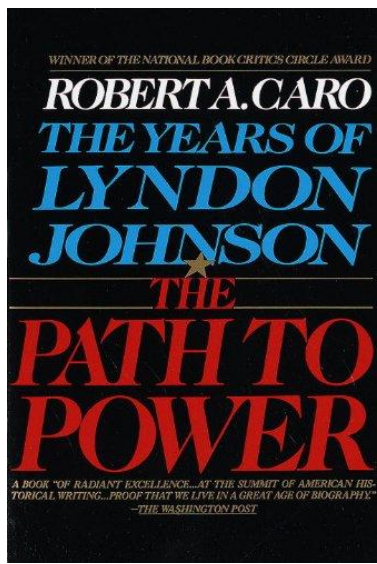




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The Path to Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson I

van Robert A. Caro

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39 Highlights | Geel (39)

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 295

The more one thus follows his life, the more apparent it becomes that alongside the thread of achievement running through it runs another thread, as dark as the other is bright, and as fraught with consequences for history: a hunger for power in its most naked form, for power not to improve the lives of others, but to manipulate and dominate them, to bend them to his will. For the more one learns—from his family, his childhood playmates, his college classmates, his first assistants, his congressional colleagues—about Lyndon Johnson, the more it becomes apparent not only that this hunger was a constant throughout his life but that it was a hunger so fierce and consuming that no consideration of morality or ethics, no cost to himself—or to anyone else—could stand before it. It, too, can be seen in college. There he obtained

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 4229

The son of the man of whom “you always knew where he stood” let no one know where he stood. Men like Kyle and Puls, into whose ambitions he was scheming to plunge a knife, thought he was their friend until the knife was in up to the hilt. These tactics had, of course, been employed within the confines of campus politics, so small-scale and insignificant compared to the politics of the outside world. Within those confines, nonetheless, had emerged a certain pattern to the tactics—the politicking—of Lyndon Johnson. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the pattern was its lack of any discernible limits. Pragmatism had shaded into the morality of the ballot box, a morality in which nothing matters but victory and any maneuver that leads to victory is justified—into a morality that is amorality.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 5220

The toilet in Kleberg’s office suite was set in a short corridor between its two rooms. Johnson would sit down on it, and, Latimer says, “there would come a call: ‘L.E.!’ L.E. would say, ‘Oh, God,’ because he hated this.” He would take his pad, and go to the bathroom. At first, he attempted to stand away from the door, but Johnson insisted he come right into the doorway, so he would be standing over him, and “L.E. would stand with his head and nose averted, and take dictation.” In later years, Johnson’s penchant for forcing subordinates to watch him defecating would be called by some an example of a wonderful “naturalness.” Others would find it, as one journalist put it, “in part, a method of control. Bring Douglas Dillon into the bathroom with you, and he has a little less independent dignity.” This tactic was, indeed, “a method of control.” The first person on whom it was employed was L. E. Jones—and those who observed it, knew it was being done to humiliate him, and to prove to him who was boss. Jones had little choice but to accept the humiliation

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 5231

THE LATER Johnson-Jones relationship reveals the quality Johnson considered indispensable in a subordinate. He did indeed help Jones obtain a government job—as an attorney with the Justice Department in 1938—and kept in touch with him thereafter, when Jones was in private practice. In his most desperate crisis—the legal battle that climaxed the 1948 Senatorial election—he turned to him, asking Jones to join his legal team for the duration of the crucial appeal, and Jones did, indeed, join it. The end of the appeal, however, signaled the end of any working relationship. The Johnson-Jones relationship contrasts sharply with that between Johnson and Latimer. Jones was the more intelligent of the two assistants—and Johnson’s awareness of his brilliance is proven by the fact that Johnson turned to him in time of crisis. From four years of personal observation, moreover, Johnson must have realized that Jones would have been the hardest-working of aides. But, except for two brief periods of part-time employment, Jones would never again be on his payroll—and Latimer would be on it for much of his life. What are the implications of this contrast? Was brilliance not enough to qualify a man for permanent work for Lyndon Johnson? Was hard work not enough? In fact, as would be demonstrated as soon as Johnson began hiring men on a large scale, the crucial qualification was subservience. Dignity was not permitted in a Johnson employee. Pride was not permitted. Utter submission to Johnson’s demands, the submission that Jones called “a surrender of personality,” a loss of “your individuality to his domination,” was required. Otherwise, no matter how brilliant or hard-working, a man or woman could not work for Lyndon Johnson.)

