

Christine Camp Oral History Interview—JFK#3, 11/4/1969
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Biographical Note

Camp, a John F. Kennedy (JFK) Senate and campaign staff member (1959-1960) and Assistant White House Press Secretary (1961-1963), discusses the staff and operations of the Office of the White House Press Secretary, daily White House press briefings, press coverage of the Kennedy family, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Christine Camp

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E. Christine Camp—JFK #3

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Third of Four Oral History Interviews

with

Christine Camp

November 4, 1969
Washington, D.C.

By Ann M. Campbell

For the John F. Kennedy Library

CAMPBELL: I'd thought, perhaps, we'd start by a short discussion of the staff. I think in your first interview the staff before the White House period is discussed. Can we talk about who comes to the White House? Who's in the press office?

CAMP: In the way of the staff you mean?

CAMPBELL: Yeah.

CAMP: All right, we'll start out with Pierre [Pierre E.G. Salinger] who is the press secretary and myself as his chief executive secretary. I'd been with him all during the Convention, presidential campaign, although I didn't work with him. But I was on the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] staff during the primaries early on. Sue Mortensen, now Sue Vogelsinger [Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger], came into the White House. I might just tell you a breakdown of our duties when I go through this. I was Pierre's secretarial assistant by the bureaucratic gobbledygook, number one secretary, and it was under my direction that the others operated. Sue's principal duties as the number two secretary was directly to Pierre. She served as his correspondence secretary because we had a lot of mail from the general public, and she did most of that. Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher] was the deputy press secretary to Pierre, and Andy and Pierre had known each other

in California years ago. Andy joined Pierre's staff—joined our staff at the Convention, then came in as the number two man. Then Jill Cowan came with us. She had been—let's see, how did she arrive on the scene? She had been a student and, as I recall, hitchhiked

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her way to California and became a volunteer on the staff, and Pierre hired her permanently. She served as our office receptionist early in the administration. (In 1963, Cowan was replaced by Miss Nancy Larson [Nancy L. Larson].)

And then, on arrival—that mean on arrival in the press office—on the first day of the administration it was Salinger, Hatcher, myself, Sue Mortensen, Jill Cowan, and also Barbara Gamarekian, who had been in the campaign, but I believe she worked here in Washington at the National Committee [Democratic National Committee]. And she served as Hatcher's secretary. When we got to the White House that day, we found Mrs. Helen Ganss, who had been in the White House on press secretary staffs since FDR's [Franklin D. Roosevelt] time. And Helen, as a lot of staff people were known in the White House, was what we called a "holdover" because this was a transition device worked out by, as I understand it, Clark Clifford [Clark M. Clifford] and General Goodpaster [Andrew J. Goodpaster] for the transfer of the workload from the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] staff to us. And it was felt that at least someone experienced in the White House staff should be in each office, and it was Helen, in this case, for us.

Now, that's immediately on arrival after the Inauguration. I can't place it in point of time, but soon thereafter, it became evident that Pierre was going to have to have more help in the form of a third officer because we had major radio and television and foreign correspondents to cover, which the two of them and the rest of us couldn't really manage ourselves. So it was on the President's trip to Canada that Pierre became acquainted with Jay Gildner, who was then stationed there with the USIA [United States Information Agency]. Pierre stole him from the State Department and USIA, and he transferred there [White House Press Office] as a third man. Then much later in the administration, Mac Kilduff [Malcolm M. Kilduff] replaced Jay Gildner, and that comprised the staff. I'm leaving one out. I can't think of her name right now.

CAMPBELL: Barbara Coleman [Barbara J. Coleman].

CAMP: Oh, I forgot Barbara, of course. Barbara came in right away, and she worked with Andy Hatcher and photographers. She had been on the campaign staff, too, but principally, I believe, for the Democratic National Committee. Who else have I overlooked?

CAMPBELL: Now, did Priscilla Wear pass through your office?

CAMP: She passed through our office every day, but she didn't work on our staff; she worked in the President's office. She and Jill were very close friends. But she never formally worked on the staff.

CAMPBELL: How about Ed Bayley [Edwin R. Bayley], who was assigned to the White House for a short period of time?

CAMP: Good old Ed. Yes, we smuggled him in the back door. He was for all intensive purposes—and much later on there was another fellow by the name of Paul Southwick, who was rather a liaison between the national committee and Ken O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] and Pierre on political campaigns. They never were really formally attached to our office as staff. We carried them on the roster as being associated with us, but they were more—they were really working more on campaign matters and liaison with the national committee than with ordinary day-to-day White House operation of the press.

CAMPBELL: Let's talk about Hatcher. What were his initial responsibilities? What sort of thing was he responsible...

CAMP: Well, actually, I have to tell you that when we went into the White House we didn't know what we were doing, any of us. Actually, what we did—and it's the only simple thing you can do under those circumstances—is to keep on doing what you've been doing. And we carried the campaign right into the White House and rather tried to break our workloads down much the same as we had on the campaign because it worked out that way until we got our feet on the ground, which I daresay took many, many months because you had a whole different kettle of fish to deal with.

But he was the associate press secretary, the number two man. He was Pierre's liaison with many government agencies, with other offices in the White House. He had a responsibility for dealing with the ethnic press, serving as liaison, particularly with the Negro papers and magazines, broadcasters. But that wasn't his sole duty; he was really the back up man for the press secretary. He compiled press releases and whatever had to be done. And then he served as spokesman, held press conferences when Pierre was not there. So, it's very difficult, rather, to make any division of labor.

CAMPBELL: Clear distinction.

CAMP: Yes.

CAMPBELL: There's some indication that he's often minding the store in times of particular crises just by chance...

CAMP: Who, Hatcher?

CAMPBELL: Hatcher. He's in charge, you see, in the steel price rise crisis. Was he able to handle those things, do you think, with....

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CAMP: Well, of course, I'm biased because I consider Pierre to be very much a professional spokesman. He had had long experience in the campaign and during the primaries. You see, Andy didn't come on our staff until the Convention. So he had a short time to get acquainted with it; and furthermore, I don't think Andy ever had the close access and close working relationship with the President and with the members of the staff. This is no derogation on him; it's just that, you know, if you're not in early, you don't get that rapport established and that's, I would say, the most valuable working component of an effective press secretary. If he doesn't have access to his sources of information and the people that he's supposed to represent, he can't work effectively. It's very difficult for somebody like Andy to fill Pierre's shoes. You just can't take over the rapport at the same time. I think that—first of all, on that, it was entirely accidental if a crisis arose and he handled it because Pierre was not there. It wasn't because he was assigned to do it. I have no recollection that he was ever a bomb on any particular circumstance. He may not have been as articulate, or he may not have done his homework as well or all of those things, but I don't remember any real problem.

CAMPBELL: Now, Gildner comes in with the duty of handling the foreign press, does he?

CAMP: Principally because we were covered by great numbers of foreign correspondents in this town: the Reuters agency, Agence France Press, let's see, there are numbers of daily papers, British papers, for example, the Japanese have the biggest new bureau in Washington. And Jay, because he was a USIA officer with a great deal of experience, he—and he spoke several languages—was particularly valuable in that association. And they need certain things that don't affect, well, the American press. For example, they've got wholly different deadlines. The London papers are eight hours ahead of us; the overseas wire services worked differently in relation to what their deadlines and requirements are; and so it took one guy, really, to service the whole crowd. He did other things in relation to the job. He was one of the principal—what I would term an arrangements officer on technicalities, particularly during the presidential travel or survey work, also, in the White House, just getting the cameras placed in the right place at the right time for press conferences and that kind of thing. And because of his connections with the State Department and the USIA, he was also a liaison with those agencies on occasion. He was our general nuts and bolts man.

CAMPBELL: And then Mrs. Kennedy's [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] work is handled in the other wing.

CAMP: Yes, in the "ladies' wing."

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CAMPBELL: How was the cooperation between your office and the other wing?

