
Interview with John Waters

The interview was conducted by David Welborn in Sevierville, Tennessee on October 21, 1997

Audio cassette 81a2
INTERVIEW: John Waters

PLACE: John Waters’ Office in Courthouse Square
Sevierville, Tennessee

DATE: October 21, 1997

BOX 19, FOLDER 31

Interviewer: This is a continuation of the interview with John Waters. We are once again in his offices in Sevierville, Tennessee, and the date is October 21, 1997. I have a few more questions I’d like to ask you about the 1964 campaign. You mentioned George Morton being requited to serve as the East Tennessee manager. Exactly what did that involve, and what did Morton actually do in the campaign.

JW: He just kind of looked over the East Tennessee area, which of course was a, very key to our campaign, because this was where the majority of the Republican votes were, and there was always this old thought in Tennessee politics that you had to go across the mountain into Middle Tennessee with more than a 100,000 majority in Republicans beating it back in those days. So his job was very key and is quite different than the other two grand divisions, because there was an organized Republican.....every county was organized and you had the Republican members of the Congress here, and so he had a very, very important job.

DW: What was Bob Campbell's role in that campaign.

JW: Bob was just one of our key persons. I don't know that he had a specific title, then he did later on in other campaigns, certainly. But Bob was just.....we had kind of a .......a little bit of an unusual group. I always call it the Monday group, which was not....no particular name for it. We met every Monday morning, and there would be 12-15 of us, generally, and I mean some people obviously couldn't be there for various reasons, but that's when we set the strategy, talked about how things were going, what we ought to do, and what was going well and what needed attention, and kind of set the strategy for the campaign in that meeting.

DW: Was it a kind of a collegial meeting?

JW: Yes, it was. I think that's a good way to describe it. People came in with different
.....obviously, if we were focused on Memphis, Harry Welford would be....he might not be at every Monday meeting, because they were generally in Knoxville. I guess they were always in Knoxville. But at any rate, he would come up, and whatever our focus was for that particular time.

DW: What do you recall about how Senator Baker handled himself in those meetings, in the kind of role he plays?

JW: Well, that's interesting, because one of the great qualifications that Howard has, and one that I have tried all my life to emulate, and have generally failed, is he has this, to me, unbelievably wonderful ability to sit around in a group and talk about what an issue is, what the problems are, what alternatives are, what you might do and what you shouldn't do....and then he will say something like, “Let me react to that now. George says so-and-so, and Bill says so-and-so, and John says so-and-so,” and he'd go around the summary, “and it seems to me this.” You know, '1-2-3.’ And everybody would sit there saying, “Why didn't I say that?” “And this is what I'm going to do.” Howard has another thing that I've always tried to emulate and failed. His mind functions to a certain extent like a calendar, to me. OK, this is a decision. “When must I decide this?” Yes, that's probably not a good way to describe him, but what I'm trying to say is that when he has a decision to make, one of the first things he wants to know is when does he have to make that decision. And I've found that's a very valuable thing to do, because sometimes you make them before you have to make them, or you wait too late, or you don't consider the time. So he will consider the time and then sometimes he'll say, “Well, I'm not going to think about that until January. In January I'm going to think about that.” And then he'll set up, you know, to try to get the pros and the cons. “You make sure....seems like you've got some problems with this. You make sure I've got all the downside on this, and let's see....can you help me with the other side of it?” He gives you all this time...... “In January I'll think about that.” And it sounds simple, but it's a pretty good technique. And he's very good at that kind of thing.

DW: So these two qualities you described....#1, an ability to summarize and integrate in a coherent way; and #2, this methodology of decision-making were evident in those early days.
JW: Oh yes.

DW: During those early days.