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 5659

Four hundred and thirty-five Congressional districts: among them districts represented by Congressmen of long seniority whose favor even a President had to court; among them districts represented by Congressmen who chaired powerful committees; among them districts represented by Congressmen who were allies of the New Deal; among them districts represented by Congressmen who worked hard for their districts. Few districts fared better under the New Deal’s programs than this district with a junior Congressman who opposed the New Deal, a Congressman who seldom visited his office—this district whose only asset on Capitol Hill was a young secretary who worked for it with a frantic, frenzied, almost desperate aggressiveness and energy.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 5971

“Lyndon was a trimmer,” he says. “He would be guided by no philosophy or ideals. He would trim his sails to every wind.”

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 6633

Terrible as were the toil and the poverty, the loneliness was worse. Poverty, he was to say, only “tries men’s souls”; it is loneliness that “breaks the heart. Loneliness consumes people.”

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 7585

The mail descended on their desks in tall stacks, and as the day passed into evening, and the evening drew later, the sight of the stacks—the evidence of work not done—seemed to make him wild. Answering often required telephoning some state agency for information, but Johnson, rushing through the office and seeing a clerk on the telephone, would shout: “Goddammit, do you spend all your time on the phone?” In his frustration, he sometimes began cursing someone for no apparent reason. “Listening to him, I heard every curse word I had ever heard, and some combinations I had never heard,” Morgan says. “God, he could rip a man up and down.” Birdwell, soft-spoken, sweet-tempered, “the gentlest man who ever lived,” literally cowered before Lyndon Johnson in his rage—stood before him with head lowered and shoulders bent under the lash of Johnson’s tongue. Curses were not the only words that hurt. His gift for finding a man’s most sensitive point was supplemented by a willingness—eagerness, almost—to hammer at that point without mercy. The brilliant Herbert Henderson, for example, had been an alcoholic; Johnson never let him forget it. Another staff member, unable because of the Depression to find a job in the United States, had for a time worked at a humiliatingly low-level post in an American company’s Peru office. He was ashamed of that fact, and was ashamed also of the fifty-dollar-per-month salary he had been forced to accept in private industry in order to return to Texas. Johnson never let this staffer—or anyone else within earshot—forget these facts. “Why don’t you go back to Peru?” he would shout. “Maybe you can get by with work like this there! Why don’t you go to China? Why don’t I just fire you? Then you can go back to making fifty dollars a month. You know why you were making fifty dollars a month, don’t you? Because that’s what you’re worth!” Not all the rage was real. Sometimes, at the height of a tantrum—as Johnson stood screaming, flailing the air with his arms as epithets poured from his contorted mouth, seemingly out of control—an important telephone call would come in. Without a moment’s pause, he would pick up the telephone—and his voice would be soft and calm, and, if the caller was important, deferential. Then the call would be over, the phone would be replaced in its cradle and without a moment’s pause the rage would resume. Lyndon Johnson employed curses as he employed competition: for the control of men. Sometimes his treatment of his staff seemed colored

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 8153

The contractor who was selected to build it, and who began work in September, 1936, under an initial \$5 million appropriation, was Brown & Root, Inc.—which happened to be one of Wirtz’s clients. Since Alvin Wirtz was counsel for both the LCRA and Brown & Root (and for other clients with interests in the LCRA development) and was court-appointed receiver for the Insull interests, he was collecting legal fees from many sides. He set his schedule of fees high; Ickes considered the ones the PWA had to pay exorbitant, and from that source alone Wirtz received \$85,000, an immense fee for a Texas lawyer in those days. But the Marshall Ford Dam represented much more than fees to Wirtz. More than 2,000 men would be employed on that dam, and he would have a voice in their selection. When the dam, or, rather, both dams, together with others already on the drawing boards, were completed and producing electricity—when, in other words, the LCRA had become a gigantic utility—he would, as its counsel, have, he was certain, the dominant voice in its operation. It would provide him not only with money but with power on a big scale. The Marshall Ford Dam, that structure in an isolated gorge in the Texas Hill Country, was the vehicle that would give both of these men—Herman Brown and Alvin Wirtz—what they wanted.