CAMP: It was splendid because—well, it was splendid because of two reasons: One was that Pam Turnure [Pamela Turnure], who was Mrs. Kennedy's press secretary, had been on the Kennedy staff for a very long—she had close easy relationships with the President and Mrs. Kennedy and the family. Even though she had no working experience as far as press relations were concerned, she served a great, great purpose. And I'm glad the tradition has been established for the successor press secretary just to get what I call the "ladies' news" out of the national news end of it. She and her staff worked very well with us. We had close cooperation and liaison. She worked her press releases and her meetings with the lady press contingent in conjunction with Pierre's press conferences, so that we weren't competing in terms of time or stories or any of that sort. So it was a splendid relationship, I think.

CAMPBELL: Then Mac Kilduff comes on to replace Jay Gildner. How was he chosen, do you know?

CAMP: Well, first of all Gildner leaves. It's obvious we have to have somebody to fill that void because it was a very vital job at that time. As I recall, Pierre was trying to snag a friend of his by the name of Charlie Davis [Charles J. Davis], who, at that time, was in Hong Kong with USIA as a public affairs officer. Charlie and Pierre had gone to school together. And he had Charlie pretty well socked up on the job, although I don't think they'd ever really come to any commitment. And I had known Mac in a previous incarnation, and he knew the job was open, and he asked me to arrange an interview, which I did. And Mac had very good qualifications for the job since he'd been in the State Department for sixteen years. He had served as a special assistant to the assistant secretary for public affairs, one of our principal clients in support offices in the government. And Mac had been an experienced press relations man in the department all of his life, so he filled the bill very well, and that's how he came in. Pierre decided that he would have the job rather than Charlie. Charlie later went to Saigon.

CAMPBELL: There's some indication in some of the Kennedy's literature that perhaps Kilduff was not in the best favor at the time of the President's assassination and might have been on his way out.

CAMP: That is true. That is a true rumor. As a matter of fact, I've never been able really to get any evidence as to what it was that Mac—well, I know some of the reasons for....

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For reasons of personality, Mac did not enjoy some good relationships with members of the staff—not the press staff, but members of the White House staff; principally, Ken O'Donnell. And Mac is a very volatile Irishman who pulls no punches and with other Irishmen, I'm sure this is even worse in some cases. But anyway, he incurred the wrath for whatever reason. And Pierre was very fond of Mac; he thought he did a good job, but apparently O'Donnell

felt that he was going to be relieved and that Pierre would assist him in trying to find a job. So Mac did know that he was on his way out, and it was by just sheer coincidence and circumstance that he was on that trip to Texas. And here was a man who had been fired, and he ends up then having to make the announcement of the death of the President. Of course, that circumstance changed his immediate problem from a personal standpoint, anyway. But it was true, yes indeed.

CAMPBELL: The number three position was a difficult one to hold in your...

CAMP: It was, you know, and I've never understood why because in both Jay's case and in Mac's case it had nothing to do with the job they did, except incidental personality clashes. Mac and Andy, on occasion, were abrasive with each other, but for good and sufficient reasons. And I know it irked Mac that he never could really assume the same role as Andy did as associate—be a spokesman and all that. But he was doing what he was supposed to be doing. There was a personality problem.

CAMPBELL: In your first interview there was some discussion about Gildner's departure. I just wanted to ask you to tell us why he gets involved with the Indian trip? Was that the sort of thing where Pam Turnure bows out?

CAMP: No, she didn't bow out. I can't recall just how the circumstance arose, but it was perfectly obvious in the planning stage of that trip.... Of course, most of the plans were made by Mrs. Kennedy and the ladies in the East Wing, but if you will recall, Ambassador Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith] was in India at that time, and it was also very obvious from the way things were moving in the White House that the trip was going to become more than what the ladies in the East Wing could handle, and they needed an experienced man press officer to deal with the embassy people in New Delhi, and New Delhi is a very large embassy, very large city. And Jay, having worked and lived abroad, having been a member of an embassy staff, knows who to call and what to do, and it takes a great deal of organization, et cetera. And so he was delegated responsibility to handle the details of her and Princess Radziwill's [Lee Bouvier Radziwill] trip.

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I've never known what actually happened, but I am led to believe that, again, a personality clash arose between him and Mrs. Kennedy. Jay is very much of a perfectionist, and he's also a very—now what word do I want—well, he's very determined that once he ordains something's going to be, that's the way it's going to be, regardless of whether or not the principals want it that way or not. In the role that he played for us that particular feature of his personality was very much part of our job. But I daresay probably trying to turn that heat on to two ladies who are on a pleasure trip might have been too much for them. I've never known what the falling out was, but I know it was a personality problem, and he was very quietly and gracefully returned to USIA and no hard feelings.

CAMPBELL: On Mrs. Kennedy's subsequent trips abroad do you recall what sort of

press arrangements were made at that time?

CAMP: That's the only one I recall where any of our staff was detailed (to handle the press for Mrs. Kennedy.) On all the other trips it would have been handled by Pam.

CAMPBELL: Could you just give us a brief description of your physical layout of...

CAMP: Oh God, that won't take very long. I was absolutely appalled when I walked into that press office for the first time. Here was the seat of the nation's capital, the capital of the free world. The press staff was—well, at that time it comprised one, two, three, four, five, six people. Pierre's office was rather large. I don't know the dimensions of it, but let's say for the sake of discussion it was about thirty feet by twenty. That was the place where he held his daily briefings, which meant that fifty or sixty reporters, twice a day, would file into his office. The two men, Hatcher and Gildner and later Hatcher and Kilduff, shared a cubbyhole office that can only be described as a bit larger than a moderate size coat closet. Sue Mortensen and Barbara Gamarekian and Barbara Coleman were crushed together against walls in another larger than life coat closet. The two receptionists, Helen Ganss and Jill Cowan, had desks back to back, and when they sat at their desks, they couldn't get out. It was absolutely the rudest way to have to work. And I shared the office with Pierre. There was no place to go.

Now to show you how strained and awful the working conditions were, off of Pierre's and my office was a lavatory, a real, for life lavatory. Now, in order to run our office we had to have tickers, press tickers. We had no place to put them, no place to hook them up except the stash them away in that lavatory. And we managed to get the AP [Associated Press] and UP [United Press] tickers and the Agence France

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Press and Reuters, four of them, into that bathroom. And you had to know what business you were going into that bathroom for. But those were the conditions we worked under.

I might add that the conditions for the working press, the people who had to cover the White House and be on duty there—the wire services, the photographers, the magazine and newspaper people had even worse conditions; just no place for them to sit and write. We had a small press room, but it couldn't possibly hold all of the people that eventually turned out to cover us. And so the main entrance to the White House in the West Wing was always filled with reporters; it was the only place they could go.

CAMPBELL: Were any efforts made to acquire better working conditions, more space?

CAMP: Well, we talked about it a long time. As you'll recall, Eisenhower used to hold his press conferences in the Indian Treaty Room in the EOB [Executive Office Building]. We could have done that, I suppose, but that meant going back and forth to the Executive Office Building twice a day for Pierre's briefings. The President chose to hold his press conferences in the State Department. Then

there was one grand plan circulated a year or so after we got in there to kind of carve out a new office complex in the basement directly under the West Wing for a larger briefing room and more staff offices in the press room. But Pierre rather put the ax to that because he said he didn't want to go down in history as spending a lot of money for his own comfort and what have you.

But, decidedly, the working conditions were disadvantageous, and I think, to a great degree. Every time Pierre had a private consultation with anybody I'd have to leave, and I couldn't work. I'd have to go outside and just hang around until he was through. And so it was bad. And also, I had responsibility for a lot of classified material that would come into the office, so I'd have to clean that up at least twice a day because reporters were coming in for the briefings and standing around my desk. And that tended to be rather tiresome over three years.

CAMPBELL: Let's talk a little bit about where your input came from for Salinger's twice daily briefings. What sort of material did you get into your office for that?

CAMP: Well, it could take any shape, form, or source. Of course, most of the—I might give you some typical day in the life of the press secretary. We would usually arrive about 8:30 in the morning, depending on what the nature of the work was. I'm just

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taking an average day without any crises. You get the Cuban Missile Crisis, and that's altogether different. But the first thing Pierre would do is check the whereabouts of the President, and that could be that he was up and having breakfast or he was working over in the Mansion, and Pierre would make an appointment to go see him or just drop in. I mean, he had easy access all the time, so there was no difficulty. But the first thing was to check in with the President and see what he was up to for the day and what he wanted released as far as daily new reports.

