

WH6411-04-6166_scroller

Date: 1964-11-04

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Harry S. Truman

Start Time: 11:36

Place: LBJ Ranch

SCROLLER TITLE: "I'm Just So Honored"

SCENE SETTER: Making his postelection calls to supporters following his victory in the 1964 election, President Johnson reached out to former president Harry S. Truman. Johnson lauded Truman for several landmark achievements in the late 1940s, the magnitude of which "makes all of us look like pygmies" by contrast. As he would do repeatedly with Truman, as well as with former president Dwight D. Eisenhower, Johnson extended the perks of the office.

President Johnson: Hello?

Harry S. Truman: Hello?

President Johnson: Hello?

Truman: This is Harry Truman.

President Johnson: Mr. President, I love you as everybody in America does, and I'm just so honored that you would take the time to call me.

Truman: Well, I called you, because I think you set a record that's never been equaled and never will be.

President Johnson: No, anybody got your record [will] never equal it. When you go to looking at the Truman Doctrine, and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], and Marshall Plan, and everything else, it makes all of us look like pygmies, and I know it. And I [*Truman attempts to interject*]-that's one good thing about me: I got sense enough to know it, but I . . .

Truman: Well, you're all right in my book, and I just wanted to congratulate you. Now, I feel just as happy about it as you do.

President Johnson: I know you—you feel happier, 'cause you always been more for your party and your other folks than you have been for yourself. And I just want you to know as long as I'm in that office, you're in it. And there's not a privilege of it, or a power of it, or a purpose of it that you can't share. And your bedroom's up there waiting for you, and your plane's standing by your side, and—

Truman: Appreciate it.

President Johnson: —your doctors, and anything else you want or need, why, by God, Uncle Sam will—

Truman: The first time I'm able to travel and get around, I'd like to come see you and just talk over old times.

President Johnson: You just tell—

Truman: With nothing in view but to see Lyndon Johnson.

President Johnson: You just tell them that, and you bring Margaret [Truman Daniel] and your grandkids down, and we'll have a plane pick both of you up, [*Truman laughs*] and we'll just come there. And I want to get your advice and talk to you, and I think we got a good chance, but we're in trouble on foreign things.

Truman: Well, you're all right now, and you won't have any serious trouble at all , and if there's anything I can do to help, you know I'm available.

President Johnson: Well, you've done it. I came to you when I wanted to know how to run for vice president, and I came to you when I wanted to know how to run for president. And I think that we gave them a good mauling, just what you wanted them given, didn't we?

Truman: It's just exactly what they ought to have had, and it's the finest thing that's happened in the history of the country.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: "Lyndon Johnson and Harry Truman on 4 November 1964," Conversation WH6411-04-6166, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition [The Election of 1964*, vol. 2, ed. Kent B. Germany et al.] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–).