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SENATE DEMOCRATIC SECRETARY

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RITCHIE: I wondered if you could, from your perspective at the time, tell me about the background to Bobby Baker and his problems.

VALEO: I think I mentioned earlier some of the lead-up to his resignation. I didn't really get to know Bobby Baker until after he became majority secretary under Mansfield; but he was a very ambitious, very energetic and clever young man at the time. He had been very close to Lyndon Johnson, and served as Lyndon Johnson's floor man. He was there at all times. He would carry out Lyndon's instructions; he did not, at that time, try to operate, in my judgment, independently. He was actually Lyndon's person, and he worked that way, which meant he developed connections largely with southern senators, and other communications centers, except the Democratic liberals, through which he funneled Lyndon's intentions. Now, he may have done some interpreting of Lyndon's intentions at various times, but basically, I knew of no quarrel between Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Baker. As far as I know, they always saw eye to eye. When Baker got into trouble later, Lyndon tried to draw a little distance between himself and Baker by pointing out: "Well, nothing like this ever happened when I was

majority leader," or something to that effect. But that was an attempt to get off a sinking ship, and like most politicians, Lyndon Johnson had no use for sinking ships. So I think you start with that.

Bobby got to know the personalities in the Senate. He was quick to read character, knew their weaknesses, knew their strengths, and would be basically the principal adviser on the legislative process to Lyndon. My guess is that he fully expected to terminate his career in the Senate when Lyndon left to become vice president, and that he either wanted to go into some kind of a lobbying business or he wanted to go with Lyndon into the vice president's office and prepare perhaps for the day when Lyndon would become president. He was quite surprised when Mansfield asked him to stay on. Not only did he ask him to stay on, but he said he couldn't think of running the Senate without him. I mean, he went that far in his endorsement of him, again this being the political thing that LaGuardia always talked about: in politics you're always doing for your enemies what you should be doing for your friends.

I have to conclude that Mansfield knew the situation. He was too astute not to. He knew the dangers of a Baker. I think that his way with dealing with what he regarded as enemies of the Senate was not to recognize them as enemies, but to embrace them and then gradually, maybe spider-like, consume them and get rid of

them. I basically think that that was his whole approach. It was not naiveté for him to say Baker was the best secretary for the majority the Senate ever had, as he did later. He meant that Baker knew how to count votes, and that's all he meant, not beyond that. I can't imagine him not knowing that, even though there will be nothing in the historic record to show that he thought in those terms. Rather, people looking at the straight historical record would say: "Well, God, what an awfully naive man." That would be a natural reaction and I think a mistaken one.

When Baker decided, he must have talked it over with Lyndon Johnson at the time, and my guess is that Lyndon told him to stay on until he felt his own way, at least, in the executive branch of the government. This would, in effect, keep Lyndon's hand in the Senate. Baker already had enemies, but he had many of the same enemies that Lyndon had, so that was not unexpected. I think that Mansfield wanted it partly from the point of view of how to handle the transition. He also wanted it because he needed a point of ready communication with the southern members at that time. He knew them, and he knew them on a rather friendly, personal basis, but he also knew that they had been very responsive to Lyndon Johnson, very often through Bobby Baker. So it began on that note.

Once the session got underway, Baker suddenly realized that he had what amounted to virtually a free hand to do what he wanted in the Senate, without having to report to Mansfield. He began to develop his own range of activities, which might or might not be related to Mansfield as leader. He also began to strengthen what were already probably strong ties with Bob Kerr of Oklahoma. The key to this was that Kerr had oil money and he could use it for distribution to members who needed money to run. The amounts were nominal in that period. We talk now in millions of dollars for Senate elections; at that time we were talking about tens of thousands of dollars. Even in the most hotly contested election, I don't think anything more than a couple of hundred thousand dollars was ever spent on it. And that was a rarity. Mansfield ran on less than ten thousand; Aiken ran on less than a hundred. So you can see what actually happened, from the financial point of view. At that time, ten thousand dollars would go a great deal towards putting a member in your debt, if you gave him a ten thousand dollar contribution. I suspect, and I think this was brought out in later proceedings, that a lot of this money passed under the table.

Bobby Baker also had trouble with money. It sort of stuck to his fingers. He had difficulty distributing all that became available for campaign funds and some of it, apparently, found its

way into his own pockets. It was at this time that Jay McDonald, whom I mentioned earlier, from the state of Washington, who was then assistant secretary, probably at Magnuson's insistence in an earlier period, began to come and report that there were some terrible things going on in the Senate. I listened very intently, but I felt that I didn't know enough about it to carry any stories back to the majority leader at that point about Baker, simply because Jay McDonald, first of all, was very vague in his accusations, and I didn't feel that I could, in all honesty, endorse those without knowing a lot more about it.

Mansfield, meanwhile, went blithely on his own way, giving every support he could to Baker, except one that I recall. Baker wanted Lyndon Johnson's old office, which is now known as the Johnson Room in the Capitol. It's a beautiful Brumidi room. Johnson tried to keep it at first. Instead, Mansfield dug in on Johnson and said, "No, it's not the vice president's office, that's the little office to the side." He gave Lyndon only that little office to the side; he explained to Lyndon that it would be very, very damaging in the press if he let him keep his old office at that point. Johnson growled, but went along with the idea. It was Mansfield's way of beginning to cut down the previous regime to size, so that he could manage the Senate in his way. Up until this point he was afraid to do it, literally afraid to tackle it head on.