And then Pierre had a very good—I think excellent—workable system with all of the press secretaries all over government and every agency and department. They had the responsibility to keep him informed of major news breaks that were going to come out of their departments. Also, they were responsible for keeping him alert to the fact that some item of business in, say the Department of Agriculture, might require a White House press release rather than the Department of Agriculture; it might be that important. And that would be a judgment, then, that Pierre and the President would make. So there was never any lack of information; you had plenty to go on.

Of course, one of the major generating sources of information is from the press itself and not necessarily at the briefings or press conferences, but by their daily dropping in or telephoning, asking questions. You can see a trend of interest developing and so you decide to either go with it or not. And that, I would think, is probably the best—well, not necessarily the best, but I would say one of the chief sources of generating information by the enterprising press itself.

CAMPBELL: You mentioned your contacts with other agencies, and there's been a lot written, I think, about the coordination with other agencies, which sometimes is termed "managed news."

CAMP: Oh yeah, God yes. And in the Johnson administration [Lyndon B. Johnson], it then became the "credibility gap." It's all the same thing.

CAMPBELL: I wondered how your contacts did work. Say, for instance, with the State Department, how regular were these contacts and what sort of...

CAMP: Oh, they were daily. Well, it depended on the way that Salinger and his staff, the press relations people in each government agency and department could devise—or divine, rather. For instance, when Pierre used to say in dealing with the public information officers of government, of which there are many,

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many—you know, they go way up into the Interstate Commerce Commission; you know, you've got them coming out of your ears sometimes but Pierre used to have kind of a general rule that the good news was going to be issued by the White House and the bad news would be issued by the departments and agencies. And you'll remember that a lot of times the President would make an announcement, and would say, "We're going to release this a little later in more detailed form." Well, it would depend on what that news was whether it would be released at the White House or if it was a matter of foreign policy, it might be released at the State Department. But it was all arranged beforehand. You knew just precisely who was going to say what and when and at what time.

Now, in the State Department, for example.... Well, let me say this first: We had a public information official, press relation officers, in all of the Cabinet offices, who were—what did we call them, I can't remember. Anyway, those ten to twelve people—this was Treasury, State, Justice, Agriculture, Interior, NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration], Defense, Atomic Energy Commission [AEC]—this nucleus reported into us daily on what was happening in their agencies in the field of press relations. Now if Pierre could divine either by questions he was getting at the White House and by what the Defense Department was getting and the State Department was getting and the AEC was getting, he could pretty much have a feel of what the trend of the news on a certain item was going to be that day. And if he felt that this was a story that we didn't want released or we didn't need to have it—it was information before its time—then he'd call these five in, and they would discuss how to handle this breaking news story. It could be done by phone, or it could be done by memo or a personal meeting. But it really depended on the story itself, as it was breaking.

State Department, we had more business with them, really, than we did anybody—with the exception.... I would say State and Defense were the principal support offices, and they regarded themselves as a support to Pierre and to the White House because on foreign

policy and national security this was—well, this usually had the major share of the news. And we had to rely on Art Sylvester [Arthur Sylvester] in the Pentagon and, well, a series of people in the Department of State like Roger Tubby [Roger W. Tubby] and Bob Manning [Robert J. Manning] and Jim Greenfield [James L. Greenfield] to keep us up to date, hour by hour, on anything of importance that would bear on the President. And after the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, this kind of liaison was so close and on such a rapid fire order—and we knew that we had to have a better operating communications system—that we had a hotline established between the White House press secretary and the two public information officers in each, in Defense and State. So you just pick up a line and there they are;

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you didn't have to dial or go through switchboards or anything of that sort. As far as I know, that's still in operation today.

CAMPBELL: As you mentioned, Roger Tubby is the person you dealt with first at State. Had you worked with him at all on the campaign?

CAMP: Yes, I had known Roger.... Well, he was Pierre's backup for the presidential campaign. Roger was assigned as the press relations officer for the Democratic National Committee. While we were on the campaign he kept feeding us everything that we needed to know that was going on here in Washington, what the news corps here was doing, what the vice presidential candidate was doing, what his schedule was, where he was, the major spokesman of the party. He served as a very valuable appointment during that phase and then became Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs after the Inauguration.

CAMPBELL: Do you know the details of his appointment, how he was chosen?

CAMP: Do you mean during the campaign or for the State Department job?

CAMPBELL: For the State position.

CAMP: Well, first of all, it really—I think basically it was Pierre's recommendation, and Roger wanted to become Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. First of all, he was a former press secretary to President Truman [Harry S. Truman], so he had very wide, solid political contacts within the party. And President Truman had very broad powers of having his people well placed. And after all, Roger had served a very good purpose, and so I think it was strictly politics, for one thing, but he was a very good press relations fellow. And he'd also worked as a working reporter in his career, owned a newspaper, one of the first press secretaries. So he was considered not only well qualified for the job, but he also had the right political connections.

CAMPBELL: It has been written that he never enjoyed Secretary Rusk's [Dean Rusk] full confidence in that job. Did you ever observe any signs of that?

CAMP: No. Well, no, I wouldn't have because I'd ever see these people physically except maybe once a week on a regular meeting basis in the White House. I've heard that tale. I can see there's some validity to it, but I couldn't comment on it

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because I don't know. I know Roger was later appointed ambassador to the UN [United Nations] organization in Geneva. But what circumstances came about on it, I don't know. I know Pierre is well able to comment on it, but I never knew the details.

CAMPBELL: Tubby gets involved in organizing regional press briefings. I think the President appeared at one.

CAMP: I don't know that he appeared at a regional one. I don't remember that. No, Roger and his successor Bob Manning and then Jim Greenfield, who came in later, too, in cooperation with Pierre did come up with some innovative idea in order to keep in touch with the American People, the grass roots. I remember very well that the President was terribly concerned about how he was going to get any feel for what John Q. thinks, say, in Sioux City, Iowa, because there's no way in the world for a president to do that. And he was very interested in keeping government in touch directly with the people. And the State Department, who divined the idea—I don't know, but I would ascribe it to Tubby because it would be during that time—they devised a series of what was called regional foreign policy conferences, which took high level State Department officers out into the countryside for a day or two in given locales, being available to local people to ask them questions.

Then, there was another program launched, which, ironically, I came later to head in the State Department when I transferred there in '64. It was called community meetings on foreign policy, where a team of foreign policy specialists spend a whole week in various locales in the country talking and answering questions about foreign policy. That was one method that was devised.

One of the most innovative programs happened right in the White House, derived from talks with the President and Salinger. Well, they tried them on a weekly basis, and I'd have to search the records to see if it ever came off that often. But that's really what they started out to do, was to invite editors of daily papers and weekly papers from a given state to come to Washington and lunch with the President on an off-the-record basis, and they would have a free-for-all on any subject which they wanted to ask the President. And we had some very successful periods of good press relations on that score because the editors of daily papers in this country—outside of the East Coast establishment—rarely have any whack at the President of the United States or his immediate subordinates or the top level of government.

This is another way of getting directly to the people because they could go home and say, "I had lunch at the White House, and

this is what we talked about, and this is what's on the President's mind." And furthermore, it served the other side of the coin to let the President know what was going on in Oklahoma. Otherwise, he wouldn't have any feel for it whatsoever because he was very much of a political individual, very interested in what was going on in Oklahoma or the other forty-nine states at that time. So it gave him some feel for the movement of the country and the attitudes. And I think that was probably one of the most interesting programs that was carried out by our office.

CAMPBELL: How were lists prepared for invitations?

CAMP: Well, actually, I drew up the lists, and I'll tell you how I did it. We subscribed to the *Editor and Publisher Magazine*, which is a listing—just like the Dow Jones, you know—a listing of every detail, every weekly, every trade magazine; for anything going on in publishing, there's a list, and you just lift it out of the book for Iowa. We had to establish a certain cutoff; we could never really handle more—I don't think we ever had a guest list more than about twenty-five or thirty, because the President wanted to institute a very informal air. So we rather cut them off at thirty guests, and you're able to devise that by the basis of circulation of the paper. So we may not have hit every daily paper and every editor because we had to make further breakdowns then for weeklies. We had to have so many weeklies as opposed to dailies, so everybody was covered to a degree. To my knowledge, we excluded broadcasters because we were more interested at getting at the daily papers. We had some magazines in, but not very often. We had special lunches for broadcasters and special goodies for the magazines. I still think that was one of the best press relations-public relations efforts we did.

