

Dr. Peter V.V. Hamill Oral History Interview – JFK #4, 12/15/1969
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Dr. Hamill was an epidemiologist who worked as the medical coordinator to the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health (1962-1963). In this interview, he discusses receiving assistance from the Public Health Service, his loss of control over the study, and changes in the Advisory Committee after he left, among other issues.

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Dr. Peter V.V. Hamill– JFK #4

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Fourth Oral History Interview

with

DR. PETER V. V. HAMILL

December 15, 1969
Annapolis, Maryland

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Now, you were just saying that you had a sort of advisory council of upper echelon PHS [Public Health Service] people in the various institutes.

HAMILL: They were most likely to be related to this activity.

MOSS: To the activity of the committee and that they ostensibly were serving three functions as a group: One, to offer advice. Two, so that they would be aware of what the committee was up to. And three, sort of an entree for you into their area so that you could get resources.

HAMILL: Right. The organizational.... It was a specific organizational channel, both as an individual—and it was usually the director of an institute so it was the best man to go to, too.

MOSS: What sort of.... When this was set up, who set it up first of all? And under what authority and with what jobs, what tasks was it given?

HAMILL: The sanction or authority was given by the surgeon general, definitely. And I operated this group as his, I mean, I would just sanction to do the way he kind of.... as his agent. Now this was the first time I learned how to act as his agent as I described towards the end after I started getting tough after about a year and started doing that. This was about the only time earlier that I used that device and felt fairly comfortable doing so. He pointed as a [inaudible] that we had.... We had one formal meeting... [Interruption]... had one formal meeting of a large

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group, of this whole group. And I saw several things at that meeting. Several of the guys were trying to help and trying to...[Interruption] I remember specifically Ralph [E.] Knutti, who was director of the National Heart Institute, very nice guy, and he was willing to serve any function he could in trying to help. You know, one of those enthusiastic, supporting kind of a role. He more or less told me that he'd play any kind of a role I wanted him to play. He was a well-liked guy, and I correctly saw that I could achieve announcing the information, though, I'm sure. But we never got any good discussion. I mean, as far as it being a group that would generate ideas or any kind of worthwhile discussion, I could see that this group just wasn't going to do that. It was never going to.... I just had a definite feeling it was never going to come together.

MOSS: Yeah. I'm not sure whether we made this clear on the tape so I think we better do it right now.

HAMILL: Okay.

MOSS: This is an entirely separate thing from the Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health itself. This is a committee totally within the PHS.

HAMILL: Correct. Correct.

MOSS: That is designed as a PHS adjunct to the whole operation.

HAMILL: Right. Right. And what I ended up doing was I kept their names and I rather...

MOSS: I'd better push the tube because I—also last time we got the, we had the television on.

HAMILL: I got their names. I kept their names. And I would disseminate written information to them, all the way through, so that they accomplished that part of me imparting information to them. As far as advice, it soon became apparent that except for one or two who kind of stayed associated with me, the rest were left so far behind there wasn't really, you know, I mean they just couldn't.... There wasn't any advice they could give, really. As far as using them for resources—I did this unofficially from

then on—only those who were both willing and interested and also the ones who were capable of either, of being used, and I would just contact them as an individual. I would call them from then on and if I wanted anything particular.... I dealt with them on a one-to-one basis from then on. While I'm on this point, this is the same thing that happened on the federal agency level, too. After either one or two meetings, it fell into the same almost identical situation. There were one or two who were more capable and more interested than others. And I kept a relationship with them as individuals. Most of the rest I just.... I kept as a formal mailing list. I would send them information, but they were of either of very little use or, you know, for anything else.

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MOSS: Did this tend to be a function of personalities or the jobs of the agencies he represented?

HAMILL: Both. Both. Both. Yeah. For example, when I get into the federal thing in more detail next week. It's not bad, but just when I clean it up. One of the guys whose agency should have been very heavily involved—I can't remember which it was—it was just, by his very being, he just was kind of worthless, and there was no point in pursuing anything. And it was either FDA [Food and Drug Administration] or FTC [Federal Trade Commission]. I can't remember which it was. See, those were the two most immediately involved agencies, very definitely, both by an obligation of their jobs, I mean, they already up to this point more or less had some kind of responsibility in the—either in advertising or potentially as a drug—some involvement in this area. And then also professionally in the sense of the kind of people involved, there should have been at least more than one or two, a few people, who should have been more or less expert in this area.

MOSS: All right. Do you have any idea why these agencies did not participate more actively, more vehemently?

HAMILL: I have a definite idea and that is it's kind of a negative view of government agencies in general in the sense that they wished nothing was happening. In other words.... By that I mean everybody would have preferred to play ostrich and kind of—hope the whole thing would just kind of go away because to them, and also within the Public Health Service, I almost got to feeling like a pariah in this sense that I was basically bad news, and I couldn't really, and I couldn't do much for them. All I could do was create problems for them. It wasn't a question, you know, it wasn't me, it was the smoking problem. All it could do would be create problems for them.

Generally speaking, I think the nature of bureaucratic agency is not to look for things to do. Their day and attitude is generally judged by how much—I have no answer—how many problems they can.... Oh, don't rock the boat type of thing in the sense that if a problem is once acknowledged, then they are obligated to do something about.... They would hope that whole—they have a threshold, and they like to keep as many things, potential problems, below this threshold of acknowledgement, and then they can either.... Sometimes they go

away. They don't really solve themselves, but the problem bringer goes somewhere else. So, as far as that person's concerned, they go away, or maybe the problem bringer dies or one of the problem changes nature, either gets worse or better, just like a doctor. He always plays it super conservative. After a while either his—his patients will either die or kind of get better or go to another doctor. That's one way of playing or practicing medicine, definitely. And I think generally, generally I'm quite convinced that most bureaucrats run their agencies in a similar manner, rather than being positively goal directed, they're generally directed in responding to specific problems, and hopefully just not too many problems. And the ones they do respond, hopefully not too complex.

Well, the smoking problem had for everybody, had the potentiality of being immensely complex and explosive both, in the sense, all I could do was just....if you're that way. If you're not active, which very few government administrators are, out to slay dragons, in the good sense. I mean, really in the good sense. And I accuse

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very few government administrators of being like that. Ken Endicott [Kenneth Endicott] of the National Cancer Institute does, but he's a real rare egg. Otherwise it's a completely defensive thing. And this affected my operation very definitely. It also affected me emotionally because I say, when I use the term pariah, actually I got so frustrated a few times, people wouldn't—they would never return my phone calls. That was the one way. That was one of the best indexes I had. And I mean never. I would have to call two or three or four or five or six times, almost a whole day for everybody. And it kind of stands to reason there was no possible good news unless it was news that I had died or the whole study had been called off. That was the only possible, you might say, good news that they could receive from me. If the secretary said I was on the phone, nine chances out of ten it meant some kind of encroachment on their time and attention or even possibly some of the resources. In other words, I meant bad news. And really, it was remarkable how they would avoid answering my calls. [Laughter] And this, Bill, this was all throughout the Public Health Service and through any other federal agency. Unless, until there were a couple of guys who my job was to.... One of my jobs was to get a few good men committed so that by pride or some kind of almost compact they'd almost agree to suffer along with me. And then they were almost duly bound to respond in some way or else, then, if they didn't, then they were almost renegeing and nobody could say, nobody could point blank say, "I will not help you," that this is not a worthy undertaking. Nobody either—well, it's perhaps a combination of two things, either had the audacity or courage to say that, or really believed it, either. But nobody did it.