Sometime late in 1936—after Brown & Root had begun construction—the Bureau learned about this second problem. Alvin Wirtz (who assured Herman and George that he hadn't known about it) told the two brothers that some low-level attorney in the office of the Comptroller General had thought to do what no one in Washington had done before: had checked the title for the land under the dam, learned that the federal government didn't own it, and informed his superior. Wirtz also reported that the Comptroller General, in a face-to-face confrontation with Buchanan, had pointed out that he was charged with the responsibility of certifying the legality of public works contracts. This contract, he said, was clearly illegal. Unless the conflict with the federal law was resolved, he said, he would not approve a second appropriation, whether or not Congress authorized it. Decades later, George Brown agreed to tell a story he had never told before except to a handful of intimates: the story of the Marshall Ford Dam. He would, he said, never forget the day he and his brother discovered that the federal government was required by law to own the land on which the dam was being built—and that the federal government didn't own the land. The words “legal” and “illegal”—referring not to lack of congressional authorization but to lack of federal title to the land—recur frequently as he tells about that day. “We had put in a million and a half dollars in that dam, and then we found out it wasn't legal,” he says. “We found out the appropriation wasn't legal, but we had already built the cableway. That cost several hundred thousands of dollars, which we owed the banks. And we had had to set up a quarry for the stone, and build a conveyor belt from the quarry to the dam site. And we had had to buy all sorts of equipment—big, heavy equipment. Heavy cranes. We had put in a million and a half dollars. And the appropriation wasn't legal!”

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 8270

AFTER A DAY OR TWO, as George Brown recalls, Alvin Wirtz came up with a solution. Congress, Wirtz explained, as the nation's law-making body, possesses the power to make legal what is illegal. What was needed, he said, was not just the usual congressional authorization of a dam, but a law which, ignoring the land-ownership issue, specifically authorized the contract under which Brown & Root had been working. Such validation of the contract would blur the question of their original legality. It would no longer be so clear that a clear provision of another law had been violated. The Comptroller General's office would have an excuse ("something to hang his hat on" is the phrase Brown recalls Wirtz using) for overlooking the fact that, validated or not, the contracts still called for construction of a federal dam on someone else's land. And, Wirtz said, the Comptroller General's office would be happy to use that excuse. The President, after all, wanted the dam built; so did the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. If the land title issue became a point of general knowledge and debate, passage of the law might be sticky, but Wirtz saw little chance of that happening. No Congressman would make an issue of it, because no Congressman was opposed to construction of this dam in an isolated part of Texas; with the exception of a few Texas Congressmen, no one in Congress was even aware of its existence. And if some low-level bureaucrat wanted to make trouble over the title, Buchanan's power would keep the trouble to a minimum. Wirtz said he had already spoken to Buchanan about his new idea, and Buck had approved it—had, in fact, said that it would end their problems. Buck had told him not to worry—he would personally see to the passage of the necessary law, and with its passage, everything would be as before. When Congress reconvened in January, 1937, Buchanan was as good as his word. The routine House procedures preliminary to authorization began clicking off. The Rivers and Harbors Committee was expecting to take up the bill, and approve it, without opposition, in March. There really was no need to worry, Wirtz told the Browns, as long as they had the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee solidly on their side; Buchanan's power would protect the Marshall Ford Dam in the future, as it had in the past. And then, on February 22, 1937, Buchanan suffered a heart attack and died.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9810

Even with the authorization finally in hand, the second appropriation—the second \$5,000,000 (of which Herman Brown would get to keep \$2,000,000)—proved difficult to obtain. The money was supposed to come out of work relief funds, the \$1,500,000,000 Emergency Work Relief Bill that even then was wending its way through Congress. But Work Relief Administrator Harry Hopkins pointed out that since the Marshall Ford Dam was being built not by a government agency but by a private contractor; since the cost of materials far exceeded that allowed for "non-labor" items; and since the labor involved was highly paid skilled labor, the appropriation would violate at least three fundamental work relief provisions.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9815

