the overall public relations problem.

KIRBO: You've got to have his cooperation, for one thing. It was just some things that he was doing. There were times he appointed a black person, he was hurting himself. There were times he appointed a woman. We had Griffin out fighting with the Senators on minority appointments for judges, and they agreed—particularly in the South, and some in the North. But on appointing minorities, they were all in favor of appointing minorities, but they said they couldn't find any qualified in many of the states. So Jimmy just said, "Well, we just won't have any appointment." That was just going on.

There's one thing that I feel still exists in politics: Race is still a substantial factor, and "balancing the budget" is a code word. I don't think it was designed, but it's discussed maybe, but it's that way. And when Reagan and his people talk about all the good, sound, old things about balancing the budget, and saving money, and doing these things, he's talking about cutting out food stamps and giving all the money to the black people. That's what he's talking about. It's popular as hell, and it's not all rednecks. It's in a lot of minorities. The Mexicans, some of them feel that way. And a lot of the conservative people all over the country do. And that's something we were stuck with, and we were guilty of that and guilty of wasting money with some of it. There isn't any way to do those things without wasting money, just like you can't build a ship without wasting money. You can't farm without wasting money.

If the thing was opened back up now, and Carter ran against Reagan and said, "This has been bad. You've got no work and all these people. We're going to have job programs, and we're going to get the Medicaid and all that sort of thing," I think he'd get badly beaten. I think Reagan would lose some of the labor support he's gotten. But I think there are a lot of them, particularly the ones who have jobs, who will still vote for him. That's just a fact of life. Ask the Moral Majority. That's exactly what they're talking about.

YOUNG: Do you think the theme that we heard so much about from the press has been greatly overrated as a factor in assessing the Carter administration? That is, the running against Washington and all the bad-mouthing and complaints you heard about Washington. Do you think that that has been blown out of all proportion to what really were Carter's relations with Washington?

KIRBO: He did give Washington hell when he was running. I know I ran into how deep it was. It was in Maryland. We'd been doing well in the primaries, and we hit Maryland up there, and they took a poll. They sent me the poll of an area up there around Baltimore, and it was terrible. I thought maybe there was something wrong with the figures. Sometimes you do find mistakes. I had found some in Florida that were mistaken and redid them. But I flew up there and got Ben Civiletti to send me somebody who could explain the territory around there. It turned out it was Washington people, bureaucrats all back in there.

JONES: Montgomery County.

KIRBO: They had to send Jimmy through there cussing the government about the tax program, how bad the tax thing was, and all these IRS people were scattered all over the place. So we got hold of them and got him off of that in those areas.

JONES: Reagan ran against Washington, too.

KIRBO: That faded out. Reagan is getting along all right with Washington, and the reason is they are spending a lot of money in defense, and that affects the whole areas over there. They are also having events over there, and Reagan and his people go and make a little short talk and all that. They've got something—I guess forty or fifty things or more—that the President for the last sixty years, they tell you, has been to. Most of them are related to the press. And if the President goes, he spends all of his time going over and writing speeches for them.

Jimmy went for a while, and he just quit. You just could hardly drag him over there. That put them off, but you see he was trying to cut down expenses himself. But with the Democrats, and the only help he was getting mostly was from the Republicans. He told me on many occasions that about the only help he was getting to balance the budget was from the Republicans, even on the oil thing. He got a good deal of help out of the Republicans in certain areas.

HARGROVE: Do you think regional prejudice was part of the media? Did you sense that?

KIRBO: Yes. I figured it would be. I think it's natural and not anything necessarily wicked. But Carter baffled them. They were expecting sort of a hick fellow, and they found out he knew more about issues than they thought he would, and he could handle himself in a speech or debate. He could do most anything they could do.

YOUNG: And they never forgave him for it.

KIRBO: We had a lot of friends up there, a lot of people, but they've got a certain way they want things done. Mainly they want to get involved in it. They want to be a part of the White House. If not, they want to be a part of something else, and it's their place, and they want to get into the thing.

Carter liked to fish. He liked to go to Camp David and work. That's another place I enjoyed seeing. Not long after he was President, he invited Hubert Humphrey and his wife up there, and Hubert thanked him with tears in his eyes. He said he had never been permitted to go to Camp David. The Washington thing was that you just don't have ordinary people up there. Jimmy would let his staff come up there every now and then and bring their children. I've been up there sometimes when they'd have fifty or sixty people up there, all over the place. But that was not according to the way they wanted it. They wanted a regal operation, and some of the people liked it better that way. I think Reagan, with some of his operations—militaristic shows and things—is calculated and is best for them.