CAMPBELL: It's been said that the President was a good press secretary for himself and was very concerned with his image.

CAMP: On the first part of your question, yes. He was superb; he had an absolute, fine instinct for what was good press relations, what was good public relations. My own opinion is that is devolved on the political animal because he's been in politics all of his life. And yes to the second part of your question, he was very much concerned about his image because that's what a politician all about. So if you don't have that instinct, if you don't have a certain amount of ego, if you don't have that sensitivity, you're not going to have very much success in trying to get to the very people who elected you and to keep in touch with them. And Pierre often said that he really wasn't a press secretary; he was just

the guy who carried out what the boss ordered, which he did. I would say that it's true that President Kennedy had the real fine touch of good public relations.

CAMPBELL: How are policies established from your office for the coverage of the family?

CAMP: By guess and by God and by a jot of trouble and—Jesus, it could be awful sometimes. One example—I can do this better by example than anything else, I guess. And every case was different. You just didn't have any—you flew by the seat of your pants with this crowd, I tell you.

One of the first things that ever happened to me—this was soon after the Inauguration, soon after we were in the White House. [This whole anecdote is equally covered in the Grele interview.] Pierre held a morning briefing one day in which he happened to inadvertently let loose and volunteer that member of the domestic staff of the Kennedys had to sign pledges that they wouldn't publish any memoirs on, you know, the back stairs, the White House gossip kind of stuff. Well, once that happened—we had a large number of reporters in the briefing that day. Every reporter got hold of that statement and just ran with it. That was the entire context of the press briefing. And Pierre, I knew—I could look at him—he knew what he'd done because he was just going pale that the whole press conference was aimed in that direction. There was going to be a bigger story than really what was, and he'd really goofed, and he knew it. But anyway, he rather—we though at the time—rather got out of it gracefully, and they got on to the minor matters, and the thing broke up and went away and lunchtime happened.

Pierre was at lunch; Andy was at lunch. The next thing I knew—I'm in the office—Evelyn Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln], the President's secretary, called and said that the President wanted to see Pierre right away. Well I explained that he was at lunch, Hatcher was at lunch, but I could do anything. She said she'd find out. She called back and she said the President wants to see you right away and bring a pad and pencil; he wants to dictate. Well, this was not an unusual circumstance and had not been for me.

Anyway, I walked in the office not knowing what was ahead of me. And I can remember walking in the oval office, and Ken O'Donnell was the only other human in the room, and he was rather plastered against the far wall, pale. I've never seen Ken O'Donnell pale in my life. He had rather an ashen look about him. And the President of the United States was pacing up and down the oval office in an obvious towering rage. And I don't remember his exact words, mainly because I couldn't

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repeat them anyway; it was a good old Irish temper at work. But the whole context was he had seen reports coming over the tickers because he watched the tickers religiously, and he had gotten ahold of the take on Pierre's press conference. And it was to this effect: "Why was this the subject of the morning press conference? Why did Pierre do this? Why did he volunteer what Mrs. Kennedy and I had divined for our household staff?"—practically shouting. I didn't know what in the world had happened to the poor man. But he was so mad—he was not only mad at Pierre, but he was mad at the reporters because he said, "What else did they ask? Didn't they ask about the farm program? Didn't they ask about Laos? What was the foreign policy question?" And I had to admit that the entire conference really surrounded that one little domestic issue.

Then he asked me a question, and I couldn't answer, and that was, "What would Jim Hagerty [James C. Hagerty] have done in this situation if he were press secretary?" Well, when you're asked that by the President of the United States you know your boss is in trouble. And I said I couldn't answer, I'd never worked with Mr. Haggerty. Well, to shorten a story, the President wanted this story off the tickers as fast as it could be possibly done. He wanted a different image cast about his relationship with his domestic staff. He didn't like that way the stories were being written.

He said, "Now I'm going to dictate a statement to you, and I want you, without divulging the source of this, to have this on the wires within thirty minutes." Now, this is rather an illustration of what managed news can be done if you manage it well. He dictated a statement—of course, at a hundred and ninety-five thousand words a minute. I never got a word of it, and finally he calmed down and realized I wasn't getting it. And then he settled down. He apologized for shouting and using bad, Irish "good" words to express his rage. He sat down and dictated a couple of paragraphs about his alleged arrangement, and I was supposed to come back and report to him how I'd managed it.

Well, the only thing one can do under those circumstances is call in the AP and the UP and tell them, "Here is a statement, and it would be appreciated if you could run it on the wire if your editors think it's up to par. And I can't tell you the source of it." Of course, they knew damned well who it was. These fellows are very experienced boys. And I remember one of them saying to me, "Are you in trouble?" And I said, "No, not very much. [Laughter] It should get hotter around here if there's no evidence on that little machine in thirty minutes." They ran it, you know, verbatim, and the story was turned around, and he was satisfied.

But when Pierre came back from lunch, and I told him everything

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I could him about it, Pierre was appalled, of course. And when I mentioned the reference to Jim Hagerty, Pierre said that if he asked that question, he said, "I think I'll have to resign." And Pierre really believed that he had to resign. So I took it upon myself to advise him to go in and discuss it with the President, but my own opinion was that it was just hot, Irish temper, and I thought the storm was over, and I don't think you'll ever make the same mistake again. And so that's precisely what did happen. The President was damn mad about it, and Pierre knew it, but Pierre never made that mistake again. That's one thing he learned early in the game.

CAMPBELL: How about an established press office policy, say, for the treatment of the presidential illnesses—the back problems and thing?

CAMP: Well, there never was any established program or policy because, again, you have to face these things as they come. I do remember being called to the White House at 7:30 one morning. I can't remember the issue anymore, but the President had a cold, and he was going to bed. No I'm sorry, it wasn't a cold. He was going to have to appear on crutches because of his back. This was the first time this had happened, and there was some concern on, you know, how to handle it in order not

to present a disabled president because that truly was not the case, physically. But he didn't want to alarm the people; he didn't want to alarm the—he didn't want the thing to get out of hand. I mean, there was no sense of trying to preserve his image; that was not the case at all. But just overnight to have the President of the United States appear on crutches, is you know, quite a problem, and how do you handle it?

So this took a great deal of talking back and forth with the President, and with his physician, and with members of the staff. As I recall we just issued a simple press release, or we told the reporters assembled that just don't make a big thing out of this because this is what the physician has ordered. He has to be off his feet for a while, and he'll be on crutches for a few days, and, you know, it's just not a big deal and no alarm should be attached to it. And when you approach reporters and photographers on a vein like that, you're perfectly honest and straightforward—and the President was and the physician was and Pierre was—there's really no problem.

CAMPBELL: How about answers to question about his sister Rosemary [Rosemary Kennedy]? Were they always handled frankly?

CAMP: I don't recall that we ever had any questions about it. If they did, they were—well, what I mean to say is we never had any open public questioning about it. Certainly, there were

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questions, but always done either in private queries to the press secretary—and fully answered. But that's the way you handled that. There's always a nut and a kook in every crowd, and you never know when a reporter is going to throw you a curve ball. On something like that you have to be really on your feet and alert to that kind of thing. But most reporters are sensitive to these human problems and don't make anything out them.

CAMPBELL: There were, I think, some ground rules established for the coverage of the children [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy; John F. Kennedy, Jr.] in the White House and a question of pictures or no pictures....

CAMP: You bet there were ground rules. They changed every day. My dear. It depended on who was making the ground rules, whether it was going to be the President or Mrs. Kennedy. Now, when she was in situ there was an absolute rule of divine right that no photographer ever would photograph the children. Every photographer who covered us knew "no long lenses through the fence to get at the children." Well, of course, that's like telling a photographer, "You don't take pictures, but that's the way you make your living." And Mrs. Kennedy, of course, in her great glorious way, would forget her own rule and take the kids out in a sleigh on the south lawn and be kind of mad that there weren't any pictures, you know. But she was very tough on the matter of photographing the kids.

