

Robert C. Weaver Oral History Interview –JFK #1, 5/6/1964
Administrative Information

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Weaver, Robert C.; Administrator, Housing and Home Finance Agency (1961-1966). Weaver discusses his role as the Administrator of Housing and Home Finance Agency, his acceptance of the position, and the process of appointing staff members. He discusses the Black community, racism, and southern opinion, among other issues.

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George Weaver

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Oral History Interview

with

ROBERT C. WEAVER

May 6, 1964
Washington, D.C.

By Daniel Patrick Moynihan

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOYNIHAN: This is Daniel P. Moynihan speaking. I am interviewing Dr. Weaver, the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, under President Kennedy and now under President Johnson. We are speaking from Dr. Weaver's home in Washington. It is May 6, 1964.

Dr. Weaver, the beginning of any oral history of this kind is probably best started with simply the beginning of your relationship with the President. I wonder if you could tell us something about when you first -- not just first met the President -- but when perhaps, when you began to be aware of him as a person with whom you might have some dealings one day.

WEAVER: Well, shortly after the President was nominated, in my capacity at that time as Chairman of the Board of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins, who was the Executive Secretary and still is for the NAACP and I visited the then Presidential nominee Kennedy at Georgetown. We talked to

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him at that time in general terms about his philosophy towards social, economic and racial problems in America, and we had a very interesting hour-and-a-half meeting on that occasion. I did not see him again until the idea of my coming into the Administration was

raised. I might say that at the time of the first meeting which was in November before the election, early November or late October; I have forgotten which, there was no question on the issue of my becoming a part of the Administration.

MOYNIHAN: Let me ask you, how had you viewed the emergence of this young man as a possible candidate for the Presidency in a party with which you were associated and causes in which you were much involved?

WEAVER: Well, I might go back to 1952, the time of Mr. Stevenson's nomination. I was in Chicago on that occasion and listened to his acceptance speech and I think that I, as many other Americans, was completely thrilled by the urbanity; the scope; and the articulateness of the man. This was something new in the American life which sort of thrilled me. However by 1960, I had decided that he could not be

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elected President; therefore, I was looking at the possibilities. I was "Hatched" at the time, in other words, under the Hatch Act, because I was then with the Housing and Redevelopment Board in New York City which gets most of its money from the Federal Government, and consequently was not able to participate in politics at all at that time. Thus, I had no political activity in the 1960 campaign or the 1960 pre-campaign activities.

There were two men who, to me, were the leading candidates, as possible victorious candidates. They were Humphrey and Kennedy. I happened to have known Senator Humphrey better than I had known Senator Kennedy; and I was probably pro-Humphrey at the time. However, I had felt that the capacity, which I subsequently came to appreciate and understand, and the ability and intellectual capacity in the then Senator Kennedy were significant and I was impressed by him. At that time, my feeling was that between the two of them there was a possibility of a victorious candidate.

When President Kennedy was campaigning, I was I think like most Americans. I was particularly impressed by the debates between him and

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Mr. Nixon. I might say in passing that I had the unique experience of voting against two candidates for the Presidency in my lifetime. The first one was Tom Dewey and the second one was Mr. Nixon. Fortunately, This was not only a negative thing because by that time I had developed a feeling that the Kennedy program and the things that he stood for were the things that were compatible with my interest and my concern.

There was no personal involvement on my part at that time; it was an involvement of intellectual ideas. This was the position that I had after the meeting that I mentioned before the election. I came to feel even stronger about this, but I would not be accurate were I to say that I was a strong Kennedy champion at the time of the nomination. Certainly by the time of the election, there was no question as how I was to vote.

MOYNIHAN: Was your judgment in this question shared by the leadership in the Negro communities that you represented as Chairman of the NAACP?

WEAVER: Well, I would say that certainly my negative attitude toward

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Mr. Nixon was a reflection of the general thinking. I would say, too, that I was probably a little more pro-Kennedy. This involved not only the personal contact that I had with him because when one meets with a man of his type and spends an evening with him, I think there is something that happens to you in realizing that you are talking to a real person who has real conviction and real dedication; but I would say that at that period there was a very anti-Nixon feeling which was both a part of the personality of Nixon himself and the way he conducted the campaign subsequently, and also a part of the anti-Eisenhower attitude which was fairly prevalent among Negroes.

My own feeling, I think, was both part as a Negro and probably a large part as an American because I feel that the Negro's status in this country can never be better than the country itself. At least, I feel you have to be an American first, and a member of a minority group second in a country of this sort.

MOYNIHAN: You sound a little bit like you are on television Mr. Administrator.

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WEAVER: No, our difference is in sincere feeling. I have said this before; I have said it publicly; and I feel it very strongly.

MOYNIHAN: Have you said it publicly? Could you say it in private too?

WEAVER: Yes, I feel this very much from my heart. Also, I felt that this is an inevitable situation for the Negro in America because he is an American and his whole flight is based upon the fact that he wants to have all the things that every other American has. The other side of that coin is he has to be an American to get them.

MOYNIHAN: But Bob wait -- question: How much was the feeling, just speak of the Negro community to mean the organized leadership of the Negro community that you have represented? How much was your feeling about Nixon and about Eisenhower as you described it the feeling of the Negroes? And how much was it the feeling of liberals? And can you distinguish?

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WEAVER: It is very difficult, but I think the Negro part of it came this way. All Negroes, I think, with the exception of a very few who were constitutionally Republicans and had not recovered from a hangover from the past, felt that Eisenhower never really understood; never really felt; or never really wanted to be involved in the problems of the Negro in America. I think the average Negro, and this includes the man in the street as well as the most highly trained Negro, felt that Mr. Eisenhower's feeling was -- why do they have to have this race problem while I'm President? Why can't they just wait until something else happens? Because really this is an impediment; it is an inconvenience; and something that I don't understand; something I do not have any feeling for at all; no identification with. I think this was a basic feeling.

Now as a liberal, which I think I am, I have felt equally that Mr. Eisenhower had been concerned with the issues which were not the basic issues for the average American, but the issues for a rather restricted group. And I did not identify with that group; therefore, I didn't feel he identified with the interests that I had.

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MOYNIHAN: Can I ask a question that would be a question you can't answer? The general run of opinion in people among whom you might know -- that if President Eisenhower had run a third time, he would have been elected at third time. Would there have been -- there wasn't that much of a Negro vote for him I think the second time around -- but would there have been a continued fall-away?

WEAVER: My judgment would have been that it would have been quite substantial -- the fall-away.

MOYNIHAN: You have seen a political reaction.

WEAVER: Yes, I think there was a complete disillusionment, not only about what wasn't done, but also about an attempt to evade an issue that was very basic to the Negro in America. I don't think that President Eisenhower ever took a forthright position either by identifying himself with the problem or by taking action which would alleviate the situation

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unless he couldn't avoid it.

