



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Public Programs application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/public/media-projects-production-grants> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: LBJ's War: An Oral History

Institution: Public Radio International, Inc.

Project Director: Melinda Ward

Grant Program: Media Projects Production

**PUBLIC RADIO INTERNATIONAL (PRI)**  
**Request to the National Endowment for the Humanities**  
**“LBJ’S War: An Oral History”**  
**Project Narrative – January 2016**

**A. NATURE OF THE REQUEST**

Public Radio International (PRI) requests a grant of \$166,450 in support of *LBJ’s War*, an innovative oral history project to be produced in partnership with independent radio producer Stephen Atlas. *LBJ’s War* presents the story of how the U.S. entanglement in the Vietnam War derailed a presidency that previously seemed destined for historic greatness, told through the recorded, and largely unheard, recollections of those who were there, gathered from sources such as the vast archives of the LBJ Library in Austin, TX. A distinguished team of scholars, experts on the leading figures and events of the period, will help guide listeners through these materials, adding context and analysis. *LBJ’s War* will consist of one hour-long documentary special to be distributed for broadcast on public radio stations nationwide, as well as by podcast, and a series of six podcasts, in the ten- to twenty-minute range, that will open up and amplify stories touched upon in the hour but meriting more time and exploration. To accompany these audio materials, PRI will create a landing page within its web site, PRI.org, where visitors can read complete interview transcripts, listen to original audio segments in unedited form, and learn more about the program participants. The total project budget is projected at \$221,145.

**B. PROGRAM SYNOPSIS AND HUMANITIES CONTENT**

*Got himself in a terrible jam, way down yonder in Vietnam*  
— Country Joe MacDonald

A president of immense political shrewdness and skill begins his White House tenure with a string of stunning accomplishments, and appears destined for Rushmore-level greatness. Four years later, his presidency is in tatters, the spectacular early successes eclipsed by a single, equally spectacular failure: a ruinous and misbegotten war that will ultimately cost the lives of 58,000 Americans and upwards of two million Vietnamese. How that happened — how Lyndon Johnson lost his way and came to grief in a conflict he didn't start and couldn't end — is the subject of *LBJ’s War*, an audio documentary project in oral history form, to be constructed from the recorded, and largely unheard, recollections of those who were there.

(Note: All quotes in italics are from audio recordings to which the project has access.)

**Central Themes**

*I know we oughtn't to be there but I can't get out.*  
— LBJ, phone call to Sen. Richard Russell

Two main works of scholarship provide the conceptual underpinnings for this project: *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*, by Barbara Tuchman, and *Choosing War: The Last Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, by Frederick Logevall.

In the former, Tuchman begins with a provocative thesis: "A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests." To qualify as a folly — her shorthand term — Tuchman stipulates first, that a policy must have been "perceived as counterproductive in its own time, not merely by hindsight"; and second, that "a feasible alternative course of action must have been available."

While the book comprises several instances of governments pursuing manifestly self-destructive policies that meet these two tests, the centerpiece is Vietnam, where "throughout the long folly, Americans kept foretelling the outcome and acting without reference to their own foresight... The question raised is why did the policy-makers close their minds to the evidence and its implications?"

*Choosing War* begins with a related set of questions: "Why did the war happen? Might it have been averted? If so, how?" Published in 1999, to considerable acclaim, the book was widely regarded as ground-breaking — "Vietnam studies will never be the same," one reviewer wrote — and established its author as an important and influential new voice in his field.

Logevall's seminal contribution was to strip away the aura of inevitability that characterized most previous scholarship on how the U.S. became entangled in Vietnam. Where the prevailing view had been that large external forces left first JFK and then LBJ with few choices and little room to maneuver on Vietnam, Logevall made a persuasive case to the contrary. The war could in fact have been averted, or at least drastically shortened, he argued, had those making policy not missed one opportunity after another to bring the conflict to a close.

Focusing on one crucial period, between August 1963 and February 1965, Logevall reveals how Johnson and his team "chose" to escalate and ultimately to Americanize the war. While his analysis constitutes a break with most earlier scholarship, it is consistent with, and in many ways a corroboration of, Barbara Tuchman's *The March of Folly*. Together, these two works will provide the project with a framework for its storytelling — a way to understand why and how a president of Lyndon Johnson's enormous talent, knowing "we oughtn't to be there," still couldn't or wouldn't get out of Vietnam.