JW: Very much. Especially in the campaign. And he's not a real kind of a 'take charge' person. He won't move in and take charge until he makes the decisions, you know. And then another thing that he does is, you know, you go with that decision and you really...you don't necessarily look back. He's not a finger-pointer or blame-setter at all. And I think he took that kind of thing into the Senate with him. Another thing that he took into the Senate that I always admired in him was that if a piece of legislation came up....a fairly important piece....I suppose they think they're all important....and a senator was proposing that, say, some legislation, and Howard decided he couldn't support it. He never, ever, let that person...the other senator, find out that he couldn't support it through anything other than his direct contacts. He didn't read it in the paper; he didn't hear it on the senate floor; he didn't get it from somebody else.....he called that senator up and said, “You know, Bill, I know you're interested in Senate No. such-and-such” on whatever issue it is, “and I've got some problems with it and I can't support it.” And they talked about it. And it was amazing what that would do, because, you know, so often, especially when he got to be Minority Leader and then Majority Leader. I would read in the press where somebody would ask, “Do you know Senator Baker's against it?” Senator Howard called me on the phone and we talked about that. I understand his position, you know, and it was just such a way to do the thing.

DW: Very up front.

JW: Very up front. And once again, why don't we all do that? It's a better way to make friends.

DW: You commented last time that if Senator Baker had the opportunity as a candidate, back during those days, to spend 5 minutes with someone, that person would end up being a Baker supporter. How was he able to do this? What enabled him to do that?

JW: Well, that's a good question, because I guess the other side of that is that Howard is not the kind of guy that has this tremendous first impression, I think. The Frank Clement....or even his father....the Estes Kefauver, you know, back in those days, walked into the room and you immediately felt his presence....kind of took charge ....kind of thing. Howard
would kind of ease in the door...the back door...kind of slip in the side. So he didn't have that....and he's not a big man....so he didn't have that technique. So people would tend to not be favorably impressed, but if they talked to him a few minutes, he had the ability to give them such 100% attention.... in other words, when he's talking to you, he's not looking off somewhere else, or preoccupied, or trying to shake other hands, or trying to move around like a lot of so many politicians do....he would give you complete attention. And he would respond...he could generally pick out something that that person said that he thought had merit to it or was worthwhile that he could respond to. And of course, you know, there's nothing like having somebody appreciate your own opinion.

DW: That's right. Several people have commented that Baker had extraordinary listening skills.

JW: That's a good way to put it. That's certainly a good way to put it. And he does. And he has good listening skills and he can respond to that person, I found in a unique way. Somebody would stop [in], or he'd talk to him....I've seen it happen many times....and say something, you know, very trivial. But he would pick up on it. He wouldn't put it off. He would respond to it. And he'd maybe ask a question about it. He didn't just pass it off like so many of us would, you know. “Who cares about that?” He didn't do that. And I think that made him.......I think also that served him well with his colleagues in the Senate.

DW: How was he on the stump in that first campaign?

JW: Well, he's a great speaker. He's not the flamboyant type, but you know, he just has such a tremendous command of the language....choice of words. Unique, I think. That you didn't listen to him very long or you thought, “This man's got something to say that's worthwhile, and I really ought to pay attention.” I've saw people doing that, you know. People would say that to me. “He's got something to say, you know.” Maybe they weren't interested particularly, but....and he has that ability. He's not a....his father was an old line stump speaker.

DW: Stem-winder?

JW: Stem-winder, you know. And I always enjoyed hearing Mr. Baker speak....his choice of words. But Howard was totally different than his father.
DW: Thinking back on that first campaign, are there any particular moments or particular situations or especially memorable.....

JW: Oh, I'm sure there are. It's hard for me to really draw them up right, that's been so long ago, because it seems like every day was interesting. He was such a.... compared to today, it was such a kind of haphazard campaign, and we would go into a town in Middle and West Tennessee where our only contact was somebody that had been my fraternity brother or his fraternity brother, or we'd known through practicing law, or something. And it's amazing, and had no political organization....and certainly no Republican organization. And hacked out this bill from really nothing. And he had a good ability to do that. One of the things.... one of the very first things that helped us so much was, to me, women....first real working campaign to where they would have things in their home and invite a group of friends in to meet Howard. And these were just friends. They might be church friends, or bridge-playing friends, or whatever, because they certainly weren't necessarily political. And that was the first time I saw....and it was an opportunity that the women....of course it sounds so weird to say that now, they are so active.....but back then, they didn't feel comfortable in coming to the court house rally so much. But they could do this....in their home....and that was, to me, it was fairly new. I'm sure it wasn't original in that campaign, but it was a fairly new technique, and it worked well for us, because those people....obviously those women saw his sincerity...his intelligence....and his sincerity and that he was different. And he was always kind of low-key, you know. And you sat around in those kinds of groups, and boy, when he left, they had no question who they were for.

