

**Dr. Peter V.V. Hamill Oral History Interview – JFK #2, 11/28/1969**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Dr. Peter V.V. Hamill  
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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 the political pressures within and outside of the Advisory Committee, Surgeon General Luther Terry's role, and the difficulties within epidemiological research, among other issues.

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Dr. Peter V.V. Hamill– JFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

DR. PETER V. V. HAMILL

November 28, 1969  
Annapolis, Maryland

By William W. Moss

For the Oral History Program of the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Okay. Where were we the last time? I think we'd gotten the committee selected and we're somewhere towards the time of the first meeting.

HAMILL: Yeah. Well, I am going to have to be.... I didn't finish my homework on the federal agency.

MOSS: Right. I'll put a note on that.

HAMILL: But then I got a note of that and I'll definitely try to pick it up next time.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: So let's skip it, but...

MOSS: All right.

HAMILL: The two themes of....I'm going to pick up another theme till the next time I do the homework on the federal agencies, and that is, I'm going to check the minutes, my copy of the minutes, which is rather important on the point of the

question on scope and kind of mission. It's a question of wording, it's rather important. Excuse me, not mission, but...

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MOSS: Objectives?

HAMILL: Nope. Support.

MOSS: Support. Oh yes, the...

HAMILL: In accounting for the study they state that pledged all support possible from the United States Public Health Service. That's, you might say, a retrospective qualification. To make it a little too.... When I checked the federal agencies [inaudible] check the minutes...

MOSS: You mean that the word "possible" inserted there was retrospective on the part of...

HAMILL: Yes. Yes. I mean qualifying it.

MOSS: Yes.

HAMILL: Because that was very important, and...

MOSS: Yes. Well, it was your understanding then that it was all support that they were capable of rather than all possible support.

HAMILL: That was.... See, all the people I got, as I mentioned before, were....None of them were looking for a job like this. They were all over-committed as it was. They'd all served on a lot of committees in the past, and quite a number of them had initially turned it down. And I was able to sell them when I told you I—in the previous interview I spent a long time talking about the selection made, but then there was that other item about how they, how they accepted, and as I say few things to tell about [inaudible] for various reasons, and all of them were good reasons, you know, people turn them down. But the selling point was the surgeon general—I was able to offer almost unconditional support. Literally, you name it and we'll do it. A couple of them still said, "Well, I've heard that before," but I was able to get across the surgeon general's absolute promise that this was really something different. This was really something different.

MOSS: And you really believed that at this point?

HAMILL: Lock, stock, and barrel.

MOSS: Okay. And those who were dubious you convinced...

HAMILL: I was able...

MOSS: ...simply by reiterating that you believed it.

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HAMILL: And I guess my belief communicated itself. Jake Furth [Jacob Furth], Dr. Furth, one of the—he was, I think, the second oldest man, about sixty-five or six, the great cancer specialist—was the one that I...He told me no, and I asked him if he would just give me one more day and I flew up to see him that afternoon. And he said, "Okay. It can't hurt to see you," and on that afternoon he could only see me, so on Thursday afternoon I had something like, I had a bar [inaudible]. I think, as I recall, I was in the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda. I had to go home to change clothes and catch a plane. It was the only possible plane because it was the only time he could see me. I had something like an hour from the time I went to Bethesda till we hit Annapolis, change my clothes and make the plane and get to Baltimore for the only time he would give me. If I couldn't make it, then that it was an unconditional no. And by God, I really moved! I had my secretary call my home to tell her to get any decent clothes out, just kind of "hold, hold the pants, I'll jump right into them" and so forth. And so I got up there.

I think he's Hungarian by birth, still speaks with an accent, but a wonderfully warm man like the central Europeans tend to be, the ones that we know over, the ones that I met many of them over here, but primarily the academic or professional people, which is probably some kind of a selective [inaudible], but this great warm feeling of warmth. I really let all out and I knew he was reluctant, but then he said, "Well, if you really mean it, and it's really that important," which is one thing I want to expand on, "but it's really that important and is really that different from anything else I've done and you need me that badly, then okay."

MOSS: Okay. Now did Terry [Luther Terry] honor that?

HAMILL: He didn't say.... At the time he said, "Call me tomorrow morning and I'll give you a definite answer tomorrow morning." So I went back that night and called him the next morning. Without any fuss or muss he said, "Okay. I'll accept."

MOSS: Okay. Okay. Did Terry know you were putting yourself on, the service out on a limb on this?

HAMILL: Yes.

MOSS: He knew it?

HAMILL: He knew it. He authorized me to do it.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: And he encouraged me to do it.

MOSS: Did you keep him apprised from time to time with reports as to progress on the selection?

HAMILL: Yes.

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MOSS: And the circumstances of selection and agreement to serve?

HAMILL: Yes. Yes. Yes. I tried to keep him....I'd try to give them like this. Furth was kind of an outstanding—he's kind of special blow by blow. I might send some little notes in to him. I was using Dr. Hundley's [James M. Hundley] office, who was on leave for a couple of weeks which was right across, well, it was about two doors away from Dr. Terry's office. I'd send special little note in, try to make them as brief as possible so it would only take thirty seconds or something like that of the real outstanding pieces of information like this. There was also a great urgency because from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting our original schedule was to have a meeting, our first meeting, near Labor Day, I remember that now. That was five or six weeks. And I was going to try to keep that and I just went on a rather incredible schedule to go through all the things that I felt necessary, that I had to go through to select the committee, I mean all the checking of recommenders and then checking about the recommenders, as I described. But we just couldn't do it. It was just impossible, and then at the last minute we got a, kind of a, well, it was at least three-or four week delay because we had to be.... Once we—and this was the thing I was not told before, I was not—I don't know whether it was by oversight or what, but Dr. Hundley and Dr. Terry did not tell me in the timing of the final clearance of all these people and it was.... and I'm not positive whether it was White House or Democratic National Committee. It was one of those. It was a top level, frankly, political clearance required.

MOSS: This was a political clearance as opposed to a security clearance.

HAMILL: Right. We knew all about that, the security. I went through all that. That was already planned for. But this last thing....

MOSS: Now, why should the Democratic National Committee or the White House be concerned in clearing what is supposedly a scientific and technical advisory committee?



HAMILL: That part I'm not, I never quite understood. I kind of raised hell at the further delay, and it was at least three weeks, I'm sure. I thought we had everything locked up. We were ready to issue the names to the paper of the— because the newspapers were really after us—of the so-called, this incredible, I mean the blue-ribbon committee. I want to go back again to one other point in that. And I thought we were ready to release the thing, right, we were [inaudible] that proved Terry approved everything. And then it was almost as if, came in almost—either afterthought or somebody got his foot in the door, and I don't know, I never knew which happened. I thought we were going to release the thing, say, the next day. And all of a sudden, I guess it was Hundley who said, "No, we're not going to.... We've got to get a further reading of the names."

MOSS: Did he explain it further?

HAMILL: A little, yes, but not much.

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MOSS: Okay. What did he say? What sort of things did he say?

HAMILL: Well, the only part that I can recall it was political, and it was either White House or very top Democratic National Party Committee. And whether.... There was a gal. I called her Gravel Gertie. I don't know who she was. Mosk [Stanley Mosk] was from California, wasn't he?

MOSS: Right.

HAMILL: I think this gal was from Texas. She was a big wheel politically. And I called her Gravel Gertie from her voice was almost as hoarse and deep as mine, if that rings any bells to you.

MOSS: Not to me.

HAMILL: And she talked to me a couple of times. I'm sure she would be somebody who was knowledgeable in the political affairs of the Democratic Party of those days. I think she was from Texas. Apparently she was quite important. And she was quite brusque and she actually tried to plan a little bit definitely.

MOSS: In what way?

HAMILL: By who, before I knew who some of the people were and how I was selecting people, I don't recall whether she actually tried to push somebody like Mosk there and much further; definitely did, but I'm sure I checked with Terry and he definitely backed me up on Mosk. And with her I was supposed to be a little more careful, but I was.... He more or less backed me up enough to be able to almost tell her to, not to go to

hell, but to mind her own business, which I always delighted in any, you know, opportunity like that. And I did.

MOSS: Her pressuring show was simply queries as to the political nature of these appointees?

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

MOSS: Right. She wasn't trying to sell you on anybody and she wasn't trying to [inaudible]?

HAMILL: That part I'm not...

MOSS: But she didn't try to...

HAMILL: No. She didn't try to block anybody because she didn't know who anybody was.

MOSS: Okay.

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HAMILL: But she was trying to find out who some of the people were so she could.... See, what I suspect is that this delay might have been occasioned by her and her people who finally got to somebody by saying, "You cannot get all these names out until we've had chance to go over them."