I must admit that I am personally sympathetic with it because trying to raise two very small children in a fish bowl atmosphere such as we lived and worked in must be no easy

matter at all. We tried to do what we could, but the point is that you can't control the press; you can't control photographers. They're making their living. You do what you can, but sometimes it gets out of hand. Yes there were guidelines.

CAMPBELL: Both Mrs. Kennedy and the children were certainly assets when there was publicity about them. Did your office ever attempt to encourage Mrs. Kennedy's side of the White House to cooperate more fully with the press?

CAMP: Well, it wasn't a question with her side of the White House; it was the question with her, period, end of quote. It could take several forms. For example, I remember very well that *Look* magazine had a.... After John, Jr. was born and John, Jr. was a year or so old, *Look* magazine put in a request through our office to do a story on the President and his son. So Pierre went to the President and said, "We're all for this. We think it'd be a great PR piece, and *Look* is in the line for it. Could you, Mr. President, persuade Mrs. Kennedy to do this?" Well, of course, the answer came back no,

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not having any part of it whatsoever because this is a mere small baby and they just didn't want anything to do with it. But Pierre advised *Look* magazine to keep the request in. Maybe the mood might change or the situation might change, and we'll just have another look at it. So every so often, as Pierre normally did with requests for exclusive stories, be they photo or written or broadcast, he would go, take the whole bunch in, and say, "Now, this is still outstanding, and can we bring it up again?" Well, in this case Pierre brought up that *Look* photo story three or four times and always the word was, "No, Mrs. Kennedy just won't have any part of it."

CAMPBELL: Brought it up with the President?

CAMP: Yeah, and on occasion, Pierre would go directly to Mrs. Kennedy too. They had a very warm, close relationship—or Pam would. You know, there are several ways of getting at this kind of thing, and you use them if you think it's the right one to do.

So maybe around the sixth time and about six months Pierre brings up the request from *Look* again because the editors are bugging us, and we have to do our bit with them as well. So the President said to Pierre, "Now, you tell *Look* magazine that I'll reconsider it, and we'll reconsider it, and why don't you ask me the next time Mrs. Kennedy goes out of town?" Well, a few weeks later she did. She took Caroline with her. I think it was a trip to Italy. And I remember the President sticking his head in the back door of our office one day, and he said, "Is there a *Look* photographer around?" I said, "No, but I can get one over here in ten minutes." And Stan Tretick [Stanley Tretick] was there in ten minutes and shot all of this film.

The President, as I recall, and Pierre, asked *Look* to hold off publishing this story until Mrs. Kennedy could see the pictures, for one thing. And the President allowed how he would take on that responsibility. But anyway, Tretick had free access to the President's office and Cabinet room, and he shot a lot of film of John, Jr. and the President and various staff members and so forth. And Mrs. Kennedy came back and was informed—I don't know who informed her, but I assume the President did—about the circumstance, and of course, all hell broke loose. "You tell *Look* magazine to never publish a picture." And they didn't, and they couldn't. It was ironic that the pictures were finally approved just the week or so before the assassination. And the whole story came out as the Father's Day issue, I think, after the assassination. And those were the photos of John-John crawling out from under the desk and all that kind of thing.

So it depended on just what it was, what the story line was, who was going to do it. They had some favorites. *Look* was one because

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they liked Tretick, for one thing. Tretick they considered an excellent photographer, which he is. And he was particularly good with children and had done a lot of work on Bob Kennedy's [Robert F. Kennedy] kids and the Shriver [Eunice Kennedy Shriver; R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] kids and the whole—well, he was with us during the campaign as a UPI photographer at that time. But Stan was a good photographer, and they trusted him. They also trusted *Look* to honor commitments.

CAMPBELL: Laura Bergquist...

CAMP: Yes, Laura was the writer.

CAMPBELL: ...gets involved. Was there ever a concern in your office about a problem of overexposure for the President?

CAMP: You can never overexpose the President of the United States; you never can.

CAMPBELL: It never was a concern then?

CAMP: No, because the reason is that you can't overexpose the President, his family, or the circumstance of the White House; and if it does become a problem, editors don't need to run the copy. That's the whole point. You know, they don't have to cover the White House. They don't have to cover the President if they think there's too much. So really, managed news per se ends up in the editors' offices more than anyplace else—how much gets in and how much gets out.

CAMPBELL: At one time, I believe in late 1961, for a period of a month or so Salinger cut his press briefings from two to one a day. Do you remember that?

CAMP: Gee, no, I don't.

CAMPBELL: It didn't last very long. It was announced as a practice for several months, and I think it lasted just several weeks.

CAMP: Well, now I do, vaguely. It didn't last a long while. I don't even remember the reason for it other than it took a hell of a lot of time to get ready for two a day. I mean, it's an immense amount of work to prime the press secretary from all avenues of government and the President. But still, you have to take into account the morning papers, the afternoon papers, the broadcasters, the foreign correspondents who have other deadlines, breaking news stories all the time. And we tried to innovate and tried to streamline it.

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I know that the press office, the Kennedy press office is always criticized as being sloppy and untechnical and what have you, and I would subscribe to a number of those criticisms. But there was an honest attempt made, I think, by Pierre and the staff and the President to be innovative. The one briefing a day would have made it much simpler for us, that is true. But it just didn't work. We tried different hours of the briefings. As I recall, we started out with 11 A.M. and a 4 P.M. press conference everyday, but for just sheer physical reasons sometimes, the thing would be delayed until noon. Okay, you pass a deadline and those guys get mad, or you're too early for the afternoon editions. You just had to work by the seat of your pants a lot of times. Or sometimes you had to cancel them for reasons we couldn't explain, but there may have been a crisis brewing, and it would be better to have no comment, no press secretary appear on the scene. And you'd have to be prepared to explain why because everybody is very alert to crises around there. But it was an innovative kind of thing.

Of course, then, during crisis situations like the Cuban Missile Crisis, you know, we were on the pan all day long. And it was really one press conference all the time in a situation like that because you always had reporters in your office. That was tough, in that particular instance.

CAMPBELL: Let's talk about that a little bit. Do you remember when you were first aware that there was something very special going on?

CAMP: I do.

CAMPBELL: Let me turn this thing over.

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

CAMP: Well, I remember.... Let's see the President was off on a trip to the Midwest—as I recall, it was a campaign trip of some sort—and they had

several stops after the Chicago stop. I did not go on this trip; I stayed in town, and I believe Sue was covering for our office with Pierre. And it was on a Saturday, and they were in Chicago. And as I read the morning *Washington Post*, I noticed several strange items which would be strange only to someone like me: I saw that the Vice President had caught a cold in Honolulu and was coming back to Washington; Dean Rusk had cancelled some kind of commitment which would not ordinarily be cancelled—or it seemed so to me; McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], who was due to go out of town, stayed in

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town to review the Pentagon budget. Why kill a Saturday to review the Pentagon budget, I asked myself? And just putting all those things together I thought it was rather odd. We generally knew where the top Cabinet officers were at every time and what they were up to, but I thought these were odd circumstances.

And the next thing I knew I got a call from the White House switchboard in my apartment saying that Mr. Salinger had phoned in from Chicago or from aboard *Air Force One*, and they were coming back, and he wanted me to be on hand at the White House as soon as they landed. So I got dressed and went to the White House. I was on hand when they arrived.

By this time the news had broken that the President was ill, had a cold, doctors ordered him home. Well I'd seen them off a couple of days before and he was in the best of health, and I thought, gee wiz, the Chicago weather is really tough these days. And Pierre comes in, and Pierre's playing the straight story with me: The President has a couple degrees of temperature, and Doctor Burkley [George G. Burkley], the Navy physician, White House staff, decided it would be better if he came home. So the President went to the mansion and, as I thought it, probably went to bed to recover from his bad cold.

Then Pierre confided that if I have any plans for dinner or going away for the weekend, which I did, that he would appreciate it if I would make other arrangements and cancel it on the basis that something has come up and not to stir up any trouble which I duly did. (A social life while working in the White House was very complicated in those days).