At this time, Mansfield was still chairman of the Rules Committee. It came to him because of his seniority, and it gave him control of the new rooms in the east front of the Capitol, which had just been completed. Nobody had ever occupied those rooms. He said he wanted them turned over to the most senior members. I drew up the list for the assignment of those rooms. And he wanted all of the rooms evenly distributed in terms of proportions within the Senate as between Republicans and Democrats. This again was a step in the direction of reducing the partisanship, but at the same time enhancing the privileges of the already fat committee chairmen. He just added more food and fuel to their already extensive powers. They again were surprised. I remember some that I approached. [John] McClellan was one, I think [John] Stennis was another. [Richard] Russell was certainly another.

These were elegant offices, the new offices on the east front, many of which Johnson had ear-marked for himself had he remained majority leader. So we went down the list, strictly by seniority. The only exception Mansfield made to this was to recognize that Margaret Chase Smith needed one of these rooms, and Mrs. [Maurine] Neuberger, who was then a member on the Democratic side. They had complained to him about no bathroom for women senators in the Capitol. There were two offices side by side which shared a bathroom, so he put the two women senators in those offices in the new east front, again endearing himself to people

like Margaret Chase Smith. He would do that whenever he could. Once having distributed these new rooms, Mansfield stepped down as chairman of the Rules Committee, elevating Everett Jordan of North Carolina to that post.

Well, I think one of the consequences of this first demonstration of leadership, if I can call it that, was that people began to recognize, or have reconfirmed their view of Mansfield as being an awfully nice guy, who really had a sense of the equality among members. However, this did not automatically translate into legislation that was wanted by the Kennedy administration. Mansfield turned again to Baker, as Johnson would have done, to try to line up votes, and Baker now, operating essentially independently, began to say, "Oh, we can't do that," or "There's no way you can get those votes," and so forth. Generally speaking, Mansfield would take that and relay it back to the White House. What Baker also found, however, at this point, was that some things were changing. For example, he could have held out, on behalf of Johnson, inducements in the form of committee assignments to members to go along. Mansfield would not have that. As I explained earlier, on the Steering Committee he had already made it clear that committee membership would be by election on the basis of people self-nominating themselves, or making their selections of preference and then the decision would be by secret ballot in the Steering Committee, which took that out of the

process of maneuver, one of Johnson's favorite devices, shall I say flim-flam, really in terms of: "I'll do this for you and you do that for me," the usual kind of thing that went on during Lyndon's tenure.

RITCHIE: Wasn't Mansfield weakening himself, in a sense, by losing that leverage?

VALEO: Yes, he was giving up a device that Johnson had clearly used to collect power. But Mansfield's view from the very beginning was there was no other way he could do it. He would not do it the Johnson way. He would run the Senate as an orderly place, and that if it failed, it would be the whole Senate that failed, not him and vice-versa. He was not going to be neither the star nor the villain in the piece. This came as a surprise. Some of the Republicans at first greeted it with disbelief. They were very skeptical. [Everett] Dirksen was then the minority leader. He was a very pleasant person. He had lived through a large part of the Johnson period as minority leader, and had learned to spar with Johnson. He was very clever on the floor. He looked for the same kind of sparring with Mansfield and got nowhere, because Mansfield would greet it with either a look of not understanding where the humor was, or whatever. So Dirksen soon changed that. He found it was no longer necessary to put on

this performance, which he was very good at, on the floor or he waited until Humphrey or some other member might be substituting for Mansfield to engage in his witty repartee.

Baker at this time had offices near the Architect of the Capitol and the doctors, down on the terrace floor, which I later occupied as secretary for the majority. One of the things I used to get from Jay McDonald was, "You ought to see the string of people going in to see Baker these days." These were mostly, apparently, lobbyists of one kind or another who had certain things they wanted to try to get. They didn't know any other channel. You couldn't go to Mansfield. Unless you were from Montana, he wouldn't even talk to you. So they went to Baker, who would listen. In that way, I think, he was building up his power, primarily by the collection of campaign money, which he would then later distribute.

On top of this, Mansfield changed the structure of the Senate Campaign Committee, which, in a sense, shut off the legitimate channels for somewhat tainted money. It could not go through the Campaign Committee because Mansfield laid down a dictum to the first chairman that the money collected by the committee would be distributed absolutely equally between all Senate candidates who were seated senators in allotments, and then if there was surplus it would go to Democratic senatorial candidates who had not been in the Senate, Democratic candidates on the outside. So basically

the Campaign Committee became a source of equality. Now, some members themselves distributed their funds because they didn't need them. They would say, "I don't need the money, I'll give it to him, he's in trouble." Mansfield said, "That's your doing, but the committee itself will treat all members with absolute equality, and so far as I know, he kept very close to that principle.

Well, in the circumstances, if Baker received campaign money, he couldn't very well put it through the Campaign Committee, because the Campaign Committee was not responsive to Mansfield, and not to him either. So I would think that a lot of it, the money that came from Kerr and others that was later distributed by Baker for campaign funds, went through Baker, that which didn't stick to his fingers. This was one aspect of Baker. He still did his usual floor work, but he was seen less and less on the floor. He'd come up just for votes and things of that sort.

He had one other thing going which was something called the Carousel. It was a hotel down in Ocean City, he was involved as an investor, and ultimately as an operator. These two things were the things that ultimately did him in. The Carousel had been building for a couple of years and was about to open in this period. This would be probably in '62-'63. I remember him talking to me about the Carousel. He said, "We're going to have a grand opening." I think somewhere the press was just beginning to get on to Baker. They had not bothered him at all during the

Lyndon period. They began to pick up stories about how he was using his limousine, which was a Senate vehicle, to run things back and forth to his hotel, which was perhaps trivial at that point, because the officers of the Senate use their cars almost as personal cars, not quite but almost. It was the accepted thing. They had to be on duty twenty-four hours, so it was not surprising that he would run out to his hotel with a Senate car. I didn't find that particularly offensive, but when the press began to get on Baker, this was one of the things they picked up. In addition to that, he borrowed cutlery from the Senate restaurant for his opening party.