MOSS: Okay. Okay.

HAMILL: I know that happened.

MOSS: Okay. And you didn't hear any other names of National Committee or White House people named in this?

HAMILL: No. No. No. This gal and Mosk are the only names I remember. Is it Mosk or Musk?

MOSS: Mosk. M-O-S-K.

HAMILL: Yes. Okay. Now, and I will say that for various reasons, I have no idea of all of the reasons, no names were.... After this whole thing nothing was suggested to be changed. I mean, I'm not necessarily covering for anybody who just the.... Now, I think, I might be.... I'll just do a little, is it okay for me to do a little speculating?

MOSS: Sure.

HAMILL: Okay. I'll do a little speculating. It may be that, you know—it was all very clean, but, as you recall, the key to the whole thing was that this was not going to be a completely unbiased, clean committee with no political, economic, social, any kind of strings attached whatsoever, and to let the chips fall where they may. This was what we, what.... If there ever was a covenant in the Old Testament sense of covenant, this was the covenant. But the surgeon general, so many times, some of the savvier people, both newsmen and also some of the various advisors would kind of poo-poo this. You know, We've heard this stuff before. But I'd say, "No, by God. We really mean it." You know, "We really mean it." And this is what really sold Jake Furth incidentally, and a couple of others, that—this, if we're doing anything else, it's going to be so clean that it's got to....

It'll be quite inefficient to be that clean, because purposely we're going to go over some tired old material. We're not taking anybody's word for anything, including the PHS report of four years ago. We've got no reason to doubt it. There's no, we have no reason to say we challenge that, you know, as of now. But we're not taking anybody's work on anything. We're going to start from scratch and go at our own speed as if nobody ever made a judgment before, and we're going to go over it with as fresh eyes as possible. Everything we do, we're going to go at it with fresh eyes.

This was part, as I tried to explain, of my selection process. It had to be this peculiar combination of a guy both of ability and who was substantively involved in this area, and yet, somebody not only who publicly.... Some people said, Oh, yeah. Sure, you know, publicly. But I went after not just publicly but privately of, well,

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successful, I would say out of the ten, eleven including me, let me—I can count this up. I can count this up preferably [inaudible]—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

MOSS: I think you said last time that one you discovered had definitely made up his mind and another one you knew had privately but still was objective.

HAMILL: Okay. Eight. Eight were really clean. One, as I found out later, this was the one I didn't pick, was...

MOSS: That you didn't pick?

HAMILL: No. It was Burdette [Walter J. Burdette]. I'm going to mention names. This was Burdette. This was the one that Kraybill [Herman Kraybill], the original guy I picked, he was a cancer specialist, and he's also the guy that I really regretted picking up. He was a guy of great credentials, a very bright guy, but he couldn't.... I've never met a man in my life, I mean intelligent man, with whom it was not difficult, but impossible to have any dialogue with. Nobody could have dialogue with him because nobody had dialogue with him. He was bright. My God, he was bright! He was productive. I mean he

was, oh, probably forty years old probably. I think he had eighty or a hundred good, I don't mean cheap rewrites of the same thing, I mean eighty or a hundred good, bona fide scientific papers to his credit, and I mean on all original, not.... A lot of us, we write the same thing two or three or four times and we get more mileage, but I counted Burdette's stuff up. He wrote well. When he was the writer, he was simply putting forth a point of view, not discussing but expository style he was good. But by God, he...

MOSS: Just doesn't work in committee.

HAMILL: ... oh God. Oh boy! When he found out he couldn't lecture to us [Laughter], then, you know, then nothing, you know, right then and there everything broke down. Well anyway, so I found out later, and I will say that I can't really condemn them except that they put on a different show. Terry and Hundley already had their minds made up.

MOSS: Already had their minds made up about what?

HAMILL: About smoking. About the causes of....About, to a large measure, the ill effects of tobacco smoking.

MOSS: Okay. Would you hold it just a second while I double check to make sure this thing is taking.

HAMILL: Okay. Go ahead.

MOSS: All right.

HAMILL: Now, there was a little bit of duplicity there in that...

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MOSS: How so?

HAMILL: I couldn't, obviously couldn't fault them for having their minds made up, you know, not at all. They were Public Health scientists. They weren't as versed in this area, neither one of them, as I was.

MOSS: Which way did they have their minds made up?

HAMILL: That it was bad stuff. You know, smoking was bad. Now Luther Terry was a heavy cigarette smoker, almost as heavy as I was. And he was...

MOSS: There was an article that he switched to a pipe afterwards, too.

HAMILL: He quit, he tried to quit smoking before we actually started the study, I mean, you know, so obviously, you know.... And he liked to smoke. Now Jim Hundley had been a cigarette smoker and he quit. I guess he quit full turn. He quit just about the time the study started, right in the very, very beginning. Now, the thing I fault, and I don't know, a lot of times I can't disentangle Hundley and Terry for, you know, it was an official action. It was something that one of them specifically said to me, then I can, you know, distinguish. But when it was as my superior, some kind of specific action that I never knew, you know, whose input was what.

MOSS: Did they often work like this as a team? Because very often it's easy, for instance, in other departments, say, to distinguish the action of a secretary and an under secretary because they tend to operate in different fields.

HAMILL: In this particular thing, this was definitely a team and that was important because Terry retained the titular head as chairman of this committee. When I couldn't get Walsh McDermott of Cornell to be the chairman of the committee, then I said.... Hundley and I talked a lot of this over. We talked a lot of this strategy over. I couldn't find somebody that I was satisfied, you know, to be chairman. And after I picked.... When I couldn't get McDermott, I went ahead and picked the committee, and by and large it was a group of peers. And they were great. I mean it was an extraordinary collection, but no one should be the head. We talked this over a lot.

Obviously, and strategy was important, obviously, although I was highly skilled, it would be a little ridiculous to.... I mean the general public didn't know who the hell I was. And also it'd be a little presumptuous-I was thirty-five, I guess, yes, thirty-five, thirty-five, thirty-six-I think for me to have been the actual chairman of the committee. So when normally you have secretary or executive secretary, I mean that's kind of the.... Even though I might run the committee, for quite a few reasons both pro forma, it was not good, you know, to be chairman. And also, I also reserved it wasn't just the appearances, but also if something extraordinary did occur, say a big fight, a serious fight, I, in all humility, it really was humility because I don't have too

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much humility, but in this particular case I did. I felt that if something like that were to occur that I shouldn't and couldn't have the authority to adjudicate in a fight, a serious fight between the committee members. There had to be some kind of outside authority in case it was needed, or either that or something between the committee as a whole in either the Public Health Service, a [inaudible] or the outside public. Any of those three things. Any of these three areas.

I felt that.... First I also didn't think I had the skill. I had never been involved in a big committee like this before, ever. I had no experience. I didn't have the skill, but also perhaps even more important was this kind of like, I had to be a god somewhere, you know. Hopefully we'd never, and as it turned out never had to be, this authority never had to be invoked. Some authority, because we were not, Hundley and I together, Hundley and I were

not willing. Hundley was intimidated by Walsh McDermott. I'd sold Hundley on, and it wouldn't be difficult to sell Terry because Terry knew McDermott and this was in Terry's clinical years of heart disease. McDermott was primarily chest, but heart and lung go together and McDermott was one of the greatest men in internal medicine, and that wouldn't have been difficult. But when that fell through, I think I had a council with both Hundley and Terry, both of them, I think, together, and we agreed that.... I said, "I can't come up with one person like McDermott." And either they were reluctant or what to name anybody, but they didn't come up with anybody. So at that point we put chairman aside.

Toward the very end when.... See, Bayne-Jones [Stanhope Bayne-Jones] was the last appointment and it came late; this was Terry's suggestion. He didn't force it on me. It was his suggestion, and as I mentioned in the previous thing, I went to talk to Bayne-Jones. I read a lot of his stuff. I read about him and I asked a lot of people about him and I just kind of fell in love with him sight unseen. B.J. was seventy-four, seventy-five. And that time there'd been the famous Bayne-Jones report of about 1955 or six of extraordinarily well reputed study and report on something like medical manpower in America. It was the superb physician, scholar, scientist; statesman and culminating in statesman. The report had that stature and that clarity both. And Dr. Kidd [James Kidd], K-I-D-D, I think it's James Kidd, of the Public Health Service was the executive secretary of that report. He'd been on detail for about a year or so to do nothing but work on the Bayne-Jones committee. Bayne-Jones was the chairman and Kidd was the executive secretary or secretary. B.J. was a heavy.... He was a working chairman. But I talked to Kidd, who was a skilled, quite a bit senior to me, a skilled man. And I talked to him on several occasions to get his advice, what B.J. was like, what it was like to work with him, how they went about their report because this was.... I wanted our report to be something like that, and that is, nobody doubted its integrity, honesty. And integrity was kind of the key to this whole thing. I could supply brilliance. That part there's no question about. I could supply all the brilliance in the world, but we needed a hell of a lot more than brilliance. We needed, for this kind of a question, we needed integrity, just kind of this whole thing of kind of above reproach type of thing, that this was kind of a healing, kind of a reconciling thing, not only for the whole scientific community, for the scientific community—because I'll go on another step later on if you can make it on this. I want to follow this down, the scientific community. This was my real love. And why, what I mean by it was a special dream of mine that never took place. But it was part of the dream I sold quite a few of this half of the committee on.