JONES: I have a couple of things from this morning really, but they go to the heart of the Carter Presidency. This morning, on three or four occasions, when you were describing Carter in the earlier period, you admired the fact that he was "organized to a T," as you put it. One of the

criticisms you had of the White House operation, or you were critical of, was that it was too open. We've heard others—different words, but similar kinds of characterization—and that confuses me, because people I know who are organized to a T, organize other things that they are part of to a T as well. Apparently, this wasn't necessarily the case in the White House. Am I correct?

KIRBO: No, I say open. What I mean is that you don't hide things, and when the allegation was made or a question came up, he got the papers and spread them out. In addition to that, there were a lot of things that he wanted to do publicly. He'd had these town meetings and things like that. But just like the Billy Carter thing, he made notes, and when it came up, he got his secretary to go through his diary and see if there was anything about that in there. He knew there was something in there. And when Civiletti said he had no discussion with Carter about the thing, had not told him what to do or advised him about it or something like that, it was technically correct, but it was subject to a kind of construction problem. Carter brought that out, and he told Lloyd Cutler to get hold of Ben and show his notes to him.

JONES: I see. Well, I misunderstood. I thought you were being critical of what some others have been critical of in the White House staff, that it was sort of porous, that there were too many group representatives, that it wasn't well ordered enough, but your—

KIRBO: Well, I think there is some justification for what you said. There were too many leaks.

JONES: Not enough discipline, some people said.

KIRBO: And the trouble about that is that there's not a lot you can do about that. Now we may have had more because we did have a foreseeable future. Whenever you get a black or Mexican in there, they are loyal to the country, but they are also loyal to their concerns. And they're apt to tell people—women are the same way. You get a woman in there—most of them, not all of them, but some of them—and also political people, people who have been in Washington and been in politics. They've just got sources that they talk to about things.

For instance, Griffin Bell would like to be a dictator over whatever he surveys. And the Justice Department, he hadn't been in there long before he got all of them in, his lawyers, and he told them that he thought it was a matter of ethics that they were leaking things, and that his people over there were leaking plans of indicting somebody that they think ought not to be indicted or vice versa. They all leaked the thing out to try to screw it up. And he was just going to give them hell. He was going to disbar them or do something. So they called in the FBI, trying to catch them and all that. Finally, it ended up he got them all over there and told them that he found out he couldn't stop the leaks. All he could do would be to ask them to try to be accurate.

JONES: My other question from this morning is that at one point, you observed that you generally had the same goals and reactions, you and the President. How did you come to know that? Was it over issues, or the discussion of issues? And did it continue throughout his Presidency?

KIRBO: Yes, we talked about issues, and we developed platforms at various times when he was running. I heard him speak and debate and every other thing politicians do. I think I know what his goals are and how he will react to an issue, and they are compatible with my views. I know how he feels about the blacks, and Jimmy and I feel the same way. He's a conservative. He's realistically conservative. He realistically thinks you ought to try to balance the budget, but there are times when you need to go in debt.

JONES: Were there any areas that would have developed where you weren't compatible?

KIRBO: I don't recall any. I don't know whether this is an issue, but as for this idea of government having to be open, I think I'd be as open as I could afford to be.

JONES: That wasn't a calculated position on his part. I think it was part of his nature. Don't you feel that way?

KIRBO: Yes. He had a man he appointed, he was a good man, at the head of the GBI [Georgia Bureau of Investigation], which in his administration was head of the state patrol, over the state patrol and also the investigative branch. The guy screwed up some way or another, and it was leaked out that he made a fifty or a hundred thousand dollar mistake or maybe more than that. And Jimmy said—they asked him about it, and he said he didn't know; he'd check into it. It turned out he had. He made them get up a report of the thing and attach all the documents to prove it. In the news conference they said it was true, it was inexcusable, turn over the records. He didn't fire the guy. He said it was an inexcusable error.

The way things are operated over there, they ordinarily would say they're looking into it. About a month later, they'd say that the thing is being compromised or something like that. The first thing you know, it would disappear. But generally, for instance, on the Billy Carter thing, he sent over to the Senate—and I wouldn't give the Senate anything if I were President. It's just like giving the enemy a gun to shoot you with. He made them get up all the documents. Lloyd Cutler and the rest got up every document in his office that had that subject. A lot of them were not relevant to the accusation. He sent the whole thing. Of course, after they heard him on TV, they looked at the documents and forgot it.