MOSS: How did it feel to hold these hostages?

HAMILL: What?

MOSS: How did it feel to hold these hostages?

HAMILL: Which.... I don't follow.

MOSS: They.... Maybe it's hyperbole. In a way you're holding their commitment.

HAMILL: But there were only a few who'd really make the commitment. And the few who did, did it with the knowledge that—it's just like people who get involved in any kind of a—they were going to get used. They kind of almost resignedly did that, but most of them honored—the guys who allowed themselves to do that, then they by and large honored their commitment. And they were the ones who could answer the phone, usually not the first time, but maybe the second time. I'm sure deep down kind of hoped I would get lost, but as long as I didn't, they responded. And Endicott and not all of his people (the National Cancer Institute funded most of the study), the different people he either assigned to me or ended up making available more or less, by and large, well, I'll say—well, I'll say fifty percent of them were definitely cooperative.

Several, both Dr. Shimkin [Michael B. Shimkin], whom I mentioned earlier, and Mr. Haenzel [William Haenzel], H-A-E-N-Z-E-L, a biostatistician, were basically quite hostile, basically quite hostile and remained so all the way through. They were very

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experienced and skilled in smoking. And Haenzel ended up begrudgingly doing some work, not very good, and one of his reasons for hostility.... As I said in the earlier report, Shimkin—I didn't know him well enough to really even now even to presume to say why he acted the way he did. Part of it may have been his nose was out of joint or, you know, there might have been various reasons. But Haenzel was different and we had a longer association. It was actually even a little more unpleasant. And he was more basically hostile for, I think, a good reason of his. And that is, he had written several papers on the subject more or less relevant to smoking and lung cancer and a couple of them weren't very good. Now, some people said he was quite bright. I didn't think he was, particularly. He had some very definite biases, and even without the biases, he was not a man that I would accuse of being the most intellectually open-minded man I ever knew in my life. I thought he was petty always, and petty on two levels: Working with people and also, this would follow into, on an argument level too, as far as the ideas are concerned. He would allow this to affect his behavior in an argument. I'm going to leave this evidence in it. I'm not going to be editing this out of the transcript. I want this part of the record. But he was part of the National Cancer Institute.

There may have been another.... There was another kind of a reason in that thing involved, and that is, two former colleagues, both far superior to him, both administratively and in ability, Jerome Cornfield, who was at this time at the Heart Institute, an immensely bright guy was one of my most helpful of all the important government people. He spent time, he worked, and he also sweated through with me a couple of my decisions. And the other man was, at one time had been Haenzel's boss, Harold Dorn, who unfortunately died of a kidney tumor before the study was ever over. And Harold Dorn was one of the great biostatisticians in the world just without qualification. And he had initiated, as far as I'm concerned, the most important of all the epidemiologic studies, and that was the Veteran's [inaudible] prospective study. And he was steady in his help, encouragement, and, even more

important, made himself available to me both publicly and privately, just on a one-to-one relationship to argue out ideas with me, which is immensely important to me because here was a man who was immensely skilled. He was very fair minded. He was also very knowledgeable in this area, and he was far older and far more experienced than I. And by allowing me to argue with him back and forth, it gave me an opportunity to test some of my thinking and some ideas. And after an encounter with Harold Dorn and if my ideas that survived, I was quite sure weren't completely half-baked, which made a lot of difference because I had to move fast. I didn't have too much time as I do now to nourish ideas and let them grow on their own accord. I had to make up my mind real quickly on a lot of things.

So I think Haenzel knew of this relationship, and Haenzel compared to Harold Dorn, to almost anybody, isn't going to look, just isn't going to look too good. So this was a kind of aggression which I hadn't even thought of. But I think it's a.... It throws some different kinds of lights, and that is, relationships with other government people, not only the individual appeal, but also it shows some mechanisms of the times where there was cooperation and the times where there wasn't so much cooperation. So Haenzel's involved—a defender of Haenzel might say that one of his reasons for acting that way might have been because he was impatient because he thinks the whole thing had been studied adequately before, and there was no point in going through this again, which may or may not be true.

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But Jerome Cornfield was either chairman or the most important active member of the 1958 report, far more involved than William Haenzel and a far more accomplished man, and yet he never took that attitude, never. He was the best. He was willing to go back through things that he'd thought through four or five years earlier. I mean that's—a lot of people won't do that. I get impatient if something that I've already thought through some years back, I don't want to lead somebody else through, but Cornfield did that for me, things that he had already thought through, he resolved in his own mind some period ago, was willing to take me again through his own thinking, not just throw the conclusions at me, but actually take me through his thinking. And on several occasions it was, well, I guess, in some peculiar ways, Jerry Cornfield now, on a couple of real crucial turns.... In the guttiest of all the questions—"Is it really a cause or not?"—I think by a couple of discussions I had with Jerry Cornfield were probably the most critical I had with anybody, period.

And I also, both Cornfield and Dorn did another thing. They were very, very helpful in leading me to other, to consultants that I used outside of the Public Health Service, and their advice was, well, almost flawless in the sense that the people they led me to turned out to be both skillful and what I call good guys, that is, cooperative and productive, not necessarily that.... When I say good guys I don't necessarily mean that they agree with everything you say. I don't mean that. I mean, you know, but basically positive as against the nonproductive, carping, destructive critic. And on the other hand, when they advised me to stay away from a couple of people, we'd think of that. They were willing to do that, too. It turned out to be very, very valuable advice a couple of times, because in this kind of a situation with this incredible complex of consultants that I'd build up for the different subcommittees, and then, you might say, almost got consultants' consultants. I got reviewers

of reviews. This can be a very sticky business. And you get one bad guy. By that I mean, who is both basically a little destructive and also aggressive, and boy, you've got yourself a problem. You've got yourself a hell of a problem. [Laughter]

So this was something I would almost wake up in cold sweat some nights, worrying about this because it came close several times getting just precisely that kind of a person. On a lesser scale it actually did happen, but never on a totally ruinous scale. One I was able to isolate fairly quickly and a couple of knowledgeable people came to my rescue in the sense they were knowledgeable both in the subject and also about the person, and were willing to be positive enough—and I always.... Gee, I can't express enough gratitude to those people who'd be willing to stick their neck out to me and say a person is no good or to be avoided. It's a lot easier to give advice on the positive side. But those were the guys I really appreciated when they said a person or a particular important piece of work because that's a special kind of commitment. And these frequently were the very most valuable because the penalties for falling into several traps, there were, or I won't use the term trap because traps imply somebody set a trap. I use the term pitfall or a mess.

MOSS: Bogs.

HAMILL: Yeah. The penalty was very, very high. So I almost got somewhat defensive because I learned this later on that almost like a poker game, one way of describing how well you do in a big poker game is not the

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big pot you won or the number of pots you won, but, and this has been expressed by some very skillful poker players, is the big huge ones you avoided losing. And one way of looking at it, if you can avoid the ruinous ones, then on the other side of the ledger, they kill themselves. That's kind of another similar way of looking at things which, at times, depending on what the consequences are, it's rather, it can be kind of a useful way of looking at things.

MOSS: This sounds very close to some of your bureaucrats that you criticized.

HAMILL: I know, but it's somehow different, though. It's somehow different because it's only good advice as a counterbalancer to a basically aggressive person who always takes the offensive, like I do, on everything I....So this is only good for, I think, for a person like me to cover the flanks as it were so that while you're single-minded in going out, at least people can't hit your flanks. For the person who's basically cautious, then I think this is miserable advice. It's only as a counterbalance, I think. So that's a good observation and an important qualification, I think, a very important qualification. Well, I'd gotten quite a result.