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But in my job.... It wasn't really my love, but my job and my obligation as a Public Health physician, really, I mean, as the physician [inaudible] and my obligation to the surgeon general, not only the man, but also the position. I wanted to make this integrity, this quality of integrity so that the social agencies.... It would be a rock upon which social programs and legislative programs—to give the poor legislators something to really shoot at, so that they would, they themselves.... I knew this question very well; they are incapable of judging the health effects of smoking, really, especially back seven or eight years ago when there were some real honest-to-God points of controversy.

MOSS: Yeah. Maurine Neuberger was making a lot of noise about that.

HAMILL: Yeah. She was shooting her mouth off a lot. Yeah. Making a lot of noise. Now, this gets to that difficult when it's done, when everything's all clean, this is the fine line between the—I mentioned that thing that policy made from the intellectual or the statesman and the scientist, that whole difficult area. I knew before the study started that we had some very major unresolved questions, scientifically unresolved questions. I did not know when I started the study whether they were going to be resolvable within the scope of the study. I did not know, honestly. I did not know. Now, but I did know very, very well that Maurine Neuberger or anybody else, I don't think of having the best intentions in the world, were incapable of resolving a couple of these points. There were, oh, perhaps, Maurine Neuberger spent five years and she had some kind of ability to learn something about science and really skilled herself for five years, inside she could have at least followed the discussion as closely. But even then I don't think she could have been an active.... it was this point I tried to make early, the active decision-maker scientifically.

There are several things that occur. First, it requires some maturity of skill so that you can kind of rise above the trees as it were. And frankly, a lot of scientists intellectually, you know, never rise that high. You know, they can't. They're still dabbling with the limbs and the trees and stuff like that. But the brightest person has to spend a certain period of time of mastery of a certain amount of skills. I mean Mozart could not start writing his compositions, he wrote them.... He started writing them when he was about eleven, but he couldn't write them when he was seven. I mean, he was rather extraordinary, but he had a certain amount of fundamental music mastery to achieve before he could start writing. You know, there's an analogy there.

MOSS: So it's this borderline of intellectual and policy maker or scientist and statesman.

HAMILL: Now, early right along this line in our first meeting on this point, at our first meeting we talked this point out a great deal. Were we going to be scientists-statesmen, that's a hyphenated, scientists and statesmen, or were we going to be scientists, scientist judges, and then possibly later statesmen? Do you follow what I'm...

MOSS: Yes. I think I do.

HAMILL: ...all these distinctions?

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MOSS: Let me...

HAMILL: Both as individuals and as a committee itself.

MOSS: Okay. Let me back up a minute. Hold on to that for a minute and let me back up to something you said earlier. You said that you wanted an outside chairman in order to take care of ruptures and this sort of thing, now...

HAMILL: Besides me. I mean a person outside, yeah.

MOSS: Yes. Besides you. Now you mentioned ruptures between individuals on the committee. I think this is understandable enough.

HAMILL: True.

MOSS: Did you have anything specific in mind when you mentioned, say, ruptures between the committee and the PHS or between the committee and the public? At the time, were you anticipating any particular kind of trouble?

HAMILL: No. Not with the public, but PHS.

MOSS: All right.

HAMILL: Possibly. Yes. Because, you know, for several reasons. There were several people in the Public Health Service who were powerful people who said this was all completely unnecessary, that we knew all the answers already, and were against having the study performed.

MOSS: Specifically, where did this come from?

HAMILL: Do you mean where did these people come from?

MOSS: Yes. Who were they? What...

HAMILL: Michael Shimkin was one. Dr. Shimkin of the Cancer Institute was one.

MOSS: All right.

HAMILL: But as I mentioned earlier, [inaudible] was right then in the process of retiring. I never knew he wasn't consulted on this—I never knew what was the source, you know, of his, well, I'll say, lack of enchantment with the study. Whether it was because his nose was out of joint or whether because he, you know, so firmly believed that from a cancer standpoint, and as I say, cancer, he'd do no great deal more than I did. But one time he was kind of popping of and included emphysema and I started rather than [inaudible] right then and



there, I started asking him a few questions about what he thought might be some of the possible mechanisms or what kind of evidence he had for cigarette smoking either causing or making worse emphysema, and he was not much better than a layman, frankly. But he was just as opinionated on that as he was on a couple of theories on cancer that I didn't know about, and I didn't know how.... The reason I didn't know all the arguments on the cancer part, but he spoke about both with the same degree of authority so that obviously I started to, I had a little reservation about him on some of his authority on cancer itself.

MOSS: Okay. You were operating and intending to be scientifically pure, but you were also operating in a public and political atmosphere which people in the Congress were taking positions and this kind of thing.

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. So when I say the public, you know, by the public I mean, you know, probably a congressman more than anybody else. I was in no position to tell a congressman to go to hell. But I was in a position, with certain guarantees from the surgeon general that we had, to demand from the surgeon general [inaudible]interference for us. And I'll be very specific. We'd gotten started.... We hadn't been started very long when we started getting the usual congressional inquiries. I had an information officer who was an alcoholic, unfortunately, and early in the game he started getting one involved in a pretty lengthy.... You know, he'd spend a lot of time on those damn congressional inquiries. It was not only the time but also the possible pitfalls. So finally I told [inaudible]. I told Hundley and Terry together. I don't know how the, specifically the mode of me telling that, "For God's sake, I don't want any, under any circumstances, any congressionals coming out to my office at the library. I want all congressional inquiries to come through the office of the surgeon general," and hopefully all of them to stop there.

MOSS: Okay. Had you had specific congressional inquiries before this point?

HAMILL: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And it looked like we were going to have a lot of them. And Maurine Neuberger's office was definitely one of them. And sometimes they weren't quite so...

MOSS: Gentle?

HAMILL: ... gentle and tactful. I mean she can, you know.... Yes. So finally, and as I recall, for the next year and a half.... I never got another direct congressional after my.... It was an absolute statement. And I think they saw, either they saw the wisdom or were just doing this to humor my office, you know, I don't know. That part I don't know, and I don't really care. A couple of times Hundley, who was, apparently he was handling the congressionals, asked me a few questions of advice or suggestions on, about a couple of congressionals, but didn't spend.... We didn't spend much time on it. He just wanted my, you know, my reaction to a couple of points. And he handled it very skillfully in relationship to me.

In other words, it didn't do the two things or three things that I was primarily concerned about. One was, well, the time. It could be an awful lot of time. The other is the possible repercussions of messing things up on the outside. I kind of left

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everything the outside, and I just, you know, the whole outside, and that meant when I meant outside, I included the Public Health Service. I included everybody but us, our small committee, my staff, and the consultants, and after a while I kind of, I had the bigness to include Terry and Hundley, not all the time, but, you know, kind of emotionally they were part of the crew. But I had kind of reservations, kind of about them. Everybody else it was none of their damn business, and I didn't want anything to do with anybody.

Now, the third reason, and this was as I say, time and time and bother and energy, the other was possible messing things up. And the third was them possibly messing us up in this way. Sometimes you overreact if somebody suggests something, you kind of overreact the other way just because you'll be damned if any particular congressman is going to have, you know, anything to say. It's just human nature. At least it's my human nature and sometimes I'll, you know, just go a little too far the other way. I didn't even want that to happen. So I just didn't want any input, no input whatsoever. So that worked out very well and it was an agreement, an early agreement, and they stuck to it, and it was clean and it went on very, very nicely. And we were able after a while to start with—we were handling newsmen.