MOYNIHAN: Was some of the tension that we've seen break out over America the last three years building up that over that period?

WEAVER: I am sure that it was, but I think it would be an exaggeration to say that this is a result of that. I think this is a result of a lot of other things: the

emergence of the African States for example; the fact that we had after the first flush of post-war reconversion an increasing amount of unemployment; and also the fact that we had a whole new generation of young Negroes who were coming up and who were beginning to feel their oats; and also began to feel, as all young people do, that their elders had not too good a job; and they were going to do a better job..

MOYNIHAN: Bob, could I just try our machine to make sure I haven't lost any of this. I am not that clear of -- We see your diary there and some notes on the desk. I think

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perhaps the most important fact about your career in Washington in the last three years is the fact which is not the one you would be proud of, but the one you regard the least test of your abilities. It is a fact that you, sir, were the first Negro to achieve what was in effect cabinet staffing in the American Government. The series of proposals that would have given you a formal seat at the Cabinet, it did not come to fruition while President Kennedy was alive. But the fact that you were a serving Cabinet officer was clear and the fact of his specific proposal to establish a cabinet in the Department and make you the head of it was explicit. He said as much and that had its consequences. So I wonder if we could ask you to go over some of the events that you think led to this.

WEAVER: Well, maybe I had better give you the chronology. On Monday, December 26 --

MOYNIHAN: You are reading now from your diary, sir.

WEAVER: I am checking with it, yes. I am not reading, but I am

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ad-libbing from it.

MOYNIHAN: But you wrote this at the time of the event.

WEAVER: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: This is a 1960 diary.

WEAVER: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: Did you keep a diary?

WEAVER: Only on very significant things, not generally.

MOYNIHAN: But you have a book like this around and scribble in it when --

WEAVER: When something happens that I think I want to keep the chronology.

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MOYNIHAN: The reason I ask this question is because historians will want to know. This is not a diary with pages in it, but rather a notebook that you can write in.

WEAVER: It is a notebook which happens to be in the form of a diary, but it isn't a diary because there are pages and pages with nothing on them.

MOYNIHAN: Right.

WEAVER: It is only the significant things. On Monday, December 26, 1960, Mayor Wagner; -- I might say at that time I was the Vice-Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Board in New York City -- called and said he wanted to see me.

Even before that, I had been urged and more or less led to believe that the Mayor was going to ask me to become the Borough President of Manhattan. This was a job which did not particularly excite me and one which I was not too anxious to assume. And yet, I would have been in an

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extremely difficult position had the Mayor asked me to do it -- to refuse him. So I thought that maybe this was what he wanted to talk with me about.

It was a very snowy-slushy day, and very reluctantly I went over to the City Hall. And I was quite relieved in a degree when he told me that he had been talking to the President and that President Kennedy wanted me to become a part of his Administration, either as the Commissioner of FHA or the Administrator of HHFA. I said to the Mayor that if the former, Commissioner of FHA were involved, I was not interested because I felt that job required a person with a technical knowledge of the operation of FHA which I did not have. I might add, which I still don't have and never intend to have; but if it were the latter, the Administrator of HHFA, it was something that I was very much interested in. He then said he'd talk to me again when he found out what was involved. So I saw him the next day and he said that it was the Administrator of Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Some weeks prior to that, in fact in the latter part of November, Louie Martin who is an old friend of mine (I had known him for twenty-five

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or thirty years) who was with the National Committee, had called me and said I was being considered for an appointment in Washington. I sort of listened to it, thanked Louie, and forgot all about it. However, after this discussion, I called Louie on Tuesday and he confirmed that this was a live possibility. And I raised with two points. The first was: if there were to be a Department of Urban Affairs, would I be considered as the Secretary? And the second was: if the President was prepared to issue the Executive Order as far as Equal Opportunity and Housing was concerned saying these were the two things that I would be very much concerned about in connection with this job. Louie, of course, could not give me any firm commitment, but said certainly these were things that I should raise with the President because he was sure the President would want to see me.

I was told then to call Palm Beach, which I did, and I got assurances that the Executive Order would be issued and a rather indefinite answer on the matter of the Cabinet. I did not talk to the President that time, I talked to a member of his staff. I have forgotten who it was, unfortunately the notes don't show it. But in any event, I then was called

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on Friday in the morning and informed by the Mayor that I was asked to come to Palm Beach, which I did, leaving that afternoon at 4:25 p.m. I saw the President at 10:30 the next morning. He then confirmed the fact that he was considering me in this capacity, and more or less made, in fact he did make an offer for the appointment. I raised the two issues with him. And at that time, I got a very definite and categorical statement, that he was going to issue an Executive Equal Opportunity Order on Housing as he had promised to do during his campaign. And secondly, I remember his very good phraseology, that if there were a Department of Urban Affairs, I would be a logical candidate for the Secretary -- which was all I thought one could get.

This was particularly interesting to me because it was on December 29 which was my 53rd birthday, and I felt that this coming on my birthday was rather significant.

I then talked with Pierre Salinger and gave him biographical information. And after seeing the President for a half-hour; at 11:00 we had a press conference at which my appointment was announced, and at 2:00 I left to come back to New York.

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MOYNIHAN: I wonder if I could ask two questions there. First, it comes as a bit of a surprise to me that the question of the creation of a Department of Urban Affairs was so clearly a matter of issue at the outset of the Administration. I was not aware that this had become a matter of commitment or of very obvious interest to anyone involved in Housing and Home Finance.

WEAVER: Well, actually I think when they had a Conference -- which again I couldn't attend because of my status under the Hatch Act -- in Pittsburgh on Housing and Urban Affairs, the commitment was made at that time. So this was a part of the Kennedy program.

MOYNIHAN: Could I ask you on the second question? Would you have any idea how you came to be the person President Kennedy offered the job to? Have you thought that -- he had -- there was a short list of candidates and then you emerged? Were you Mayor Wagner's nominee? Was he speaking to Mayor Wagner because the Mayor was your employer,

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which he was, or because he was your political leader which in a sense he was also, leaving these things absolute or both? Or how did you come to get this job?

WEAVER: I have been told by no less than twelve persons that they were the ones who suggested me to the President. My guess is that there were several people who were very important in this. I had been a member of the Policy Committee of the National Democratic group which had met over a period of several years. At which time, I came to know Ken Galbraith very well, Seymour Harris and the others who were members.

MOYNIHAN: May I interrupt, are you talking about the Democratic Advisory Council?

WEAVER: Yes, Advisory Council. In addition, I think that probably the key people in this were the members of that Committee. I think Governor Harriman was also a person

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who was involved. Phil Graham, publisher of the Washington Post may have contributed, too. I am sure that once my name came up, and as to who put it in the pot first, I don't know -- I certainly would not eliminate Louie Martin either. But I am sure that the President touched base with the members of that Committee who were people who had gotten to know me. I am sure he talked with Mayor Wagner, and I am sure he talked with Harriman. Whom else he may have talked to, I haven't the slightest idea.