MOSS: Okay. Okay. Let's go back for a minute to the chronology and let me ask if you have thought any more about that May 5th and 6th meeting, if there's anything else you want to add on that because that is the...

HAMILL: I think I summarized it and in many ways, that was far what.... Except for the first meeting, which I still claim was the most important meeting, certainly the meeting of 5th and 6th of May was next to that the most crucial. Things could have really gone into different directions, you know, in several of different directions.

MOSS: All right, now. What directions would you have anticipated that it might have gone had things been different on the 5th and 6th?

HAMILL: You use the term "anticipated." You mean before the meeting or after?

MOSS: Right. Before the meeting, where were you headed? When the ground was pulled out from under you, where were you going?

HAMILL: At that time things were serious enough, all the other times I had things enough under control so that I had things rather clearly in alternatives, but I mean, seldom more than three alternatives. I didn't always get my way, exactly what alternative, but at least I knew the three alternatives. I had things enough under control so I could almost dictate the alternatives anyway. In other words, which one is the one to take. This was analogous, in a way, to the potentiality, or analogous to a route, a military route, in the sense it didn't happen, but it was analogous in the sense that you're completely out of control. There were so many determinants, powerful determinants operating at the 5th and 6th meeting over which I didn't have control and I didn't even predict outcomes anymore. I was....

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MOSS: This is in the dynamics of the committee work?

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: The dynamics of the committee work and...

MOSS: Not the research?

HAMILL: Oh, no, no. Not the research. That was going well enough.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: Oh, no, no. The dynamics of the committee work and the inaction of that and the political realities and exigencies or whatever terms were used.

MOSS: Okay. Let's break this up into two parts then. Where was the research headed at this point, first of all? The study itself.

HAMILL: This was also, you might say, in one way a juncture, but only.... These I had very clearly delineated, the different alternative paths. We were at the point then, we'd done a lot of work and we were at the point then of determining the depth or scope, whichever kind of descriptive term we want to use, to a large extent, which way we went. This is interesting, this juncture because it was timed—these decisions completely aside from the dynamics of both the committee and the administration. We were going there, but there was a crisis anyway. There was a crisis of choice. I mean, by the crisis, I mean, crisis in the classical sense, a critical juncture does not necessarily mean that, your impending doom. It's a thing that has to be resolved.

MOSS: A significant choice had to be made.

HAMILL: Precisely, precisely. Something had to be resolved. And yet this was the thing that Zelda Schiffman, my wise, well, adviser from the...

MOSS: This was your management consultant.

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah....from the [National] Cancer Institute helped me articulate on this larger scale the different, the different possible choices, distinct ways to study and each one may have been just as good as the other. I mean there were several alternative ways, routes we could take on both the.... Yet most of it involved what our scope was going to be and how much detail we were going to go into. And also there was another dimension, and that is, whether the study—I'll go back to my.... in some ways the very first date. This involved me, my own personal dreams and aspirations.

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If you recall, I said in some ways the study had two dimensions, one was the practical job that had to get done as a scientific, political instrument upon which decisions and a posture and an attitude both by government institutions and by scientists and that was the part of converting it from an independent, I mean, from a dependent to an independent variable on both these levels. That's what I call.... That was a utilitarian function. That was the one face of the study. The other was, while doing that—and I thought I could justify it in a sense of it wasn't just an overlay, but it would actually affect the essential quality of the work. If a decision is ninety percent good, this might have made it 99.5 percent good, that kind of a little bit of difference. And that was the great work in a sense of at once making this utilitarian instrument, but also the great work in using the study itself as—and I thought we had enough data—that internally we would convert it from a....almost the entire study from a

dependent to an independent variable in testing the state of art of all of our inference making ability in the bio-medical sciences. And this would have required—and this was, I think, purposely—to do it right, I couldn't really let anybody else completely know what I had in mind. I let several.... Bayne-Jones [Stanhope Bayne-Jones], LeMaistre [Charles A. LeMaistre], and a couple of others were partially in a...

MOSS: Yeah. I was going to ask who was sympathetic to this and who was not?

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. Bayne-Jones, LeMaistre...

MOSS: I'm going to turn off this top light. It kind of glares.

HAMILL: Yeah. Seevers [Maurice H. Seevers], Schuman [Leonard M. Schuman], and Bill Cochran [William G. Cochran] was split, the canny Scotsman said "no," and the other part of him said "yes." These were the real.... And, oh, Manny Farber [Emmanuel Farber], very enthusiastic, Manny Farber, perhaps the most enthusiastic of all.

MOSS: All the people on the committee.

HAMILL: Yeah. Who were definitely sympathetic and enthusiastic.

MOSS: Did you try to clue Terry [Luther L. Terry] in on this?

HAMILL: No. No. Not at all. I tried to talk to Hundley [James M. Hundley] about it and he, when I say he wasn't sympathetic, I don't give him the.... I don't think it was a decision to be sympathetic or not sympathetic, I'm positive he just didn't understand what I was talking about. I don't think he had the capacity of understanding what I was talking about. The reason I couldn't spell it out too much was because in a way it would destroy the job I was after.

MOSS: How so?

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HAMILL: Okay. When I tested this technique out, quite a few times since in other situations, when you're in handling a truly multi-factorial problem and especially, the old term multi-disciplinary, too, in a sense of it's not only multiple determinants, which is the multi-factorial, but also, the different determinants operate in different systems like.... I mean man is a....Man can be explained by, as an economic unit or a spiritual unit, you know, those are all different systems, or as a physiologic unit. Those are all different systems. I like to first sit back and rather clearly delineate the most important, distinguish the important systems impinging on the problem, and try to redefine and argue along one channel—I know I described this to some extent, that

is true, in the first tape without using evidence from another system, if you're talking about "Does painting tars on the skin of animals produce cancer," then never beg the question anywhere along in that framework and stick.... and only allow the.... It's almost like a good judge saying anything.... keep ruling out admissible and what they call irrelevant evidence. And that's what really what is allowing data from another set of operations to transfer over into this first set of operations and influence your thinking. The human animal is always integrating unconsciously. He's always integrating data from a variety of systems.

MOSS: Okay. So let me see if I understand you. You did not want the people working on this practical study to be influenced in their work on the study by these other considerations, these somewhat larger considerations of the validity of your whole methodology, your premises, and whatnot. You wanted to have a judgment on them as a result of the effectiveness of the study.

HAMILL: No.

MOSS: No?

HAMILL: Let me try it a different way.

MOSS: All right.

HAMILL: The compartmentalization was going on, well, say, the primary level of the study. And that is, for those who were studying the evidence of carcinogenesis in animals...

MOSS: Oh, okay, I can understand it. I'll keep....Yes. Okay. I can understand the different compartmentalization levels.

HAMILL: Okay. Right. Yeah. Okay. Until we reach a point of clarification, then we start purposely putting all these together. Okay.

MOSS: Yeah. Okay.

HAMILL: Okay. Yeah. That's one.

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MOSS: Yeah. But I don't see how this explains your conscious desire to keep the larger thing from people.

HAMILL: No. Wait a minute. When I say larger thing, I'm not talking about political....

MOSS: No. I don't mean that.