Then after a while I requested—for two reasons: One, when I learned that my—Kritini [Alexander Kritini], who was my.... He was a senior, real senior guy, but he was a lush. He was a broken down boy, and this is important. Remember I'm doing this because this'll be another topic and that is when you see him, the great resources of the Public Health Service that were Alex Kritini, K-R-I-T-I-N-I. He's expunged somehow from the record almost as if he didn't exist, but by God, he did exist. He was fired several months before the report came out, and he probably doesn't exist on any records and the like that you can find, but he was there for over a year. When I saw that Alex was not the kind of a man he was, that he really couldn't handle these things, well, I also requested all press inquiries be handled by Stu Hunter's [J. Stewart Hunter] office. Stu was the PHS information officer for, you know, the whole Public Health Service. Stu Hunter and Mary Ross. And I wanted everything bucked down there, and then automatically, if anybody got through the switchboard to us inadvertently, which they did several times, they'd use different ruses, they were saying they were somebody else and my secretary would.... They'd even get past my bulldog secretary several times, but it turned out they were reporters and they.... I'd just very coldly say, you know, just say, "Call Hunter." And I'd just hang up without another, without further ado. So it was a very nice mechanism. It was a nice mechanism and it worked out well. However, that horrid little person from Drew Pearson's office.... What's her name? She's a cripple. She's an alcoholic and it's a German name.

MOSS: I don't know the name.

HAMILL: Oh God! She was a horrid woman! One of the.... Got through several

times and I think Kritini I don't know whether she got him drunk or I don't know what—but I think Kritini gave her a little information that she wasn't supposed to have one time, at least one time. And they wrote one of the typical Drew Pearson columns. He knows everything. It was really rather humorous because they listed names and who was doing what, what the conclusions were many months before the report came out, and they had, oh, I would say, only fifty percent of the names right, but less than a quarter of the names attached to the right people who

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were doing what were right, but yet, stated with all this great secrecy. And so I think that's probably par for the Drew Pearson course anyway. But I think she got some of her information—it was a name something like Hoffnagel—I believe she got her information from Kritini at least once or twice.

So preserving the integrity of the committee was almost like it was some kind of a mission from, it's almost like a mission from God or something like that as far as I was concerned. In getting back to that, Terry and Hundley both had their own personal minds made up early. I guess it was necessary in their position to be a little bit, I mean they were a little bit dissembling in the sense that they pretended they didn't, but I think they were obligated to do that. I mean they couldn't help it if they had their minds made up, but they never went around preaching what their verdict was. But only towards the famous May 6<sup>th</sup> when they pulled the sneak attack on us and said the report had to be out that year that they kind of violate and really violate the scope of the study and by several suggestions, but they, to some extent, almost hinted at the, violating the, even more important, the verdict. They almost hinted at it once or twice when the whole committee balked at their.... Well, I'll go into that. It's a real critical juncture. In fact, that's the whole reason that I want, really why I wanted to call these interviews and get this on record. It'll be the famous May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Okay.

MOSS: See, we've gone back to the first meeting, I think, in which you were talking about the committee discussing whether or not they were scientist-statesmen or scientist judges, then statesmen. Let me ask one thing here for the record. What sort of records did the committee keep? What sort of minutes? This sort of thing. What was your policy on what was to be recorded and what not?

HAMILL: We laid the ground rules down right away. My secretary, my chief secretary was a stenotypist, but it was immediately determined that we would not keep any kind of transcript, a verbatim transcript of our discussions, except when we decided we wanted a specific portion transcribed, while the other way around, which is usually.... I mean you keep a transcript except with the option of going off the record at any time. That's what I'm usually accustomed to, but this was the other way around. And we definitely thought for several reasons. It might, and I'm sure it would have, inhibit free, inventive, truly inventive discourse. I'm sure it would have. People would just have been a little more careful because I begged them not to be careful in the first six months or so

anyway. For God's sake, let's almost free associate. Let's just, let's follow down the wildest ideas we can think of. Let's not be careful. The only way we're going to do this job properly, by properly I mean that peculiar thing of looking at these [inaudible] with the freshest eyes possible and don't leave one stone unturned anywhere.

MOSS: Okay. How did the committee...

HAMILL: Don't take anything for granted.

MOSS: How did the committee respond to this idea?

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HAMILL: They agreed, definitely. And we—and quite enthusiastically. This was fine. Terry and Hundley really tolerated, I learned later, and about five or six months later, didn't tolerate it with the greatest grace and humor. Terry used, I mean Hundley used the imagery once of spinning your wheels in sand and let's get on with the job and get the report written. That was to me, sent specifically to me with a couple of committee members there. And this was after Luther Terry saying at the first meeting, the second meeting, and the third meeting, "No one, absolutely no one will dictate to this committee, certainly not its verdict, but how it is to proceed with the study, how long it takes, or any of its.... It determines its own mode of operation." And he said specifically, "No one, I, Luther Terry," he even looked at Jim Hundley, "Jim Hundley or," I forget how he addressed me, "Peter Hamill, no one, absolutely no one will dictate to this committee." So this wasn't once, this was three times. This—well, I keep going back to the mystical three. So Hundley's statement on this was a direct violation of that premise. In fact at that first meeting Luther Terry was, he was, I use the term, I don't know if I used it in the minutes-covenant—but I used it to quite a few people. Terry said, "I'm asking you men to do an extraordinary job for me. The most important job that certainly I, as the surgeon general, have ever asked a committee to do and perhaps any surgeon general has asked a committee to do, and perhaps the most difficult. I'm asking you to do this for me. In turn this is what I pledge to you."

MOSS: Immunity, in short.

HAMILL: Immunity, all resources necessary of any kind, and you proceed in your own way. And this was in my.... Maybe things on that level are always done tongue-in-cheek, but I don't think so, and I didn't take it that way. And my—I keep saying my committee—the committee members, most of the committee members didn't take it that way. This was serious. Because the first meeting was very important. It was very important. This was the first formal meeting of any kind after the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Now, this first meeting was....

MOSS: Excuse me. Was it the first time all of the members of the committee had gotten together at one time?

HAMILL: Precisely, yes. It was the first time they'd gotten together and we actually.... It was also the first time now it—this wasn't just to be introduced to each other—it was also to decide whether we can do the study or not.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: It was possible and Hundley and I talked about this; we talked about it with Terry. It is possible that this committee.... We'd set the thing up for Friday or Saturday and it could've gone for the next week if they'd elected this gut meeting through Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We gave them all this authority. It was possible if they said—they could've gotten together regardless of all of my—and I got this completely open—I reminded them several times that even checking the individual people they had their minds made up, possibly

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as a group they finally after maybe five hours or twenty-five hours, look around and say, Well, really, there isn't really any point in doing this, it's been studied enough. And that personally, I mean one guy might say, Personally, I have some few doubts, but by and large probably there's enough evidence. And if they could kind of reinforce each other that way and say, Okay. Let's not have a study—they had that authority, too. They had that authority. They could've stopped right then and there.

And they could've stopped right then and there and done several things: One, decided not to become a committee and not have a study, or two, say that the study's all finished. We've reached our verdict. They could've done one or the other and the third thing was any individual man, after we explained the whole meeting, the only commitment I got from any of them was to come to this first meeting because I didn't know what was going to come from it. Nobody knew what was going to happen after that, whether we were going to meet every week or every six months or God knows what we were going to do. It was up to this committee with Hundley, Terry, and me kind of right there to kind of decide, are we going to become a living organism, are we going to become a committee, and also any individual person was free to get up and leave in all good grace because his only commitment was this first meeting. I'd forgotten about that. That was his only commitment to come to this first meeting.

Oh my God, I spent hundreds of hours churning out different courses. In fact, I think—well, I had pages and pages I'd sent to all the guys three or four weeks before the meeting due—for them to do as much homework as possible on, I'm not saying on what course of action you should take, but I tried to think through every one of the alternatives. If you take course A, then these are the consequences. If you take course B, these are the consequences. If you take.... In fact, I had three main courses of action. These are the different consequences. Then I had sub-consequences all the way through. In fact, I think we set some kind of a record that two weeks before the meeting my secretary—I had two of them, I had three, a total of three, then—the real sharp gal, the stenotypist, put in a hundred

hours of overtime in two weeks. That's putting in some overtime! But I went.... I had my own favorite alternatives. But as much as possible I tried to keep all of mine out. But I was there to play guide as much as possible since not that to guide the discussions too much, but in that I had many, many weeks time to think through this, to.... and it so happened I took a lot of shortcuts. I was able to help us all take a lot of shortcuts. And by the second day, Saturday—there had been several kind of shifts as the committee starts to almost get a center of gravity after a while; there had been several big shifts back and forth.