DW: Were you surprised at the results come election night?

JW: It was the kind of a thing that it gradually just built over time, so that there's no question but before the election....you're talking about 1964, of course, we knew that it was a desperate uphill battle. But there's no question that on the last we felt like we were in striking distance. Now we never got carried away with it, but we felt like we were going to run a very, very good race, and we could win. That's about the only way I can put it.

DW: What are your thoughts about the effect of the Goldwater candidacy on those results?
JW: That was one of the great worrying things. I never will forget. Goldwater was on a plane going somewhere, and Everett Dirksen was with him, and I'm sure you didn't talk to people on the plane then, but we had some kind of communications before, and .....I believe he was about to go to Florida and make a speech against Social Security....and we were just continuously worried about what he was going to say, and the worst time was when he was going to come to Knoxville. And we sat and talked a little lick on strategy. What were we going to say if he said, “Sell TVA.” Because we were not going to handle it. Howard was....there was a thought that he might just step forward and challenge him right then, or what, but we were not going to go along with it, of course. And I think Dirksen was the one that probably got him to soften that, at least in Knoxville. But it was continuously something to worry about. Let me divert here a moment, because of a great story. One of the funniest ones I've ever seen. After Howard was the Majority Leader....Minority Leader, I guess....and you might have to help me with the year.....but this was the year that equal rights for women...Equal Rights Amendment....what are we talking about....somewhere in the early 1980s?

DW: Well, it would have been in the '70s. Late '70s.

JW: 1970s. You recall tremendous publicity, just in the press everywhere....all kinds of crazy things for it and crazy things against it....wild talk. I went to Washington one day and walked....and his office was just a very small waiting room, smaller than this office, where his secretary sat...I'm trying to think of her name right now.

DW: Laura Nell?

JW: Laura Nell...yes, that's it....a very small oak couch over here, and then the big room in back, if you are familiar with that office.

DW: Yes, I am.

JW: So, I walk in there and I'm setting there talking to her, and I said, “Well, where is he?” And she said, “Well he's on the floor in the Senate, and he wants you to wait, because you all are going to have lunch,” because it was getting close to noon. And I said, “OK, I'll go on.” “You don't want to go back there. There are about 50 women back there. On the ERA.” And I said, “Oh, gosh. I'll just sit down here.” And I'm just sitting here, and just a minute went by, and in walks Howard. “Hey,” he said, “well, you know, we're going to
go to lunch. Let's go back....” And she said, “Senator. There are 50 women back there waiting for you on the ERA.” He said, “Oh, my goodness.” So we're standing there. That minute Barry Goldwater walks in the door. He said, “Barry,” he said, gets _____, opens the door and says, “Ladies, Senator Goldwater would like to say a few words.” And he closed the door. We went on down to the Senate Dining Room, and about 30 minutes later I can't repeat all he said in mixed company. He said, “I'll get you.”

DW: That is a dandy.

JW: And it is a true story, too.

DW: Well, do you think that Goldwater's position on TVA really hurt Baker? Or...no way to know, really.

JW: No way to know, really. I don't recall it being after he came to Knoxville and left. We were very worried about it....very worried about it. But I don't recall after that feeling like we had to do a lot of damage control. Baker's position was clear, you know. And I don't recall.

DW: On the other side of the coin, some people have been of a view, or expressed a view that Goldwater was a net plus for the Baker campaign, because it energized a certain part of the electorate –

JW: I think there may be merit to that, yes. There may well be. I'd say that's right. I think he thought it was a plus. He probably....and the net result gave us a boost. In Tennessee.

DW: Right. Yes. Well, on Election Night and the immediate aftermath of that, was there talk among Baker people like you as to OK, we've done this.....what's next?

JW: Oh yeah. Yeah, and once again, Howard says, “You know, I'm not going to think about this until January.” Another time when he set the date. “I'm not going to think about this until January. You know, Lyndon Johnson could fall on his face. The Vietnam War could get hot....things could happen. Probably not, you know, but those things happen. In January we'll look at it.” And of course that's exactly what did happen.

DW: In the meantime, did you or others make an effort to try to stay in contact with the elements of organization?