HAMILL: No. What I wanted us to do was operate first within the system of the day, the state of the art as great practitioners of this art and do it unselfconsciously using all the best rules and techniques like that. And then we will go through the whole operation and we do a job. We finish: and one way of looking at it—we finish the report. And as soon as we finish the report, we stop and look back and say, "What have we done? What have we really done?" And then we go back and hit another level, dimension of self-consciousness and awareness and then start analyzing exactly what we did all the way through.

MOSS: Okay. Okay. That's clear now.

HAMILL: Then we start analyzing our technique. If you do that beforehand, you end up [inaudible]. You can't perform properly. See, that's what I was after, and that's why if I'd made this, you know, too—if everybody was too aware of this [inaudible] greater.

MOSS: Right. Right. Okay. I think that's clear now.

HAMILL: I was.... If I had to have let enough in up to a point, I had...

MOSS: Support.

HAMILL: Right. And also so they would be a little tolerant of some seeming delays and not to ask just like it was before Christmas—part of the ground rules for kids is, just don't ask so many questions. We'll get to it, that I promise you. We'll get to it. If we're not going to get to it, then we've got to stop now and talk about these questions. But just have a little faith. In fact, we will get to these questions far more than you ever dreamed we were going to get to them, really.

MOSS: Okay. Okay. So about May 5th and 6th you were coming to a critical juncture on this kind of thing. What happened? What obviously...

HAMILL: See, part of this was involved with how much time we were going to have, how much time and resources were we going to have. Part of it is a question of closing patterns of thought. And what I wanted to do on this level—and Zelda and I would diagram different themes. I got a hold of rolls of newspaper print.

MOSS: News print.

HAMILL: Yes. You know, I use sometimes twenty and thirty feet long prints, I mean, sheets. And premature closure of that kind of a—of your patterns, is, you know, very, is not very stultifying. What I want to do here, going on using this imagery, was to close even a little earlier than some of them thought we should and really without—and do it with all strength and enthusiasm as if this was going to be our real closure. Then after we close announcing, "Let's start all over again. We've learned. We'll just call this a learning period. This whole thing we did was just kind of a learning period." See, and also, because in reality that's almost what it was, if you recall—I think I said—all these guys were extraordinarily bright. And one of the things we wanted to do was, but some of them were not epidemiologists and never even heard of epidemiology much before. They had enough background and enough intelligence so they were learning. And this was a real exciting thing to see a mature, skilled, vigorous intellect using a brand new technique just like a little kid and encountering the problem with the same kind of enthusiasm as a kid. Only his resources are infinitely greater because he's just—he's got all the strengths of the kid encountering a new idea, all the strengths, but his own seasoning wisdom and vastly greater resources bearing these extra things, bearing out at the same time.

Now, if we could not open up again, I mean, if once we closed we couldn't open up and then conduct what I would call the real study.... That's after they're already skilled in the dialectic method. I'm saying on a practical level if I had to know fairly soon what we were going to be able to do, because I was the one responsible for closure, when we were going to close. In fact, I was the only person in the world who could decide when we were going to close the pattern. And if we were going to be able to re-open it and go at it again the way I wanted to, I was going to close many months earlier than I would otherwise. If we were going to be able to close it only once and for all that would be the—both as soon as it was closed, that was the report and we were never going to re-open it, that was the end of us—then I was going to use every resource and device I had to delay the closure longer. If, in fact, it was going to be a one final closure. So it was rather crucial as to who, you might say, how much time I had. And in a lot of ways this was my problem and my problem alone, this part.

MOSS: Let me ask you this. How close do you think you were to.... Or, let me put it in another way. Had you been told this was to be a one time thing and you wouldn't have the chance for the second go-around, how long would it have taken for you to be satisfied for the first round?

HAMILL: You mean [inaudible].

MOSS: Right. Yeah. Say there you are at May 5th and you're told, "No, you can't do this broader, like, evaluation." And I were Terry and I understood it all and said, "All right." How long do you think it'll take you to close it off?

HAMILL: I would say from May 5th, I would have said about one more year, probably closer to a year and a half operating at the same level, presuming.... If you brought in a great deal more resources, that would do two things: It would change the time scale. It would also change the nature of our operation. That's what ended up happening anyway after I left. They brought in private Public Health, no more outside resources, but vastly greater Public Health resources. But also the whole nature of the operation changed, too, from the biggest Public Health man who directed it, Gene Guthrie [Eugene H. Guthrie], Dr. Guthrie, was primarily in an administrative position, but he was primarily an administrator, a skillful one. And he played it.... What the hell are you doing? He played it pretty good, you know...

MOSS: The dog?

HAMILL: [inaudible]

MOSS: I think we ought to explain that, "What the hell are you doing?" The dog just walked in.

HAMILL: Oh, excuse me. [Laughter] Come on, [inaudible] I thought I had this closed, that's the whole point.

He played a good role at that time because he wasn't at all personally involved like I was, personally, he never had the ability to get personally involved like that, nor the desire or the time. He had no dreams at all. All he wanted to do was get a job done. And when he came in he had something like four months to do it. So he kind of doubled the whole thing from the outside as it were. And he, you know, a kid could have done. He worked on the Service. He didn't even want to understand a thing. He didn't even care what Terry wants. He quit either by failure of ability to follow the arguments fully, nor time. He didn't do any of the writing. All he did was marshal resources, and he [inaudible] them, and he did it very well. He [inaudible] and as I say, he stayed definitely on the outside, which was.... As long as those time....

The point is, had I not gotten sick—it was interesting. Had I not gotten sick, I would say because of prior relationships, commitments and dimensions of work, I'm not sure that even the job could have gotten done, frankly, in that given time with me still there. Let me explain for a minute. It's like if you're writing a paper, you can write a paper on, you know, ten different levels of detail or generalization, whichever way you're looking at it. But if you chose one and you find for some reason or another you've only got, say, there are only four more sheets of paper left in the world. Project it at the level you were working on would require forty more, something's got to happen to finish up in four pages. Something's got to happen. You've got to totally shift dimensions and gears. Now, dramatically, if this were a book, you could do various kinds of things. You could use a [inaudible] machine, a [inaudible] or something like that, or kill off nine-tenths of the people, and, you know, all kinds of things if it were a story. But you have to make very dramatic shift of some kind. Projected, there was.... I'll make this statement. Here this is 1969. This is six and a half years later and very little rancor or anything. I would say, the way we were constituted and the way

we were going, you know, project the way we were going and do all the speeding up you want to, the report, to close the pattern and including the

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documentation of this pattern and closure, which was the report, was literally impossible. It was impossible for that time limit, December 31st, 1963. And this is six and a half years later and it was impossible. As long as several criteria were met, we could close the patterns, which we did. We closed the big pattern before; I left. Before I went to the hospital I was sick, I checked with everyone of the committee members and I made all my major decision myself, and I checked with, well, I'll say, almost all. I guess Burdette [Walter J. Burdette] I never did check with and probably Fieser [Louis F. Fieser] I didn't. I think the other eight, I told them what my conclusions were and checked what theirs were, and we all more or less agreed right then and there. This was in the first part of August, early part of August, the major decisions.