These objections were registered in July—less than two months before the initial appropriation would be used up, with Herman Brown still half a million dollars in debt. A letter from Brown's banker, Thomas H. Davis of the Austin National Bank, told Johnson that Brown was already beginning to close down. "Activity on the Marshall Ford Dam ... is practically at a standstill." On July 20, Brown and Wirtz—accompanied, for window dressing, by the rest of the LCRA board—flew to Washington. Tom Connally was attempting to circumvent Hopkins' objections by placing an amendment in the Senate version of the Work Relief Bill, but objections arose in the conference committee over a provision so obviously contradictory to the bill's intent; Connally, despite the power he was beginning to accumulate in the Senate, could find no way around the problem. But White House Tommy could—with an assist from Bill Douglas. Johnson asked Corcoran and Douglas to intercede. The precise nature of their maneuvers are not known, but Jimmy Roosevelt (James H. Rowe, Jr., secretary) began making telephone calls, and Connally was asked to withdraw his amendment—because it was no longer needed. Hopkins quietly withdrew his objections, and on July 22, Johnson, Wirtz and the LCRA directors were invited to the White House. There the President's son handed them the papers approving the additional \$5,000,000 appropriation, making a point of telling them that the President was "happy to do this for your Congressman." In case they didn't grasp the point, it was reiterated by Hopkins, when the group was ushered over to his office. "We are doing this," he said, "for Congressman Johnson." The dam—the dam that represented so much to Alvin Wirtz and Herman Brown—was secured. Alvin Wirtz's investment in Lyndon Johnson had paid off.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9829

TOMMY CORCORAN was Johnson's bluntest weapon. Abe Fortas, too young to have entrée but gifted with that lawyer's mind at which other lawyers marveled, was the sharpest. And this weapon, too, was to be called into use. Herman Brown had his dam now—so he wanted the dam to be bigger. On November 30, 1937, just four months after Johnson had rescued him from financial disaster by obtaining the vital congressional authorization for a \$10,000,000 Marshall Ford Dam, Brown's construction superintendent, Ross White, speaking at an Austin Rotary Club luncheon in the Driskill Hotel, urged that the dam be made higher, at the cost of an additional \$17 million. The next speaker, Howard P. Bunger, who was supervising construction for the Bureau of Reclamation, said that the dam must be made higher, for its present height would be "inadequate to control large floods," and he urged "all interested persons to contact the Congressman representing this district and urge ... construction of the high dam." When the next speaker moved that the club's board of directors prepare a resolution endorsing the dam, it was obvious that Brown, who was sitting quietly in the audience, had orchestrated the meeting. Ray Lee wrote Johnson that evening: "It seems definitely that a carefully staged coup was pulled to get the thing into the public demand stage." Johnson's first reaction, and Wirtz's, was fury, both political (the statement that the dam was "inadequate" to provide flood control was embarrassingly accurate; Wirtz, of course, had never intended it to provide flood control; despite his statement to the contrary, he had always intended its primary purpose to be the production of hydroelectric power which could be translated into political power) and personal (the two men felt that Brown had taken advantage of them to obtain a bigger profit).

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9969

A firm believer in experience, he had never seen Johnson in action in Washington, and didn't believe Wirtz when Senator told him that a youth still in his twenties could fill Old Buck Buchanan's boots. Moreover, Herman Brown was a hater. He hated Negroes and he hated unions—in part, for the same reason. Having worked so hard all his life, he hated laziness and he believed that Negroes were lazy, and that unions encouraged laziness in white men; after World War II, he would, with the assistance of Alvin Wirtz and Ed Clark, ram through the Texas Legislature some of the most vicious anti-labor laws in America. And Brown hated the man—that Man in the White House—whose policies were helping unions and Negroes.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9974

He had coined his own word for New Deal programs: "Gimme's." Lazy men, he said, were always saying "Gimme," and now the country had a President who was giving them the handouts they were demanding. The very thought of programs that gave people benefits they hadn't earned brought to Brown's narrow, hard face that red flush that men feared. He saw, too, that these programs would lead to increased taxation. The very thought that government—politicians who never worked (Herman Brown, who had bought so many politicians, despised politicians)—was going to take his money for which he had worked so hard and give it to people too lazy to work—"well," George Brown says, "Herman really hated that idea." His feelings toward Roosevelt had made him ill-disposed toward a candidate who was shouting "Roosevelt, Roosevelt" up and down the district, and in the face of such shouts, Alvin Wirtz's assurances about Johnson's private dislike of the New Deal had a somewhat hollow ring. Johnson, so eloquently mouthing the phrases of the despised New Deal, had seemed, in fact, to epitomize everything Brown disliked. Every time Johnson left after one of his visits, George Brown recalls, "Herman would be saying how he'd never do—how impractical he was." And Johnson wasn't made to feel particularly welcome in Brown's home.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 9983