MOYNIHAN: Let me ask you Bob, you are sitting on a Harvard chair right now. I believe that's right -- I can't see the back of it. That has come to be known as the seat of Government in Washington.

WEAVER: This was given to me after I lectured there in '61; that is why I happen to have it. I am not that chauvinistic either about school or country to have bought it.

MOYNIHAN: But the people you mentioned possibly having associated with the

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Democratic Advisory Council: Galbraith; Harris; Schlesinger; people like that; they're Harvard men. You're a Harvard man -- have a Ph.D. -- aren't you?

WEAVER: I have three degrees from Harvard.

MOYNIHAN: Three degrees from Harvard -- bloodline enough for anyone.

WEAVER: My grandfather graduated from Harvard.

MOYNIHAN: Your grandfather was graduating from Harvard -- which neither Galbraith, Schlesinger or Harris could say. Now do you think they were toadying to you as a member of a long old Harvard family. Or do you think there had been some decision that Housing and Home Finance was the place for a Negro to enter the top ranks of the American Government?

WEAVER: Maybe I can answer that by telling an anecdote. My wife -- to whom I have been married for twenty-nine years and who is very restive

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with my being here and her being in New York because she has a career of her own -- said right after Thanksgiving that she believed that I was going to end up in Washington. I said no, I enjoyed what I was doing in New York. I love New York and I had no intention of leaving. There is only one job that I would possibly take in Washington I told her, and that would be the head of HHFA and the President would never offer that to a man who was the Chairman of the Board of the NAACP. So that I have a feeling that what you said was not the way it happened.

I think what did happen -- and here again is conjecture -- was that after Lodge had come out, if you recall during the campaign, before Nixon repudiated him -- and suggested a Negro's being in the Cabinet, there was an abortive effort to get Congressman Dawson as the Postmaster General, but that fizzled out for some reason which I do not know. And I think the Administration felt that they had to have a Negro in a high position. And then I think there was the question of finding the Negro, and then finding the particular area that that particular Negro had some competence in. I think for some reason, I was the guy that they found and Housing was the area in which I was most

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knowledgeable. I think that's the way it happened.

MOYNIHAN: That makes a lot of sense. But question -- was the offer of the Postmaster Generalship to Dawson a serious offer or was it in fact understood he would turn it down?

WEAVER: I have no idea. Very frankly, I was not a party to it at all, and I don't know. And once I became involved as I did, I made it my business not to try to find out.

MOYNIHAN: It appears you were not really in touch with any politicians.

WEAVER: Not at all.

MOYNIHAN: You didn't go to the Mayor; the Mayor came to you. You didn't go to Mr. Dawson or Mr. DeSapio or Mr. Powell or Mr. Harriman or -- and don't fall back like that -- just any of the long list of one hundred and fifty people you might mention going to you; the job just

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came to you.

WEAVER: No, I had no idea of coming to Washington, and I didn't lift a finger to come here. I don't say that with any feeling of superiority because maybe if I had thought that I might have become the Administrator of HHFA, I might have behaved differently. But I just didn't because I had no idea that this would be in the cards and I did nothing to get it.

MOYNIHAN: You had no idea that it would be in the cards. Perhaps in one respect you really hadn't had much to do with the campaign, and you had nothing to do with the nomination, and had no claim on anybody. Had you done that, it would have been perfectly possible that you would have gone out and canvassed for a job which you would have wanted to do?

WEAVER: I might have. Though, I have found that in jobs of this type, unless you have been very active politically which I have never been,

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this doesn't help. I think that the way I operate, it would have been a mistake, looking back upon it, no matter what I had done, to approach it that way.

MOYNIHAN: There are some things that you cannot organize.

WEAVER: That's right.

MOYNIHAN: This has been your experience, and I think it is relevant, as a whole, a discussion of the Kennedy Administration. This has been your experience through thirty years of fairly prominent public office.
Hasn't it?

WEAVER: Yes, I got it in the Harriman Administration by something that resulted completely from no activity on my part. In fact, I wasn't even thinking about it at the time. I almost insulted the person who suggested it by saying that this was a pipe dream, and I was busy. I had other things to think about.

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MOYNIHAN: Were you teaching at that time?

WEAVER: No. I was directing a fellowship program for the John Hay Whitney Foundation.

MOYNIHAN: You were in education! Who suggested to you that you might --

WEAVER: Hortense Gabel called me and said Bob, how would you like to be either the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner of Housing? I said, "where" and she said New York State. And I said well I don't know, but I've got some guests here tonight I'll call you back and talk to you about this some other time. I just played it with a light touch. This was my reaction to it. And I had no idea that I was being considered in that capacity.

MOYNIHAN: Is that the story in the general sense of how you became a member of a league group known as the Black Cabinet?

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WEAVER: No, that was a little different. That was back during the depression. That was during the time when I had finished my graduate work at school and had been teaching in North Carolina and I wasn't happy there. I felt that I would like to come back to Washington which was my home originally. I was born here and my family and my parents were here at the time. And I talked to some people about going into Government, but not in the particular capacity in which I went. But there I was much more active in seeking not a particular job, but seeking a job in the New Deal. In fact, it is the only Government job that I have ever sought, and that was in 1933.

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[BEGIN REEL 2]

MOYNIHAN: This is Daniel P. Moynihan speaking; this is our second tape of the first session interviewing Dr. Robert Weaver, the Administrator of Housing and Home Finance. We are speaking from his house at 4600 Connecticut Avenue. It is the 6th of May, 1964.

Dr. Weaver, we had just got ourselves to the turn of the year. We are not yet into the Kennedy Administration. The President had not been inaugurated. But your appointment had been announced. And it now fell to you to organize your Department -- organize your Administration. It was one that had been notably unorganized in the past. You cannot have escaped the reputation of the Agency -- having been one of its clients over the years. Tell us how you set about. What was the job of Public Administration, as well as political activity?

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WEAVER: Well, one of the things, I think that I had the advantage in, was the fact that I knew a great deal about the operation of the Agency. I had been, as you say, a client. I had been with several public interest groups -- the NAACP, then I was the Chairman of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, and then on one of the committees of the Urban Renewal Administration. And I had been in constant contact with the Agency over the past eight years before coming to Washington. One of the things that I knew very well was the fact that HHFA was something like a feudal system with a lot of fiefdoms, and with not too much central control.

So one of the issues that I raised early with the Administration was the fact that it seemed to me that if this operation was to be successful, there had to be some administrative machinery whereby one would be able to weld together these five constituent agencies into an organization that would begin to operate like a single agency. I found a great responsiveness.