I expressed a desire to call in betting odds, and that is that their proposition there is a factual, causal, biologic relationship between continuous cigarette smoking and lung cancer. And by that I mean, not only if you smoke you've got a much greater likelihood of getting it, but if you don't smoke you've got very little likelihood of getting it. That's what I mean. The betting odds that this in fact obtained—I said at ten thousand to one in favor of yes. On emphysema the same kind of relationship, but allowing for because we knew that.... We knew that there were other important determinants in emphysema, that probably there were not as many important other determinants in lung cancer as there were in emphysema, but just the fact that it was a determinant at all, and when I say the odds wasn't the size of the determinant—by size I mean the proportion of the contribution like you get in a discriminate function, else....But the probability that this connection was true or false, that's what I mean by betting odds, and emphysema was a thousand to one. That's a bet, a thousand to one. And in the third thing myocardial infarction or coronary or other disease; producing myocardial infarction, I said at fifty-fifty. And that's precisely the way the report came out. It's the way we still do look at it today, and it's almost—those betting odds haven't shifted very much since then.

MOSS: Okay. Let me flip this tape.

HAMILL: Sure. Yeah.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

MOSS: Okay, now you've talked a little bit about the study and the critical juncture of the study itself. You also mentioned that the dynamics of the committee were getting out of hand.

HAMILL: Let me go on with one of the things we ought to go ahead with.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: When we initially broke up at the first meeting the big blocks of areas of responsibility, as I described, I took one myself, small. And I was going to do it purposely and I was going to use that as the paradigm. And that was smoking and its relationship to the smoking mother and its effect on the infant, the newborn infant. The reason I took that myself, for several reasons, it was small, fairly well defined area. I had already a fairly good idea of how many studies

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had been done in this area, significant ones. I knew quite a few people in this field and it was a peculiar epidemiologic kind of little, funny little epidemiologic problem. It lent itself very nicely to be a paradigm for several reasons: One, it was—its size fits. It was small. It could be accomplished faster than the others. Another very important thing was it was one of the few problems in our whole area that didn't interact with any of the given problems. Nothing was contingent upon this conclusion one way or another. It was kind of hanging out, isolated all by itself. So it could be kind of going at its own speed. Nothing had to be done prior to it, and nothing subsequent to it. And it was what I call nice bite-size little thing.

And in fact, I ended up accomplishing this before I left. We finished the whole thing totally with a small, very good group. By finish I mean we totally assessed the area in the sense of exhaustively examining all of the known work in this field and to the point that I was satisfied that no more conclusions of any kind could be wrung from the body of existing work. The only way you could make any further positive statements was to conduct further research. That was the only way you could make further statements. You couldn't turn it upside down to get anything else. It just wasn't there. Now, I did this.... What I accomplished by this was—this was primarily on a technique level—it was, it showed everybody else on the committee what I meant by a thorough assessment of a particular problem. It was also what I meant by coming to conclusions. What kind of conclusions can we come to from a particular problem? Or what kind of conclusions can you draw?

It's the heart of stating exactly what is contained, no more or no less. At the same time, part of the conclusions as set the model for the whole report later, part of the conclusions were not only the data suggests so-and-so, but we also identified the critical lacunae, holes, gaps in knowledge. And that is, critically stated that such and such has to be done. No. Let's say the part of the puzzle that's missing specifically identified, the parts of the puzzle that are missing, and that nobody can make a statement. It's not that we don't have the ability to make a statement. Nobody can make a statement about these kind of things because there's no data. And in order to make a further statement, you've got to generate such-and-such kinds of data. So all the way through I kind of—this was the principle I operated on before we never even met in November. We were way back in September, October of the previous year—I kept using the term "lacunae."

MOSS: How do you spell that, just for our transcribing?

HAMILL: L-A-C-U-N-A-E. Lakes. You know, holes or lakes, specifically lakes, I mean that's what it is, lakes. We used that, biologically we used that in looking under the microscope for tissues. We would use the term lacunae for gaps here and there. And that is, there's tissue and then also there isn't anything. It's just void or emptiness. Now, in one way of looking at it, you kind of hedged your conclusions by—but in another way you kind of defined what you meant by knowledge. You would—it was quite graphic—you would say, we know such and such and this suggests we can get from A to, let's say, C. But in order to get to E we have to have, specifically state exactly what kinds of information we have to get to have a supply in the future in order to get to point E or point F, and spell it out specifically. And as far as I'm concerned, this is the best kind of assessment you can make, and it's so in some ways. This totally fills in a picture of the present states of

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both the art and the knowledge of any given, subject could have given kind of place. This was accomplished before I left, but then this was used as a paradigm and quite effectively. So that was my.... Okay, now I'll go back to your—ask a....

MOSS: I was asking.... You had mentioned earlier...

HAMILL: This was.... Excuse me. This was done, accomplished by about the middle of July. I would have preferred to have accomplished it by about May. I was originally hoping to have accomplished this by the May meeting, by the May 5th and 6th meeting. I ran into a big road block in the chief consultant I got. I'd known him. I made a mistake. He wrote an immensely complex, ponderous report that took three times as long as.... I mean he worked. He worked very hard. But he just....But it was far more complex than it should have been. He took far more time than he should have. And I already committed that course of action of trying to squeeze the report out of him just, you know, he just.... If you can't get it out, you can't get it out, and that was it. So let's go back.

MOSS: Okay. You had said that the dynamics of the committee were getting out of hand. Was this manifest before the May 5th meeting?

HAMILL: Oh, wait a minute. Try to go back. When you say the dynamics of the committee, that's kind of a general, big general statement. I don't think I made a statement like that.

MOSS: Well, no, I did, as a matter of fact. We were talking...

HAMILL: So I wouldn't know what you mean specifically.

MOSS: There was a point at which you were talking which...

HAMILL: Oh, wait a minute. No. I think this was.... What was getting out of hand was the whole study, dynamics of the study, not just the committee.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: Oh, I thought you meant.... You didn't mean just the ten committee members, you meant the whole study.

MOSS: Right. Right.

HAMILL: Yes. That definitely was getting out of hand.

MOSS: Yes. Okay. In terms of other than those you've already expressed?

HAMILL: Well, let me kind of perhaps try to summarize them. One real important thing was Terry and Hundley were calling shots, you know, the fact that I had no, even no contact with them for two months, then of

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course, I had no idea what kind of shots are being called. And there wasn't anything I could do about it. So this was one of the most important of the determinants that was getting out of hand as far as I, you know, it was getting out of my hands.

MOSS: Okay. You didn't...

HAMILL: And what they were going to call.... I knew they were calling something. And what they were calling, I haven't the vaguest idea, nor—plus, I was also powerless to do much about it, to influence it or control it.

MOSS: Okay. This is one aspect of it. Was there anything else?

HAMILL: Yeah. And this is a real aspect when we talk about control and it was a thing I've been mentioning, oh, I've mentioned several times and that was myself, how long I could last in this commission, and though I viewed just viewing myself as an instrument or as a resource, it was the chief resource. How long any kind of, you know, kind of taking myself out of myself, and saying, how long is this resource going to be available? How long can I take the staff? And I had a little bit of experience viewing myself this way from highest level athletic competition as a boxer, we call pacing yourself, and speed skaters, a football player. It's a question of.... You have a pretty good idea of how much is left. It's a question of how much you spend and what, well, I'll just go, fall back pacing yourself again. And I knew that I had started to recognize that in, oh, early April started going into very serious pacing problems of myself, very serious. It looked like I was going to run out of gas long before we got there as it were, unless the pace changed in some way, unless it

changed it some way, definitely.