But eventually I came to know just by the material that I was work with because I had to deal with classified material in the office—the other girls usually did not—and I also had to serve as main liaison with State and Defense, opposite numbers, so it was soon that I became aware that something was happening. I didn't know what it was; I knew it had something to do with Cuba. Of course, there had been a great deal of publicity in the press about troops being trained in Guatemala and there were breaking stories out of Miami from refugees and, you know, all kinds of prepublicity, so it wasn't too difficult to put something together. Finally, I was eventually clued in to what it was all about. And that's how we got going.

And then we lived there [at the White House] for—well, I never got to my apartment except during the day to change clothes because we went on eight-hour shift. There was somebody in the press office, physically, all week, twenty-four hours a day. Some of the girls brought clothes to the White House and slept in the air raid shelter underneath the main mansion. I usually pulled the night duty, but I only

live four blocks from the White House, so I was able to go home and sleep during the day. Pierre, who lived in Virginia, literally moved downtown, had a room at the Hay-Adams which is right across Lafayette Park and just short walking distance. We had a bunk rolled into the press office for Mac and Andy, who, when they were on duty, particularly at night, were able to sleep there. But they were physically in the place. Our office operated on a twenty-four hour basis for at least a whole week and it was quite active.

CAMPBELL: You were rather active, I think, in non-crisis times. Were there such things as eight-hour days?

CAMP: Never. Never, no. Our normal working day and working week was—first of all, you're always on call no matter where you were, whether you were in Washington or in the White House or whether you were trying to take a few days and go home to the farm in Ohio. You always had to leave word where you could be reached at every point in time. The working day usually started about 8:30 in the morning, and I would say average time out at night was 9:00. That was standard. Often it would go to midnight. Always Saturday duty. We had split shifts on Saturday. We had a rotation system so that at least I or Sue would be there in charge, and at least Pierre or Andy would do the Saturday duty and always a receptionist on hand. And that could last any amount of time on Saturdays, but usually we worked from 8:30 until about 1:00, if we didn't have any real activity as far as the press was concerned. We usually get out about 2:00 or 3:00 on Saturday afternoon.

Sundays were always open to question. We at least had Sunday off, but again, we were always on call, and a lot of times there was a lot of Sunday work to be done in our office, particularly when there was legislative messages going to the Hill. We always sent the messages to the Hill and barred them from release until 12:00 noon on Monday at the opening session of various—the House and the Senate. But for the press to write their stories so they'd break at the same time that they [the messages] were accepted on the Hill, they had to do this on Sunday. So we often had briefings, backgrounders, and press releases to get out during Sundays, but that was part of the game and that's what we were hired for.

CAMPBELL: We read a lot about the kind of gung ho campaign spirit that prevailed in 1960. How long did that last in the press office?

CAMP: The entire time that I ever worked there.

CAMPBELL: Did it?

CAMP: Yeah, right up to Dallas. Let me make a comment on that. It's can't help but prevail for several very good reasons because in the press office you

have a situation where you are exposed to three things: number one, you are exposed to the nation's press on a continuous basis; you're always alert or have to be. You know what they're after. So that is a definite milieu to itself. You have to be alert to the presidency and to the President. He was a very active president, and he was in and out of our office on a daily basis, so you've got that in the background. Plus, the fact we had to cover all the VIP's who were coming in and out of the White House, the official visitors, the chiefs of state, because we had the photographers to drag around. Barbara Coleman and Barbara Gamarekian had to be on duty at night to be the arrangements and escort officer to accompany the photographers and writers to cover the state dinners. So you had all this going around all the time. We were on the front line as it were.

Now, other friends of mine who worked for the Legal Counsel's office or for the Congressional Relations office were stashed away upstairs or in the back room. They got the presidency end of it and the government milieu, but they never had the exposure that we did to the other two features to any sustained degree. And so it is kind of a constant revving up all the time.

In addition, personalities play a great deal with this. Pierre was and is a very active, energetic fellow—a great sense of humor. He was always on the move. Pierre cannot ever be labeled a bureaucrat under any sense of the word because he just wouldn't stand still long enough. And we all had a great—well, we were all individuals and had our own individual personalities that play here, too, but we had a good team.

We were able to sub for each other. We knew each other's work well enough so that if Barbara Coleman was busy making up credentials for an upcoming trip, I or Sue or Jill could escort the photographers to the President's office for a picture and knew precisely what to do and when to call for lights and when to knock it off. We were able to sub for each other. So we got a good feel for each other's jobs, and the press officers worked in the same fashion. Andy could do what Mac did; Mac could do what Andy did and so forth.

CAMPBELL: A minute ago you just made a passing remark about social life in the White House. Talk a teeny bit about social life in the White House. Was it kind of democratic....

CAMP: Well, my reference to that really was more to how you organize your own personal life in order to apply to the work at hand. It is particularly difficult for girls who date and are single

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and made plans to go out to dinner, and all of a sudden, a Cuban Missile Crisis comes up and you've got to scotch all plans. In fact, you never could, really. I often said I had the greatest friends in the world, because they'd put up with me; and, that I was able to maintain any friendships like this because I was either having to cancel engagements or I was all of a sudden whisked off on a trip that I didn't know was coming up. To a degree, there's really no such thing as a personal life in a situation like that. It's very difficult to fade into the background when you want to get away because you're always on call; the White House operators know where to find you. So that's what I really had reference to.

As far as the social life in the White House is concerned, there just wasn't any, just none. I wouldn't for a minute have anybody believe that it was one great, big, happy family; that we socialized at all, because we didn't. This was true even in the campaign. The Kennedy family, while they were generous to their staff.... There wasn't any real social play in that sense. Yes, there numbers of people who were close to them, and they invited them to dinner, and there was some socializing on that scale, but not as far as the staff was concerned.

CAMPBELL: How about the press office and relations with other people close to the President? There's a lot been written, I think, about some problems between the press office and the Appointments Secretary, for instance?

CAMP: Oh, do you mean the other offices in the White House?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

CAMP: Well, it's hard to make any judgments on that because each office had its peculiar role to fill. First of all I've long thought that anyone who has any kind of relationships with the news media is automatically suspect. That's number one on the hit parade. All of us in the White House press office always felt that the Legal Counsel's office or Congressional Relations or the Budget Bureau or McGeorge Bundy's staff, the National Security Council, didn't tell us anything because we're going to hold a press conference and spill the whole bag of beans. But that's inherent to the trade; you learn to live with that. Actually, we had very good relationships in most cases. There were occasions when certain personality conflicts impeded it, but not to any great degree. We all got along very well. We'd known each other for many, many years—Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] and Mike Feldman [Myer "Mike" Feldman] and all the special assistants.

We did have some occasions when.... I can give you one good

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example of this. General Clifton [Chester V. Clifton, Jr.], who was the military aide to the President, had been at one time a public relations expert in the Department of the Army, and he rather fancied himself as an ex-officio press secretary. And the good general, on occasion, saw fit to make some unattributed leaks to the press, which we could trace back because we knew damn well who was doing it. And it came to be a very, very decided difficulty. Here was a guy who was strictly an intelligence briefer to the President; a military man; but he was on occasion holding his own press conferences—not in any organized sense. It got really so bad that Pierre wrote a memo to him and defined precisely to General Clifton who was the press secretary, what the responsibilities were, and if he had any questions about it, he thought that he and Clifton ought to go and call on the President and have it straightened out. But the White House had to have only one press secretary, and as far as he knew, he, Pierre, was the one. Well, that did it, and we never really had any trouble with Ted after that.

But ego plays a great role in these matters. There are always internal frictions. Of course, you're working with super egos in this case, and so you're bound to have an

occasional difficulty. But on the whole, we got along well with everybody else and vice versa. We had a good reason to.

For example, we had a very tight, close working liaison with Ted Sorensen and his staff because Sorensen and his staff were the chief repository for the speeches, not only speeches but legislative messages to the Congress and major policy statements, and we'd have to work together in order to establish deadlines as to when the press releases would be written and how things were going to be done, and who was going to do it.