### **Source Material**

*It is all here: the story of our time with the bark off.*

— Lyndon Johnson, at dedication of the LBJ Library and Museum

The producers will draw on two primary sources of material:

### **1. Interviews**

*God, I hope they don’t play this [tape] for a long, long time.*  
— Barry Goldwater, oral history interview (1971)

Shortly after President Johnson's death, in January 1973, New York Times columnist James Reston wrote that “the real story” of LBJ’s tumultuous White House years would be found not on paper, “but in the memories of his friends, companions and political adversaries. Historians will never be able to sort out the glory and tragedy unless they manage to collect the stories.”

In fact, unbeknownst to Reston, the collecting of those stories had already commenced. Even before President Johnson left the White House, researchers had begun asking individuals who had been witness to and participants in the life of LBJ to record their still fresh recollections of these eventful times. The resulting archive, gathered over many years, is a time capsule of immense historical value. While the collection has long been known to scholars, who have drawn on the transcripts for individual research purposes, its sheer magnitude makes it daunting to approach and difficult to navigate for all but the most determined of non-specialists. As a result, the original audio recordings have gone largely unheard, and have never been used in the comprehensive way this project envisions.

### **2. Recorded phone calls**

*Get the sonofabitch on the phone.*  
—Lyndon Johnson

Many presidents have taped their telephone calls, but none on the scale of LBJ, whose recorded calls ultimately totaled more than 800 hours. “This guy was on the phone more than any president in history,” one White House correspondent observed. “He made the phone an instrument of national policy.”

Because the conversations were taped secretly and never intended for public consumption, they are an extraordinarily revealing window on the inner workings of the Johnson White House. From the record of these calls, LBJ told historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, “You could learn more about the way government really works than from a hundred political science textbooks.”

Indeed, the calls pull back the curtain, not only on “the way government works” but on the character and thinking of the man at the center of it all. In public, LBJ was a stiff and ungainly figure, lugubrious in manner, uncomfortable in front of a microphone, and devoid of his predecessor’s natural grace, movie star looks, and easy charm. In private, James Reston wrote, “Lyndon Johnson was a great talker, one of the last of the old Southern and frontier storytellers of the age.” It is this private LBJ — unguarded, protean, utterly compelling — who emerges vividly and unforgettably in the phone calls. “He was a very, very, very big man,”

pundit Joseph Alsop remembered, "with the most extraordinary mixture of good and bad qualities, all of them larger than life-size, that I've ever seen." And nowhere are those outsized qualities more tellingly on display than on Vietnam, where the calls chart the president's increasingly desperate efforts to find a way out of the developing disaster that will intimately engulf his presidency and prove his undoing.

### **Contributors**

*Johnson said, I don't let them bomb so much as an outhouse without approving it. He used a slightly stronger word than "outhouse," but the point was clear: he was running the air war.*

— Sen. George McGovern

*LBJ's War* will bring a varied and lively cast of characters to the witness stand — cronies and cabinet members, journalists and generals, ambassadors and spies, all with first hand recollections of the big events and central players in the Vietnam story. While many of the main characters are high profile figures (Robert McNamara, William Fulbright, Joseph Alsop, McGeorge Bundy, Katherine Graham, David Halberstam), a number of the most insightful and interesting voices will be those of less recognizable witnesses, who will bring their own unique, and often sharply observed, perspectives to the program. Happily, a remarkable number of those with valuable stories to tell also turn out to be good at telling them. The best — those whose voices will figure most prominently in the program — are gifted raconteurs, participant/observers with front row seats and literary skills and sensibilities. Harry McPherson, for example, a senior Johnson aide and speechwriter, had this to say about Walt Rostow, the most resolute of the Vietnam hawks in the State Department:

*Walt has a kind of rugby player's view of a lot of international events. It's sort of a "pull up your socks, shoulders to wheel, it's going to be okay" point of view. It is encouraging when you're down in the dumps and when you can't see any way out to have an obviously intelligent man be optimistic. But when you feel that he is utterly neglecting Good Friday and only talking about Easter, it's even more dismaying than the facts themselves.*

And here is John Dunn, a military attaché assigned to the Embassy in Saigon, on General Harkins, the top military man:

*You'd have to have seen his quarters and the garden parties; everybody's turning out in whites. They're passing hors d'oeuvres in great numbers, very elegantly. And all these generals had their wives over there. It's just like the French all over again.*

Taken together, these eyewitness accounts — intimate, colloquial, anecdotal — evoke the Johnson era with uncanny immediacy, and with often startling candor. To discourage withholding of possibly sensitive material, interviewees were offered the option of sealing their testimony from public view for as long as they wished. Today, with nearly all the embargoes

expired, this material will enable *LBJ’s War* to convey a sense of what project advisor Christian Appy calls “the lived experience of history” in its most unvarnished form.

[A note on demographics: As David Halberstam made the world aware, the Best and the Brightest who created and waged the Vietnam War were a very thin slice of humanity — with very few exceptions, white, male, affluent, and educated. There were, as we now know, many women in Johnson’s life, Lady Bird most importantly, but only a handful (Katherine Graham, Helen Gahagan Douglas, Helen Thomas) played serious roles or had their stories recorded. Of necessity, *LBJ’s War* reflects that reality.]

### **Lessons**

*Of all the disasters of Vietnam, the worst could be our unwillingness to learn enough from them.*

— Stanley Hoffman, historian, 1968

*This chasm under your feet is a horrible thing. You put 550,000 Americans out there; you’ve lost 25,000 of them dead! What if it’s wrong?*

— Harry McPherson

Fifty years on, the Vietnam War continues to cast a long shadow over American life, but just what and how much we have learned from the experience remains an open and contentious question. With the nation now enmeshed in a growing number of quicksand conflicts around the world, *LBJ’s War* will give listeners a sense of the forces that led an immensely gifted president so disastrously astray. It is a painful tale, to be sure, but also a great yarn. High profile recent works on Johnson, from Brian Cranston onstage and Robert Caro in print, have brought a different LBJ to public attention — a figure vastly more complex and compelling than the caricature that most people remember. It is this LBJ whose story will be told here, by the people who knew him, in the hope that their first person testimony may help a later generation benefit from their collective insights and experience.

### **American Oral History Project**

*In every community [there are] men and women who have stories to tell which posterity will find significant and engrossing.*

— Allan Nevins, Columbia historian, oral history pioneer

*LBJ’s War* is conceived as the inaugural production of a proposed new initiative to be called The American Oral History Project. Under this banner, PRI and independent producer Steve Atlas propose to produce an open-ended series of audio documentaries and podcasts that would be constructed from the recorded recollections of individuals with personal stories to tell about the seminal figures and transformative events of modern American history.

The raw material to feed this initiative exists in virtually inexhaustible supply, housed not just in presidential libraries, but in university and military archives, historical societies, and state and

local collections scattered across the country. These archives are a buried treasure of great historical value — comprising thousands of hours of first-person recollections, recorded over decades and painstakingly preserved “for posterity” in dozens of institutions across the country.

Sadly, owing to the sheer scale and technical inaccessibility of the original recordings, most of “posterity” has had little or no opportunity to benefit from all this effort. What has been lacking — what the American Oral History Project proposes to supply — is the means and capability to turn these aural riches into compelling narrative.

The project means to provide the missing curatorial link between the recordings and the general public. Its aim is to make this remarkable eyewitness testimony accessible, and audible, to a significantly broader audience — to bring to the dissemination of oral history the same level of energy, ambition, and enterprise that has gone into its production and preservation.

Additional projects already on the drawing board include:

- **Ripple of Hope:** A portrait of Robert Kennedy, constructed from the remembrances of friends, colleagues, journalists, family, and others who figured in his brief but extraordinarily eventful and consequential life.
- **Wade in the Water:** A look back at the civil rights movement from the multiple perspectives of those who took part. Featuring a diverse roster of participants in these historic events, some well known and some not, but all with vivid first person stories from the front lines of the country’s painful struggle to live up to its own ideals of justice and equality.

### C. CREATIVE APPROACH

While oral history, by definition, begins as speech, in the end it is nearly always experienced as text — read rather than heard. After an interview is recorded and transcribed, the original audiotape is locked away for safe keeping, and the transcript becomes the official version of what was said.