I tried to get this information to Hundley in early April. He completely ignored it, totally ignored it. I'd forced it on him in May. And one way of looking at it, it was very inconvenient information for him to have, very inconvenient. And he chose to pretty much ignore it and brush it aside again. He did order me to take two weeks off, which was preposterous, utterly preposterous because I couldn't afford to be gone for two weeks. It was just too, you know, it was like me sitting down on my fanny as a doctor, as I've heard doctors have done with a woman with eight kids, all under the age of eight, and telling her to relax and take it easy. It was the same—and that's a woman with no money who couldn't hire outside help. It was just about as realistic as that, and by that I mean it was nothing, it meant nothing. And in a lot of ways it, and this was harking back to the, not only the, I mean very solemn agreement of the piously stated early in the previous October, not to allow anything to get over my head and to let him know before it's too late. Right up to the very end I'd tell him a hundred times.

MOSS: Okay. We have two factors now that are upsetting things: One is your own running out of gas, the other is the unavailability of Hundley and Terry to put you in the light as to their intentions.

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HAMILL: And also then by 5th and 6th knowing that they were reneging on their promises. This is an extremely important thing. This is the outside thing, extremely important. And a fourth thing: It was not only the time, you know, setting the time on the committee and trapping the committee, which they did and rather unashamedly, in fact, I think they were rather pleased with themselves, frankly. They knew they had the guys in pride and everything as I tried to explain. That's when the.... It almost suggests that it didn't just happen then and there. I, in retrospect, I almost.... my betting odds right hard better than fifty-fifty that they thought about this for some few months.

Now the other thing was, first was the time or scope and the other was the just almost too bald abrogation of one of the most important of all the [inaudible] was not to interfere with the committee's procedures or operations or.... They made my job a little tougher in this way. They, or at least Hundley did. I think at the May meeting almost let it be known what his so-called conclusions were. And when I say it was tougher, made it tougher, professionally and intellectually he was a lightweight, but he was the almost de facto chairman and certainly Terry's immediate agent. So this had to be reacted to in some way, either completely ignored, or kind of be influenced by it, or kind of purposely go five times around the block to avoid being influenced by, you know, those were your kind of alternatives.

Kind of completely ignore it, I think, was almost impossible. The last thing in the world I, and I think, almost every member of the committee was going to be truly swayed by this. You know, by that I mean positively in the sense that we would seriously listen to him in the sense that it would influence positively. It was going to influence anyway, it would influence us negatively. I'm quite sure. In the first place the abrogation of agreement and then

the second place the presumption. So on both of those levels there was a thing that had to be reacted to definitely. And on overall assessment, it was definitely a damaging or destructive help. So those are the....

There are also some forces, I guess, another set of forces, and that was the more nameless thing, kind of a collective of forces within the Public Health Service of sources of help and possible sources of interference. But I could kind of harness both, but I couldn't determine the ultimate well springs [inaudible]. The sentence is bad, but anyway.... And I knew that. This was another important set of determinants that I was almost powerless to control it directly, depending on my own purpose, and also I was almost, even more important perhaps, I was losing the ability to predict what was going to happen. And this, this is another dimension, and I had the ability to predict. One was the problem of control, the other was the problem of predicting. I tried to indicate to some extent how important it was to be able to predict, even if I couldn't control, at least to predict. And I knew I couldn't trust Terry and Hundley again. I knew that. So as long as that's the case, there's no way for me to predict what's going to happen from them, is it.

The sources within, the kind of collective of sources within the Public Health Service, some would kind of.... They were kind of wax and wane from some sources, far and away the most constant single source of which was the Cancer Institute. But there were a lot of other sources that would kind of, one time they would almost indicate they're going to help a lot. And then they just kind of totally evaporate or shrivel up. And then somebody else would come on the scene and some actually did help, some didn't at all. I had a little bit of control on stimulating or persuading or something like that. But other than that I, you know, not a lot. So I was almost, you

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might say, I in the true sense of suffer, and that is you're a passive agent, I suffered at their pleasure as it were, on both levels, controlling and predicting again. And this was getting quite upsetting, quite upsetting because I was also beginning to realize, and I was also stating this very clearly to Hundley later on in May and June, July, meaning this thing—as I said I'd shifted gears, I kept using that imagery of shifting gears—that if we were going to meet a deadline, December 31st.... And frankly, I wasn't very graceful in accepting, meeting the deadline, not at all. I kept throwing it in his face. I probably used all kinds of, well, adjectives about, you know, probably used the word "treachery." God knows what I did use, but I, you know, if we're forced to and if the whole, all the conditions are changed, I certainly didn't accuse them very overtly of malicious intent, nor do I even today.

But I did both state and very many times strongly suggest that they kind of reneged and that's quite unbecoming of a very junior or middle grade officer, and I was in a very vulnerable position. I was sick, had already popped my neck. That occurred in June. I was defeated in some ways. Then I was horribly in debt, just moneywise, and greatly augmented by the study for this reason. I'd done the study for a year and any time.... Well, I couldn't do anything for all the [inaudible] that they had really done. A lot of things I would normally do myself, and this was kind of at the low point of my career pay. In some ways it's kind of hard to describe it. But if I traced my whole career, this was absolute rock bottom relatively for my

expenses at the time. And it was also probably—this is 1962—was one of the, would probably.... There were subsequently two huge pay bills that went in later on for all officers. So this was kind of relatively one of the lowest points in all commission officer's history. And I was in serious financial trouble, very serious financial trouble. In fact, I didn't have time to even find out how much. I knew there was big trouble, but I didn't have much time.

So I'm saying this in the sense that I was pretty vulnerable, but even despite that, I had a couple of, kind of.... Well, I was a little more than disrespectful a couple of times. Matter of fact, I guess it could be called insubordinate a couple of times. Well, there was no question it could be called it and forgetting the causes. I mean, you know, not a question it could be called that, but then it's a question of whether there is such a thing as justified insubordination. So we had another meeting in July, which is one of the worst times in my entire life because by this time I knew my neck wasn't going to get better, that it was not only extremely painful, extremely painful.

MOSS: What had happened to your neck?

HAMILL: Well, I got a ruptured discs in my three cervical discs in my neck. And I finally say I literally broke my neck on the study. Tension and fatigue can literally do that. The proximal cause was, I had a very important meeting, I came home by 8:00 in the evening. I had a meeting. One of my consultants was coming over later that night. I was just absolutely exhausted. I couldn't even hold my head up. I was too tired even to eat supper and I.... We had a couch with a big head rest on it. And I didn't want to get too comfortable. I had to rest. I just literally had to rest, but if I got too comfortable I knew I'd fall asleep, so I purposely arched my body, my head kind of hanging in the air and kind of bridged across the head rest so that I wouldn't be too comfortable so that I wouldn't fall asleep, but I just fell into just a deep sleep of exhaustion and for probably forty-five minutes and that started the

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process. By the next morning I couldn't even, you know, I just couldn't even move, couldn't turn one way or another, couldn't move at all. And I had some prior rather serious neck injuries in athletics before. And at first I was hoping this was so-called wry neck, not R-Y-E but W-R-Y, is a self-limiting spasm. It might last three or four or five days. That's why I was [inaudible], but it proved not to be that.

MOSS: Okay. You were in this condition...

HAMILL: By July, a month later, by a month later when we had the meeting in July, this was almost five weeks after this had happened. I'd fallen, of necessity, way behind on my own schedule, but then during myself as a resource, I was literally crippled. I couldn't walk fast and it's odd, really odd—I mean you got an immense amount of work to do—how important body habit is so that you can sit in an attentive way, and you'd be surprised how much time you can save by walking fast rather than slow during

the day, just quite a lot. But when your position is determined not by the work at hand but by a damn neck it's a problem. It affects your thinking, too. You can't—at least I couldn't even think properly because I'd just[inaudible], I get all [inaudible] upon what I call a kinetic, K-I N-E-T-I-C, kinetic thinker, and my whole muscular—skeletal system gets involved with my thinking just like if you tie my hands, I can't talk.