He hired a bus to bring down people from the Senate for the party. I received an invitation. I didn't want to offend Baker at this point, but I also thought the better part of wisdom would be either to plead my sick father or my young son, I'm not sure which. So I decided not to go. But the party was a great success, a lot of staff people went down, a number of senators went down, and the Carousel got underway. Well, this more and more distracted Baker from his work in the Senate.

The final factor was apparently a feud with Bobby Kennedy that went all the way back to the '60 convention, or perhaps even before that. Bobby Kennedy was now attorney general and he began to look very closely at Baker's affairs, undoubtedly put the FBI on it to be sure, particularly his financial affairs. It would

have had to have been before [John] Kennedy's assassination. I can remember Baker talking to me on the floor one day, saying, "What are they trying to do downtown?" I said, "Who?" He said, "The Kennedy people. You know, Bobby Kennedy. They've had people going into my affairs, and I know it." I said, "I don't know anything about it, Bobby. I don't know the Kennedy people that well." But he had then begun to worry about a possible interference with his affairs from the Kennedy administration. Meanwhile, on the surface, everything went on as usual.

RITCHIE: When he opened the motel, and when he had the Quorum Club in the Carroll Arms across the way, didn't people begin to wonder? He was only earning twenty thousand a year from the Senate.

VALEO: This was the beginning of the concern, actually. When these things came out into the open and became associated with him, then they began to figure there was a real corruption problem with Baker.

RITCHIE: Was the Quorum Club open by that stage?

VALEO: Yes, I think so. Again, it was one of those things I was not a party to, and in this case, genuinely out of naiveté. I didn't fully appreciate what was going on.

Meanwhile, I think Jay McDonald had gotten himself fired because he had taken the story directly to Mansfield, and Mansfield didn't want to hear it. Finally Mansfield—probably at Baker's insistence—fired Jay McDonald. Magnuson made a plea for McDonald, and Mansfield said, no, he couldn't do that, that Baker didn't want him, and Baker was secretary and McDonald was his assistant. It really embittered Jay McDonald, who later became a Republican. I don't know if it was because of this, but he became a Republican out in the state of Washington at a later point.

I can't remember what particular incident triggered it, but it was something sensational in the press that finally seemed to blow the whistle on Baker. There was a big meeting in Mansfield's office. I was not a party to that meeting but I was outside. Baker was there; Kerr was there; some of the leading older members of the Democratic party. It went on for a good deal of time. Then Republicans came into the meeting. I think Sherman Cooper was one of them. I'm not absolutely sure of that, but I believe he was one of them. I think Dirksen came in at some point and John Williams. It was at that point that Baker was given a chance to resign, which he took. He resigned. Mansfield came out to me, as they were passing out to see the press, and he said, "You take over as acting majority secretary." Really, I didn't know which way to turn at that point. I knew of course what the secretary

did but I still didn't know how to count votes. I took over without knowing what that meant in terms of full responsibility. So when he came back, the first responsibility was, he said, "I want you to go down—take a lawyer—to Baker's office," and talk with Bobby Baker's secretary, a girl who later died in a plane crash out in Ocean City.

RITCHIE: Carol Tyler.

VALEO: Was it Carol Tyler? Yes. She said she wanted to go through the files to take out Baker's personal papers. He said, "You go down there and see what she takes out, and make sure the lawyer says its okay." So I took one of the policy committee lawyers and went down to the office and Tyler cleared out Baker's files. That was the first responsibility I had. By this time the FBI was hot on what was going on. I moved my office down there a couple of days later. I had my first interview with the press as acting secretary for the majority. It was a fellow from the *Washington Post*, Larry Stern. Of course, I had a couple of old friends, whom I mentioned earlier, Tony Vaccaro and Warren Duffy, from the AP and UP, because of our frequent Saturday meetings. I got a lot of national publicity at the time, began to hear from people named Valeo that I didn't even know existed.

I gave an interview to Larry Stern. We went through the interview, it was mostly on personal matters. When we got to the

end, he said, "You have a very unusual name. What is it?" I said, "Well, it's a pure Latin verb. My father was Italian. The name is valeo in Latin; if you look it up in a Latin dictionary you'll find it as such." He said, "What does it mean?" I said, "To have influence." He smiled and then used the line in the story the next day, he used it with humor, and in ways that didn't hurt me.

Well, at this point, the question came up: what to do with Baker, who was really in serious trouble. Now I began to sit in on the inner meetings of the party in the Senate as I had not done fully before. I had been at policy committee meetings and Steering Committee meetings, but where some of the linen had to be washed, I had not been in on any of that. I think Mansfield was trying to protect me, partly because he knew I was pretty naive in politics. So I began to sit in on these meetings. The decision had been made for a Senate investigation and the question was who was going to pursue it. I believe Humphrey was there, [B. Everett] Jordan, who was chairman of the Rules Committee at the time—a really fine lovable man, and a very decent human being—was there, Mansfield was there, and Smathers was there. You could kind of feel who was trying to protect Baker and who wasn't, and it was interesting to see the maneuvering that went around.

But the net result was poor Jordan got stuck with the job, as chairman of the Rules Committee. He didn't really want it. He

didn't dislike Bobby, I don't think he was particularly close to Bobby, but he didn't dislike him. As a matter of fact, Bobby had some deep-seated liberal enemies, but that was about all. He had done a lot of favors for a lot of people in the Senate. Jordan didn't want the job of doing these hearings, and the press later gave him a hard time with it—probably cost him his reelection. But the plan definitely was to go ahead with the hearings but to minimize them; don't go any further than you have to go. And Jordan had the job.