JW: Oh yes. It was no trouble. People were too enthused....a lot of party leaders that really saw an opportunity, didn't want it to fail. Even people that didn't think we were going to
do anything. I'd get so sick of these Republicans... “John, you got a pretty good boy there, but he can't be elected to the United States Senate.” Well, all those people were saying, you know, “Hey, you sure ran a pretty good race, you know. There's more to it than that.” And I would call it....I call it those death wish Republicans. They wanted to be right and lose. Well, I had had about all that I wanted.

DW: What do you recall about the Ken Roberts situation and how that developed?

JW: Well, that was a kind of an unfortunate situation, because once again, Howard had said he wasn't going to make a decision until January, and Ken and some of the other people took that that he wasn't going to run. And so that gave them a chance to get out and stir up some things. Because he just wouldn't say.

DW: My understanding is that Roberts started actively, or gearing up for a campaign, perhaps as early as mid-1965, and talked several times to Senator Baker to try to ascertain whether Senator Baker was going to run. And Baker would simply tell him, which was, I suppose, the case, that “I just haven't decided yet. But if you feel you need to run, then go ahead.” And Roberts did.

JW: I think that's right. Yes, I think that's right. Well, you know, Ken Roberts is an extremely attractive candidate. Big, tall guy. As Howard said, “The worst thing about it is looking into Ken's navel during the campaign.” Because Ken, you know, is this great big well-over 6-foot guy...well, his race was a total catastrophe, I think. Somebody figured up that they spent over $15 a vote. Don't hold me to that unless you check it, but as I recall, it was some outrageous number, at least at that time.

DW: My understanding is that after.....well, let me see how you react to this. There seems to be a general view that the Primary was probably a pretty good thing for the Republican Party.

JW: Probably so, yes. Because, you know, just more people out and we weren't used to a contested Primary, and it gave us more credibility. That we were going to be players. People that had run for Senate and Governor, you know....Republicans were just somebody nobody ever heard of, and it was supposed to be some kind of an honor to get your name on the ballot and be beat.
DW: And also it is my impression that after the Primary was over, the Roberts people came willingly over to the Baker camp.

JW: Oh, there was never any problem that I ever heard of.

DW: To what extent was the 1966 campaign looking forward to the general election different from the 1964 campaign?

JW: Well, it was totally different, because we started out with a number of key people all over the state. I suppose that there was not a county in it we didn't have pretty good contacts in, and pretty good people that were the leaders, and when you consider the difference in that in like Middle and West Tennessee sections, it made a tremendous difference. Whereas I said we'd go into a town and county, had no one....and sometimes just walk up and down the streets. And when 1966 came in, we had a much more sophisticated organization.

DW: At the grass roots and also at campaign headquarters.

JW: Oh yes. We even had a couple of paid people then.

DW: And well, you had Hugh again. You had....

JW: Lamar came in then, see, and Victor.

DW: And Victor Ashe. Bob Bonitatte.

JW: Of course Ruthie was there. Ruthie Lyons. Not Lyons now....

DW: Edmonds.

JW: Edmonds then, Lyons now. Yes. And of course she was....it's hard telling what an asset she was to the campaign. And Bob....

DW: Gable.

JW: Gable. I couldn't think....and of course he was back again. And as I recall, Senator Dirksen always was sending some people down. Some of his strategy people. And it was just a different campaign.

DW: By this time, when 1966 rolled around, talk a little bit about your relationship with Guy Smith.

JW: Well, that was a strange one. Because Guy and I had been such bitter enemies. And I guess I told you the last time....did we talk about Guy last time? I can't remember.

DW: Just a little bit, when you said that Baker reported to you that Guy thought it would be
Alright for you to run his campaign.

JW: Yes. I told him, “You don't want me for his campaign, because Guy won't allow that.”
And he said, “I've already talked to him and he will. So that really surprised me. But we became real close friends. Of course, he was such a yellow journalist, you know, and editorialized on the front page, and poor old Frank Clement.....he found that picture of Frank that looked like he was drinking...which is not hard to get a.......he ran every week. And that's just the way Guy about politics.

DW: Well, based on what I know, it seems to me unquestionable that the Knoxville Journal was an integral part of Baker's campaign operation.

JW: Well, no question about it. No question about it.

DW: And a lot of the reporters for The Journal were sort of helping on the side.