So I had to do in doing this resource part, me as a resource, I had to make my own closures as I had indicated, the fact that I had to get up those betting odds. I made those at least, came anywhere from two to six months earlier than I wanted to make my own. I wanted to make mine before any of the committee members made theirs so I could help guide and, you might say, modulate this process. And for myself, who'd studied it more than anybody else on the committee, all aspects, I had a jump on everybody, I had to make my own closures. And then I also stimulated early closure on most of the other guys' parts. So the report came out in December, well, roughly December 31st or January. I don't know, 4th, 5th, 8th I guess it was.

MOSS: 12th was the announcement.

HAMILL: Oh, okay. Okay. Roughly by July 31st all of our major decisions were made in the sense that the guilty verdict was reached by July 31st definitely. Now, part of our report and our obligation—there was no possibility of compromising.... When I was looking at the amount of work to be done we had to reach a decision, like this, you know. Essentially the decision was—well, we articulated the whole problem was to assess the nature and magnitude of the health hazards of smoking. In a way that's the verbal formula we used. Another way of looking at it, the first job was, "Your honor, is he guilty or innocent?" And then, following the same imagery, "If guilty, how guilty? Of what kind of crimes?" I mean first, second, third degree manslaughter, how did he want to...

MOSS: Charge the particulars.

HAMILL: Yes. Okay. Yes. So in a way this was essential. This was the first part of the job, but then the dimension of the report, just coming out with this was absolutely not enough. We had to document. We had made

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this decision much earlier that whatever we did, we had to document how we reached our conclusions. We felt obligated to the world at large that no matter what else we did, we had to do this. That was a bare minimum, reaching some kind of conclusion that was an understandable conclusion, and in another words, not weasel-wording something that didn't mean anything, in other words, coming to a real honest conclusion so one way or another and then basically documenting this conclusion, supporting this conclusion.

MOSS: This, in effect, was the so-called phase one.

HAMILL: This was phase one. This was the bare minimum of phase one.

MOSS: Let me back up just a second and get your comment on something.

HAMILL: Sure.

MOSS: In the papers, in the White House papers there's a memo from Celebrezze [Anthony J. Celebrezze] to the President [John F. Kennedy].

HAMILL: What date?

MOSS: Dated 29 May.

HAMILL: Of '63?

MOSS: Of '63. Before that, on 22 May, somebody at a press conference asked the President when the report was to be expected. This is 22 May, two to three weeks after the May 5th meeting. And he answered, "I would think very soon. We haven't received it yet, but I think it will be very soon."

HAMILL: I can't remember that anyway.

MOSS: Now I suspect that after the press conference—and I'm reading into it. I don't know. But somebody at the White House asked Celebrezze to look into it and see what the status was. On 29 May there was a memo from Celebrezze to President Kennedy.

HAMILL: Are these formal things? I mean when you say memo...

MOSS: This is a formal thing.

HAMILL: A formal document?

MOSS: Right. This is a formal document. This is a memo, a report on the status...

HAMILL: Okay. On the status. Yeah.

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MOSS: Right. And obviously there had been little communication previously because he says, he reports that the first meeting was held back on 9 to 10 November and he listed the phases, spelled them out and then states the following: That the committee reports that phase one can't be done in the, quote, "originally estimated period

of six to eight months," unquote, but will be by the end of the year. "Main cause of the delay is attributed to the study of six current long-time studies in the U.S., Britain, and Canada."

HAMILL: Okay. I've got a lot of comment.

MOSS: Okay. Go on. You want this in front of you just for reference?

HAMILL: Yes. Yes. I'll take it point by point. Obviously my response to the first thing of President Kennedy's press conference is—let's see, this was 1963. He'd been President for two and a half years. He was a skilled President. He wasn't about to make a statement like this without some darn good information before he made the statement. I mean...

MOSS: Well, I presume that he was privy to the decision of Hundley and Terry to speed things up.

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. And I presume...

MOSS: He'd had some indication of this at least, whether it originated in the White House or someplace else.

HAMILL: Right. Regardless of where it originated, he was definitely aware of this. The memo, apparently, is a formal—you know, I don't know how secretaries write [inaudible]—this is obviously a formal document for the record. I mean I don't think Celebrezze, well, thought that Kennedy didn't know these pieces of information. I don't think he was doing this to inform President Kennedy, I mean definitely. Now, as far as the accuracy, I presume the memo from Celebrezze came somewhere from Terry's office, either directly or...

MOSS: This is usually the way things go. Yes.

HAMILL: That's what I presume. Their contact was not close. I do know that. And sometimes Celebrezze's authority was actually flaunted. I saw that. In fact I was almost invited to be a flaunting agent, at least once. Now, the six months, the original estimated period of six to eight months was back in the July 24th days of the previous year when we first began. The first week when Hundley was, either was getting me involved, either wooing me or how do you want to put it, he was talking in terms of six to eight months.

MOSS: This suggests that possibly Hundley wrote the memo.

HAMILL: Or somebody just who was quite distant using some old memos or old data. He just had a very superficial awareness of what was going on because we were actually using the term six to eight months. I was thinking in terms of.... When I accepted the thing in July, I was thinking in terms of [inaudible] March. I never even did count up how many months that was. But March was a time used. And this was way back in July before we even got the committee and before I really had time to do much thinking about how we were going to, in fact, really go about this darn study. Let me put it this way: I would say after October, even before the first meeting in November, sometime after October, I no longer thought in terms of six to eight months and I don't think.... Hundley and I never talked together in terms of six to eight months. As I recall, when I talked to the different committee members, I wasn't thinking in terms of six to eight months then, not at all, and certainly at the November meeting. Nobody, I don't think anybody was thinking in term of six to eight months. We weren't geared for it psychologically. We weren't geared for it.... Well, look. We had a meeting in November and I'll give you an idea trying to be objective, you know, it's not just my impression. We set our next meeting on the 24th of January, which was almost three and a half months later. If you were going to have—this was the first, second meeting—if you were going to have a report done in six months, you wouldn't set your next meeting three and a half months later, would you? Would anybody?

MOSS: Two and a half.

HAMILL: Oh, excuse me. Okay, two and a half. You wouldn't set your next meeting two and a half months later, would you? So I think this is kind of objective internal evidence that even by November 11th nobody was thinking in terms of a six months report, were they? Okay? But we'll meet by the end of the year, obviously, that's a factual statement. That was the...

MOSS: The deadline that was set.

HAMILL: That was the new sentence imposed. Okay. There's nothing to comment about. In fact, I've been commenting on that for the last.... all the tapes.

MOSS: Four hours.

HAMILL: Okay. "Main causes of delay attributed to study of six current studies in the U.S., Britain, and Canada." This was a convenient excuse, you might say, partially true as any convenient excuse had to be. And that is no matter what kind of a study you wanted to do, unless it was just the most superficial, unless it was no study, and you just simply came up with your preformed opinions.... The main studies referred to were the Harold Dom study. That was the great prospective study on veterans. The other key study was the American Cancer Society study, the Hammond, E. Cuyler Hammond study. And early in the game I made contact with Hammond and originally his data was due.... Well, that's why I know that that's six months.... I mean the six month thing was so sort of looking funny because Hammond told me, and let's say by August of the first year, I think his

original plans were a year or a year and a half from then to finish collecting data. I think timing the report, any kind of report was somewhere a year and a half to two years away.