But Herman Brown was a man with his own code of honor. "He always paid his debts," Ed Clark says. "He would always find a way to balance his books. He would never let a man do more for him than he did for that man." And he knew how big a debt he owed Lyndon Johnson for obtaining the authorization that made the dam—and Brown & Root's contracts—legal. When, after Congress adjourned in August, 1937, Johnson returned to Austin, Brown told Clark to bring Johnson along to the house on Niles Road, and soon, Clark says, "Lyndon was over at Herman's house every night."

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 11643

He had shouted "Roosevelt, Roosevelt, Roosevelt" to get to Congress; in Congress, he shouted nothing, said nothing—stood for nothing. Not only was he not in the van of any cause, he was not in the ranks, either. Lyndon Johnson would later be called a legislative genius. A legislator is a maker of laws. During the eleven years that Lyndon Johnson served in the law-making body that is the House of Representatives, few of its 435 members had less to do with the making of its laws than he. Some of the more astute of his colleagues felt that

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 11663

power in the House was not the power at which Johnson was aiming; the triple dais was not high enough for him. The difference between the aims of the older man and the younger had been demonstrated even before Johnson became a Congressman, when, as Kleberg's secretary, he had placed himself at the service of businessmen who were not from Kleberg's district. Had not practically his first move as Congressman—made while he was still in his hospital bed—been to keep the statewide NYA under his control? And now were not the letters from his office going out not just to addresses in his district but to addresses in Houston, and Dallas, and El Paso as well? A House seat had been an indispensable staging area on the long road he saw before him; he had no choice but to come back a Congressman. But the House seat was only a staging area; it was not the destination at the end of that long road. He had needed the seat; he didn't want to stay in it long. So his silence was not for the sake of power in the House; if he was keeping deliberately silent, it was for a different reason. Who could foresee the turnings of so long a road? No matter how safe a particular stand might seem now, no matter how politically wise, that stand might come back to haunt him someday. No matter what he said now, no matter how intelligent a remark might now seem, he might one day be sorry he had made it. And so he said nothing.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 12205

All through 1939, of course, Johnson had been advancing Herman's interests, working diligently for the enlargement of the Marshall Ford Dam and for the profitable change orders on that project. The Browns were grateful. On May 2, 1939, George, who, of course, did nothing without clearing it with his older brother, wrote, "I hope you know, Lyndon, how I feel reference to what you have done for me and I am going to try to show my appreciation through the years to come with actions rather than words if I can find out when and where I can return at least a portion of the favors." The effort to find out "when and where" the favors could be returned continued; before long George would be writing Lyndon, in response to a Johnson remark about "the ninety-six old men" in the Senate: "I have thought about you often out here and don't know whether or not you have made up your mind about what future course you want to take, but some day in the next few years one of the old ones is going to pass on, and if you have decided to go that route I think it would be 'gret' to do it." No matter what the route, Johnson was assured in letters from Brown & Root headquarters on Calhoun Road in Houston, he could be certain of the firm's all-out support.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 12406

Building up a precinct organization cost money, but the money was available, thanks largely to Herman Brown.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 13957

THE NEW POWER he possessed did not derive from Roosevelt's friendship, or from Rayburn's. It did not derive from seniority in the House, nor even—despite the relationship that power in a democracy bears to the votes of the electorate—to his seat in it. His power was simply the power of money. To a considerable extent, the money was Herman Brown's. A single corporation, Brown & Root, may have given Democratic congressional candidates more money than they received from the Democratic National Committee. Lyndon Johnson had been attempting to, as Rowe puts it, "build a power base." He had succeeded. His power base wasn't his congressional district, it was Herman Brown's bank account. Although he was young, he had been seeking national power for years. Now the power of money had given him some. Simultaneously, it had given a new kind of power