*LBJ’s War* reverses this process. Production will begin with transcripts, using digital search capabilities to find the most revealing, insightful, relevant, and memorable nuggets. The gleanings will then be stitched together, with interstitial narration as necessary, to produce multi-voice programming — only now to be heard rather than read — for distribution via a variety of platforms. This approach was piloted in Atlas’s production *We Knew JFK / Unheard Stories from the Kennedy Archives*, a public radio documentary in oral history form that aired nationally in November 2013, on the 50th anniversary of President Kennedy’s death in Dallas.

*LBJ’s War* will consist of one hour-long documentary special to be distributed for broadcast on public radio stations nationwide, as well as by podcast, along with a series of six supplementary podcasts, in the ten- to twenty-minute range, that will open up and amplify stories touched upon in the hour but meriting more time and exploration. The shorter podcasts will use the

same combination of source materials as the hour — recorded interviews, White House phone calls, and narration — but will add one further element to the mix: interpretation and analysis from historians with special expertise on the designated topics. In addition, the podcasts will enable us to pull in more diverse voices and perspectives than are reflected in the primary source interviews and recorded phone calls in the hour-long program.

To accompany our audio materials, PRI will create a landing page within our web site, PRI.org, where visitors can read complete interview transcripts, listen to LBJ phone calls in unedited form, and learn more about the program participants, along with links to the podcasts. Modeled after the web site created for *We Knew JFK* (<http://weknewjfk.org/>), the page will benefit from its placement within PRI's lively and well-trafficked web site (currently more than 1.5 million uniques per month). We will also work with PRX to incorporate links and materials from the JFK special into the page.

#### **D. AUDIENCE AND DISTRIBUTION**

PRI will roll out the broadcast special and podcasts in Summer of 2017 in anticipation of Ken Burns' multi-part PBS series on Vietnam, with a second wave of promotion in support of an anticipated round of re-broadcasts around the 50th anniversary of LBJ's decision not to seek re-election, in February 2018. We expect that the anniversary and the Ken Burns series will attract a great deal of attention and we will take advantage of that. In addition, there is reason to expect that Robert Caro's long-awaited final volume on LBJ, which covers the White House years, will be completed and published somewhere within this period of time. Should that happen, the project will also benefit from the considerable spike in interest the book is certain to produce.

PRI's station marketing team will promote the broadcast special to our more than 800 affiliate stations, which serve a weekly audience of over 28 million listeners. The podcasts will be distributed through PRI's podcast network and through our partnership with iTunes. PRI's weekday news programs, *The Takeaway* and *The World*, with a combined broadcast reach of four million listeners, will use versions and segments of the material and will promote the podcasts. PRI's social media team will also promote the series through our Facebook and Twitter groups. We will also cross-promote the series on various PRI podcasts, which receive approximately 1.6 million monthly downloads.

PRI will create a landing page within our website, PRI.org, for text versions of the series and links to the podcasts. PRI.org currently receives an average of 1.5 million unique visitors monthly.

Recognizing the long-tail appeal and potential of well-made radio programs, we will market and promote the program in the future around additional anniversaries such as President Johnson's departure from the Oval Office in January 2019.



PRI will hire a social media and promotion consultant to identify press and other constituencies and organizations most likely to review, use, and share the series. The consultant will create a marketing tool kit including social media messaging for use by stations and other stakeholders. Additionally, we see high school and university history courses as a prospective secondary market for the pieces, which could be used not as a substitute for text but as a compelling supplement.

With minimal promotion and no advertising, the hour-long documentary, *We Knew JFK* — distributed by PRX — was carried by 205 stations nationwide, including nearly all major markets. New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and Boston all broadcast the JFK program at least once, and in many cases, several times, mostly in desirable prime time slots. While audience numbers are difficult to measure because stations aired the program at different times in different markets, PRX estimates that the broadcast likely was heard by close to one million listeners. Given the longer lead time and greater marketing resources for this venture, we anticipate at least the same level of carriage for *LBJ’s War*, if not higher. The addition of podcast distribution will also enable us to broaden the reach of this production.

#### **E. PROJECT EVALUATION**

A variety of metrics will be used to measure the impact and success of the project:

- Number of overall station licensees and commitments to broadcast
- Carriage commitments by top 20 and top 50 markets
- Number of downloads of the podcasts
- Number of unique visitors to project content on PRI.org
- Social media shares, comments and mentions

We will also ask our scholar advisers, as part of their participation in the project, to review the finished productions and provide feedback on their effectiveness in engaging and informing a general public about the historical events and their significance.