I was called as a witness for the Rules Committee hearings. It was my first appearance before a congressional committee. I remember the incident well. Jordan knew me well, and we were very good personal friends. As a matter of fact I still keep in touch with his widow, and it's twenty-five years later. The questions were routine, about when I took over as secretary. I was still only acting secretary at this point, I hadn't been elected. Mansfield kept it that way for a couple of months. So I appeared as acting secretary for the majority. What I remember most from the meeting was John Sherman Cooper, who was then the ranking minority member. He knew me, not well, but he knew me. He knew me through my association with Mansfield, and he knew that I had worked on the Foreign Relations Committee. So he began to ask me a series of questions about the Carousel and what had happened in connection with it. He wound up by asking me, "Did you go to

the opening party?" I just answered with one word, "No," no explanation or anything else. After the meeting, he caught me on the side. He said, "I had to ask you a few questions, but I don't think they hurt you." And he was right, of course. It kind of left me in the clear of being disassociated from Baker's friends and colleagues.

There were two other things that I recall from that period. This was immediately after I had taken over from Baker. The first one was an interview with an FBI man who came in. I thought he wanted to know about Baker's records and so forth, and he said, "What is this check that Baker sent to you?" I said, "Check?" He said, "Yeah, a check for \$64.28," or some such figure. I couldn't for the life of me remember it, what it could have been. I didn't remember Baker ever owing me \$64.00 or trying to bribe me with \$64.00. "Oh," I said, "my God, yes, I know what that is." I said, "That's the balance in the luncheon fund that Carol Tyler sent to me," because the secretary of the majority had custody over the funds for the Majority Policy Committee luncheons. Since he paid the bills, the members used to contribute \$25.00 or \$30.00 periodically. This was the balance that was left over, and Carol Tyler very honestly had asked me what she should do with it. I said, "Well, send it to me and I'll put it in the bank and we'll go on from there."

Actually, my present wife was then my secretary. She went down from Mansfield's office with me to take over from Baker. That's Beth Shotwell, who at that time was Beth Oliver, as I recall.

The other thing was an interview by Joseph Alsop. He called me one morning and he said, "I'd like to come in see you." He said it in this very imperious way of his. "Well, fine," I said, "anytime you want." So he came in. He said, "I want to ask you some questions, now that you've taken over in this job. Do you have any background for this?" Well, I gave him such background as I had. I said, "Well, I'll answer any questions you've got beyond that." Instead of asking me any further questions, he then immediately went into a long dissertation on how the Senate couldn't possibly run without somebody like Bobby Baker. If it wasn't Bobby Baker it would have to be somebody else, but there was no way in which the Senate could operate unless they had such a figure somewhere in the structure. The dissertation went on for at least ten or fifteen minutes. He never asked me a question. At the end of the dissertation he got up and put his hat on and said "Thank you, very much," and he left! I was absolutely flabbergasted. I had no idea what he wanted to know. He just wanted to make a speech and leave.

It was funny, because later on I mentioned the incident to Frank Meloy, who at one time, I guess, was head of the European desk in the State Department. Frank said, "I had exactly the same experience with him. He called me up one morning for breakfast. He said, 'Could you come to my house for breakfast, I want to ask you some questions about Europe.' I went over for breakfast and he said, 'Now what would you like? Would you like eggs or ham' and so forth." Frank gave him his order. Then Alsop said, "Now, I want to ask you some questions about Europe." Frank said, "He never asked me a single question. He gave me a speech about Europe. I never got my breakfast. At the end of the speech he said, 'Well, it was so nice of you to come,' and I left without breakfast!" That was Joe Alsop.

Mansfield told me a story about him once, too. This was in the very early period of our association. He said, "I was on the train going to New York and it stopped at Philadelphia. I was in the diner, and Joe Alsop came in. He sat down next to me and we started chatting. The train took off, and he said, 'Where have you been, Mike?'" Mansfield said, "What do you mean, 'where have I been'?" He said, "Are you going back to Washington?" "No, " Mansfield said, "I'm going to New York." Joe said, "Oh, Jesus, I'm on the wrong train!"

Well, the Rules Committee hearings brought out some of the manipulations of Bob Kerr in terms of campaign funding and gave a

strong indication that some of that money had stuck to Bobby Baker's personal fingers. The press got on it very heavily, of course, and the stuff came out about the club and the Carousel as well—some of it trivial, some of it of some significance. It was some time thereafter that Baker was indicted. But before that happened, the report on the Baker investigation was presented in the Senate by Jordan, with much trepidation. He was not an aggressive, contentious man. He put out what amounted to a mild report, and it was attacked, very vehemently, by Clifford Case, the New Jersey liberal Republican.

It was the only time I saw Mansfield become strictly, strictly partisan. He got the floor—I don't recall the sequence of the procedure by which he got the floor, but as I recollect there may have been a time limitation on the debate on the report. Clifford Case tried to get the floor back from him. Mansfield would not yield the floor, would not even yield for a question, and Case really hit the ceiling. He was a rather strict moralist and he knew there was something very, very fishy in the whole Baker thing and he just was furious with Mansfield, whom he liked and with whom he usually saw things the same way. But Mansfield would not yield. He felt, I think, that this was a party duty that he had to do.

It took Case a good deal of time to get over the heat that was generated in that debate. He never got the floor on the situation but he got it later on, or the next day, to make a long speech. By then the press heat had come off the Senate part of the investigation. I don't think Mansfield meant to protect Baker in this but I think he was trying to protect the Democrats and Jordan as far as that was possible. The situation was bad and Jordan's committee report, while it indicated there had been problems, did not treat the element of corruption with the kind of vehement outrage that Clifford Case and some of the other saints on the Republican side wanted at that point.