A lot of times that happens, but we got up money for him in the campaign from people who customarily, when he ran for Governor, gave with the understanding that it was just a custom you didn't tell who gave you the money. A lot of people gave on both sides. They got a rumor out about some sort of skullduggery in our fund-raising, the press got into it, but there wasn't a thing to it. I had the record, and I wouldn't give it out, but what do you know if he didn't give them every bit of it.

HARGROVE: I'd like to pursue this business. You said earlier today that he was very tolerant of conflicting opinions. I asked him if he thought he was well served by the [Zbigniew] Brzezinski-Vance built-in tension duality, and he said yes he was. But I wonder if he was maybe not sensitive enough to the negative fallout from press reports about conflict within his own administration. Maybe he didn't care about that, wasn't sensitive. That's an openness.

KIRBO: Well, that was something. It was really a big negative thing, not only the first opinion, but Brzezinski just kicked up dust everywhere he went. And he did things in his conduct, thinking it was making him look great, I think, but it really turned off a lot of people.

HARGROVE: He was a master of that.

KIRBO: I liked Brzezinski, and Brzezinski is better informed than anybody Jimmy found. Now he hasn't got the judgment that Vance had, and about ninety-nine percent of the time Jimmy did what Vance recommended. But it's a typical situation, and I'm sure he planned it that way. He talked to me about Vance. I got a little worried about Brzezinski to start with, before Brzezinski started to help him, furnish him with information. He was one of the ones who Jimmy met, and he furnished Eizenstat a lot of information.

Jimmy was pretty well informed on a lot of issues before he got to running for President. I got a little concerned about Brzezinski, and some of the people began to speculate that he was going to be Secretary of State and would be a disaster. But Jimmy had told me he wanted to make a point to have lunch with Vance. I was going to call him. I'm sure he told Vance he wanted him to try to have lunch with me. Anyway, I saw him over here at the Historical Society, and they were having lunch there, so we arranged to sit together, and I talked to him. I had known Vance from a distance, but I liked what I saw.

After I had lunch with him, I talked to Jimmy, and he wanted to know what I thought about him for Secretary, and I told him. I was relieved. I figured that when he told me to have lunch with him, that's what he was thinking. But he defended Brzezinski, and I must say Brzezinski got bad-mouthed a lot of times when he wasn't guilty. Or rather, they'd say his position was such and such. And somebody would talk to Jimmy about it, and I'd find out that Vance and Brzezinski were on the same team a lot of the times. But Vance began to get sick a lot, and he was a workaholic. Jimmy got worried about him. He'd call him up early Sunday morning, and he'd find him at the office. He kept telling me he was worried about him. And he did. His face looked red all the time. I figured he had high blood pressure. But after he got out of office, he began to look better, I think. It was a blessing for him when he got out. But that was a calculated setup and a typical setup.

Eizenstat and I are good friends, but there are a lot of issues I don't agree with him on. But we've always worked as a team. He hears both sides. But I generally don't discuss issues and things other than politics with the staff. I talk to Jimmy. I usually know what he's going to do before he does. I knew the time he vetoed the budget appropriation bill, I mentioned that earlier. The political judgment in Washington was it was "politically unwise to do that."

And Strauss—I got my Washington report from Strauss, and they were his words. There was a young lady over there who was on the staff, political. She called me, and that's what she told me, the same words. So we had a meeting over there on whether to do it or not. I found that when Jimmy had a good feeling to do something, it turned out to be wise. There were times when generally we got in trouble when he let somebody talk him out of it because it was unwise for some reason.

They had been holding him back on budgetary things for some time, and I think he was about ready to explode. But we got over there at the meeting, and I think there were seven or eight of us. And everybody was called on except me. They went around there, and everybody voted no. Jimmy said, "Well, I've decided I want to veto, so Hamilton, tell Jody to get out and get ready," and that was it. Everybody was then in favor of it.

I've thought about some things I've forgotten. As I told you, I haven't kept any notes purposely.

HARGROVE: Do you think your vantage point as an outsider was of some value to you as an advisor to the President?