And I really didn't know what was going to happen, and if so [inaudible] second day we met in the, it's called the chart room. It was the secretary's, you know, it was the secretary of the department's called his chart room, as I say interestingly enough, because that was the day we, you might say, we chartered our course, at least for the first few months and to another meeting. We set another meeting time and kind of sketched out a probable beginning course of action, would of course substitute modification both major and, I mean both minor and even major modifications. This was really a....First time in my life I had ever gone into something so big without my mind completely made up. I usually like to control the situation of any kind. But when we started Friday morning, I really didn't know what we were going to end up achieving. I had to think scheduling talk [inaudible] Saturday night all the way through Friday and Friday evening and all day Saturday. I had a schedule which could have been, you know, that was just a tentative schedule, but subject to—could have quit earlier or kept

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going much, much longer. And I really didn't know and I kind of emotionally went along with this peculiar kind of open-mindedness, this open-mindedness. I think I was, for the first time in my life I kind of understood what open-mindedness was because most.... I always [inaudible]most major arguments pretty much after a goal, the job being primarily to convince one or more people of my point of view. Or I would allow for some modification, an alteration in some input, but primarily my goal was.... I was pretty much cold-hearted in it except this.

MOSS:           Okay. Let's cut this and turn the tape for a moment.

HAMILL:        All right.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

MOSS:           Let's see, about where were we?

HAMILL:        Somewhere still in the first meeting.

MOSS:           Yes. We were still in the first meeting.

HAMILL: The meeting in the chart room. We chattered the course. It was truly a creative, almost a....This was almost like true creation. You know, this was an extraordinary—I think it's the most extraordinary two days I ever spent in my life, this meeting. And at the end of it I was just—I don't think I was—I don't know if I've ever been quite so totally exhilarated in my life, at the end of that meeting.

MOSS: What made it that way?

HAMILL: Two things. One, well, I guess, three. The guys were as good as I thought they were individually. They fit collectively as a group the way I had kind of thought. They took off, they started to take hold, there's no question about it, and they selected as their course just about every one of my most cherished—I mean, of all the alternatives, all are almost everything I was kind of hoping they would.

MOSS: This was exhilaration and self-satisfaction?

HAMILL: Oh God, it was just sheer delight. And of course, also, after a couple of months of just incredible work and being on the edge, which we were all on, we were born. We were made. We were there. And it was in this setting why I use the term covenant of Luther Terry and without any kind of qualifications on the imagery at all. It was that serious. And the guys agreed, Okay. We'll do it. Both to a man, every single man, and this peculiar thing of, as a group again, this one voice.

Oh, chairman. Hundley and I left the idea of chairman up for grabs in the committee meeting. Then Hundley never quite talked to me as much again after that first meeting, maybe purposely. I don't know. But as far as I was concerned, it was

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kind of solved. Either Terry said he wanted to be or I suggested he be, or I forget how. And I guess Hundley and I more or less just said Terry should be. But B.J., by his very nature, both as the way he was and then his kind of preeminent both of age and wisdom and everything. And the fact that he had at some time or another taught almost half the guys there, some of the guys thirty years before, some kind of a connection was.... He was kind of a father figure, that kind of chairman in some peculiar way. So I never had any more concern about it was going to be any kind of a rift on the committee, never. Because if there was, almost by the very nature of Terry's covenant, he couldn't really intervene any more anyway. Once [inaudible] became a committee they became self-regulating and self-determinating.

MOSS: All right. Now, did Terry sit as chairman in all the meetings?

HAMILL: What he would do, would-usually the first.... On the first day stayed almost the whole day at the first meeting. Then from then on he would come, formally he was the chairman, and he would sit maybe for the first hour or two. And I would write out what we call an annotated agenda. I had the regular agenda and then for him

I would greatly space everything and then [inaudible] had several side columns for suggested both topics and specific things to say. The first meeting, second meeting, possibly the third, no, first and second meeting, we went over these things together beforehand, discuss edit every way, but then apparently he liked them well, so he just took it as I, you know, gave it to him, and he followed it quite closely. He was definitely kind of pulling out emotionally and intellectually. He was not spending as much time and investment in it. Hundley was his designate. Administratively Hundley, in some peculiar ways, in my day-to-day dealings he's the one I dealt with. But I always, I don't know if it was ever stated. I don't recall how much it was codified and I always knew that at least for the first six months, I could always go to Terry at any time, at any time. I felt, really, that he made himself that available. By available, I mean, you know, emotionally and everything, available. I was obligated obviously, and the surgeon general's an extraordinarily busy guy. I was obligated to keep my contacts, which I did to a very bare minimum. So I kept, say, kept most of my dealings with Hundley. And I could see also that, I almost got the feeling it didn't really make much difference between Terry and Hundley, that I got almost the same reaction from both on most points.

MOSS: Was this because they agreed or because they talked it over or what?

HAMILL: I have no idea—don't know, I just don't know. I was never told and I had no real indication of which it was, whether they agreed that much or—I know they kept in touch with each other independent of me. I know that. There's no question about that.

I want to bring up one other point before the first meeting that I didn't mention at the previous meeting, kind of a personal thing. I would think it's really quite important on the structure of the committee again, relationship of Terry and Hundley to me, the Public Health Service. I'll just mention this part, then we can move back to it again later on. After Hundley and Terry fired Kraybill, which was very early in the game (without me knowing it), a couple of weeks after we were [inaudible] to work, way back in the middle of August for his judicious remarks to the newspaper people, we kept

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trying to find a replacement for Kraybill. And Hundley and I would meet, oh, I guess, once a week or more often to take care of other business. We'd also talk about names, different people in the Service as to who might replace Kraybill. We mentioned one guy. He was fairly enthusiastic about it, I could tell. But I said, "Do you want me to be honest with you?" He said, "By all means." I said, "If you appoint him, then I'm leaving. If necessary, I can resign from the Public Health Service."

MOSS: Yeah. Okay. Go ahead.

HAMILL: He said, "That's exactly what I expected you to do. It's at, least.... You know, tell me your reaction, because," he said, "I've got to live with you." Well, time went by and Terry and Hundley both in September and October were



immensely busy on several very prolonged conferences. One was, I remember, out at the Airlie House. And the only way I could communicate was through Terry's chauffeur, they gave me his schedule of when he came and went or whatever. So I could call him at a specific time and he could get a message to them and, you know, bring the reply back, that type of thing. But they were that, for a period of a week or two they were almost, they were that incommunicado; I don't mean just to me, I mean to everybody. In about the muddle of October, say two weeks before the November meeting, might have been possibly end of October, Terry came out; my offices are in the National Library of Medicine. [Interruption]

MOSS: Let me cut this for a second. Okay.

HAMILL: It was about the end of October, a couple of weeks before the first meeting was going to start, I mean for our first meeting. I think our first meeting was—do you have the date November 11th? I think it was November.

MOSS: Yes. Right. Well, November 11<sup>th</sup>, there's a news article on the first meeting at any rate. So it's probably around the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>...

HAMILL: Well, that Friday and Saturday whenever that...

MOSS: I have a note here—9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

HAMILL: Okay. Okay. It would've been about the end of October. We still didn't have a so-called executive director, Kraybill replacement, the administrative guy. Hundley and I had been talking about this. He ran out of names. He suggested a couple of times kind of not really heavily, but suggested that maybe I would do that, too. I didn't.... I just kind of ignored it. I knew he was going to come out of [inaudible] on Thursday evening; we had to make a decision pretty soon. I forget, I don't remember why, but there was a....It might have been the week before the meeting. I don't remember. It might have been that close. When I knew he was coming up that next night.... He didn't have much time, and he was going to be gone for another few days for some reason or another. It was a pressure of time. He came out, I think, it was a Thursday night, about five or six o'clock.

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So I went out that afternoon to see Ken Endicott. I didn't see any other solution. I didn't know for sure whether Hundley wanted me to do this or maybe it was just a....I didn't see any other solution, that for me to take that. He was going to go for the other name. Endicott was on leave that day and was out at his home. So I called him and asked if I could come up to see him. He said yes. He'd been out on his tractor and he came in. We had some, a couple of beers in his kitchen and I shot the breeze. And I explained to him what the situation was, that I couldn't do this. I wouldn't do it, both couldn't and wouldn't without his support. And that meant two things: One, administrative support, and also rely on him for advice counsel on how to operate with other parts of the service, for example, the Heart Institute or

the Communicable Disease Center and so forth. I mean, administratively, hell, I was three grades below any of the directors of that, but I was kind of charged to coordinate everything. I knew at the time.... I'd heard.... Endicott, at least Endicott's wife and Hundley's wife, as I mentioned, put us to go on covering more detail and then probably strike it out from the earlier thing, because I want to go into it in a little bit of detail.