RITCHIE: John Williams made a big protest.

VALEO: John Williams also did something on it, I can't remember. He was one of the key figures.

RITCHIE: He stormed out of the hearing one day and called it a whitewash.

VALEO: Yes. Of course, he brought up a lot of stuff on the floor. I don't know who was feeding it to him, but there was a good deal of it. He was a strange man, John Williams. He did have a very puritanical streak, provided it didn't involve what you might call white-collar crimes. He seemed to be singularly blind to some of the depredations on the Treasury of big business,

or any kind of business. But he was a puritan in terms of his expectations in personal behavior particularly of public officials. He was very, very adamant on this point not only on Baker but on everyone else. One can say that in the case of Williams this was probably not partisan, although the impact of it was partisan. He probably meant it just because he was outraged by government people he felt were irresponsible with public funds.

RITCHIE: Do you recall, when you sat in on those damage control meetings, was there any concern about Lyndon Johnson's involvement in the Baker scandal?

VALEO: Oddly enough, I don't recall any reference to Lyndon on this. I don't think he was there, but I don't recall any reference as such. I think it was more the damage to the party than anything else, and how was the best way to deal with that. Mansfield, I know, favored the hearings. Some people did not want to have the hearings. Mansfield favored the hearings, felt it was necessary, that the heat was too much and that you couldn't evade it. But I don't recall that it was linked at that point to Johnson. I remember Hubert saying, "Keep it away from downtown," or something to that effect, but that was all.

RITCHIE: Do you think that Mansfield essentially gave Baker too much responsibility, or gave him too much of a long leash?

VALEO: It depends on whether you look at this long range or short range. One of the impacts of the whole Baker incident was that it resulted in practically the complete undermining of Kerr's influence, per se. He didn't live much longer after that, but the effect of this was to make people extremely wary of any kind of funds that might come from Kerr. That was one effect of it.

Given my way of doing things, yes, I would say that he gave Baker far too much leeway. But again, I think the full understanding of Mansfield's character involves a recognition of his tendency to do that, to an extraordinary degree, with people who later are destroyed by that or destroy themselves or at least have their wings clipped as a result. That's precisely what happened, not only to Baker but in a more amiable way, with the committee chairmen, which we'll get into as we go further into it. He showered them with privileges and rights, except he always would stress one-man-one-vote in the Senate, and we're all equal in the Senate. People would look at him and say "What Senate is he talking about?" But that was his approach, and ultimately it came very close to that. So if you look at it in that long-range approach, then one could say no, he didn't; he helped Baker to destroy himself in this process, which, of course, he did, politically.

RITCHIE: One of the quotes I came across was that Lyndon Johnson kept Bobby Baker too busy to get into trouble.

VALEO: Well, Lyndon was looking for all sorts of ways to get off the Baker thing. He said, "Yeah, he gave me a stereo once for a present for one of my daughters," or something, "but it was a strictly business association." Well, that was bull. It was a very close, close relationship.

RITCHIE: But the idea was that Johnson kept the Senate running so long and kept Baker running around so much that there wasn't as much time for his extracurricular activities.

VALEO: It sounds real, but I suspect that the extracurricular urge was there even before Mansfield took over the Senate. The difference was that Baker would never have thought of doing anything that would embarrass Johnson, in any circumstances. Whereas with Mansfield, he really didn't give a damn. He had, by that time, lost interest in the leadership. He felt he was cut free to do his own thing, and he did it.

RITCHIE: In Baker's memoirs, he has some sordid stories about procuring women for senators, and drunkenness, and private financial deals. He really makes the Senate seem kind of seedy at that stage. Is that a truthful or an exaggerated description?

VALEO: Of course, most of that was during the Johnson period. But bear in mind we're also talking about a period of social time, not much after the time when a Supreme Court Justice was reported to pick up a prostitute outside of Garfinckel's on Friday nights. That was Justice [Frank] Murphy, who had been governor of Michigan. So what sounds seedy in the present context may have seemed less so in that period. You didn't flaunt your vices but it was something which everybody suspected went on. There were such stories about Smathers, of course, many, many such stories, and about Jack Kennedy as well. It's hard to say who was the strongest womanizer in the Senate. I don't really know that any of them were that strong. Well, [Carl] Hayden had a reputation for this, up into his eighties—if it's any satisfaction to our older citizens! He had a very strong reputation for this.

But prostitution was pretty open in that period. Women were readily available, and the idea of linking sex with payment was not necessarily anathema—this was before it had become the free ride as it seems to be today. Basically, that was a part of Senate life, and I don't think, in the context of its time, any more corrupting than a lot of other things. Money was far less corrupting then than it is now. It's much more corrupting now. And Baker undoubtedly played the role he describes in the book. Well, I say undoubtedly; I shouldn't go that far. He may well have played

that role. He liked women himself. He used to boast about it all the time, and would have known where to find them if he were asked to find them.

RITCHIE: He considered that a legitimate part of head counting, I guess.

VALEO: Very likely! He was well known over at the Carroll Arms, where I guess the [Capitol] Police now hold forth. I don't know if he kept rooms over there, I guess he did. According to the stories, in any event, he had Carol Tyler set up in Southwest in one of the then-new townhouses in that area, and that these were supposedly the scene of parties. Again, I think there must have been a great deal of exaggeration by implication in the press stories. I don't think it was nearly as extraordinary as we make it out to be.

RITCHIE: Well, what was it like to take over as majority secretary after Bobby Baker?