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 13985

And there was a lot more Texas money available than had been apparent in the 1940 campaign. Lyndon Johnson's base had been Herman Brown's money, but he had expanded that base by adding to Herman's cash, Sid Richardson's and Clint Murchison's. The extent of their wealth made his power base infinitely expandable. It could become a factor in campaigns other than those for members of the House of Representatives. It could exert more influence. To the extent that he remained in charge of its distribution, he could exert more influence. In terms of power in Washington, his power was still quite small, but if the amount of money at his command

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 14027

HALLMARK OF JOHNSON'S CAREER had been a lack of any consistent ideology or principle, in fact of any moral foundation whatsoever—a willingness to march with any ally who would help his personal advancement. His work with the congressional campaign committee brought this into sharper focus. Because Democratic congressional candidates in the one-party South had no opposition in the November elections, he was providing money only to Democrats in the North—who were primarily liberals. But the money came from men who were not liberals. Some of them, in fact, were arch-conservatives; among the "Texas friends" who had provided funds for Lyndon Johnson to distribute were men who would be bankrollers in 1944 of the "Texas Regulars," Texans who bolted the party rather than support Roosevelt. He was helping New Dealers with the money of men who hated the New Deal.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 14033

In dealing with these men, Johnson did not make the slightest effort to paper over this conflict in his fund-raising efforts, nor was it necessary for him to do so. Political philosophy played not the smallest role in his appeals for money. During the next congressional campaign in 1942, after Ed Flynn had again attempted to freeze him out but had again been thwarted by Johnson's control over Texas money (replied oilman G. L. Rowsey to a Flynn plea for funds: "My delay in replying is due to the fact that I expected to be in contact with our

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 14052

IF HERMAN BROWN regarded the campaign contributions he funneled through Lyndon Johnson as an investment, he received a healthy return on it. Neither Herman nor his brother George had ever seen a ship being built. “We didn’t know the stern from the aft—I mean the bow—of the boat,” George recalls. Nonetheless, in 1941, at about the time that their Corpus Christi Naval Air Station contract was rising toward \$100,000,000, the brothers were awarded a lucrative Navy contract to build four subchasers. (The brothers established a new corporate entity for the purpose: says George, “They needed a name to put on the contract, and I said, ‘Brown Shipbuilding.’ That was all there was to it.”) When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the four subchasers were not yet completed, but a Navy Department official told the brothers, “We’ll put you in the destroyer business.” During the war, Brown Shipbuilding—under contracts with provisions so favorable that profits were all but guaranteed—would carry out \$357,000,000 worth of work for the Navy.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15135

Herman even drew money himself—\$5,000 in one instance—and gave it to the campaign through Austin banker Walter Bremond, Jr. No tactic was necessary for Lyndon Johnson in dealing with Herman Brown. All he had to do was ask. No one knows how much Brown & Root gave to the 1941 Lyndon Johnson campaign for Senator, and no one will ever know, but the amount was in the neighborhood of \$200,000. No one knows how much was spent in total in that campaign, and no one will ever know. But in an era in which the cost of a typical Texas political campaign ran in the tens of thousands of dollars, Lyndon Johnson spent hundreds of thousands of dollars—according to one estimate, half a million dollars. Johnson’s first campaign for the House of Representatives had been one of the most expensive congressional campaigns in the history of Texas. His first campaign for the Senate was the most expensive campaign in the history of Texas. Even in a state in which money had always been a significant factor in politics, his use of money to obtain political office was unprecedented. More significant than the amount of money was its availability. Asked how much money Johnson was given in 1941, Ed Clark says flatly: “All he needed. If he had \$50,000 or \$100,000 more, that wouldn’t have mattered. He had as much as he asked for.”