JW: Oh, are you talking to Ralph Griffith?

DW: I haven't talked to Griffith, but I've talked to Ed Miller and...

JW: Be sure and talk to Griffith. Griffith was there from Day One. And nobody...even in the 1964 campaign. And he was Guy's “Poison Pen” expert, if there ever was one, you know.

DW: And I understand that there was a little tension going back a few years with Jimmy Quillen.

JW: Yeah. Most of the tension on Guy, though, was in the Middle and the Western. See, those people.....the Republicans down there hated him. They felt like he had ostracized him...and he had....kept him from having any Party leadership, and all. I remember one time I was down there and came back, and Guy called me up. I went to see him or something, and he said, “Well, what's going on down there?” I said, “Well, Guy, it's a strange thing. Hell, I go down there, and they're painting me as your stooge.” And he said, “Did you tell them you called me a son-of-a-bitch from every courthouse in the First Congressional District?” I says, “Yeah, I told them that.” I said, “They don't understand that.”

DW: Hillary, John, at one point in his youth, took on the East Tennessee Republican establishment by running against Carroll Reese in the First District.”

JW: Of course, I really ran against Guy. I used him as a....which was a dumb thing to do, but
that's what I did.

DW: What did this practice of ending the campaign with the bus trip through the First District start? Was that in 1964 or 1966?

JW: 1964. That is an interesting one, because, and I hate to say this, because I know of at least 6 people who take credit for that. And I have agreed with every one of them. And this really sounds sassy, because it really was my idea. I wanted to.....you know, one of the big problems in this race was in both 1964 and 1966, and certainly in 1966 was the East Tennessee Republicans would say, “Those people aren't going to vote for Howard Baker over in Memphis and West Tennessee. They're Democrats or whatever. They're not going to vote for Howard Baker.” And then you had this brand new organization of people over there that were really hot, and were really good people. And they'd say, “They'd double-cross us up there forever. East Tennessee Republicans have always double-crossed us. They never let us have anything.” So I had set in the past one of my main jobs was running back and forth saying how good things were in the other section. Go down in West Tennessee and talk about how good things were up here, and come back up here, and say, “Just came back from Memphis and you ought to see what's going on down there.” That was one of my big jobs. And so I was trying to figure out a way to kind of pull this thing together. And I came up with a band wagon.... the Baker Band Wagon.....get on board...the Baker Band Wagon....and go across the state with it. And kind of get that snowball approach, you know. And the first one was Lobetti, who had the White Star Bus Lines over at Maryville, gave us the bus. See, back then you could use things like that.....we could have never survived under the rules today...where you had to get the money and spend it. He could give you an airplane or a bus, and that's the way we got around, really. But he gave us this bus and the driver, and we started. And of course, you get the politicians on....the Jimmy Quillens as you come down, you know, and across, and they get on and ride with you a little bit, and you end up, and it really did work well.

DW: Now where did you start and where did this end?

JW: Oh, we started in Upper East Tennessee and went to Memphis.
DW: Yes. So you did the bus before he did it via train in 1962.

JW: That's right. He did it by train, yes. Bill Hamby....Squire Hamby....came along and took the idea and made it into the train....which was a great idea, too.

DW: Well, you learn something all the time. Nobody has mentioned this cross-state bus trip. I had in mind the more restricted bus excursion through the First District.

JW: Well, obviously you picked your places. So, you know, when you got over in the Middle, you might go for several miles before you stop, whereas you didn't up here. But still, that's the way we did it. And the press liked it because they could track you along. Where are you today, and where are you going? And people would get on board and get off. It just worked really well. And you always used it after that.

DW: In the 1966 campaign, were decisions made in basically the same way as they had been in 1964?

JW: We still had the Monday meetings....that's when the strategy was really decided. We set up the schedules and all. Howard is....working a schedule for Howard is not an easy thing to do, because he's like most of us.....he doesn't really like to be led around by the nose. And most candidates are that way, other than Lamar Alexander....never went anywhere or did anything unless it was written down 10 days in advance. Baker kind of...a little bit difficult....and we always had to have somebody who would move him on. And that was my job quite often. When he's talking to 6 people, you say, “Senator, you know you're 30 minutes late.” And if we had a lot of people waiting for him...there's media press there...which maybe was not true at all, but you had to get him out of there....away from those people, because he would not.....he was too polite, and he just simply would not –

DW: Did Baker improve as a candidate between...and as a political analyst, I should add, between 1964 and 1966?