VALEO: Before I get to that, I want to wind up the Baker story. I only saw Baker one more time after that in all the years. It was strictly by coincidence. It was Sunday morning. I was out with my wife and my mother who was visiting us at the time. We were walking in Georgetown and we wanted to stop to have a sandwich and we stopped at Clyde's in Georgetown, which was very crowded. The waiter finally sat us right next to Baker, who was

there with some woman. He sat about where you're sitting, and I sat facing him a little bit to his right. He immediately started up a conversation about how he was going to write a book. I had said, "Hello, Bobby," when I came in, and then dropped the conversation, but he kept persisting in trying to pursue the conversation almost to the point of trying to provoke me to hit him in the nose, I think. But I didn't. My son said, "Well, why didn't you hit him in the nose?" You know how kids are.

But he talked about the book he was going to write and how Mansfield was the worst majority leader the Senate ever had. He didn't say anything about me at this point, but he did say it about Mansfield, and that I wasn't going to look very good in his book. He said, "I was just down with Lyndon and I talked with Lyndon about something or other." I guess Johnson had left the presidency by that time. He went on for a while, and that was the end of it.

I guess what irritated me later on was that Mansfield had an interview just about this time. Somebody asked him about the Baker period; it was a press group that he had asked me to sit in with. He said, "Well, Baker was about the best majority secretary the Senate ever had." I thought it was getting a little late in the day for still holding to that line! Just as he used to say Lyndon was the best majority leader the Senate ever had. I thought he really could tone that one down a little bit, that it

was no longer necessary. But he persisted. We had a chance to edit the transcript of this interview, and I said to him, "Do you really want to leave that line in?" He said, "Well, you know, he knew how to count votes." I said, "Well, do you mind if I change that and say he was a very competent secretary for the majority, or something?" So he said, "No, go ahead and change it." But he stayed with his story right up till the end.

RITCHIE: This was probably in the '70s?

VALEO: It may have been as late as the '70s, yes. It was certainly long after the whole experience with Baker, and the Senate had already changed rather drastically at that point.

I guess Mansfield had a great capacity for keeping his eye on the main target and not being sidetracked by what would be the meat and drink of newspaper people, these small events which develop into a kind of flurry and then disappear within a week or so, or a month or a year even. He was really looking in terms of the legislative record, and in that context, one can understand a lot of the things that he was doing. I didn't fully understand it at the time, but in retrospect I can see it.

RITCHIE: Do you think one of the attractions that Baker had for Mansfield was that it freed Mansfield from having to do all the nitty-gritty of leadership?

VALEO: No, I don't think it had anything to do with that. I think it had only to do with his estimate of the power cores in the Senate and how best to deal with them. Mansfield was a hard working man, and the least of his problems was that he would have had to work a little harder. He just didn't know how to deal with that situation except in these terms. Maybe he was the only one who could have effectively dealt with it without splitting the Senate, or at least the Democrats in the Senate, wide open.

RITCHIE: Bobby Baker did have such a reputation for being the wheeler and dealer and the hard-nosed secretary for the majority. Did you find that people had that same expectation for you when you came into that position?

VALEO: No. I think they figured that anybody who followed Baker, that Mansfield would appoint to follow Baker, would have to be a somewhat totally opposite type, and if he came from the Library [of Congress], how could he possibly have any scandal attached to him? Unless he led a double intellectual life of some kind! But I think that was the answer. I was elected by acclamation then, after having been secretary for a while, handling it for two or three months. Then Mansfield thought it was safe enough to bring it up at the Caucus. I think I was great relief to them, because they knew that the Baker experience was unlikely to repeat itself, largely because Mansfield chose me to replace him and the spotlight was so strong on it. They wanted somebody who was a little

on the naive side, who could be ten points off on a vote, which I was at that point! I learned to count later, but at that period I was still pretty far off in my estimates, thinking always the best of people and assuming they would vote like I would vote on some items.

RITCHIE: Did you find that the other Democratic senators started coming to you?

VALEO: Yes, but not in the same way. No one ever approached me about "How can I get some more money" or anything like that. I never had any such approach. They knew that if Mansfield appointed me, I would be somebody very similar to him in temperament and in attitudes. So there was never any case of that. Not a single case. What I used to get—and I got it more and more frequently from Dodd Senior, Tom Dodd, as time went on: "Why doesn't Mansfield lead?" He would talk to me at great length in the lobby of the Senate. He said, "You know, we can't follow if he doesn't lead. What does he want on this?" I'd say, "Well, he wants you to vote your convictions." You know, what does *he* want?

There were some that were always looking for that. [Russell] Long of Louisiana was always irritated with him. There were flair-ups from both of these people, both I think partly alcoholic at that point, I mean the flair-ups were alcoholic. In both cases Mansfield adjourned the Senate to save them from embarrassment.

One was with Dodd, who began to make this speech quite vehemently, comparing Mansfield with Johnson—this was all extemporaneous—and saying how the Senate was going nowhere and it was ambling and doing nothing, and so forth, and they didn't have any leaders; we needed some leadership of some sort. Then Russell Long came storming on the floor in a drunken rage at another point raving against something or other and Mansfield immediately adjourned the Senate, because he knew what the situation was.

The Dodd outburst came just before Kennedy's assassination. I know that, because at that point, Mansfield was totally exasperated with the situation, and was beginning to think seriously of resigning as majority leader. He said, "I don't really think we can do it this way." He said, "I want you to write up a speech saying what we think, how we think it can be done, and say if they can't go along with that, well, it's their choice and they can decide."

RITCHIE: By "they," do you mean the Kennedy administration?

VALEO: No, the other senators on the Democratic side. No, Kennedy was not pushing Mansfield at this point.

RITCHIE: Once you stepped in the majority secretaryship, I assume the Kennedy people got in touch with you to try to push their program.

