

Christine Camp Oral History Interview—JFK#4, 11/24/1969
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Camp, a John F. Kennedy (JFK) Senate and campaign staff member (1959-1960) and Assistant White House Press Secretary (1961-1963), discusses White House staff members, Pierre E.G. Salinger's role as an intermediary between the U.S. and USSR, and advance work and press relations on domestic and international presidential trips, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Christine Camp

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Christine Camp—JFK #4

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Fourth of Four Oral History Interviews

with

Christine Camp

November 24, 1969
Washington, D.C.

By Ann M. Campbell

For the John F. Kennedy Library

CAMPBELL: I'd thought that we'd start tonight with a little bit more talk about the staff in the White House. What staff members did the press find most useful to talk to? Who did they enjoy talking to besides Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] and people in your office?

CAMP: Outside the press office you mean?

CAMPBELL: Yes

CAMP: Well, it would depend on what story they were covering and what angle of the story. With the exception of the Cuban Missile Crisis and other big hooahaws that were rather classified in nature, the White House staff was really open to anybody who wanted to question them. They'd either come through our office and ask for an appointment or, more likely than not, they'd go direct to the person they'd want to interview, and if that person wanted to, they would. But there was no real centralized control on press contacts in the White House among the staff.

CAMPBELL: Did your office ever make an attempt to restrict the access of the press to a White House staff member?

CAMP: Well, let's see. Again, I go back to the Cuban Missile Crisis. There, indeed, we did and for good and sufficient reasons, which I think are perfectly obvious. In that case, this was not an arbitrary decision on Pierre's part; this was part of the whole security of the government at the time and also how one should conduct oneself under national emergency. We did request that the press office be informed of who they [staff members] were seeing among the press corps. There was no attempt at censorship or restriction of what they said, we just wanted to be informed of where the press was going and who they were talking to.

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CAMPBELL: And what sort of pattern would you look for in that...

CAMP: We weren't looking for any pattern.

CAMPBELL: Nothing.

CAMP: Nothing. I suppose—I'm only speculating now because I don't know that it was ever used or that it served any purpose at all—I suppose the thought was that if a story were to appear in a paper and that it was injurious to the national interest or to the conduct of that day-to-day circumstances regarding the Soviet Union and the missile crisis, that we would have some knowledge or somewhere to go to start to find out where it came from, which is an essential part from that standpoint. But we didn't look at the list after they'd come in or anything of that nature. It was merely filing a report as to who saw whom and where.

CAMPBELL: I thought that it would be worthwhile to get your perceptions of what you saw from your seat in the press office about other staff members close to the President [John F. Kennedy], how they interacted with each other, how they interacted with the President. Maybe I'll just throw out a few names and you can....
Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan].

CAMP: Well, Ralph was very close to the President. My association with Ralph goes way back to the primary campaigns where I first met him. He was a member of the staff on the Hill, and he had had a long association with Kennedy. He was at the time I met him in '59 on, I believe, the Labor Committee in Senate. He had left the staff physically, but JFK called on Dungan for numerous pieces of advice and relied on his knowledge and so forth. But Ralph had ready access to the President and to all members of the staff. I would call Ralph one of the swingmen. His lines were rather clearly defined on the nature of clearances and hiring the staff and processing political appointments and that kind of thing. He was a very able guy, very attuned to what the President wanted in that regard, worked very closely with people like Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen]—to my knowledge anyway; whether they had any personal difficulties, I am not aware of them—in the Counsel's [Special Counsel to the President] office—Sorensen, Feldman [Myer "Mike" Feldman], O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], and so forth.

CAMPBELL: How much did your office have to do with Dungan?

CAMP: With Dungan, very little, very little, because he was what I would... There were really several strict lines of demarcation in the White House. One had to do with the pure gut politics of organization and party and the Democratic National Committee and all that. We never came into it until there was a party matter which the President would address himself to in relation to his being the head of the party. Before that, we had no real interest. The only

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interest that we were in on per se was that Pierre and Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher], by virtue of their like contacts, particularly in California—Pierre's from California and Andy is, too—but Andy also had wide contacts in New Jersey and among the Negro political structure. So they were deeply involved in political life insofar as that's concerned, but it wasn't structured; it was only ad hoc to what they were doing in a personal interest sort of way.

CAMPBELL: Okay, Larry O'Brien, how do you perceive him from the press office?

CAMP: Well, I'm a fan of Larry's because Larry was really the first boss I had during this time, and he had the great wit to hire me, so I'm very prejudiced in his favor. Larry, in my view, throughout the primary campaign, the nomination, the presidential election, right on up through the White House and today, is probably the most astute and warm human being that I have had the pleasure of dealing with in a long, long while. He couples humanity with being a solid professional, and I think that that would be my view regardless of any other opinion I might hear or come upon. I know Larry had suffered, probably from a lot of post-assassination difficulties by staying on at the White House, but I feel sure Larry did it in the best interests of the country. And I would support him on that.

CAMPBELL: How about Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.]?

CAMP: Huh! Arthur Schlesinger! Well, I have very strong views about Arthur Schlesinger and not because I don't like him personally. But in relation to the White House staff, Schlesinger was one of those that we on the West Wing would refer to as "that egghead" in the East Wing, because Arthur did not come on early in the operational part of the campaign. We never really knew him. I'm sure he was back here or at Harvard writing great position papers, and after he decided to support Kennedy, I'm sure he made a large contribution. But operationally, day to day, not at all, insofar as my view is concerned because... For example, I take great issue with his account of his own relative importance as it's outlined in *A Thousand Days*. I'm sure all he says is true from his perspective, but it sure ain't in my perspective at all. He was not the right arm of President Kennedy. If he was, he sure got by our door, and we were closer to that office

than he was, and he had to walk a whole couple of blocks to get there. No, I think Arthur—I always describe the White House staff and the relationship with the President being a series of concentric circles, and I would put Arthur on the outside of those circles.