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And to make a long story short, I was involved in the selection of all the persons who were in the key spots. I might say in passing, as you probably know, this is a peculiar agency in that the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency; the Commissioner of the Federal Housing Administration; and the Commissioner of the Public Housing Administration are all Presidential appointees. However, the Commissioner of the Community Facilities Administration, and the Commissioner of the Urban Renewal Administration, as well as the President of the Federal National Mortgage Association, called "Fannie Mae," are persons who are appointed by the Administrator. I soon worked out an arrangement whereby I would be involved in the selection of all persons including those who were Presidential appointees.

MOYNIHAN: Sir, I have to interrupt to say, much as you may regret it; we are not here to make a long story short. And I think

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that you are speaking of a subject which is too fundamental to the dilemmas of the nature of American Government, not to ask you to say: who did you talk to? From whom did you get a commitment? And how did you pick them?

WEAVER: Well, I talked to a series of persons, and let me say, at the early phases of this Administration -- the Kennedy Administration, the lines of authority were far from definite. But the persons that I talked to primarily were Ted Sorensen; Ralph Dungan; Adam Yarmolinsky who happened to be, more or less, the principal talent scout at the time. These were the three major persons with whom I discussed these issues. And I think it was well established that this made sense -- that if we were to have an agency which operated like an agency, you had to have some line of authority even though it were not in the law; and it is not in the law. Because under the law, the two Commissioners who were Presidential appointees are technically and legally, more or less, independent of the Administrator.

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And this had been the de facto situation prior to 1961.

I explained this I think the first time to Ted Sorensen early in January in New York when I had my first conference with him. Then subsequently, I discussed it with Lee White and the others whom I had mentioned. So that what happened was that there was a whole slate of individuals who had been assembled by this talent group. Ralph Dungan and Adam Yarmolinsky were primarily the persons involved at this point. I interviewed various people. I injected other names into the list and got, more or less, a clearance that some of these people would go.

To be able to make this specific, let me get to personalities. I felt very strongly that the most key appointment of all was the Commissioner of the Federal Housing Administration because FHA had functioned, more or less, completely as a separate and distinct operation. It had not been an integrated part of the Housing Agency. And there were strong industry forces, and there still are, which want to keep it separate. They don't want it under HHFA. They want it to operate, I think, for themselves

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rather than for the public. And I felt it was a public agency and ought to operate for the public. I felt even stronger that if HHFA were to do its job, it had to get all of these agencies working together. So that I came up with Neil Hardy, who had been in HHFA for a long time, who is a very knowledgeable and a very able person; and suggested him as the Commissioner of FHA. This was the first appointment that I worked on because I felt this was a key appointment that I worked on because I felt this was a key appointment. And I got clearance on this and he was designated in that capacity. Interestingly, his was one of the names listed on the roster of the Administration's talent scouts.

The next job was a rather simple one, and that was the President of the Federal National Mortgage Association which had been run from its inception by Stan Baughman who is a very competent person. And I talked to him saying I wanted him to stay. He said he would like to, and there was no problem.

The next was a matter of the Administrator of the Public Housing Administration -- Commissioner of the Public Housing

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Administration. Here I was very much impressed by a person who had recently come in under the Eisenhower Administration -- Bruce Savage who had done a great deal to get some real deep verve in the PHA. But there were obviously political difficulties. And it was clear that he was not going to stay. I then picked Marie McGuire who was a woman, obviously; and who had done a remarkably good job in San Antonio, Texas with housing for the elderly. And this was one of the emphases that both the President and I thought was very important in this whole housing picture -- and there was no problem there.

MOYNIHAN: May I interrupt to say that both the President and you felt this. Had you been talking with him since or had these grounds been covered in your first discussion?

WEAVER: No, I had a casual interview with him on something which was entirely unrelated to this. More or less of a social situation in which I had been invited to the White House for some, more

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or less, formal type of thing. And we had spoken only a minute or so in which he had said: "What about public housing?" And I said I felt that in light of his platform and my own interests that housing for the elderly was very important, and that I thought public housing could make a major contribution. He agreed. And later when Mrs. McGuire's name came up, this was one of the qualifications that she had which made her a logical candidate. This was before the stress on women.

And then on the other hand, two things happened which were very interesting in connection with the Commissioner for CFA, Community Facilities Administration. A man by the name of Woolner -- Sidney Woolner who had been in state government in Michigan -- had been one of Soap Williams' [G. Mennen Williams] Lieutenants, seemed to be an excellent administrator and this was a job which required great administrative ability. And I interviewed him. I'd never met him before; never seen him before; never known him before. His qualifications seemed to be good.

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And this was a person who seemed to be a good man to do that job. He was appointed to the position.

Then I met a charming Irishman by the name of Jack Conway whom I had known thirty years before in Chicago. And when he came in, I recalled our very pleasant encounter way back when we worked on a problem, which related to labor unions in Chicago. He seemed to me to be a natural for the Deputy Administrator of HHFA. I was so right because as time went on, during the years that he worked with HHFA; I found that we always, more or less, came to the same conclusion which meant if we made mistakes they were compounded. But if we made a good decision, they were also awfully good. And so he became the Deputy Administrator of HHFA.

MOYNIHAN: Can I interrupt to ask you, you say these men came willing enough. You must have been under some fairly considerable pressures about who you were going to appoint. What kind of pressures were they?

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What institutional? What individual?

WEAVER: Well, I must say that with the exception of one case, which I will come to -- Urban Renewal -- I really didn't have the types of pressures that you usually encounter. And I think for this reason: all the people with whom I had contact, at this period, realized that housing and community development were pretty technical problems, and you couldn't just have anybody do them.

I had very few people seriously proposed to me who did not have some qualifications. I had very little pressure for the top jobs, except one, which I will refer to in just a minute, of taking people because commitments had been made to them or because they had worked hard in the campaign or what not. Now both Jack Conway and Sid Woolner had worked hard in the campaign; however, they had other attributes as well.

When we came to the problem of the Commissioner of Urban Renewal, however, this was a little different situation.

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After I was confirmed, the President at the swearing in ceremonies said to me that Tony D'Alesandro, who had been the Mayor of the City of Baltimore, wanted to be Urban Renewal Commissioner, and that the (the President) had, more or less, made a commitment to D'Alesandro for that job. I was, particularly, inarticulate at the moment and didn't quite get the message. To make a long story short, this was proposed to me not only by the President, but also by many of his Lieutenants: the fact that the commitment had been made, and when I was going to make the appointment. Well, I decided I'd sit this one out, and I out-waited the President.

The pressures were great on the President. The President made another appointment -- gave Mr. D'Alesandro another job. And then the candidate which I had was cleared and

became Commissioner of Urban Renewal. The approach was simply my out-waiting the President. Also it's important to note that the President didn't order me to appoint D'Alesandro although he came damn near -- but he never did.

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Again, sir, we are not here to make long stories short. Is there something -- what you're saying the President -- is there anything more you should say than what you have just said?