VALEO: Yes, I used to see Larry O'Brien a lot, and Mike Manatos a lot, but the Kennedy people played their own game. They had a large liaison office and they used to go directly to committee chairmen. I think they all decided there wasn't much Mansfield would do for them one way or the other, and they'd just have to do it themselves. Mansfield encouraged that. He said, "Go to the committee chairman," or go to so-and-so and talk to him. But he would not do it for them, as Lyndon would have been more than glad to do had he been majority leader.

RITCHIE: They didn't want you to do more, at this stage?

VALEO: They didn't want it because, again, I think they figured he's really only Mansfield's man and he wouldn't know what to do anyhow. I suspect that was their attitude at that point. It wasn't until Vietnam that some of the Kennedy people came back to eat some crow on some of these things. But in that early period, oh, Mike Manatos would come into the office. Mansfield's door was open all the time, so he really didn't have to come to me. It was not like Lyndon. Oh, I talked with them, but I didn't know a lot of them. I'd meet them. They'd come in and Mansfield would call me in sometimes if he thought there was something I should be aware of, so I'd sit in with them. I met most of them during that period, but I never had any private beating of a path to my door down on the terrace level; very, very little of it.

RITCHIE: Did you think that Kennedy's liaison staff was an effective one?

VALEO: Yes. Larry O'Brien was very good. Much of the interest at that point had to do with tax bills. The civil rights thing had been soft peddled.

RITCHIE: Medicare they took a drubbing on.

VALEO: Medicare probably had been beaten already. So that was not their doing. It is true, very little was moving at the time just before Kennedy's death, and there was very great unhappiness in many quarters. But if there were any tendencies to blame Mansfield for it, it would be that "he's too easy going," "he's too soft," "he doesn't want to antagonize anyone." But all the while, Mansfield was building up his connections on a personal basis, particularly with Dirksen. The relationship with Dirksen improved steadily. There were some issues Mansfield was able to carry in this period, only because of that developing relationship with Dirksen. One, of course, being the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which as we mentioned earlier in connection with Hubert Humphrey, then was picked up again by Kennedy.

Well, there were two things I dealt with them on this early period. The first item had to do with a U.N. appropriation, which was running into a great deal of resistance on the Hill. I think it was an additional appropriation of some sort. Mansfield was

trying to win over enough Republicans to carry this appropriation for Kennedy, who wanted it very badly. I remember, he sent me down to see Ted Sorenson, who was writing a speech on it, to give him some advice on what needed to be said by Kennedy to be persuasive in the Senate. Aiken had finally come around, and he said, "If you do it this way, I'll go with it." I was the messenger to relay that to the White House, and to Ted Sorenson in particular, who was putting the speech or the message together for it. I did that, but there was not a lot of that in that period. Mansfield let the White House pretty much function on its own. He said, "If it's Senate business, we'll take care of it; but let them take care of their own."

Then came the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This was the first, I think, real payoff of the Mansfield methods. I think that had he not won Dirksen over, there would have been no chance of passing it. He had Jackson against it; he had Goldwater against it, and they were big guns on issues such as this. I expect [Robert] Byrd was against it among others, I don't remember. But he had won Dirksen over to it. I remember the speech. He made a very passionate speech and Dirksen rose to the occasion and made it even more passionate with his favorite phrase: "An idea whose time has come," which he used in civil rights; he used it in many of the key votes of that period. He went along with it, and that carried the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Mansfield always deferred to Dirksen, permitted him whatever rights he wanted on the floor. Dirksen found he didn't have to fight for anything. It was all there, waiting for him. In the same way, Mansfield's treatment of the committee chairmen, many of whom were Southerners and who were opposed to many of the measures of the Kennedy administration, his treatment of them had the effect of reducing their hostility to these measures, or at least the expression of their hostility to these measures. They recognized him as being a very amiable and very decent and totally responsible leader; that they could trust his word completely. And when he came out in favor of a measure, even though they were opposed to it, they were less inclined to make vehement speeches which would have roused other members who were shaky on some of these issues, like the fellow who was junior senator from West Virginia, just retired.

RITCHIE: Jennings Randolph.

VALEO: Yes, Jennings Randolph. There were a number of people who waited to hear before making up their minds, like Jennings Randolph. So if you cut down the pressure to go in the other direction, they would normally go with the leadership, and that made the margin, I think, on a number of these critical measures.

RITCHIE: Do you think Mansfield just assumed that he had time on his side? That Kennedy was going to be there for a while and that they were slowly going to build their program?

VALEO: I think Mansfield still thinks he has time on his side, and he's eighty-five or thereabouts. It was his nature, that if we don't do it in this generation we'll do it in the next. That's the Chinese influence. It's an important element in Mansfield's character.

His attitude toward the Kennedys I found very confusing. I think there was certain natural pride since Kennedy was an Irishman and he was—he would never say this. Very often in Montana he was supported not as an Irish Catholic, but as a Protestant Mansfield, probably from German background. He let that stay confused. He never played up his Catholicism in any way near the way that Kennedy did. But I think there was a certain natural pride that another barrier—not pride, so much, but another sense of satisfaction—that another barrier to equality had been broken in the country. That, I think, is another key to Mansfield's personality; it is this need to break down barriers to equality. Some places he saw it more easily than in others. On the black question, it came slower, but he recognized the basic need to do this. He was very much a constitutional purist in every sense of the word. That's why we got along so well on issues, because I felt pretty much the same way.

RITCHIE: But his style was certainly different from the Kennedy administration's emphasis on getting everything moving again.

VALEO: Oh, yes. I'm sure there must have been a lot of irritation with him, at times, because he would not move. Maybe he over estimated his opposition, and there might have been one or two items of importance that could have been carried a year or two sooner, had he used Johnson's method; but I think if you look at the total record, it would have been drastically different if he had used Johnson's methods, it would not have been as favorable, nowhere near as favorable.

