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Subject: ARRB Interviewed Marty Underwood
TO: Jeremy Gunn/ARRBCC: David Iwai/ARRB (cc: non-record/ARRB)FROM: Irene Marr/ARRB Date:
07/22/97 11:11:27 AMSubject: ARRB Interviewed Marty UnderwoodMEETING REPORTDocument's Author:
Irene Marr/ARRB Date Created: 07/21/97Meeting Logistics Date: 07/21/97Agecny Name:
Witnesses/ConsultantsAttendees: Irene Marr, Jeremy Gunn, Marty UnderwoodTopic: ARRB Interviewed Marty
UnderwoodSummary of the Meeting Jeremy Gunn and Irene Marr met with Marty Underwood, former
advance man for both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Friday July 18, at the
Sheraton Hotel in Towson, MD. Underwood was very cordial, witty, and loquacious, remembering certain
events in great detail. He sometimes would go off on different tangents once he got caught up in telling a
story, but overall he was perfectly coherent. Underwood started off by giving a brief synopsis of his
background, which included four years in World War II followed by the establishment of his own public
relations firm in Chicago, eventually leading up to his advance work for the Kennedy campaign. He became
involved with the Kennedy campaign in July of 1960 through his old friend Bill Rivkin who also ended up in
Chicago at that time. He and Rivkin were in Mayor Daley's office when a call came in from Kenny O'Donnell
asking if the Mayor knew of any good advance men. It was Rivkin who recommended Underwood for the job.
Underwood stated that after the election, O'Donnell extended him a general offer to work for the White
House. Because of his background with trade shows, Underwood ended up working in Tunisia for 6 months as
a Trade Show Rep for the Department of Commerce. However, he was still not on the White House payroll.
Underwood insisted that the only advance work he did for Kennedy were a few domestic campaign trips and
then an emergency trip to Houston in November 1963. Underwood was responsible for trying to get Vice
President Johnson and Senator Ralph Yarborough (who were not exactly on speaking terms) to ride together in
the Houston motorcade. That episode was the first time Underwood met Johnson. At the time of the
assassination, Underwood said he was en route to Dallas from Houston carrying President Kennedy's St.
Christopher's medal, which Kennedy had (ominously) left behind in the hotel. He flew back to Washington, DC
on Air Force One.Underwood was one of the few Kennedy men that Johnson asked to stay on after he became
President. Since he had grown up in Iowa farm country, he felt closer to Johnson than he had to Kennedy, but
he idealized neither. President Johnson's Mexico City trip, which Underwood tentatively dated in 1965, was
Underwood's big career maker and was how he became "Marty" to the President. According to Underwood,
the trip to Mexico City was planned at the last minute. Marty was sent down to ensure that there would be a
big crowd for LBJ. He met with the Ambassador (Freeman) who basically brushed him off and wanted nothing
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