



“All These Harvard Men”

Date: 1965-04-07

Conversation: WH6504-02-7323-7324

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Nicholas deB. Katzenbach

Start Time: 09:17

Duration: 02:50

Place: Mansion

SCENE SETTER: Speaking with Attorney General Nicholas deB. “Nick” Katzenbach about candidates for positions in the federal judiciary and the executive branch, President Johnson highlighted the politics of those appointments. In the process, Johnson told Katzenbach of his postpresidential plans.

President Johnson: Well, have you got your department—what—have you done any more work on our taxman?

Nicholas deB. “Nick” Katzenbach: Yeah. I got two people that I’m looking pretty closely at, and I’m going to talk to somebody on antitrust this morning, [Donald F.] Don Turner from Harvard [*President Johnson acknowledges*], who . . . probably the outstanding younger man in the country. He had a heart attack about three years ago and wasn’t interested in 1961 for that reason. I think he might be interested now.

President Johnson: Can’t you get me somebody in the Midwest or South or West besides all these Harvard men? Do you know, honestly, that nine men out of ten that I name are Harvard men?

Katzenbach: No, I [*unclear*].

President Johnson: They are. They’re just everybody that [John W.] Macy [Jr.] sends me.

Katzenbach: I have a man—

President Johnson: I cut about six of them back yesterday, just one right after the other. Now, I know it’s a hell of a good school, and I’m for it, [*Katzenbach attempts to interject*] and I don’t mind them having 30 percent. But I want California. They’re just raising hell. They got the biggest delegation up here, and we never can find anybody real good from California. Now, the University—

Katzenbach: [*speaking over President Johnson*] I’ve got a man for tax from California that . . . I think might be real good, and I think would have some political backing out there.

President Johnson: We've got to have [Edmund G. "Pat"] Brown [D-California] and the delegation, anybody in California. They got their feelings hurt. They're mad. They thought we sent Pierre [E. G. Salinger] out to run against them, and they thought that lost them a seat and screwed things up, and I suspect it did. We had nothing to do with it, but we get the blame for it. They had under secretary of interior. We—he quit. They wanted a job, and [Stewart L.] Udall took a man from Idaho. Well, there's a hell of a lot of difference between Idaho and California in a convention and in an election, too. So, they're mad about that. Then they're getting ready to pass my education bill, about half of them get [unclear]. And they say, well, if we don't want the 40 votes for California, [unclear]. [Katzenbach acknowledges.] We want to go to Idaho, get the one they got up there. And that's the shape we're in.

We're in the same shape in Texas. They're getting mad at us. We haven't got anything. [W.] Ramsey Clark's their only guy. They got nobody in the Cabinet. They got nothing. But we can get by with them, but we've got [snorts]—we've got nothing in the West. [Richard J.] Dick Daley doesn't get much. You were supposed to be his man, but I don't know how simpatico we are. And he thinks that Doug was kind of—we play with him a little bit and nobody else. We—Wisconsin gets—There are two states that get everything: Wisconsin and this goddamned Harvard, and I guess because Wisconsin's got a good public school.

So I'm going to start my library, and I'm going to take a hundred people a year from over the country, the United States, and give them four-year scholarships, just about got all they can eat and wear during that four years, and make them be straight As, and then turn them out of Texas every year. That's what my—what I'm going to do when I get out of here. Just go back there and teach. Teach them and make the University of Texas finance it, and they've already agreed to put in 18, 20 million dollars.

Katzenbach: Gee, that'd be great.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: "Lyndon B. Johnson and Nicholas 'Nick' Katzenbach on 7 April 1965," Conversation WH6504-02-7323-7324, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Lyndon B. Johnson and Civil Rights, vol. 2, ed. Kent B. Germany] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4005137>

This conversation was transcribed by the [Miller Center's Presidential Recordings Program](#) with the generous support of the [National Historical Publications and Records Commission](#).

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