JW: Oh, I'm sure he did, because we all learned so much. Baker hardly ever changed. He's not....today, you know, one of these back-slappers, you know, comes in and press the flesh and he still does it about the same way he always did it. But now, in later years, it was kind of a personality trait, he was kind of admired for it, I think. And maybe the old style is not quite as popular as it used to be. I always
thought of Frank Clement, who I thought was....when it came to walking in a room and taking charge, he was one of the best. Just absolutely great. His presence.

DW: I've heard it said that one of the things that Baker really had going for him, and this fully materialized in 1966, was the fact that he was such a different type of politician than a a lot of people were used to seeing in Tennessee.

JW: Well I don't think there's any question about that. I think he....and it helped him because he wasn't 6'6", and he didn't have this, you know, this poppy, snappy comeback. I always think of Frank....one of my stories of Frank that I think was so true of him. When we were in that race, he really had a drinking problem...it was too bad, because really, I always liked Frank Clement. And I was told this to be the truth. One time they had him over in the Elks Club at Nashville. The Elks Club then was right next door to the Andrew Jackson Hotel....all that's gone now. And the Elks Club had a steam bath and all that in there. So they were in there trying to sober him up because he was supposed to make a speech, in the Andrew Jackson, which was just....you just go right up the steps into the old hotel, you knew where that was. Had him in there all morning, and finally got him so he could kind of go under his own power. He walks out and up the steps into the Andrew Jackson, and there's this old lady standing there....had been there all morning, waiting on him. And she goes up and she says, “Governor, I've supported you every time you ever ran for anything. I always voted for you. But Governor, they say the bottle's got you.” And he said, “God bless you, mother, it is true, but thanks to the prayers of mothers like you, I've overcome it.” Now Howard Baker could never do that. But Frank Clement could, and I'll bet you she went over and voted for him.

DW: Pursuing this line of the image one projects, what are your thoughts about the importance of television in that 1966 campaign, and the idea that the way Baker was and the way he projected himself was suitable for television in a way that Frank Clement was not.

JW: Oh, that's a very interesting question. It's hard to relate to it, it's changed so much, now, you know. We used television...we had a pretty good television budget that second time. It would be interesting to go back and look at some of those spots, and how we used it, and compare them to what's done today. I think we used it pretty effectively. How he would have compared then to Clement, after that Clement-Bass primary....I don't know.
I'm not...you'd have to go back and do a lot of research. I'm sure Frank must have been good on television, but I don't remember him knocking us out of the ball park with it.

DW: Do you happen to recall, or were you in attendance at a meeting of something called the Tennessee Voters' Council in Nashville that was put together by Avon Williams?

JW: What year...

DW: That would have been in 1966.

JW: No...I probably was, but I sure can't...that's not coming up in my mind.

DW: Well, apparently that was a very interesting session. I have Hugh Branson's recollections of it. Avon Williams, of course, set this up and invited Baker and Clement, and the way he had it organized was that people were there basically to beat up on Baker, and to give Clement a free ride. The ostensible purpose of this was to decide which candidate the organization was going to support.

JW: And they thought that Baker was going to be shot down pretty easily.

DW: Right. And apparently they took a couple of bus loads of black supporters according to Baker, over from Knoxville and spread them through the audience, and who sort of upset Williams' apple cart by vociferously participating in the proceedings, and in support of Baker...and Baker, of course, handled it very well, and Clement was in the state which you described a moment ago, and didn't handle himself well.

JW: I was not there. Now that you've refreshed my memory, I do remember the event, and I'm pretty sure I was not there. I do remember the event because I remember that Coach Bell...Julian Bell, is that his name...

DW: Yes.

JW: Who was the coach at Knoxville College, and who was just.....he was at one time the only black supporting us. But he was a very influential person....highly regarded. People just admired Coach Bell. He was just what you think as a coach of Knoxville College teamer. And he was very strong for Baker.

DW: I think Sarah Moore Greene was listed as among –

JW: She was. She certainly was. And she was a leader. But I tell you what....Coach Bell....he was fantastic, that guy was. I mean he had these people that just admired him and loved him so much that when he said something....if he said to some of these people, “You
ought to vote for Howard Baker,” they had to take that serious.