I think the period of Mansfield's leadership, if you add up measures of importance, would rank among the greatest in the history of the country. Certainly it would be something very close to the first two years of the New Deal, especially in social legislation. Now, that's not all Mansfield's doing, by any means. But in politics some of it's luck, some of it's being in the right place at the right time. Allowing for all of those factors, Mansfield's leadership was also another factor, because when the flood of Great Society legislation came—which I regard still of high importance to the nation, no matter what the present administration would think of that—when that great flood came, it

came through virtually without opposition in the Senate. It just poured right out. But we'll get into that another time.

RITCHIE: Were you around the Senate on the day that Kennedy was assassinated?

VALEO: Oh, yes. I remember it very, very vividly. I had someone for lunch in the restaurant, and I came back from lunch alone. I saw these long faces in the office. I said, "What's the matter?" I guess it was Beth Shotwell who said, "Didn't you hear?" I said, "No." She said, "Kennedy's been shot." It just took my breath away. Mansfield was not in the office at the time, he was out on the floor. I went out on the floor immediately. He was saying at the time, "We had better all pray." I don't know who I asked, but I said, "How serious is it?" He said, "It's very, very serious."

I had been working on a speech that was to be the response to Dodd, in effect. It was supposed to be done on that day, as a matter of fact, or the next day. The speech was Mansfield insisting that he was going to be himself, no matter what happened, and if that meant they had to find another leader, they could go find another leader, but he would not do it any other way. The speech was later put in the *Record*. He never made the speech, but he put it in the *Record* right after Kennedy's burial, saying that he had planned to make this speech, but that he had no

stomach for it, in view of what had happened, but it belonged in the *Record* so he put it in without making it. But it was a speech in effect making it plain that if they couldn't do it his way they might just as well get themselves another leader. It's ironic, because it was beginning after that that the full pay-off of his kind of leadership became apparent.

The word came through that Kennedy was dead. Mansfield adjourned the Senate and made arrangements to go out to Andrews to meet the plane coming in. He asked me to go along, and George Aiken. We went out in his car. We were bucking traffic going out, it must have been about 6:30 or so. We finally got out to Andrews. Well, the plane didn't get in till about nine o'clock or later. I remember that scene at the airport so vividly. I guess the newspapers wrote it up, but I remember it as a personal thing. The plane came in. Jackie was the first one to appear in the doorway of the plane. You know, it was a strange impulse. You didn't know whether you wanted to applaud or cry or what. You applauded so many of these arrivals in the past that it seemed like the logical thing to do, and yet obviously it wasn't, so obviously you didn't. She was blood-spattered, and came down the steps, and then Lyndon came out at some point. Meanwhile they lowered the casket through some sort of an elevator arrangement. She came down and went with the body in the hearse. Then Lyndon came down. Of course, he was already president at that point. We

all went around to shake hands with him and wish him well. He was very sad. The press was with him. I think he just said we'd carry on and do whatever we could. He had already taken over, in effect.

Then came the days of the funeral; it was really a very, very sad time. It was a family sad time. We had an Irish housekeeper at the time and she cried through the whole period.

RITCHIE: Senator Mansfield made probably the most moving eulogy at that funeral.

VALEO: Yes, I can give you the story of the eulogy. I have a copy of it at home, autographed by him. He came in in the morning or sometime that day and said, "We're going to have to do the eulogy. I've got an idea we can use." He picked up this thing about a ring; he showed me a clipping from the newspaper where somebody had used the phrase, something about a ring. He said, "See what you can do with it." So I took it home and I worked, oh, I guess 'till three or four in the morning on it, just to reduce it to some kind of poetry. It seemed to me that it really called for that. In any kind of drafting I did, I always used an approach that seemed to come naturally. There were a number of times when we did speeches in poetic language, if not actually poetry. This occasion obviously fit that.

I came in the next day with the draft. He liked it. I think he showed it to Maureen Mansfield, and she liked it. He showed it to Pastore, who happened to come into the office, and Pastore looked at it. "Damn good," he said. He made one or two suggestions on how to improve it, which we adopted. That's what Mansfield used. There are recordings of it. They're not very good recordings of it, but there are recordings of it. Afterwards, the thing created an enormous stir in the country and abroad. I had never seen anything that we did have quite that impact. I always had the feeling that there was a lot of guilt involved in that reaction. A lot of people had probably said at one time or another, "I wish that guy would die," and when he did, they felt all kinds of guilt, and somehow or other this was a natural way to atone for it. A lot of letters came in from people you just knew were not normally Kennedy supporters, although there were plenty from those who were. There were thousands of letters and they kept coming for months.

The eulogy was eventually translated into about twenty-five languages, as I recall, and circulated widely abroad. Then, of course, we got another response. People would write up variations on it, and ask for a reaction to it. It was put to music. It was part of a symphonic poem which was used on Kennedy's birthday, as a symphonic reading, on a number of TV anniversary shows. It was put to music in a popular song by some songwriter, giving

Mansfield the royalties. He turned the royalties over to the Kennedy Foundation or the Kennedy Library Fund. It really had an extraordinary circulation. It obviously touched a note which had a lot of meaning to a lot of people.

During the whole period of mourning at the Capitol, we were there almost all the time, through the night and what not. It was a very sad, sad time. Jackie Kennedy called Mansfield later to tell him that he had said what she wanted to hear. I can remember his telling me that or something to that effect.

RITCHIE: It's the only eulogy that I can remember from that ceremony, and there must have been plenty of others.

VALEO: Yes. I guess [Earl] Warren did one, and there were several others at the time.

End of Interview #7