#### **F. RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS**

All audio used in this project, beyond commissioned narration, will be cleared by project researchers. While most of the material is in the public domain, in the rare instances where restrictions have been placed on individual recordings, the project will follow library protocol in securing necessary permissions from the estates or designated executors. The completed works, including the hour-long documentary and the podcasts, will be jointly owned by PRI and executive producer Steve Atlas.

## G. HUMANITIES ADVISERS

The following scholars have agreed to participate in the project if funding is secured. See Attachment 5 for their CVs and letters of interest.

**Christian Appy — Professor, Department of History, UMass/Amherst.** Professor Appy is the author of three books about the American War in Vietnam: *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (2015); *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides* (2003), and *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (1993). *Patriots* won the Massachusetts Book Award for Non-Fiction in 2004. Appy also edits a book series for the University of Massachusetts Press called "Culture, Politics, and the Cold War." The series now has more than thirty titles, including Appy's own edited collection, *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (2001).

**Clayborne Carson – Martin Luther King, Jr., Centennial Professor of History, The MLK Research and Education Institute, Stanford University.** Clayborne Carson has devoted his professional life to the study of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the movements King inspired. Since 1975, Dr. Carson has taught at Stanford University, where he is now Martin Luther King, Jr., Centennial Professor of history and Ronnie Lott Founding Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. Carson's publications include *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (1981); *Malcolm X: The FBI File* (1991); and a memoir, *Martin's Dream: My Journey and the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2013). In 1985 the late Coretta Scott King invited Dr. Carson to direct a long-term project to edit and publish King's speeches, sermons, correspondence, publications, and unpublished writings. Under Carson's direction, the King Papers Project has produced seven volumes of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.* In 2005 Carson founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute to endow and expand the work of the King Papers Project. Dr. Carson also served as senior advisor for the award-winning public television series *Eyes on the Prize* (1986, 1990).

**Frederick Logevall – Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.** Fredrik Logevall is the Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School and Professor of History in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. A specialist on U.S. foreign relations history and 20th century international history, he was previously the Stephen and Madeline Anbinder Professor of History at Cornell University, where he also served as vice provost and as director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies. Logevall is the author or editor of nine books, most recently *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, 2012), which won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for History and the 2013 Francis Parkman Prize, as well as the 2013 American Library in Paris Book Award and the 2013 Arthur Ross Book Award from the Council on Foreign Relations.

**Edward Miller – Associate Professor of History, Dartmouth College.** Edward Miller is a historian of American Foreign Relations and modern Vietnam, with special expertise in the Vietnam War. His scholarship explores the international and transnational dimensions of the

war, and is based on research in archives in Vietnam, Europe, and the United States. His first book, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (2013), examines the ways in which political and military conflicts in Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia after 1945 were also conflicts over ideas — especially ideas about development, nation building, and sovereignty. Professor Miller’s current research projects include a re-appraisal of the legitimacy of the South Vietnamese state and an environmental history of insurgency and counterinsurgency in the Mekong Delta from the 1930s to the 1970s.

**Lien-Hang Nguyen – Associate Professor, History & International Studies, University of Kentucky, College of Arts and Sciences.** Professor Nguyen specializes in the study of the United States in the world, with spatial focus on Southeast Asia and temporal interest in the Cold War. She is currently working on two projects: a comprehensive history of the 1968 Tet Offensive and an exploration of the role of gender, people’s diplomacy, and transnational networks of anti-war activism during the Vietnam War. She is the author of *Hanoi’s War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*, which won the Society for Military History (SMH) Edward M. Coffman Prize, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) Stuart L. Bernath Prize, the UKY Department of History Alice S. Hallam Prize, and earned her an invitation to participate in the 2012 Library of Congress National Book Festival. Professor Nguyen is the General Editor of the forthcoming Cambridge History of the Vietnam War (3 vols.) and, with Paul T. Chamberlin, Co-Editor of the “Cambridge Studies in U.S. Foreign Relations” Series.