So I don't know what else Hundley's going to do. He didn't, Endicott didn't indicate that he and Hundley had talked about this at all. And then the real strange thing which we'd been talking about a couple, three hours. And he asked me out of the blue real quickly, the way he did things every now and then said, "How'd you like to go to Ghana?" He said the Cancer Institute had a research institute—this was back when Ghana was a nice place—and they had a research institute over there for all of Africa. And he said, "Go over there to run the research institute." And we'd had maybe, I don't know, maybe three or four beers. And my response was rather immediate. I said, "Any other time I'd give, literally give my right arm to do this," but I said, "As of right now, Jim Hundley needs me. I can't do it." He didn't say a word. So when.... I never figured that one out, anyway.

So I went back and met with Hundley that evening. I found out latter Hundley never ate. And I can't go without eating, but we met, I think, at 5:30 and we ended up, I think we finished at 11:30 that night. I never did eat any damn dinner and.... But Hundley the tiredest guy I ever saw in my life that night. And I kind of felt sorry for him. He was a skinny little runt anyway, and God, he just looked like a cadaver. He was just bone tired. He couldn't even think well. And we got to the point of... There was one guy I wanted him to get, Paul Kotin, whom I wanted him to get as executive director. And they'd just talked Kotin into coming into the Service from, I think from the University of Southern California. He was a good guy. He's a big wheel and good, very sharp. He's director of Institute of Environmental Health now. And I didn't want to, because of his newness, he didn't want to push for Kotin.

And he kind of obliquely said, "Well," as he called Terry—he referred to him as the surge. [Laughter] "The surge and I were talking and we both decided it was going to be a dirty study. Tough. Rough. Might be a meat grinder." And he said, "We're both very high on you and we hate to see a young very promising officer be thrown to the wolves," not saying he wanted me to do this. And I said, "Well, possibly if I know, if I've been warned beforehand, I know beforehand that it's a calculated risk, then if the wolves get me, maybe it won't hurt so much." He immediately brightened up because this was obviously what he was maneuvering for, and he said, "I'll let you do this under one condition—[inaudible]—I'll let you do this under one condition, and that is you promise, absolutely promise that if you have any kind of

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trouble at all, you let me know right away." He said, "Don't let anything build up so that it gets over your head. Call for help the first sign of anything." He said, "If those are the conditions, and you promise you'll do that, then I'll kind of accept your volunteering."

Even though I had Endicott's kind of endorsement and kind of promise for backing, and I knew that there was no other answer, I knew there wasn't. And I also—well, he was—as I say I never felt so sorry for a guy in my life. And I guess that this was called in [inaudible]

before the meeting. I guess it was. I guess it was. Maybe that's what all the trouble was. And he had to tell Terry something. God, he looked tired. But even with all that, something within me still said, "Don't do it! Don't do it!" But I silenced that and said, "Okay. I'll do it."

MOSS: Pride?

HAMILL: We shook hands. We shook hands on that. The thing is the only time I ever shook....Maybe the only other time we shook hands was when he appointed me. In other words of back and before July meeting, he chatted with me a couple of times. He found out a lot about me. We chatted a couple of times, and he said, "Do you want the job," or he said, "We could take the job," I forget how he put it, you know, originally. He [inaudible] put a committee and I said, "Okay." And we shook hands then. He said, "Welcome aboard," and so forth. Then we shook hands, then, as I recall, that was the last time we ever shook hands, and I'll guarantee you if it is, it will be. I mean if we.... [Laughter] But anyway so that was that. Maybe that was also part of the exhilaration. I guess because it was rather late before the meeting. Pride. Surely ambition. But I was, just on that score, I was never able to enjoy the luxury in my exalted position. I didn't have the resources and I didn't have the time. I was harried from morning until night. And whenever I did call six or eight months later when I started getting a little mean, I would call, say, the director of the CDC had one or two stars when I started to bully people.

MOSS: CDC?

HAMILL: Communicable Disease Center.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: I'd actually started to bully people. A couple of times I...but this was six or eight months later if I did. So many run-ons it's unbelievable how many run-arounds the old pros can give you. But I finally got there. I say, "Look. Don't tell that to me. Don't tell me now. Don't tell me no. Tell Luther Terry no." I mean, you know, "Don't give me that crap." And but it was just towards the end when I started, you know, getting like that, using the authority of my office in the sense that I was his, the surgeon general's agent in these activities.

MOSS: Let me back up a minute since you mentioned Terry. At what point again was it decided that he would be the chairman of the committee?

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HAMILL: Maybe if Hundley and I decided that that same night, two nights before.

MOSS: Okay. Because I was just checking up on this here and...

HAMILL: I think ...

MOSS: ... the *New York Times*, October 28th...

HAMILL: October 28<sup>th</sup>? This was just...

MOSS: It says, "The surgeon general names ten scientists to study the effects. He is chairman." So at any rate the *New York Times* had it on the 28<sup>th</sup> that he was to be...

HAMILL: I think this was maybe a couple of weeks, this now.... Oh, this was about the time we must have just released the—when was the news release of the committee? Was that the news release of the committee?

MOSS: Right. The 28<sup>th</sup>.

HAMILL: Okay. Maybe that was the deadline that we had to decide some things apart from the meeting being in a couple of days.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: That was probably the deadline. Yeah. And I think that what we decided was that at least we'll start out that way, with him being chairman. And it may shift for some reason or other later on, but for this first meeting anyway. I think that's what.... And Hundley and I decided this, I know, and not Terry. Hundley and I decided this. Terry may have had some, obviously had input with Hundley. But Hundley and I were the ones who talked this over, all the strategies and consequences of this or that because.... I kept vacillating in my own mind between actually shifting to B.J. or having Terry.

MOSS: Okay. Now you say that Terry came in as presiding officer and for a brief time at the beginning of sessions. Now in the sessions themselves after he left, did the chairman devolve upon Bayne-Jones, upon you, or just open discussion?

HAMILL: Hundley. Hundley.

MOSS: Hundley.

HAMILL: Yeah.

MOSS: Okay.

HAMILL: But it was never.... It was not heavy-handed, though. But as far as acting chairman, it went over to Hundley for, gee, I guess, for all of the formal meetings. Yeah. And the first couple of meetings I was kind of a scared little rabbit. I mean I didn't.... In a sense that the chairman, I always deferred to the chairman, but after the second or third I'd interrupt any time I wanted to and if I wanted to develop a point, I'd just, I developed the point. Later on I more or—I was almost—in effect I was taking over his kind of the chairman.

MOSS: Discussion leader.

HAMILL: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I didn't open the meeting. I didn't say, "Good morning," you know, "gentlemen." I didn't.... At least I didn't do that part, but I was leading the discussion.. Yeah. Yeah. After, well, maybe starting the second meeting. [Laughter] Yeah. But Hundley was definitely the chairman, definitely the chairman. Yeah.

MOSS: Would you say after the first meeting that the general thrust of the committee's work had been decided or did it take more than one meeting to decide the directions in which you were going to go?

HAMILL: The general thrust was decided, definitely.

MOSS: And by the first meeting we mean the whole Friday and Saturday business.

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Now we made some modifications, but not really anything substantial. At first that second day's meeting was very productive. That Saturday afternoon, sat down and sketched out subcommittees, who was going to head up different subcommittees. Let me check on an important point. We blocked out broad areas, kind of blocked out a table of contents, the areas that had to be covered, I mean, let's say, in cancer: epidemiology, epidemiology of lung cancer, the historical perspective, the so-called animal carcinogenesis studies, the test tube type of stuff, painting tar on mice and stuff like that. We designated the areas, and I think we also tentatively designated which one of the committee members would be attached to which area. Now, one thing we didn't decide, and we never really quite decided it, ever, was how much authority any given subcommittee chairman had for his report, subcommittee report. This was never, well, even to the time the report was written, was ever completely decided.

MOSS: Why was it found convenient to do this?

HAMILL: Do which? You mean not make the decision or...

MOSS: Right.

HAMILL: Because there was a balance of operation of the most efficient thing. It was a compromise between efficiency and my real ultimate study. The most efficient thing would've been, you know, as long as we were

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going to have a study and not just after ten hours and two drinks decide that we'd solved all the problems. We decided we had to break up and really reexamine all the areas and designating the one committee man for each major area and I would work with that committee man, each one of the committee men in setting up a subcommittee. Each guy wanted to operate a little differently, which they did. Each guy operated a little differently. I said, "It's up to each one of you guys how you want to do it. You can call hearings." One of the subcommittee guys wrote the whole thing himself. He worked like hell, did all the research himself, did all the literature review and everything. And did a beautiful job, did a beautiful job. And he was the first one to finish his report, and oddly enough...[Interruption] ... we changed his report very little even a year later. He did a beautiful job, very.... no fuss and muss. Several guys had huge subcommittees with thirty and forty consultants.