DW: What do you remember about Election Night 1966?

JW: Oh law! Of course, I just well remember it. Back in those days, when I was practicing law, I suited up all the time, and I wore French cuffs nearly all the time. And I went down, and Patch and I went to Knoxville, and I got a suite in the Farragut, and was getting dressed, and I had forgot to bring any cuff links. Had French cuff shirt but didn't have any cuff links. Stepped across the street to Miller's and bought a big pair, not expensive....blue cuff links. I always wore those cuff links on Election Night from then on.

HS: And you still have them.

JW: And I still have them. And value them very highly. And you know, we had the headquarters there and the phones, and what I had done I learned a long time ago. I had a private line and I picked out a person in each county. And I had him set up on a schedule..... “Call me at 8:00 o'clock or 9:00 o'clock.” And I had them all.... because the press, [of course], isn't nearly as efficient as they are today. And so I was getting real good information real early.

DW: Let me ask you at this point. Apparently Senator Baker was confident he was going to win. Were you as confident as he was?

JW: You know, I'm such a positive kind of a guy, you know, and almost Pollyanna sometimes. Yeah, I thought we were going to win. I think most of us thought we were going to win.

I don't mean, we didn't have our dark moments. But I think most of us thought we were going to win. We knew we were in striking distance, and there was no reason why we couldn't. Now you'll get a lot of dispute over that. Hugh Branson will tell you that's not right. But I think that's pretty true.

DW: What else do you recall about Election Night?

JW: Oh, just the euphoria of the event and night. It was a positive thing from the minute we went down there. We went down there positive....oh, you've always got your people that are the naysayers around, but it was just a big celebration, really. I just remember just feeling good about it all the way.

DW: Well, when and who started thinking, then, about next steps, after it was known that
Senator Baker was going to the Senate?

JW: Well, I kind of backed out of that, because I had no desire or intention to go to
Washington with him at that point in time. Just never....I was practicing law and I was
busy with my family and all the things. So I kind of backed out of that, and people like
Lamar and Hugh kind of focused more on that. Who was going to go up there with him
and who was going to do what, and that kind of thing.

DW: How well had you gotten to know Senator Dirksen?

JW: Oh, very well.

DW: Do you have any Dirksen stories?

JW: Oh law, yeah. I was with him so many times that he was just such a great
character.....always, you know, in center stage. And always kind of, to me, different in
what you'd expect him to say. I remember one time Howard and I were up there in
Washington and the campaign was beginning to go good. It was one of these things that
was....it didn't start out and jump....it was pretty slow rise, but it was generally positive. It
had some ups and downs, of course, but generally positive. But we were getting to the
point where...this thing....you know, we might win this thing. We're going to pull this off.
We hadn't seen Dirksen, and word was that we were leaving....getting ready to leave.
And, “The Senator wants to see you. Go to the back door there and knock on the door.
He's in conference, there, but he wants to see you.” “We're going to the airport.”

DW: He was in the Leader's office.

JW: Yes, he was in the Leader's office. So we go and whatever we were supposed to
do....knock on the door and yell. “Howard,” he says. “Spread oil in every direction.”
And he closed the door. You know, this was one of his mottoes, you know, the oil can is
mightier than the sword. And there always was some story. One of other famous
stories....I was supposed to pick Howard up, real early in the morning, in his Knoxville
home.

DW: Yes, you told me that one.

JW: About him being in the hospital. You know, he's a hypochondriac. Always thought he
was sick and going to die.

DW: And he called Baker in the middle of the night to tell him he had decided he was going to
Howard was fully dressed and couldn't go back to sleep, was what happened, because he'd called him about 4 o'clock in the morning. He said, “I picked up the phone and it was Mr. D.” Howard called him Mr. D. And he says, “Howard, Howard, I have decided that I am not going to die, and it's time to be about the affairs of the nation.” And hung up.

DW: So they had a good relationship.