**Barbara Perry – White Burkett Miller Professor of Ethics and Institutions, University of Virginia’s Miller Center, Charlottesville, VA.** Professor Perry is the White Burkett Miller Professor of Ethics and Institutions at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center, where she is Director of Presidential Studies and Co-Chair of the Presidential Oral History Program. She is also the Project Director of the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Previously, Professor Perry was the Carter Glass Professor of Government and founding director of the Center for Civic Renewal at Sweet Briar College in Virginia. In 2006-07, Professor Perry was the Senior Fellow for Civics Education at the University of Louisville’s McConnell Center, where she is currently a Non-Resident Fellow. Among Professor Perry’s 13 authored or edited books are *42: Inside the Presidency of Bill Clinton* (co-edited with Michael Nelson and Russell Riley, forthcoming 2016); *41: Inside the Presidency of George H. W. Bush* (co-edited with Michael Nelson, 2014); and *George H. W. Bush Oral History Project* (2011). Professor Perry has lectured throughout the United States and is a frequent media commentator on public affairs for CBS, PBS, CNN, C-SPAN, MS-NBC, NPR, PRI, Fox News, BBC, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Swiss TV, *HuffPost Live*, *The Morning Rundown*, *The Andrea Mitchell Report*, *The NewsHour*, *The Diane Rehm Show*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Sunday Times* of London, *USA Today*, *Bloomberg News*, the *Daily Beast*, and the Associated Press.

**Marc Selverstone – Associate Professor, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia; Chair of the Presidential Recordings Program.** Professor Selverstone is Chair of the Presidential Recordings Program and University of Virginia Associate Professor. He joined the Miller Center in November 2000 after receiving his PhD in U.S. Foreign Relations from Ohio University. His

interests include U.S. foreign relations post-1945, the culture of the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. He is editor of *A Companion to John F. Kennedy* (2014) and author of *Constructing the Monolith: The United States, Great Britain, and International Communism, 1945–1950* (2009), which won the Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in 2010. He is presently at work on *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam*, which is under contract with Harvard University Press. Selverstone is Chair of the Presidential Recordings Program (PRP). Within PRP, his work focuses on the recordings of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, with a special emphasis on their foreign policies, particularly that involving Vietnam. He formerly directed PRP’s “Digital Classroom Initiative,” a teacher-dedicated portal designed to help secondary-school teachers incorporate the presidential recordings into their learning activities. He is also the former executive editor of AmericanPresident.org.

## H. MEDIA TEAM

The media team for LBJ’s War includes the following:

- **Steve Atlas (Executive Producer/Director)** is an independent media producer formerly associated with flagship PBS station WGBH/Boston, where he spent two decades producing public affairs programming for the PBS system.
- **Glenda Manzi (Managing Producer)** is a three-time Emmy Award winning producer with more than twenty-five years experience in television, radio, newspapers and Internet interactive media. Manzi also served as managing producer for *We Knew JFK*.
- **Melinda Ward (PRI Project Director)**. As PRI’s Chief Content Officer, Melinda Ward oversees all of PRI’s co-productions and will serve as Project Director for this initiative, including grant administration. Prior to joining PRI, she served as Director of Cultural Programming at the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and curator of the NEH-funded education series, *Meanings of Modernism*, for Walker Art Center.

See résumés in Attachment 5.

## I. PROGRESS

This project will build on the success of *We Knew JFK / Unheard Stories from the Kennedy Archives* (<http://weknewjfk.org/>), which aired nationally in November 2013, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Kennedy's death in Dallas. Funded by Carnegie Corporation and narrated by Robert MacNeil, *We Knew JFK* was carried by more than 200 radio stations and reached an audience estimated at close to one million listeners — unusually high numbers for a stand-alone program with limited marketing or promotion.

*We Knew JFK* demonstrated the power of oral history in audio form as a story-telling tool, and planted the idea of a more ambitious initiative along the same lines. From there, all roads led to

Austin and the LBJ Presidential Library — a repository of comparable richness and depth, comprising close to 2000 one-on-one oral history interviews and over 9500 Johnson phone conversations. Over the past year, the project has done extensive exploration of both collections, and produced several brief pieces as an audition of sorts for the larger initiative. The three mini-documentary pieces that resulted (see links below) all aired on syndicated public radio programs, confirming the existence of an audience and an appetite for this material in the public radio community.