WEAVER: Well, I can say this: the President did everything short of saying to me that you have to appoint Mr. D'Alesandro. He did not say that. And since he did not say that, I did not feel that he meant that. Therefore, I felt if I waited long enough I would not have Mr. D'Alesandro whom I did not want to have in that particular capacity.

MOYNIHAN: You knew perfectly well the President wanted you to do this.

WEAVER: Yes.

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MOYNIHAN: But you didn't want to do it. Or did you not think it was in his interest to do it. And why?

WEAVER: Well, I felt that all of the programs in HHFA there was none that was more volatile, more fraught with problems, more dangerous for a democratic, people-oriented administration than Urban Renewal. Because this was a program which took poor people, and pushed them out, and put in a redevelopment activity of a different type. I knew that I had been a great critic of this program. And I felt I wanted to change it. I didn't think I could change it with Mr. D'Alesandro. I don't know what would have happened, to be honest, if the President had said you have to appoint this man. But I think the President didn't know what would have happened if he had said this either so he never said it. So we never faced the issue.

MOYNIHAN: Did you know D'Alesandro?

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WEAVER: Not personally. I knew his background. I knew the type of operation which he had. He was a good Mayor. But a good Mayor is not necessarily a good Commissioner of Urban Renewal.

MOYNIHAN: William Slayton, who you appointed, what was his quality that he had that D'Alesandro didn't have?

WEAVER: Well, Slayton had been involved in urban renewal for many years. He had been with the Agency in its inception, in a field capacity. He had been with the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment officials. He had been a vice-president of the Webb-Knapp in southwest Washington. He had been very much involved in that activity so that he knew technically the problems of the program, and also had a good reputation among the operators. This is terribly important because there are the people that you have to work with.

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They had respect for him, and I had respect for him.

MOYNIHAN: I don't want to anticipate any question -- a subject which will pervade your account of what happened. But in general was your impression of the way the recruitment went for you and went generally, in those days, that it was a pretty effective way of putting together an administration in several weeks?

WEAVER: Of course, I had known Adam Yarmolinsky before. And when I first came to Washington, there were about 10 names for each of the top jobs. By and large, these were 90% of the names that I had in my little kit when I came down. These were knowledgeable, able people. I can also say what happened in my particular field. I don't know what happened elsewhere. But the research had been done extremely well on this. The people who had been selected were able people; and for the most part if I had more or less restricted myself to that particular

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list, I wouldn't have had a bad organization. I would say that about 80% of the people that I appointed in top jobs were people who were on that list. There were a few people that I appointed like Woolner whom I had never known before, and Sid Spector whom I appointed to coordinate all of our senior citizen programs -- we have three such programs.

MOYNIHAN: You brought some fellows down with you from New York.

WEAVER: Yes. Not too many. The key person that I brought down from New York was the Assistant Administrator for Program Policy. This is the research man -- the man who does the evaluation, and the economic analysis. And this was the man who had done a similar job for me in New York at the rent commission as the research guy there -- Mort Schussheim.

[The following is an addition by Mr. Weaver]

In addition, I brought in Wayne Phillips, a reporter on the *New York Times*, as a special assistant. He had been associated with me, as a reporter covering housing, in New York and did much of my speech writing and acted as a personal advisor in press relations.

Of course, all of it wasn't quite as easy as it now sounds. For some strange reason, and I guess it goes back to a long tradition, the free hand, and the capacity to look

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primarily at qualifications sort of becomes less and less significant as you get away from Washington, and get out in the field. With the Regional Administrators, I had less of a free hand. Although, I did retain in New York State, Lester Eisner who was a Republican and a Republican appointee -- an able man. And I think probably the reason for that was because of the political chaos in New York State. And you couldn't get agreement on anybody else, so by default I kept him.

Elsewhere in two regions I had to make compromises with which I was not happy, and with which I am still not happy. In the rest of the seven regions, I was able to get people that I wanted. And these were not people that I knew. These were people I wanted on the basis of their records.

The biggest problem that my Agency faces in the matter of getting really competent people is in a very key spot, and that is in the State Directors of FHA. And these are rather significant jobs. Here I would say my batting average

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has been about 40%. I have taken nobody that I couldn't live with. But I certainly haven't taken the best guy that I wanted in many instances. There are exceptions. The man I have in Milwaukee, Larry Katz, is an outstanding man -- very very able. And I can give some others of the same qualifications. But in many instances these were not men who had too much to recommend them to the job.

MOYNIHAN: Could I ask you -- I wish you would name names where you feel you can representatively, but it is not that important. The most important thing is, could you tell us something about the institutional nature, the quality of the pressures? Who's after those jobs? Where do they come from?

WEAVER: Well, it's really -- it goes back to Senatorial preference.

MOYNIHAN: Are these just political party workers seeking employment?

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Are they representatives of the CIO, of the banks, of the mafia, of the

Italians, of the Negroes?

WEAVER: No, these are people often with only the minimum of qualifications because they have to have that. And I've never had to take a person in any capacity who did not have the minimum qualifications. But these are not of the same quality as those at the national level. These are people who get the endorsement of the Senator or the Senators and maybe the reason I was able to do as I did in Region One in New York was because we have two Republican Senators. But these are the people who in the FHA, the Senators will go along with. They don't name'em. But they have a tremendous veto capacity.

MOYNIHAN: But again -- the type of candidate you get, essentially, represents an individual looking for a job rather than an interested group looking for a representative.

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WEAVER: Yes, they're usually either builders, real estate people, appraisers. One was an outstanding basketball coach with some real estate experience. They're people who have the minimum technical requirements. But they're not a salesman for pots and pans who comes in. They are not the best persons that you could get to do that job in that particular area.

MOYNIHAN: But they cannot represent one specific economic interest.

WEAVER: No, in some instances, they might be the second man in the bureaucracy, or they might be a retired builder. Or they might be a builder -- Mr. Katz, for example, is a very successful builder who wanted to be a public servant. But all of them have some technical qualifications. They're not persons who have no knowledge of what they are doing. But they're not the top people that we would want to run this particular activity.

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I might say, in passing, that an increasing number of Senators who will take the position that you have got to have this guy will say privately that they wish to put it completely under Civil Service because they would rather not be in this. They recognize the problem as well as we do. But it's a situation where a guy who is appointed in a Federal job in the locale from which the Senator comes. The Senator feels that he has got to be a part of the operation, and very often he isn't too strong for the candidate. We had one situation in one state in which the whole delegation got together and took the position either this or nobody.

MOYNIHAN: Who won?

WEAVER: Fifty-fifty. We took one, and they took the other.

MOYNIHAN: Question sir! You took over a pretty big bureaucracy. What do you have about 30,000 people?

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WEAVER: No, only 14,000 or 15,000.

MOYNIHAN: What was their quality?