JW: Oh yeah, they had a very good, totally different kind of personality, but he was just.... I remember one time....we were at dinner....honoring him in Washington. And I can't remember...at the time Johnson was President, and I believe it was in [Trieste]. There was a short military emergency that might have erupted into something, and we were having this Dirksen dinner. And Johnson called him to the White House, because of this emergency. So we go ahead and we have the dinner, and finally he comes back and gets up on a speaker's platform and makes a few remarks, and it ends, and we all walk out, and we were going to the Madison Hotel. And the cars were all there, and Mrs. Dirksen is such a motherly kind of a very nice woman, and we get in the car and she says, “Now, Everett, you have not had your dinner. You have not had any dinner. When we get to the hotel, I'm going to get you a hamburger.” He says, “My dear, this time I'm going to drink my dinner.” And he did.

DW: I think it was Ron McMahan who told me this. He was covering the Baker campaign in 1966 for one of the Chattanooga papers.

JW: Yes, that's exactly right. The Chattanooga Times, yes.

DW: And Dirksen came down to campaign for Baker, and they were going to make several stops starting at Chattanooga, through East Tennessee.

JW: I remember that time....we had two airplanes, yes. We sure did.

DW: It started out in the morning, and Dirksen had at his disposal a bottle of Jack Daniels, and Ron watched the old man in amazement as he started drinking even before they left Chattanooga, and drank steadily and at each stop his speech got better than it had been at the last stop.

JW: Well, he was capable of that, yes. Well, a funny story didn't have much to do with the
campaign, but we were also in Washington, and Dirksen and Mansfield had taken a routine they did, I guess you'd call it, where...it was 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and things had kind of slowed down. Mansfield had come over to Dirksen's office for a drink. Mansfield, understand, didn't drink. But he came over to Dirksen's office and they....I think they call it a drink, but I don't believe Mansfield drank. But anyway, Dirksen did. And so he's over there one afternoon, and the phone rings, and it's the White House....Johnson. Of course, you know, Johnson never knew or cared where anybody was, and no president, I guess, does, but said, “Get Mansfield.” So they got him, of course, in Dirksen's office. And he says, “Yes sir, Mr. President.” And he says, “Where are you, Mike?” And he says, “Well, Mr. President, I'm in Everett Dirksen's office, and we're having little refreshments here.” He says, “Do you not ever invite any of your old friends to come over when you're there, Mike?” And Mike says, “My God, Ev, he wants to come over.” And Dirksen says, “Mike, he's the president of the United States. You will have to invite him.” And so here, pretty soon, comes the Secret Service and then Johnson with his two beagles. Comes in and has two fingers of bourbon and leaves, at which point Dirksen says, “Mike, it's not going to be the same if we just let anybody come.”

DW: That's great. During that period of time between Baker's entrance into the Senate, and then your embarkation for Washington in the ARC, what kind of connection did you have with what was going on with Senator Baker's political life?

JW: Well, you know, of course then what happened was.....now really what you're talking about there is after Nixon is elected.

JW: Well, it was 1967-1968, at the conclusion of the Johnson presidency. But were you involved in what was going on then?

JW: Well, what we were trying to do then was kind of trying to cement an organization here, in the state, which was kind of difficult to do, because it was a Baker organization, and there was a lot of people that thought we had this real tight-knit organization that would serve other political purposes. I knew we never....yes, we had an organization, but I knew it was not the kind of thing that was going to be easily transferable, but we were trying to work on that. And I was spending quite a bit of time on it. Then, of course, you know
the situation completely changed when Nixon was elected, because all of a sudden we had the power of the presidency.
And I had people calling me wanting jobs, and all this stuff, and it was just a nightmare, to tell you the truth.

DW: Did you have an official position in the Tennessee Republican Party at that time?
JW: I might have been on the Republican State Executive, maybe, part of that time....I can't remember. Yes, I think I was. But I was kind of considered to be the head of the Baker organization here, you know. And people were wanting jobs and all that stuff, and it was kind of a nightmare. I was not equipped to do that well, and Howard wasn't either. We were not a skilled patronage organization at all. We tried to help people and do things that ought to be done, but we never had any experience with that. So even today it amazes me how well the Democrats are doing and how poorly the Republicans are doing, you know. We Republicans really looked for qualifications, which is kind of a tough thing to do. The Democrats absolutely pay no attention to it, so you never have it get in the way. And that sounds like partisan, but to me that's the truth. They don't have any problem with it.

THE END OF INTERVIEW