We had a working system whereby Sorensen's office not only would do the drafts of messages and speeches and so forth, but it was their responsibility to get them cleared by the President. Then, after that, Sorensen's staff would come to me and say, "The President has cleared this. Now, you can put it into press release form, and we"—Sorensen's staff—"will do the President's reading copy or manuscript," if he planned to make an announcement personally. We had this worked out very well over the course of the years. It was just automatic; that was the way that this kind of thing was managed. If anybody else would issue instructions to me in a similar manner, I would know what this is just not the way the President wanted it or it wasn't regular.

For example, I had it happen to me once when a member of McGeorge Bundy's staff said the President cleared something, and I should release it right away. Well, first of all, I wasn't authorized to release anything, only the press secretary is. And this fellow got rather snippy with

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me because the President had told him to release it. But you've got to have this very solidly in line and in order because you can't have "X" number of spokesmen running around loose talking on behalf of the President of the United States. You've got to know who's in charge.

CAMPBELL: In other words, Sorensen, in that respect, had a special position.

CAMP: Well, special position in the fact that it was established procedure. Yes, I would say he did.

CAMPBELL: I've read someplace that Bundy was perhaps at times annoyed by the ease of access to him that the press enjoyed with Salinger's "open beat" program. Did you ever get any indication of that?

CAMP: Of Bundy's being annoyed?

CAMPBELL: Yeah, too many contacts with the press.

CAMP: I'm not sure I know what you mean.

CAMPBELL: That perhaps he would—well, let's go about it this way: Did your office ever serve as sort of a clearing hose for appointments for the press to see other White House staff members?

CAMP: Oh, yes, sure. It wasn't total control because Pierre never operated this way. You couldn't run a press office that way if you had to exercise.... If a reporter wanted to come in and have an off-the-record meeting with Bundy or Sorensen or whomever, we liked to be kept informed of this just from the sheer weight of our responsibilities. And most reporters would naturally come to the press secretary and say, "Look, I'd like to have a briefing with Bundy or a member of his staff." But there were numbers of enterprising reporters who would go directly to Bundy, and he could say yea or nay. But I don't remember much...

CAMPBELL: Any annoyance or....

CAMP: Bundy could be a frosty character when he wanted to be and if he felt he should be, but overall, we didn't have any particular difficulties with him or his staff, which I considered to be one of the most professional in the building. And, of course, he was a very key figure in the administration, and he was at the center of things on foreign policy. I don't recall anything.

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CAMPBELL: There's an indication that perhaps General Clifton in his press contacts was perhaps once or twice the source of deliberate leaks that the President provided with him. Did you ever have that feeling?

CAMP: No, I never did because I just believe that—well, it's not that I don't believe it, but I don't have any evidence to support that context. I can't believe that the President would use Clifton as a source—unless he had connections that I didn't know anything about, which is entirely possible. But it would seem an unlikely circumstance. I can see other people on the staff, yes, that the President would use, but I don't see Ted Clifton in that role.

CAMPBELL: What sort of problems did the "open beat" present you people with?

CAMP: By defining the "open beat," I'm assuming what you mean is that every door was open and any enterprising reporter could see anybody in government. It didn't really present any problems except when there was a leak which was damaging to policy or to people. I can give you a good example, which I think is already in Pierre's book. The amount of extraordinary preparation for the exchange of Abel [Rudolf Ivanovich Abel] and Powers [Francis Gary Powers] that went on in this government and abroad is not to be believed. And the announcement of the exchange, the physical exchange of Abel going to East Berlin and Powers coming over the bridge, was carefully programmed for reasons of safety for Powers (and there was another kid released at the same time)—to make sure that they were on the right side of the bridge and they were safe. And the announcement was to be a simultaneous release in Berlin and here. It was something like 2:00 A.M. because of the European time.

And this whole operation was very, very closely held. I did not know about it until midnight. Well, actually, I knew—I didn't know what it was, but I was told at the end of the day by Pierre that he wanted me to come back to the White House at midnight, and he would explain everything and to have the girls come in because we've had a lot of calls to make, meaning that we're going have to call everybody, all the press covering the story. He'd tell us at midnight what it was all about.

So we arrived on the scene ready to work; didn't know what was before us. There was a party in the mansion that night, a black tie party. I don't recall who it was for or what, but Pierre had gone to the party. He came back at midnight, got out of his tuxedo—he'd brought a suit in that day—and assumed the role of the press secretary. He briefed the staff on what it was all about, and it happened to be

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the Powers-Abel exchange. We were going to have a press conference at 2:00 o'clock, meaning that at 1:00 A.M. we'd have to start calling everybody in the press corps in the White House, which is a considerable job because we had over—well, our calling list on off-hours press conferences ran to almost a hundred people. So that meant that each girl had about twenty-five guys she had to locate and alert and say that Pierre was holding a press conference at 2:00 o'clock and please make sure you're present. Then, there was the matter of the statement and the press release itself, which Pierre hadn't cleared.

At this point in time, Carl Rowan [Carl T. Rowan], who was then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and who was acting because I think Tubby had left or was just about to leave.... He had been dealing with the Berlin mission and all of that press on the open telephone line. We had an actual open telephone line between my desk and Berlin to make sure that somebody saw Powers get over the bridge.

Well, we were all prepared to do all this. The calls were being made. And along about 1:30 most of the calls had been made. Now keep in mind we're getting guys out of bed all over town, and they're struggling into their trousers and their cars trying to get in here. Not knowing what in the world is happening because it's rather extraordinary to have a press conference that late. I remember on guy saying, "Gee whiz, is war going to be declared?" because this was just rather the context of it, the nature of the beast.

All of a sudden, Pierre gets a phone call. He leaves the office, and he rushed back in, and he said, "We'll have to have a press conference right now, regardless of who's here. The *Washington Post* first edition is on the street, and they've got the story on the front page." Now the question arises, who in the hell leaked it to the *Washington Post*? Well, the President directed the next morning to find out who the leaker was. It turned out to be the President himself, because had told Phil Graham [Philip Leslie Graham], the publisher of the *Post*, at the party the night before that he'd better have a guy there [at Pierre's press conference] and what was going to happen, Phil Graham, being the good publisher he was, wasn't going to miss a scoop like that, and he phoned the story in from the White House himself. So in this case, leaks can be rather—it could have been hairy had Powers not actually been on the bridge. That was the problem. We didn't know at that point whether or not he really was safely on this side.

CAMPBELL: Let me finish up this State Department business. Tubby does depart and Manning [Robert Joseph Manning] takes over. Do you know the details of his selection, how was he chosen?

CAMP: No, I don't.

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CAMPBELL: To your knowledge, Salinger doesn't get involved in that?

CAMP: Well, I think he did, but not initially. I'm sure that Pierre was cut in on the pending assignment, and he would have cleared it, yes. I really don't know whether it was through Dean Rusk or just what Bob's association was at the time.

CAMPBELL: Did the press operation at the State change with him?

CAMP: Drastically. As I learned later.... We really never got into the operations of the agencies and departments because this was their business, and as long as we were satisfied with the support we were getting.... We would lay down general policy guidelines of what we wanted to do, like, you know, we want to get to the grass roots, and you put a program together. And that was their responsibility.

But on foreign policy, it was Manning's job and Tubby's or whoever was in the seat to keep Pierre apprised of what the Secretary [of State] was up to and give their advice as to whether or not a White House statement ought to be made—either in the form of an announcement by Pierre or should it be held until the President held his press conference. But we had a very close liaison. For example, we would make simultaneous releases of, say, a pending ambassadorial appointment, where it would be pegged against Pierre's 11:00 news conference with release in Pakistan, say, at the same time. And the State Department had to do all of that leg work to get it off the ground abroad. The spokesman of the department—first of all, Linc White [Lincoln White], but then succeeded by Bob McCloskey [Robert James McCloskey], who's still the spokesman—that function was very valuable to backing us up because Pierre would say: "Here is the guts of the story; this is the release. Now, for further information, background, go to the State Department, and they can give you all the fill-in...." So from that standpoint, it was a very well regulated, running machine because we knew precisely what they had to do and what we had to do.

CAMPBELL: Any significant changes with Manning's assumption of the office?