WEAVER: Well, I think it's typical of the quality in the Federal Government. That is the fact, by in large, that the people at the higher echelons are extremely competent. The administrative bureaucracy, for example, is technically very good. The higher professional people I have found to be extremely competent. The real problem here is not the competency of it, but it is really a power struggle. That is the fact that the bureaucracy always wants to absorb the new administration. In one instance where I am going to make a change shortly, a very good man has gotten "took" by this bureaucracy. And they've got him deciding all of the little nit-picking things, and they're making all the policy decisions.

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In my own office, in the Office of the Administrator, where I had about seventeen Schedule C appointments, I fired all of them before I even met them and put all new people in. The constituent directors seldom did the same thing. They promoted from within and this I think was a mistake. I think that the policy people have to be a part of the Administration. Otherwise, you get the dichotomy between the people who are going to be here after these guys go. And they are going to run it safe -- to run it like it used to be. And unconsciously, there is in an organization -- this is true in business, it's true in foundations, it's true in universities -- the notion that if we just stand together and stay here we'll run the organization regardless of who is the head of it.

My feeling is that the person who is the head of it ought to run it. And I think very strongly that when a new Administration comes in the policy people ought to be all -- or almost all -- new people and not people who have been there over a long period of time, because unconsciously, they identify

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what's happened in the past with their own integrity. And any change from the past is a hurt to their ego and also inspires a feeling that maybe they have been wrong. So you get great resistance to change from the people who had been doing it that way all the years before.

MOYNIHAN: Very interesting point. But you were satisfied that you had the levels of

competence required in carrying out the job by the Career Civil Service.

WEAVER: I would say -- 95% of the cases -- they were competent people. This is a top echelon because I don't know and I couldn't tell you what happened below that.

MOYNIHAN: And probably you never will know.

WEAVER: One of the interesting things about this human aspect of it was the matter of letters. It took me a year and a half

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before I could stop the writing of "this is in answer of yours of the sixteenth instant" sort of thing. it is a very bureaucratic reply. I wanted a somewhat warm and personal approach. i think that we've made great progress in that and we get very few of those letters now that come up for my signature. And I always send them back. Of course, I have given up on one thing, a split infinitive. I have become a compromiser. But I still will not accept the word "contact" as a verb. To me it is still an noun.

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[BEGIN REEL 3]

MOYNIHAN: This is Daniel P. Moynihan, beginning the third reel of the interview with Dr. Robert Weaver, the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Administration. I'm speaking from Dr. Weaver's home, 4600 Connecticut Avenue. The date is the 6th of May, 1964.

Dr. Weaver, the announcement by President Kennedy of your appointment as the Administrator of Housing and Home Finance begins an era in American history -- an era which was destined -- if you mind the confusion of terms -- to escalate very rapidly in the course of the months that followed.

Yours was the first appointment of a Negro to a high -- to a Cabinet level post in the American government. And the reaction cannot but have been one of the great interest on the part of the Negro community from which you came as a representative, in some sense of one of the senior organizations. You were a

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director -- Chairman of the Board of the NAACP.

Equally, there was a general reaction to the white community -- the American community. And there was thirdly a reaction from the southern world itself -- mostly

representatives in the Congress. You had to be confirmed. You had to win acceptance generally. I wonder if you could talk to us about just that.

WEAVER: Yes. After the first flush of the designation by the President, and being enmeshed with the matter of trying to get a staff together, I might say in passing that in getting the staff together -- I interviewed a number of persons in addition to those who were selected. And this is a very pertinent to the present issue of salary schedules. By and large, the people who would have been very good candidates were people already working at the local level -- all of them getting anywhere from 25% to a 50% higher income than any of these jobs would pay. There were at least four top people who really went

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through the pains of the damned in wanting to be a part of the new Administration. But they were in a little different position from the position I was in, since my wife is professionally employed in a career of her own. We have no children at the present, and none in college. I could afford to make the sacrifice. But these men couldn't. And many of them really went through hell to turn it down.

I think this is a very interesting little bit of history because two-thirds of the salaries of the people who could not afford to come to Washington is paid by the Federal government out of these very programs.

We have, for example, the man who runs Urban Renewal in Boston, a very able man, Ed Logue, makes \$30,000 a year. My salary is \$21,000 a year. So you can see what the problem is.

There was not a single person that I had talked to among this group of six extremely competent men who was not making

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over \$25,000 -- many between \$25,000 and \$30,000 and, at least two \$30,000, and one \$35,000. So you can see the problem that presented itself, and I came here at a cut in salary from New York.

But getting back to this other thing, I faced grumblings of what was to come in the press, of course. Apparently, there were three major types of opposition to me. The first was that I had left-wing tendencies and left-wing identifications. The second was that because of my activities in Civil Rights organizations and Negro Rights organizations, I could not be objective, and could not attack this problem as from the point of view of all the people. And the third was from the industry -- the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Real Estate Boards in particular. So I had my first taste of what was to come when I was invited to the National Association of Home Builders. This was a very interesting experience because

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there were two groups: the group of the more successful and the larger builders who had decided that they could live with me and decided that they'd at least like to be exposed to see whether or not I had horns; and then a large number that felt I was just a ruin to the industry.

I went to their convention and made a very short speech and spent a couple of evenings with them. I think I probably won the support of a large number because I indulged in one of their favorite activities which was the consuming of whiskey. At least, they found in spite of the fact that I had a Ph. D., I was a human being.

MOYNIHAN: Could I ask what month this would have been?

WEAVER: Yes. This would have been in January -- early in January. My relations with the National Association of Real Estate Boards has always been a negative one. I don't think that we agree on any issue or on any basic concept. I have not attempted

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to change their opinions and they haven't succeeded in changing mine. This has been an opposition that has been indigenious, and I am sure will exist as long as I am here. But this is like death and taxes. I accept it as the inevitable.

Getting back to the confirmation, I first, as I said, got wind of this, through I knew it before -- but I mean its dimensions, at these conventions, and then finally in reading the press. So that when I went I went into the hearings, as you know, and the records show the Senator from -- junior Senator I guess he is, maybe senior -- Virginia, Mr. Robertson, insisted that he couldn't go on until the President had indicated that he felt that I was a safe security risk. And we then had to recess until the President sent over a letter to that effect.

The hearings themselves were to me very interesting, and I think very, very effective and very helpful because the Communist charges were not well documented nor the other charges about my attitude as far as Housing in general, and as far as race issues were concerned.

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Well, I had taken the position, at the time of my designation at the Press Conference in Florida on December 29 that I felt, that wherever there was Federal involvement, housing should be available to all people regardless of race, creed or color. This was a position from which I have never retreated and didn't retreat during the hearings. I haven't retreated since, and I never intend to retreat.