MOSS: Where did the appointments of the consultants come from? From the subcommittee chairman?

HAMILL: Yeah, together with me, in almost every single case. His suggestions, my suggestions, we worked together. And in some ways, this was as big a job as appointing the committee, was setting up all these subcommittees, trying to get them operating. And then I wanted to attend every one of them.

MOSS: Did you try for the same unbiased viewpoints in ...

HAMILL: Oh yeah. Yeah. As much as possible, but it wasn't quite as necessary because some of the guys we had to have on a subcommittee for a particular guy who was just the greatest expert in the world in that particular area.

MOSS: Skilled.

HAMILL: We'd have to have him whether he'd made up his mind or not. Then we would.... See, then we were capable of countering his bias, you know, discounting his, if we considered a particular bias, that was okay.

MOSS: Was his bias documented in any way?

HAMILL: I mean some of the guys we had were very well documented biases. Sure. Oh, hell, yes. It was necessary to. But it was necessary to deal with them in a particular guy. Sure.

MOSS: Okay. You mentioned a minute ago your ultimate study and earlier you had said something about the scientific community aspect did something about healing by doing a really great report with unquestionable integrity and that kind of thing. What were you after? What did you mean by that?

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HAMILL: Well, two things. If there are two questions, then there are two answers, two different levels. The healing of the scientific community.... not healing. It wasn't as severe, fought with the same consequences that we are on a Vietnam, anti-Vietnam crisis in our society, but there was a lot of very, very heated discussion, which doesn't particularly hurt, but does interfere with good discussion.

A lot of studies were proliferating. A lot of time was being spent by a lot of good men, I thought unnecessary work—that there would be a point at which you [I] made up your [my] mind. There had to be. In which you convert a dependent variable, that is, the thing under study, and you relate everything to try to shed light on it. The time you convert that to an independent variable, and that is, the rock upon which you make other studies, that was my real—on a professional, substantive professional level—that was kind of what I was really after in a sense that then I would probably want to spend the next five or ten years of my life using this as a tool to study and unlock some of the mechanisms primarily of bronchitis and emphysema, but also lung cancer and heart disease. And once you know that it is implicated and is involved, then you use that as a tool to see: How does this involvement work? What is the mechanism of action?

And the thing I was after, and the reason I was so hot on this was that smoking is a very peculiar thing. I'm an epidemiologist, that is, the study of disease in populations of people. Now, the biggest single difficulty in epidemiology, studying populations, is identifying your classes or categories or diagnoses of what you're doing. For example, nutrition, the study of malnutrition. Well, there are two levels: One is an extremely difficult level, and that is, what do you mean by malnutrition and what are your criteria? First what do you mean by malnutrition, then what are your criteria for malnutrition? The point is that as of today, the state-of-the-art just isn't developed properly enough to say that. Now, even if it were developed to that point, what you mean by malnutrition and what are the criteria, then to go out in the real world and to lump the people into the diagnostic categories of malnourished and properly nourished is an extremely difficult problem, technically.

MOSS: It's rather like trying to identify an adequate wage economically.

HAMILL: Right. Right. There's no good handle and to try to find out what people have been eating is damn near impossible. Now smoking lends itself.... Another thing I've been involved in was air pollution before, and one of the things I wanted to study always was areas, all else being equal, the only thing that differed between the two populations was high pollution, low pollution. It almost doesn't exist that way because as soon as you get contrasting levels of pollution, you get contrasting social

economic levels and styles of life and everything else is different. But here's one very interesting thing, and that is, smoking, cigarette smoking. We'll forget about the others but cigarette smoking. There is the possibility, the thing that was really fascinating, was the possibility of a different breed of cat.

MOSS: Yes. You mentioned this before.

HAMILL: The smoker as against the nonsmoker.

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MOSS: Right. Either psychologically or physiologically.

HAMILL: Yeah. Yeah. Or both.

MOSS: Or both.

HAMILL: Going together, which is even more likely.

MOSS: Yes. Or interrelated.

HAMILL: Yeah, a kind of joined thing. Now, smoking is a label. You can separate your population. You can't go on and separate you population into well nourished and poorly nourished very well. There's just not a sharp line of demarcation. But you can, and with a fair degree of reliability—this is the whole crux—separate your population into different categories of smokers quite readily and without spending hundreds of hours with each person, psychoanalyzing them, doing all kinds of tests on them, with quite a good degree of reliability, especially if you just want to contrast the never smoked as against the pack or more a day smokers for twenty years. And then all the rest just put into a middle ground, but just keep everything contrast these two contrasting populations. It's a good, it's a remarkable label. Just like sex is a good label. It's one of the best labels we have epidemiologically. We get fooled every now and then, but usually we do a pretty good job without too elaborate examinations finding out what are boys and what are girls. Age is another very convenient label. We were seldom too wrong on that. We seldom mix up a six year-old kid or a sixty-year-old kid. Another very convenient one epidemiologically is race, especially the parameter of color, of Negro and white. Then there's a whole category of others. And then you people say, "Well, what do you do with the mulattos?" It depends on what you're studying, I mean whether you throw all of them out or lump them in one category or the other. But there are good ways of handling these things.

Smoking is almost as good a label as these other categories. And what I wanted primarily—emphysema was the thing that I was really after. It was one of the best opportunities of getting some population studies and labeling almost like with.... it was almost as good a labeling as radioactive substances to trace or label elements or.... Say, within the body, for example, you can label iodine. Use 131. The thyroid picks it up and then



you can, by using a, what do you call it, a scintillator, you measure the thyroid activity by not, you know, directly seeing the thyroid, but you see what's happening. You can follow the I-131 as it's being utilized throughout the body. That's a label. So when using a whole population, you can follow the movement of cigarette smoking or various diseases. Your handle is, can be cigarette smoking. Okay. That's what I meant within the scientific community. If the scientific get enough.... If we can reach a decision, if we can reach a decision, for God's sake, let's reach it so that we can convert, rather than spending the next twenty years with cigarette smoking being the dependent variable, convert it to an independent variable as quickly as we can and really get going on some of these other substances. If we can do it, if our knowledge plus the true answer is such that we can convert it that way. If, you know, if it's possible. Okay. That's what I mean by the scientific community.

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I had even more, even much bigger ambitions than all this, too. And that was kind of a whole philosophical quest in almost like [inaudible] Whitehead, the whole modus of scientific, as I used to.... I think I used to.... I kept using the term, all of our inference—making ability of the entire, all of the machinery of the so-called scientific method. And rather than sitting on our fannies as we used to do when I was a philosopher and just talk about different modes of thought and knowledge and knowledge of knowledge, epistemology, I've always been a great believer in concrete examples, whatever I'm after, and work the thing to death and universalize or generalize from the particular always. That's the way I always like to perceive. And if I thought.... Smoking was a very interesting subject in that it had been studied from so many different angles and in this entire complex of science. And by science I mean a methodology and techniques, specific techniques, both.

MOSS: Do you also mean the presumption of causation?

HAMILL: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

MOSS: Okay. Yeah.

HAMILL: That's kind of the heart of the whole thing. Now, in viewing causal relationships between—you say A causes B, just what is that relationship?—and a lot of them going back to scholastic theology and talking about it for the next thousand years. Here's something I thought we could really get our teeth into for a good reason. And that is an extraordinary amount of good work that had already been done on this subject. Probably more than any other topic in the history of medicine, believe it or not.

Now, another extremely important thing is that our systems of evidence.... we had a lot of independent systems operating. By independent I mean the techniques and the subjects and the inferences derived from basic study of carcinogenesis in animals, say painting mice with tar, you got a whole set: of assumptions, and then, within those set of assumptions, you apply some techniques, and then you derive data and hopefully you can draw some, at least

some, possibly some different kind of conclusions from the data. That might say something about lung cancer. Autopsies in human populations and carefully identifying smokers and nonsmokers is another set of operation, it's another operation with another whole set of assumptions. They're different people, both different subjects being studied and also different, totally different kinds of investigators, a whole different way of looking at the world. And these things can be operated if done cleanly. One hundred percent independent of each other, and that is, one could be done on Saturn, the other being done on Venus. There is no necessary interconnection.