MOSS: Go ahead.

HAMILL: And this whole type of report was definitely some time away and I've done studies myself and I know that you're never on schedule. It's always later; it's always longer. So I immediately started talking to him about the possibilities of getting data to us—I want to use the term prematurely, but that implies it's no good—but, you know, especially early. Okay? And he was agreeable to look into this. And we made a definite.... The surgeon general made very definite agreement authorizing me to make any kind of financial deal necessary, and that is—you know something about studies and computer type of stuff—if we want to tap in early and obviously that's going to be inefficient. Right?

MOSS: Right.

HAMILL: We had full agreement that any inefficiency caused, we would fully foot the bill. In other words, we just didn't waste our time. We wouldn't be expected to foot a bill, but we were.... If they were going to do something special, tap in early just for us, then obviously we were obligated to pay for it. And this was fully agreed upon. But nobody ever promised this data before the following summer, which was the minimum of a year. The Harold Dorn study was—Dorn was part of the U.S. Public Health Service—was even a bigger problem in that he was less near to completion than the Hammond study was. Dorn was willing to do whatever we could to tap any, whatever useful data could be tapped in any time. That was going to require quite a bit more than the tapping of Hammond's study. The biggest one in the U.K. would have been the Doll [Sir Richard Doll] and Hill [Sir Austin Bradford Hill], Bradford Hill, the study of... All of them studied the latest further study on physicians themselves. Anyhow, the one in Canada just doesn't mean much...

MOSS: Well, at any rate, there were studies that were around that could conveniently be used as an excuse...

HAMILL: Well, this is an important thing to talk about because this also is another piece of objective evidence of the six months...

MOSS: Right.

HAMILL: As soon as it was agreed that it was necessary to use these studies, then I don't care what the political exigencies were, it couldn't be done before a certain period of time, before the studies were ready. And everybody knew that.

MOSS: Okay, I just wanted to get that memo on the tape.

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HAMILL: Right. I don't think I knew about that memo. I may have, but I'm not, I don't think I knew about it.

MOSS: Okay. So we're in effect in the July meeting. And you say you had a pretty miserable time of it.

HAMILL: Well, that's all personal, and it wasn't a very effective meeting either. Spirits were low. They were still very, very, very definitely.... There was a definite animosity towards Hundley, I just mean, very definitely, and rightly so. And several of the guys as individuals were involved in rearranging their own lives and resenting the hell out of it, and rightly so. One of them, Schuman, took off about three months on sabbatical, literally, and came down to Washington to do nothing but [inaudible]. That wasn't part of the agreement, but he was backed to the corner and that.... If I recall, Bill Cochran got a special leave—he'd told me before he had a lot of departmental academic obligations, but he ended up to finish his job because he was the kind of man who, just a sheer delight because he was not only so extraordinarily capable, but if he said he was going to do something, by God, he was going to do it with no excuses of any kind, no matter what the cost was, he would get it done and on time, too. And in order to finish his obligation, he ended up, if I'm not mistaken, taking a premature half year sabbatical or something to do his work and that was far from the original agreement, far from the agreement. A couple of the other guys really had to wreck their—well, two parts of a year in both the spring and the following fall. And this, six and a half years later, I still resent that and resent it very, very much. And that I told Hundley, I hold Luther Terry responsible for that, solely responsible for that. Hundley probably might have been the architect of it, but Luther Terry was the man that was responsible. It was Luther Terry who made the original promise to the—his personal promise—to the men and made a personal...

MOSS: Okay. What transpired then at the July meeting?

HAMILL: Nothing special. It was just further integrating areas, discussing, sharpening up time schedules. And it was primarily the men kind of jockeying their position and realizing they had no choice but to.... They were more or less assessing each guy was independently assessing what he had to do. And it was a pretty grim, pretty grim time for everybody.

MOSS: Okay. Now what happened between the July and August meetings?

HAMILL: This was primarily my.... Hundley and I were meeting very frequently. I did not, progressing medically—I was getting virtually no participation now on the different subcommittees on content. It was primarily overall strategy of what could be done, what couldn't be done with the report. This part—I don't want to go into much detail in this part. It was quite ugly. A couple of the committee members who had some privy inside information as far as the goings on of the office of the surgeon general warned me about some things. As time went on, there were less and less alternatives for everybody and finally—I may end up filling [inaudible] but I don't think I will. I'll just skip over to about the middle of August when there's no question.

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I was going into the hospital right away. They got Eugene Guthrie to replace me. Terry knew Guthrie personally, his father was an assistant surgeon general. I think Guthrie was the third generation of Public Health Service officers. And his father was a retired assistant surgeon general and because his grandfather was, too. They got a skilled administrator and, even more important, as I stated earlier, a whole set of resources that came along with it, and that is, he had a whole staff of writers and all kinds of people immediately. He knew how to deploy resources and he immediately started bringing in men that was necessary to kind of, you might say, to use the term finish the job, literally finish the job. All creativity was gone, you know. That was totally gone and you might say, it wasn't a question could the job be done [inaudible] it was just a question of between now and December 31st—I'm just using that as a—between now and December 31st, what can you do? If you go out and do....Whatever you do, it's going to be December 31st. Just what can you do between now and December 31st?

That's, I would say, the best way to formulate the activities that took place from then on. There were really no more decisions made. It was a question of cutting and pasting and documenting. And later on I was in touch by phone primarily with Schuman and Cochran. We spent hours talking some ways of expressing some of the....There are a couple of sections on methodology to have. We talked that over to quite some extent. But I had no more.... My contact was only personal with the committee members, members of the committee itself. Well, I had some contact with Guthrie. I had several contacts but I had no more contact with Hundley or Terry [inaudible], rather mutual, I guess. And my just in finishing up the.... And the report came out and it was on this first level, a good report, not a great report, but a damn good report, a good, very good, as reports of this kind go. It was far better than a lot of people thought it was going to be. It was a totally fair, totally honest report. That part there's no question about. Certain amounts of skill were definitely lacking and some real dimensions were lacking. Total dimension of smoking in relationship to constitutional type, primarily behavioral type was very, very poorly handled all the way through. That was the real hack job, real hack job. And this was one I had hoped of all the specific areas was going to be the most creative of all the specific areas. You know, it was just plugged up, a gap that was just plugged up. That's all. Now I did state at the beginning, and I want to repeat again now: As far as I'm concerned, the report was far better in quality, far better quality than the surgeon

general deserved personally. He didn't deserve a report that good. And by deserve I mean, he personally paid for and participated.

MOSS: Right. I think you said...

HAMILL: And also was far better than the U.S. Public Health service deserved and publicly, in the context of paying for what you get. It counted in my summary, this kind of summary was—in some ways it was not at all disappointing, but it was far different from what I had envisioned at the time and now, six and a half years later, still feel we should have done, harder, we should have done. And it's just as I've used the whole section on smoking and prematurity or the—what it literally was was simply interpreting the, first assessing the truth and then interpreting the low birth weight of smoking mothers. Just as I used that as a paradigm, an internal paradigm, I wanted the entire study to be a paradigm of studies

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of this kind, of really complex, technically complex issues with very broad, wide-ranging consequences and consequences and implications. And I think we could have done and should have done quite a bit different kind of report.

MOSS: Well, I'm almost at the end of the tape. Suppose we cut it here and pick up next time.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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