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15145

SOME VOTES for Lyndon Johnson were being purchased more directly, for it was not only the size of Texas that made campaigning so expensive but the ethics that pervaded politics in entire sections of it. One of these sections was San Antonio, and the area south of it to the Rio Grande. “The way to play politics in San Antonio,” as John Gunther was to write, “is to buy, or try to buy, the Mexican vote, which is decisive.” The city’s West Side was a gigantic slum, containing perhaps 60,000 residents, who were paid, Gunther says, “probably the lowest wages in the United States”—for pecan shellers (San Antonio was the “Pecan Capital of the World”) an average of \$1.75 per week. It might have been supposed that the support of these disadvantaged people would go to advocates of the New Deal which was attempting to improve the lot of the disadvantaged, but in fact they voted at the direction of their leaders—who were motivated mainly by cash. Some of it they passed out to individual voters: two, three, or, perhaps, five dollars per voter. A single payment might not be enough—which inspired what Gunther calls a “cruel little joke, ‘An honest Mexican is one who stays bought.’ ” Explains San Antonio Postmaster Dan Quill: “First [some months before the election] you had to pay their poll taxes. And that was a very dangerous thing to do because they might take your money, and then on Election Day some guy might come along and give them five dollars, and they’d vote the other way—with your poll taxes.” Constant precautions were therefore necessary; in many of San Antonio’s “Mexican boxes” election supervisors would, in violation of law, stand alongside each voter in the voting booths to make certain that each vote was cast as paid for. Even the supervisors might take a candidate’s money and deliver the precinct’s votes to another candidate, who had paid more (or had paid later); the supervisors had to be watched by other men, more trusted men, usually from the candidate’s own staff. On Election Day, careful candidates had men “riding the polls” in San Antonio—driving from polling place to polling place to make sure the candidate was getting what he had paid for. Northern liberals might rhapsodize, as Sherwood Anderson did after one Maverick election victory, that he had, through implementation of New Deal policies, bought the West Side’s votes in a “new and legal way,” but in fact the use of cash had played a not inconsiderable role in his victories—and in 1941, he had learned again the crucial factor in San Antonio elections the hard way; “Maury Maverick won when he carried the West Side, and lost when he didn’t carry the West Side,” Gunther was to write; in 1941, this champion of the New Deal had been heavily outspent by the “City Machine” on the West Side, and had lost it and the election.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15165

In 1941, Lyndon Johnson needed the West Side, for he was very unpopular on the North Side, among the city’s large, and conservative, Catholic population; the San Antonio Rotary Club had refused even to let him address it during the campaign. He knew, of course, how to get the West Side; he had himself participated in the purchase of votes on the most basic level when, still a congressional secretary, he had sat in a hotel room handing dollar bills and five-dollar bills to Mexicans on behalf of Maury Maverick. Now he had to buy in large lots.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15439

The votes from the Valley came in. Duval County had given O’Daniel 95 percent of its vote just a year before; in that intervening year, O’Daniel’s popularity had evidently suffered a remarkably rapid decline; now Duval gave O’Daniel 5 percent of its vote—and gave Lyndon Johnson 95 percent. He received 1,506 votes to 65 for the Governor: George Parr had delivered. In Starr County, the vote was 615 for Johnson, 12 for O’Daniel: the Guerra boys had delivered.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15442

In Webb County, it was 978 for Johnson, 257 for O'Daniel: the mysterious Judge Raymond had delivered. In the other South Texas counties controlled by the Anglo jefes, the vote was equally lopsided: in Zapata, 273 for Johnson, 21 for O'Daniel; in Jim Hogg, 119 for Johnson, 12 for O'Daniel. In the five South Texas counties that voted as a bloc, in other words, Johnson received more than 90 percent of the vote: 3,491 to 376 for O'Daniel. Mann, Dies and the other twenty-five candidates received only a few scattered votes. In the South Texas counties in which only part of

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15452

The abruptness—and thoroughness—of the decline in the Governor's popularity in the Valley startled even politicians who might have been thought to be immune to voting conditions there. "It was nauseous to learn of the returns from such corrupt stinkholes as Duval and Starr Counties," one said. "Money bought every Mexican vote...." Even some independent spirits in the Valley commented; said one: "They simply voted the Mexicans in a body everyplace they could." Said another: "... If there is any law to cover it, I think, in common decency, that the ballot boxes of Starr and Duval Counties should be opened and counted. The majority of those voters can neither read or write the English language so ... they didn't know who they voted for. As a matter of fact, they probably didn't even go to the polls, and the ballots were all placed in the box by the boss." An observer in Cameron County said: "We have a situation in this State that is worse than the Pendergast, Kelly-Nash and Boss Hague crookedness ever was. How can one expect honest men and clean government to survive under such a system?" On Election Day, the early reporting of the South