Sample pieces:

- **Voting Rights Act** (<http://hereandnow.wbur.org/2015/08/06/voting-rights-act-voices>)
- **Immigration Reform Act** (<http://www.thetakeaway.org/story/how-lbj-celebrated-mexican-americans/>)
- **Battle of Ia Drang** (<http://www.texasstandard.org/stories/on-the-ia-drang-anniversary-a-look-at-how-this-texas-reporter-covered-vietnam/>)

The production of these mini-documentary pieces has enabled the project to develop working relationships with Library staff, who have been extremely helpful and supportive at all levels up through senior management. While the volume of requests for both transcripts and audiotapes in connection with this project will be well beyond what the Library has been asked to process in the past, likely benefits in terms of increased awareness and appreciation of the collection should more than justify the investment of time and effort on their part, and we hope will lead to new and expanded collaboration in the future.

At the project level, key staff have been identified and are already contributing in-kind labor to insure that the first stage programming package discussed above can be completed, to the highest standards, in time for broadcast and distribution in 2017.

## **J. WORK PLAN**

### September 2016

#### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Work with LBJ Library archive staff to establish a "pipeline" process for generating all necessary transcripts and audio files in timely manner
- Schedule one-on-one and group consultations with project advisors to begin integrating them into the editorial process

#### PRE-PRODUCTION

- Continue review and cataloging of transcripts
- Begin selection and digitization of audio archive components
- Begin first stage outline of a structure for the documentary
- Initiate planning of web component

October-December 2017

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Identify and interview candidates for narrator
- Convene editorial meeting with advisors

PRODUCTION

- Continue transcript research and audio digitization

January-February 2017

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Submit first rough scripts for review by advisory board.

PRODUCTION

- Complete selection of principal archive and program elements
- Secure music and other thematic material for the production
- Begin construction of website

March-April 2017

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Submit fine cut scripts (for documentary and podcasts) to advisors for review

PRODUCTION

- Record promos and initial host continuity
- First rough mix of the full documentary and podcasts
- Complete and prepare to launch website

May 2017

PRODUCTION

- Complete and post final mix of the program, audio promos, and 6-part podcast series

June 2017

- Program and podcast broadcast and web distribution

July-August 2017

POST-PRODUCTION

- Review and evaluation

**K. FUNDRAISING PLAN**

Should NEH funding be awarded, PRI has committed to securing the additional funds (approximately \$55,000) needed to carry out the project as conceived. We have identified several private foundations with interest in American history and/or based in Texas as viable prospects for grant support. We will proceed with our approaches to these prospects while this

application is pending, with the goal of having funds committed by the time NEH decisions are announced.

#### **L. ORGANIZATION PROFILE**

**Public Radio International (PRI)** is a global non-profit media company focused on the intersection of journalism and engagement to effect positive change in people’s lives. PRI’s mission is to serve audiences as a distinctive content source for information, insights and cultural experiences essential to living in our diverse, interconnected world. We create a more informed, empathetic and connected world by sharing powerful stories, encouraging exploration, connecting people and cultures, and creating opportunities to help people take informed action on stories that inspire them. Founded in 1983, PRI audio, text and visual content is currently consumed by almost 19 million people each month through broadcast, podcasts, and on our website, PRI.org. PRI co-produces the daily news programs *PRI’s The World* (with WGBH Radio and the BBC World Service) and *The Takeaway* (with New York Public Radio) and the weekly arts and culture magazine show *Studio 360* (also with NYPR), and distributes such hallmarks of radio excellence as *Afropop Worldwide*, *Science Friday*, and *To the Best of Our Knowledge*. In the past, PRI has received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to produce three series of “American Icons on Studio 360,” a collection of hour-long programs and feature segments that examine classic works — of literature, music, film, architecture, design or visual art — that have achieved the status of an “icon” in American culture. Most recently, PRI received NEH support for “The World in Words,” our distinctive online and on-air feature focused on entertaining and informative stories of language around the globe.

#### **M. LIST OF COLLECTIONS TO BE USED BY THE PROJECT**

Please see the Bibliography (Attachment 4) and Treatments (Attachment 3) for sources and materials consulted for this project.

**N. PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS** (not applicable)

**O. USER-GENERATED CONTENT** (not applicable)