Interestingly, on the 24th of January when the hearings were being set up, I encountered the then Vice-President Johnson for the first time. And he indicated his interest in my confirmation and suggested a few things. He suggested one thing which I felt was a very sound suggestion -- one that I used. And that was the fact that I was not going to retreat from my position. But the timing of such an order was within the jurisdiction of the President

and not within my jurisdiction. The President would make the order, and not I. Of course, this was a very sound position -- one which I took all the way through.

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I think the important thing about the hearings, as far as I am concerned, was that they gave me a chance to have a certain degree of exposure -- to the press, to the TV, and to the radio, but more important to the Congress and to indicate that I knew something about what I was doing, that I knew something about the job, and also that I had some degree of integrity and some degree of courage; that I wasn't going to equivocate, or I wasn't going to back up nor was I going to apologize for what I believed.

I must say that probably my writings had more exposure at that time than they ever had before. I wish my books had been in print because they would have sold very well, but unfortunately, they weren't. They were quoted from extensively and articles were put in the record.

But on the whole, I think that it did a great deal of good for me in that it gave me an opportunity before I really got functioning to get an image of myself before the Congress.

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One rather tragic thing that occurred was when I went to see Senator Sparkman whom, incidentally, I had voted for and supported as a Vice-Presidential candidate and who I knew to be a liberal on issues (save race) and a person expert in guiding housing legislation through the Senate. It was rumored that this man would oppose my confirmation; and I considered him a decent human being whom I hoped would be able to rise above the limitations of his region.

I said to him at the time of our conference, I recall it very well, that I hoped he could vote for my confirmation. By that time, I knew that I didn't need his vote. I had enough votes to come out. But I added that if he couldn't vote for the confirmation, for heaven's sake vote for the Housing Bill, which he did. And this was more important than his confirmation vote.

The fact that from the point of view of a human being, because I was a Negro regardless of my qualifications, my capabilities or anything else, I was subjected to this long

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hearing -- much of it irrelevant, much of it without any basis of fact -- was demeaning. This was the sort of thing that naturally I resented, and I felt that this was again an evidence of the fact that Negroes in America are still not first class citizens. But I don't think this happened to another Negro appointee to the same degree that it happened to me.

Actually, from a very selfish and a very operational point of view, it turned out to my betterment rather than to my detriment. But the implications of it were very demeaning and something that I felt, at first blush, very much put upon. But I happen to be a debater and I happen to like a fight. Before it was all over, I had a hell of a good time.

MOYNIHAN: I read the hearings mostly, I must say they were a beautiful case of your holding your ground -- answering questions. You came repeatedly to that question that Lyndon Johnson apparently

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gave you, which is the timing of such an order of the question of the President's decision. The need for it is one which I stand behind for now.

Can I ask you now -- look it wasn't just that easy, and again you are making a long story short. Seriously, some of those southerners must have been pretty nasty.

WEAVER: Well, let me say this. You know I didn't become a Negro yesterday, and I didn't become a Negro that day of that appointment. It occurred. I had had a lot of experiences. I had had a lot of situations. So this wasn't new to me. As long as I had a chance to say my say in court -- I resented the fact that it happened -- but I got a certain enjoyment once I got into the swing of things of swapping wits and repartee and analysis with these gentlemen -- some of whom I think were gentlemen at that time. I am not sure I do now. But it was an inconvenience, but not a terrifically unpleasant task, because I at least, had a fair break. I had a chance to say my say.

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MOYNIHAN: I will never forget your exchange with I think Senator Thurmond.

WEAVER: Blakely.

MOYNIHAN: Blakely said "I have this review here by a man named Mr. J. Crow for the New York *Daily Worker*. Do you know Mr. J. Crow?" And you said, "Yes, I believe I know him, but I did not know he wrote the book review."

WEAVER: And Senator Blakely at that time, and until sometime later, did not realize that J. Crow was the title of the review which meant Jim Crow. He didn't know what Jim Crow meant.

MOYNIHAN: He didn't know what Jim Crow meant!

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WEAVER: He did not. He never understood the laughter. Even Robertson laughed, and Blakely didn't understand.

MOYNIHAN: Good Lord! But look, let me ask you, were the hearings as it were a public affair?

WEAVER: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: Not attended very much by private inquisition or private harassment.

WEAVER: No, it was a public affair. It was done with a degree of decorum, and the witness after me were permitted to talk and to come in. But it was well handled -- from that point of view, there could be no criticism of it. And I had an opportunity to answer -- as unfounded as many of the charges were -- the charges. And actually of course, I must admit maybe I am being a little more philosophical now -- after it's all over -- than I was at the time. But looking back upon it,

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I really think it was something that was one of the greatest helps to me that could possibly have happened. Although, the concept of the thing happening and the basis for it was something that I had great objection to.

What I emerged with, as a result of that, was posture that I could not have acquired otherwise under any similar set of circumstances in such a short time.

MOYNIHAN: Could I ask you -- I may be quite wrong, I had the impression that Senator Sparkman was persuaded by you -- that you answered his question and said that you helped him out.

WEAVER: I really think that Senator Sparkman was really torn in this. In the first place, as you know, the Senate Banking and Currency Committee's candidate for this job was a colleague of mine and yours -- Mr. McMurray -- who was the Commissioner of Housing at the State of New York, when I was the Deputy for a year, and who had been a long time staff member of the Banking and Currency Committee. I think

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that was involved.

The second place, I don't think Mr. Sparkman politically could afford to do anything but to oppose me. I would say looking back on the record that Mr. Sparkman's opposition was minimal.

And certainly it was done with the greatest amount of decency -- the greatest amount of consideration. And he desisted at the point where he could logically easily get off the spot. Well, my major help in the subcommittee, of course, came from Senator Javits, from Senator Clark, from Senator Douglas and one or two others; but those were the three persons who were the most helpful.

MOYNIHAN: Senator Javits, as New Yorker, as a liberal, as a what?

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WEAVER: It happened that I have known Senator Javits for a long time, and that he and I happen to have, as far as housing is concerned, very much the same ideas. And also as a New Yorker, he had an identification. I think, too, it was a personal thing, though I'd never been a political supporter of his nor is he a political supporter of mine.

Senator Clark, I had known for a long, long time. For example, we were co-founders of Action some years ago. We worked very closely there and got to know each other very well.

Senator Douglas, of course, is an economist. I used to be one. I have great respect for him, and I hope he has the same for me. And so these were the people who were particularly helpful, though there were others as well.

I have a feeling that the other thing that was extremely helpful to me was the press. The reporters were very much

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on my side, except for some of the southern press, and the commentators on TV and radio were in my corner. This had a very salutary effect. Also, it posed a problem because I immediately became hot which meant that I was invited to be on every TV and radio show in the country. But I refrained and only went on a few.

MOYNIHAN: You hadn't really gotten that much hold of your Department yet.