This was the way I wanted to study all parts of the smoking problem and purposely keep things compartmentalized and the different systems—I would call them witnesses at times just for imagery, just like a person—keep them so that one didn't contaminate the other. But even more important so that we, as judges, when we talked about one, that's all we talked about. And I would keep hammering this thing. I'd say, you know, because the tendency is when you say, "Well, how do you know what is all on your data on animal carcinogenesis?" All the time almost all the previous investigators would start studying things and then do a poll or popular study

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when sometimes it was necessary they'd say, "Well, then we have evidence from autopsy studies." And then they keep bringing other kinds of extraneous information. If I were a judge, I would say—what do they say?—irrelevant or, you know...

MOSS:           And immaterial?

HAMILL:        Yeah. Yeah. This should not bear on this. Follow your whole chain independent of everything else. You're following your chain. And I would keep.... I bucked some of the guys. A few of them never did understand what my point was, ever. Nobody quite understood it to start with. A few, I think, understood it towards the end because it was inefficient. It was a very inefficient way of operating, obviously. The human intellect does not operate that way unless you rigidly.... I mean it takes tremendous effort to force it to operate that way. And this was, as I say, very inefficient, very time-consuming, but I thought absolutely necessary to do this thing cleanly. Let every single witness stand on his own two feet, its own two feet.

Now, what I was after was not.... When the whole thing is put together and all the synthesis takes place, you come up with the answer, two levels of answer: One is, you answer at the specific thing that we're getting paid for, you know, just what is the magnitude and nature of the health hazards of smoking. That was the question, nature and magnitude of the health hazards, to smoke would hurt you, in other words. If so, how much and in what ways? But because of all these different independent systems, does the thing really make a total, consistent picture all the way through, the different whole systems of thought. A lot of these historically, a lot of these kind of people always, you know, kind of lived by themselves. It would have been much better had they continued like in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to more or less operate by themselves rather than have all the communication floods

which even influences the test tube. [inaudible] of question on it. [inaudible] And I say contaminate his thinking a lot of times. Then he jumps.... And he starts making assumptions and also, the biggest thing is, he over—interprets his data in light of a prevailing, I used to use the term myth, which bothered people, a prevailing myth.

MOSS: A bias? Presumption?

HAMILL: Yes. But by myth I meant specifically a thing of the scientific community was almost assuming was Gospel truth when it wasn't Gospel truth.

MOSS: Was according it the validity of having been proved.

HAMILL: Yes. When it'd never been proved. I like to categorize my things, those that have been proved on one side and those that are still quite tentative on another side.

MOSS: What do you consider proof?

HAMILL: Well, that's a...

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MOSS: Yes. Okay.

HAMILL: That's a whole another huge ball of wax.

MOSS: Okay. Let's get rid of that.

HAMILL: And I don't think...

MOSS: No. Okay.

HAMILL: I don't think that'll...

MOSS: Well, it didn't...

HAMILL: But these were the kinds of things that were uppermost in what I considered proof, what I considered both proof and the nature of causation, and the nature of knowledge, systematic knowledge and inference-making abilities, and validities.

MOSS: Okay. You say that most of the committee really didn't get on the same bandwagon...

HAMILL: Oh, no. They got on the.... They didn't fully understand exactly what I was talking about.

MOSS: Yes. Okay. Now how about Terry and Hundley?

HAMILL: No. Definitely not.

MOSS: Okay. Do you think that this was possibly some of the source of your trouble with them?

HAMILL: Yes. In all fairness to Terry and Hundley, they were getting impatient with me and my shenanigans because the committee, there was absolutely no question, was my committee. In fact the committee told Terry and Hundley that. And I found a peculiar thing happening with me and the committee by identification, loyalty. All of my loyalty was to this committee later on. I mean if it ever came to any rupture for any reason, you know, even though I was a career officer and hoping to retire someday and get the great benefits thereof and all that kind of stuff, if it ever came to a necessary choose your side, it wouldn't have taken me a thousandth of a second to know which side I was on. In other words, let's say Terry will say in public for some reason or other, Terry and the committee had a disagreement and one called the other a liar. By that, when I say a thousandth of a second, why, it wouldn't have taken me a ten thousandth of a second to know where I would have been, and still at the same time trying to be as much as I could a loyal Public Health Service officer. But I say that my highest loyalty, oddly enough, I mean it might sound paradoxical, my highest loyalty or the greatest loyalty I could give would be to totally identify with the committee and protect them and serve them at all

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cost because that's what the original charge was. That's what the original charge was. They were to have everything they wanted and in the way they wanted it and that's what I pledged myself to doing even when Terry and Hundley disagreed. That was the original covenant. And that's what, by God, I meant to keep. I meant to keep it, and I almost did. I didn't, but I damn near did. I came close to it. In fact, I almost made it a holy crusade after a while and I had to because there were a lot of reneges on it, a lot of reneges.

MOSS: When did the reneges start coming?

HAMILL: Almost right away. Almost right away.

MOSS: In what form?

HAMILL: The first was the resources.

MOSS: Yeah. Okay.

HAMILL: The staff. Of our working staff, my information officer was a lush. Nobody wanted him. He was a refugee from the Peace Corps and he couldn't get an assignment anywhere. They peddled him off on me. I had a very important post for a biostatistician. And my biostatistician was a real derelict. I finally accepted him with the promise that he would be.... they were going to kick him out of the Cancer Institute. He just couldn't get anything done. He was fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven, I don't know, neurotic. He was burned out. He wasn't stupid, but he was burned out, and he hadn't done anything for six or eight years, and they wanted to get rid of him. And I finally agreed, with the idea that he would be the flunky for a good biostatistician I was able to get. I never got one. And here, he was the only one I had.

MOSS: Okay. To what do you attribute...

HAMILL: My secretary, the best one I ever had, I didn't get her from the Service. I hired her from the outside. The only people I could get from the Service were retreads or rejects, except one guy. Owen Scott was my executive officer for three or four months and he was good, damn good. Then Ken Endicott, I went to Endicott personally, and Endicott was the one who detailed him to me. And he did a beautiful job. And he was very good. But one of the reasons I got him was he was between assignments, and all.... I mean I want to cut the legs off that. Nobody paid, nobody hurt themselves even then, and his replacement that's when I really started getting bitter, because I knew the gal. I knew that she was the administrative officer in air pollution and they were trying to peddle her off on me. I would keep finding.... Hundley's stock remark was for almost everything, "I think of the person. They'll get him for me." Well, I think I fingered at least three or four people, and they didn't have a reason why I couldn't have them, that particular person. And finally, I ended up with this gal they were trying to peddle off on me. She slavishly followed the book.

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MOSS: This was the problem of trying to crack the feudal baronies again, wasn't it?

HAMILL: Yeah. And their—by "their" I mean Hundley and Terry's either inability or reluctance to rock the boat and do something about it despite the promise. And this gal I got as administrative officer had been a WAC [Women's Army Corps] officer. She's a good gal. She's a friend of mine now. In a very stable situation she's good. She knows the book well. She works hard. Within little tiny things she actually could be a little bit imaginative. You know, if it's the difference between using yellow paper and white paper. And she tries to be helpful, but my God, in a study like this, when there are no guidelines anyway, and it's questioning—you're going at five times the normal speed, and it's a question of stealing anything you can get. Because, one guy put it, what I need, and I found one of the guys who I need, was, "If you want a pint of pigeon milk, you just tell them, as long as you don't ask him any questions of where he got it, he'll get it for you." And, you

know, that was the kind of guy I needed for this kind of a study.

Owen Scott, the good one I had for almost four months, was very successful. First, he stabilized me. I respected him and I was very impatient of all red tape, but he would warn me when I was going too far and I would listen to him and he kept me out of serious trouble a couple of times because I knew he wasn't that high bound. I mean if he warned me, I knew there was something to be warned about, so I'd listen to him. But we were successful in getting.... This was back in '62 when Xerox machines were at a very, very high priority and we beat the Pentagon out for the next month's supply of Xerox machine for, we had our own for our study.

So, well, let's end on this for tonight on the second-rate staff I was able to assemble. Every time I would finger anybody, a specific person, there was always a reason why I couldn't have that person. As I repeat, the only really great person I had on my entire staff was my chief secretary and I got her from the outside. And the ones I got from inside, secretaries, just were real mediocre or less. The second best one I got, I recruited her from another federal department. Yeah, that was the.... So as I say, when you say, "When did they start to renege," my reply is, "Immediately."

MOSS:       Okay.

HAMILL:     As soon as they got the committee on board. I think this is kind of important because I used a rather indelicate imagery one time when I got mad and said, "You used me as a pimp."

MOSS:       To get the committee.

HAMILL:     Yeah. Yeah. And as soon as I got the guys committed, then they started, they started renegeing right away.

MOSS:       Just as one quick footnote I think we ought to have in here that you've been smoking cigars and I've been smoking a pipe throughout the interviews.

HAMILL:     Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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