KIRBO: I think there was some virtue, some advantage to hearing things from people. Also, I got some good readings and helped work out some things by being able to communicate with businessmen, lobbying people who were taking one position. A lot of times these associations and their lobbyists don't really represent the consensus of their people. When you can find out about that and sort of cut through it—and some of our particular clients in the oil area, I found out some things that turned out to be contrary to the information Jimmy had and was a help to him.

When you get in the White House, it's like being out in a cabin in the mountains somewhere. You don't hear anything that people don't want you to hear; it's usually on purpose. Somebody comes in and talks to me because they want to talk me into talking Jimmy into doing something. After a while, you get caught up in the stuff, and you just have to break out and start thinking yourself. That's one reason Jimmy liked to go to Camp David. But as I mentioned before, you had a disadvantage: You might decide something ought to be done and leave there and say, "I'11 be back up here Tuesday, and I want to be sure to get that done." When you get back, that's gone. They've appointed that fellow, or they've done something, and it's all over with.

I want to tell you one little funny thing. This Billy Carter thing got going. I was over at the convention, I think. They called me up in the Senate and said they wanted to examine me, and I was scheduled. I had my family with me, and we were going to California, and I told them I couldn't come over there. They accommodated me and examined me over there at the hotel. So they sent two lawyers over there, and I got a room. We got in there, and they examined me for about an hour.

I could tell they weren't asking me what they wanted to ask me. They kept going around in a circle and coming back. Finally I told them I was going to have to break off, and the fellow said, "We've got one other thing we'd like to ask you." I said, "Well, let me have it." And he said, "Well, it's sort of personal. But we have the information from a very reliable source that your third wife handled the sale of planes to Libya and made umpteen dollars off the thing." And I said, "How's that?" And then he said it again. And I said, "Well, I don't have a third wife. I've just got one." And he said, "You've been divorced, haven't you?" And I said, "No, I haven't been divorced. I've stuck with the same wife I married the first time." And they kept coming back, "Are you sure you haven't been before?"

Then they got through with that, and they asked me one other thing, I forgot what it was, but it wasn't that bad. It was senseless. How in the hell they could ever get that out I don't know. Finally, I think he told me that it was my third marriage the way they heard it, but it was that I married the same one twice. That's what they came over there to find out. All they had to do was ask me on the telephone.

JONES: I'd hate to be defended by lawyers like that.

STRONG: I have just one question from this morning. You said when you first met Carter you were really impressed by how well the family worked together. Was the First Lady an important source of political advice while he was in the White House?

KIRBO: Yes, she really was, but she was very timid when I first met her, particularly about politics, and you just had to push her, shove her to get her to do things. But she had good judgment about people, and of course she had an instinctive interest in protecting Jimmy. She could tell if people were after something pretty quick, whether they were really wanting to help Jimmy and things like that.

And she had contact with a lot of women and knew their thinking about things. She discussed things a lot with Jimmy. She didn't mind differing with him. When he differed with her, that was the end of the thing. I got involved sometimes when they were on different sides. Other times, she would talk to me when she and Jimmy were crossed up on some things. She never was arguing about whether they ought to have a raid or not, whether they ought to do something. She was not different from most anybody's wife in the same position. Now where she was good, she was a good campaigner. She'd brag on Jimmy and say things that he couldn't say about himself. And she would discuss anything and try to get informed on it, and she would go off to make a speech. She'd make Jimmy help her make up a subject or something like that. [redacted]

JONES: [redacted] If it had been in year two instead of year four, it would have been over and forgotten mostly by then, but it piled on top of everything else. It was bad.

KIRBO: But he could have done it. One thing that gets the average person is money—usually a politician. They hear about him putting his hand on money, just like Talmadge when his wife said he had two hundred thousand dollars or forty thousand dollars in the overcoat pocket. Well, he was gone. Well now, if Billy had done anything, he could have moved in with the fellow over there and said treacherous bad statements about him or something like that. Kicking the Queen of England or something like that he could have overcome, but when they take that large amount of money, and you've got a lot of people saying, "Yeah, old Jimmy got that money. That's where that money went," boy, that's bad medicine.

He called me up and asked me to meet him down at Sapelo Island. We were going down there and go fishing. I walked in there, and just as I walked in, the thing broke about Billy. He didn't

know a thing about it. He was in there making flies. He's got a little machine where he makes his own flies to fish with. He was sitting in there, and they brought the news to him. It was such a bad time. I understood then why Kennedy wasn't out.

YOUNG: This has been a very productive day for us. I want to thank you very much for your candor and for the time you have given us.