WEAVER: No. Not only that, I think it is very difficult to get on any point of exposure on a subject before you know where you are going. We hadn't even decided where we were going to go as far as housing legislation was concerned. This would have been the next logical question: what are you going to propose? What is the Administration going to propose? And the Administration had not decided what it was going to propose at that time. So that this was not modesty

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or reticence. But I think that it was a little bit of discretion that I resisted this temptation.

MOYNIHAN: Bob, the White House kept its nerve through this -- did it?

WEAVER: Definitely, the President took a position as he could often take. Not only the President, but all of the staff; Larry O'Brien, Ken O'Donnell and all of them were completely dedicated on this. This was not a personal involvement at the time. I think it might have been a little later, but at the time I don't think they knew what sort of kettle of fish I came out of. But it was a fact that this was

a Presidential appointment, and there were certain things done such as Robertson's action, for example, that were a direct slap at the President and his authority. It was, to say the least, a most ungracious and impolite thing to do to say --

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MOYNIHAN: You are speaking of his demand that the President send a letter to the Committee.

WEAVER: Yes, and once the issue was made the whole Administration took the position and this included, as I said, the Vice-President. It included Humphrey. It included top leaders including the Speaker, incidentally, in the House. All were behind it.

And this was not any tribute to me, but it was a tribute to the fact that this was the Administration's position and they were going through with it. The support was complete, and I think that to me it was a very rewarding experience. I always had a feeling that they were behind me, and not too far behind me, but really effectively behind me.

When it came out as it did, I think that it was a very good thing for the Administration. I think it would have been a very direct slap in the face of the Administration if this

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had not happened.

One thing that interested me was, some time after that, the *Los Angeles Times*' feature article said the two most controversial appointees of the Kennedy Administration were Bobby Kennedy and myself. Within six months both of us had gotten fairly good acceptance. This was something that I felt extremely good about -- the fact that there were very few scars left as a result of the issue.

There was a situation in which I think the Congress, politicians as they are, has a collective respect for a person who can slug it out with them. This was the image that I tried to establish at that time. I tried to be gracious and not to be obnoxious personally, while holding to the position which I felt was not only a matter of my own personal integrity which is important to me, but was also politically important. Once the hearing got going, I felt it was an opportunity for me to show that I could take it.

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And I might say, if I may reminisce a little bit. I've often felt that probably the one guy whom I owe the most for the successful experience is Joseph Carlino. Because the first time I went up as the State Rent Administrator in New York City, Mr. Carlino got me on the stand, and removing me from my general council spanked me in public for about twenty minutes. I didn't know the technical answers. And then I fought back for an hour. I found out that this is the way you get along in these legislative hearings. It's by being articulate. It's by being

knowledgeable. It's by knowing your homework. It's also by showing you've got guts. And I think that if I had not had that experience in New York, I wouldn't have been able to have sustained this. And I certainly would have felt much more personally involved about it than I did because I realize that this is sort of par for the course.

MOYNIHAN: Question! Two questions which we'll go into some other time.

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I think it would be a fair thing to ask you to tell us a little later just a little more about was the nature of your involvement in the 1930's in the politics at that age.

But just for this moment, did you ever subsequently deal with these others, and was there ever any indication of the conclusions they came to?

WEAVER: There was never any reference again to the hearings. I might say that one of the most difficult persons on this was not a southerner, but a good Republican -- that is the senior Senator from Utah who was quite articulate and a very formidable foe, but also quite conservative. He objected strenuously to the notion of open occupancy because this was a matter of human rights against property rights. So it wasn't only a southern -- it was a philosophical outlook as well as a regional one.

My relationships with the Congress has been, without any reference to the hearings, my relationships with Mr. Sparkman --

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Senator Sparkman -- have been very warm and always, of course, I kept theme on the official basis because I don't want to embarrass him -- I mean politically; I don't know about embarrassing him personally or not. But there was never any reference to this afterwards. It was as though this had never happened.

And my relationships, by and large, with the southern Senators and Congressman have been a very professional ones and ones in which the matter of race or the matter of the hearings has never come up. I, of course, have a great deal of contact with them both by the correspondence and in committee hearings. As a matter of fact, one of the arch-segregationist, a man today who is fighting the Civil Rights bill with great vehemence -- when I was testifying for the mass transit bill in the Senate and a Democrat, so-called, Mr. Lausche of Ohio, was attempting to submarine the act and I had quite a colloquy with him -- when I finished this particular southern Senator (Thurman of South Carolina) complimented me (when nobody was around)

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upon the nature of my defense of my position.

So that I think you have to realize that a great deal of the southern position is for local consumption. At least, I recognize it. On the other hand, I don't relish it. I don't like it. I

think it's a very unfortunate situation in a democracy that this can occur. And also, as I said after the hearing, I think it is a hell of a thing that a man trying to set up an organization such as HHFA has to spend, as I did, literally three weeks preparing for hearings -- going back and trying to find out where I went twenty-five years ago -- what I said twenty-five years ago -- whom I talked to twenty-five years ago -- and what was which twenty-five years ago. And that's a research project involving time and effort with which I could almost write a book.

But this is a part that I don't like. But I must say I don't think there were many scars in it. And I think it is a part of the political activity of a young country which I hope will mature a little more quickly in the future.

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MOYNIHAN: Mr. Administrator, just one last question tonight! The southerners came up with an awful lot of information about you. Did they get it from the FBI?

WEAVER: They got it from the files of the FBI. On the other hand, Congressman Walter gave me a clean bill of health on my supposedly left-winged activities. You know the files of the FBI are strange things in which they simply quote everything that anybody says -- absolutely unedited. This doesn't mean that this is an FBI position. But I remember one time when I was being investigated for a job. They went to my neighbor to whom I only said hello. And he said we had strange people coming in. And he felt that he didn't know very much about this.

They also went to the corner groceryman to find out what my ideological positions were. Well, I submit the corner groceryman doesn't know a thing about my ideological position. So this is unedited stuff which if you take it in the raw can damn anybody.

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MOYNIHAN: But would the Congress have access to raw FBI data?

WEAVER: Apparently they did.

MOYNIHAN: They had no business in the normal course of --

WEAVER: Apparently, they did. And this I would have to check back. I don't recall the details. But apparently they did. And certainly, there were certain FBI reports which had a lot of unedited material which should be read by saying: "It is alleged that..." But of course, it was never quoted as being alleged that.

MOYNIHAN: Was this J. Edgar Hoover getting along with Congress in a way he had done -- ?

WEAVER: I don't know I would imagine so. From what I know of FBI in the past, this would be my guess. I think it is a very

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vicious and dangerous sort of thing. Because really if someone wants to character assassinate you, all you've got to do is talk to an FBI agent and say I don't know that this is true but I understand that Moynihan has got a direct line to the Kremlin. And this goes in the record.

MOYNIHAN: It wouldn't surprise me one bit if he did! Well, sir, I think we've gotten through six weeks of the Kennedy era or sixteen months rather.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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