CAMP: Well, we had better rapport and better help out of Bob because Bob was a very experienced newspaperman himself. He had been associated with *Time Magazine* for a long while, served as the London bureau chief. His first appointment was Jim Greenfield, who had been with him on *Time* and who'd been diplomatic correspondent for *Time* here in Washington, and that had a very great sensitivity

for fast moving news stories, and they knew the mechanics of it. I would say, yes, the support from the department was much more effective. And

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Carl Rowan and Phil Stern [Philip M. Stern], who preceded them, they did a very good job, too. But the first year of office was kind of touch-and-go because we were all learning our jobs. We were all new, whether it be at the White House or the State Department or wherever. So you really have to work these things out; figure out what is the best way to do things.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember the background for the order that came down that said all DOD [Department of Defense] and State press contacts should be reported in some detail to, I think, internal officers at DOD and at State?

CAMP: I remember that, but vaguely. I don't know how it arrived. But the Pentagon always had trouble in that regard because it's so bloody big. I would like to pay a compliment to Art Sylvester, whom I think was one of the great public affairs officers that this government ever had. The very best idea that he could get a handle on the department.... And Art is a very tough cookie, a very tough customer.

There were occasions, however, when you had to institute this kind of thing, particularly in situations like the Cuban Missile Crisis. When the government institutes a "one voice" policy, you have to take certain steps whereby that "one voice" policy is going to prevail for pure national reasons. It may have derived from that; I don't recall that circumstance. But I know that we had it in the White House on a couple of occasions when we wanted to know who was seeing whom. And it nothing to do with checking out stories or who was spilling the beans to anybody, but we needed to have some fix on where reporters were going. It's always good to have the press secretary informed of what people are saying because he can serve very ably to back up a story or to back up the source, or he could fill in another piece of information he may have gotten from someplace else. It's just a simple, good, common sense, that's all.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember a specific time when that sort of thing was instituted at the White House?

CAMP: Well, the Cuban Missile Crisis.

CAMPBELL: Cuban Missile Crisis was a time.

CAMP: Yeah. Oh, absolutely.

CAMPBELL: Who gets involved in the review of Defense Department speeches before they're given, that sort of thing? Does your office get involved in that at all?

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CAMP: No, not really because.... First of all, just the operation of the press office itself; everything is cleared before it comes to us, and who clears it and where it goes and what happens to it before happens was not part of our bag whatsoever. I suppose speeches by generals or the Joint Chiefs or what have you—I'm sure the Pentagon has its own review system—would have had—through Sylvester because Art would have wanted to have that function. I'm sure the State Department would have one. In fact, they do today, so I'm assuming they did then. But what the clearance process is and that kind of thing, I don't know.

CAMPBELL: Your office is not involved?

CAMP: We were not. I'm suspecting that in the case of the White House, certainly there'd be a clearance procedure, and I'm sure it probably was Bundy's office.

CAMPBELL: One reads that on some of the President's trips abroad that the State Department press office actually kind of takes charge of the press operation. Is that reliable? Is that accurate?

CAMP: I'd say it's the other way around. The White House takes charge of the embassy press staff, USIS [United States Information Service] because.... Take charge in the sense that wherever the President goes he's going to have an outlet and a channel to the press. His press secretary has to be there—or a press secretary. But in order to service the press and the President, somebody has to be in charge, and the guy close to the President is certainly the one in charge.

When you travel abroad, you have to call on certain functions of the State Department and the embassies to provide services which you otherwise wouldn't have time to put together. It would be true to say that they serve as a very valuable support and back up system in the matter of just straight technicalities and press release and the translation services and a messenger service and people to run the press release machines. It's a massive thing to try to move the President around and keep the press corps reasonably well tooled up, because on every presidential trip abroad we'd have at least a hundred people in a separate press plane, not to mention the hoards, on arrival at each stop, of the local press. My first introduction to this was the first trip to Europe in '61: France first, Vienna second with Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev], followed by London, and then, home. And in each case the American embassy's USIS staff would serve as out pivotal source of support. And yes, they turn out, and they do very well, but the central actor in this is the White House press.

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CAMPBELL: ...is the White House staff. I want to get to the trips later. Let me ask you

this about USIA: What sort of contacts did you have with Don Wilson [Donald M. Wilson] there?

CAMP: Oh, good, old Don? Well, Don was Deputy Director of USIA. Well, first of all, to go back further in his history, Don came on to the Kennedy campaign staff, as I recall, shortly after the National Convention. I don't recall that Don was in LA, but he may have been and I just never knew him. He wasn't attached to our office. But in any event, he was an associate of Bob Kennedy's and, given his background in broadcasting and magazine work, served as Roger Tubby's right-hand man in the National Committee during the presidential campaign. Also, during transition, that is the period between the election and the Inauguration, Don worked as the liaison between USIA and the Kennedy staff because the Director of USIA had not been chosen. So he rather was the Kennedy man at USIA and later became deputy director under Ed Murrow [Edward R. Murrow].

I would include Don in the general rundown of liaison officers that was dealt with on a more or less continuing basis. But keep in mind, USIA's function is abroad; it doesn't have any domestic input. But we worked with them very closely because a lot of the speeches of the President on major foreign policy issues, the legislative packages on various issues, Don would be right there ready to have the Voice of America carry them or have them translated. His and Murrow's function was to get the stuff out overseas under their statutory requirements. Also, in another roundabout way, the Voice of America and USIA had their own working reporters covering us every day just like a regular commercial service. So there were always VOA broadcasts being made and wire service for their own wire service program around the world. They covered us just like any other reporter did.

CAMPBELL: Was there ever any indication that he might have joined the White House press staff at one time?

CAMP: Don?

CAMPBELL: Yeah.

CAMP: No, not to my knowledge.

CAMPBELL: I wondered. We read that early in the White House the President was roaming the halls and was a frequent visitor to various offices. Did he visit yours?

CAMP: Well, I would say that—not only during the early part of the administration, but all the time that I was in the White House.

Oh, yes, I would say daily we'd see him. He'd either drop in or we had business in his office in one way or another. First of all, keep in mind that the wire service tickers were in our little old john, our bathroom. And we had an instituted procedure that Jill or the receptionist or Barbara Coleman would tear the ticker tape off, I guess, every hour. We'd put it on clipboards, and we'd take it into the President. Well, we had three copies run: one clipboard for Pierre and one for the President and one for the press in the pressroom. And it was a daily job of one girl just to tear that stuff up and get it circulated. But sometimes he'd get edgy, and he'd know about a breaking news story or he was just plain bored, and he'd want to come over and look in and see what's coming over the wire. So he often dropped in. And sometimes he and Pierre would just sit down and have a good storytelling session. They had a good, easy working rapport.

The President enjoyed moving around, and he did. I mean, we weren't the only office. We were the closest one. We were right across the hall from him. He saw us more, I think, than any of the rest of the staff on a daily basis because we were always in and out of his office. But very casual and informal, and he enjoyed getting out of his own office on occasion.

CAMPBELL: It's said that he liked the press; he genuinely was fond of the press.

CAMP: Oh, yes.

CAMPBELL: A former newspaperman himself. Did you notice any change in his attitude toward the press from the campaign through the administration?

CAMP: I wouldn't say so. He'd get roaring mad at, you know, a story that he didn't particularly like or that he thought was badly written. You'd be surprised how much junk is badly written and badly reported. And that used to bug us all because we thought that, on occasion, you know, we'd done rather a good deal of making information available, and then you'd see a final copy in the newspapers and the magazines and it was biased because of the editorial opinion, which is always something you have to have into account. But I wouldn't say his attitude changed very much. It might have on individual members of the press. Some of them can be real stinkers when they want to, and they get on your.... They get to be bores sometimes, too. And we're always working day in and day out with them. I remember one reporter who absolutely used to drive Salinger up the wall, and he finally told me, "Don't let that guy in the office anymore. I can't stand him."

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CAMPBELL: Who is this?

CAMP: Oh, what was his name? He was a *U.S. News* reporter

CAMPBELL: *U.S. News*.

CAMP: I'll have to look him up. But this guy...

CAMPBELL: And fill it in.

CAMP: He was a good reporter. Nothing to do with his professional job, it was just the personality. He could bug you to death.

CAMPBELL: I'm going to have to call this for tonight.

[END OF INTERVIEW #3]

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