

## WH6411-23-6398\_scroller

**Date:** 1964-11-18

**Participant:** Lyndon B. Johnson

**Participant:** Robert S. McNamara

**Start Time:** 16:05

**Place:** Oval Office

SCROLLER TITLE: "A Model of Law Enforcement"

SCENE SETTER: While speaking with Secretary of Defense Robert S. "Bob" McNamara about the controversial appointment of a new chief of police for the District of Columbia, President Johnson expressed outrage about the recent, separate robberies of both McNamara's daughter and the daughter of a Republican senator. The high levels of crime in the District had been an issue that Republican nominee Barry M. Goldwater Sr. [R-Arizona] had tried to use against Johnson during the recent presidential campaign. The exchange captured the emerging salience of crime as an issue in American politics.

**President Johnson:** We wanted to get the outstanding criminologist in the United States and bring him in here [the District of Columbia] and try to make this a model of law enforcement. I got upset particularly when this Senator [Gordon L.] Allott [R-Colorado] from Colorado's girl and then your girl got robbed, [McNamara acknowledges] and I just think it's an outrage that a Cabinet officer, his daughter, can't come in without having thugs [unclear]. So I told him and sent word and asked that I be notified. He—[Walter N.] Tobriner got a little upset, said that's his prerogative, although I'd reappointed him. And they didn't tell me about it. I didn't know anything about it. But said he would. He checked with each one of the southerners and boys on the District Committee that they dominate, both of them, about this new man but claimed that he thought that that man notified [Robert F.] Bobby [Kennedy], and Bobby wasn't there anymore, so he didn't notify [Nicholas deB. "Nick"] Katzenbach, and he claimed he forgot that we had asked him to do it. Although he was irritated enough to cuss a fellow out when we told him—[Charles A. "Charlie"] Horsky. [McNamara acknowledges.]

Now, [John B.] Duncan finds him [John B. Layton] very unacceptable and was against him. Your man didn't know much about it, just went along. He's the fall guy. Tobriner's trying to slip it over.

Now, we were informed that two weeks ago, this fellow's daughter was caught shoplift—purse-lifting here in town, and they started to prosecute her. The District called up—police did—this fellow and told him that he wouldn't present any evidence. And so [David C.] Acheson was forced to dismiss the case. Now, we don't want any national problems in the police department of the capital like we've had [McNamara acknowledges] in some of these other ones.

**McNamara:** Sure.

**President Johnson:** Now, Katzenbach is writing a letter, I think—he's out of town now, but you might check with him [when] he gets back—to the chairman of the Board, Tobriner, saying that we want this regarded as probationary. [McNamara acknowledges throughout.] We hope it'll be treated only as temporary. I doubt we have any legal jurisdiction, either he or I, but he's asking that, and when that letter comes up for consideration, we think that Duncan and [Charles M.] Duke [Sr.] ought to say that, in view of the fact that we have responsibility for the federal establishments in the capital, and the Attorney General has these problems, and we have these problems, it's a matter that ought to be cooperatively handled and have some person that's satisfactory, that's outstanding. And if the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] report shows that any of these things have been alleged happening,

we don't want to get ourselves in a jam of having that kind of fellow running it. And I thought I ought to tell you and let you talk to Katzenbach and then see what the score is and talk to your man.

**McNamara:** Sure.

**President Johnson:** And I think it's something you have to be discreet about. Look at his background, see who he is, what kind of fellow he is, who talks to him, and who he works with over there, and so on, and so forth. Get a good, complete picture before you move. But I don't think we ought to have this capital in charge of a corrupt man.

**McNamara:** Yeah. I'll talk to Nick as soon as he gets back and work on it.

**President Johnson:** All right.

**McNamara:** Thanks, Mr. President.

*End of excerpt.*

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