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15602

Johnson's reaction was to try to steal it back. Telephoning George Paar, he asked the Duke of Duval to give him more votes. But Parr refused; he later told friends that he had replied, "Lyndon, I've been to the federal penitentiary, and I'm not going back for you." Johnson got some "corrected" totals from various strongholds: 226 from Austin, for example. But he couldn't get enough. His strength was in South Texas, and due to his mistake, South Texas had already sent in its official figures; there was little more South Texas could do. East Texas was going for O'Daniel, and because it hadn't sent in its figures, it could give Pappy whatever he needed. Indeed, as Johnson's effort to improve his total became apparent, his canny opponents held back certain key counties—Trinity County deep in East Texas was one—to see what would be needed at the end; whatever Johnson managed to add, they would be able to add more.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15624

Lyndon Johnson's loss had been due to a political fluke. He had been beaten not by his opponent's friends but by his opponent's foes; O'Daniel had won the Senate seat not because these men wanted him to be Senator, but because they didn't want him to be Governor—because they wanted to get him out of Texas. But it was Johnson's mistake that had enabled these men to take his victory away. He had planned and schemed and maneuvered for ten years—had worked for ten years, worked day and night, weekday and weekend—had done "everything." And, for ten years, he had won. He had relaxed for one day. And he had lost.

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15688

Johnson did not shrink from the role; he was developing a line of strategy to solve the problem. The first step was to convince James H. Rowe, Jr., who was Johnson's liaison to the President, that the Internal Revenue Service investigation of Brown & Root was politically inspired by IRS officials in Texas loyal to the Garner-Jesse Jones group—and was aimed at cutting off vital Texas financial support for the New Deal. Although this was not true, it was not difficult for so persuasive a talker as Lyndon Johnson to convince men who knew nothing about Texas politics that it was. Rowe, who admired Johnson and believed in him, was thoroughly convinced. During the Summer of 1942, he was to recall, I sent to the President a memorandum telling that Internal Revenue agents were going all through Texas stirring up political trouble for “our crowd.”

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15701

The next attempt was made with Sullivan's superior, Internal Revenue Commissioner Guy T. Helvering, known to Washington insiders as “the President's man at IRS.” Johnson made the attempt himself; he went to Helvering, told him the same story, and asked him to kill the investigation. But this attempt foundered on the invincible integrity of Helvering's superior. Internal Revenue was a bureau in the Department of the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Treasury was Henry Morgenthau, Jr., a man detested by the young wheelers and dealers of the New Deal for his unshakable adherence to the law. The investigation would go right ahead, Morgenthau declared. Now, Rowe recalls, “the Browns were worried

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15732

And in 1943, the Internal Revenue Service began to close in on the truth behind the financing of Lyndon Johnson's senatorial race. On January 22, the six agents involved held a conference

Markeren (Geel) | Loc. 15891

On June 28, Werner submitted his final report on Case S.I.-19267-F, showing tax deficiencies of \$1,099,944 and a penalty of \$549,972. But even this was to be scaled down. After a series of further conferences between IRS officials and Wirtz, Brown & Root was ultimately required to pay a total of only \$372,000. There were of course no fraud indictments, no trial, no publicity. Franklin Roosevelt had already done so much to advance Lyndon Johnson's career. In this instance, it may be he who saved it.

He ran not as a New Dealer, but, to the extent possible because of his earlier statements, as an anti-New Dealer. And during the campaign, he attacked much of what was left of the New Deal. The shift in his views can be symbolized in a single issue: labor. In his first campaign for the Senate, he had told Texas labor unions: “I come to you as a friend of labor.” In his second, he came as an enemy—open and bitter. In 1948, it wasn’t Pappy O’Daniel who attacked the “big labor racketeers” and “racketeering Communist [union] leaders who take orders only from Moscow.” Those words were Johnson’s words. Nor was the change limited to labor. Once he had said—over and over, in speeches, in pamphlets, in posters and on huge billboards—that he was “100 percent” for Roosevelt and the New Deal. Now, he still said that he had supported a percentage of New Deal legislation—but the percentage he cited was not 100, or even 50; on twenty-seven major pieces of New Deal legislation, he said, he had voted for the New Deal thirteen times. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce, one of the most reactionary business groups in the United States, checked out his record—and found it so satisfactorily conservative that it enthusiastically endorsed him.