CAMPBELL: Sorensen on the inside?

CAMP: Well, on the inside is the President. In the next orbiting circle would be the Attorney General [Robert F. Kennedy], who was the close friend and confidante, possibly with O'Donnell and the so-called Irish

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Mafia, including Dave Powers [David F. Powers] and a lot of—possibly Ralph Dungan and Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.]. Maybe they're the second circle. Then would come, say, the Sorensens and the Feldmans and the Mac Bundys [McGeorge Bundy] and the Salingers. Salinger was crossing every line because he wasn't really tied up with either end. Then would come the military aides and the Arthur Schlensingers and the ladies' staff over in the East Wing and all of that. It depends on what the operation was, what the mission was. I wouldn't say that any of them didn't have access; I just think that the relative importance is more to be found if you look at it in that way: family first, clan second, the old pols—because they were the closest—and then fanning from there. It depended on when you were employed and how they felt about taking you into their confidence. That was really the way they rather set the scene—they meaning the President and the Attorney General and the family.

CAMPBELL: Now, Reardon was an old Kennedy staff member whose responsibilities were perhaps lessening or...

CAMP: Well, I'm frank to say I don't really understand and never did, even while I was there, what Ted's duties were. But from what I gather, it was very similar to what he was doing on the Hill for the President; it was much in line with personal affairs, family affairs. Ted was rather invisible as far as the inter-White House staffing was concerned. We all knew that he had other duties to perform which really didn't pertain to the White House.

CAMPBELL: What staff member, other than Salinger, did the press office see the most of?

CAMP: The President.

CAMPBELL: The President?

CAMP: The President of the United States, yes. Mainly because our office was in such juxtaposition—as being right across the hall.... Now, if you're asking

what staff member came into the office, everybody would drop in occasionally. It depended on what—we had the most business with Mac Bundy and the National Security Council staff on international affairs. So we were either dealing with him or Brom Smith [Bromley K. Smith] or whatever aide there was who was doing the work on any kind of question. O'Donnell was in a great deal. We had great work and coordination to deal with in Sorensen's shop, so we were in touch with them a great deal.

But we moved around, too. If we needed to know anything from the congressional liaison staff, why up the second floor we'd go; or if we needed to have anything done on speech writing or check up on where legislative programs were, that was Sorensen's office. National Security was downstairs in Mac Bundy's shop. Military was in Easy Wing. Pam Turnure [Pamela Turnure], we had. So we did as much going to them as they came to us. Furthermore, it's a very small staff when you think of it. There are only, you know,

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a couple of dozen people that you're dealing with, so it's just not like the big bureaucracy you find in another department or agency.

CAMPBELL: What sort of contacts would have had with Bundy's staff? On what sort of issue, what sort of problem, would you see that much of him?

CAMP: Well, first of all, one of the duties of the duties of Mac Kilduff [Malcolm M. Kilduff] and earlier, Jay Gildner, was to read the worldwide cable files maintained by the—oh, what do they call it? I guess the operations room.

CAMPBELL: Situation room?

CAMP: Situation room. And they had direct access to do so on behalf of Pierre. This was in order to brief Pierre on any worldwide developments which may come to his attention, over and above what we were getting from the wire services around the world. And if Pierre was alerted to some developing trend that might break during the day or the President might have to involve himself in, then Pierre would ask for a briefing by a member of the Bundy staff, or he'd go down and see Mac himself, which was, actually, more the case a lot of the times.

We found early in the game that if we didn't make the effort to go to people that were dealing with it, they weren't going to come to us, mainly because it's an occupational hazard of press offices that if you are associated in the minds of people who don't understand what the press is all about or what information is all about, they automatically think you're a member of the opposition, you're going to leak everything that you ever hear inside an office. And that's one of the principal problems that Pierre had early in the game was to gain access to the decision-making process all the way along—the Bay of Pigs, which was the first one. But we found you have to go to them; you have to seek out what's going on today, in order to be prepared.

CAMPBELL: Did Salinger ever evidence resentment over being left out, if you will, of

this decision-making process?

CAMP: No, Pierre is not a fellow to carry grudges, for one thing. I think he was a little short, meaning he's got an ego just like the rest of us. I think on temporary grounds he was disappointed that he wasn't considered to be a member of the team. But I think the handling of the Bay of Pigs was a perfect illustration to everybody around. I think the President recognized it, too; that you've got to keep your pressman informed of every development so that he can make a judgment on how best to play a story or how best to represent the President and so forth. But Pierre would bear no resentment whatsoever. It was a matter of just learning the process and how to handle it.

CAMPBELL: Then there was a change after that?

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CAMP: What used to enrage him, however, were the so-called bureaucrats in other departments and agencies who would not keep him informed of developing things in their own departments; that he would read about on the front page and about which he should have been alerted. I mean, he wasn't trying to manage the news or trying to get in on their act per se, but, after all, they all represented the executive branch which was beholden to the President. But this is a very complicated government that we've got. That used to make him very, very mad.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember a specific example of something like that?

CAMP: Oh, God after six years.... No I can't. If I do, I'll add it.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask if you recalled something I've read about someplace—a time when various information officers from different agencies were asked to submit briefs about how they thought the image of administration might be enhanced, how they thought news coverage might be improved. Did your office get involved in that at all or was it....

CAMP: Well, that is a new one on me.

CAMPBELL: Is it?

CAMP: Yes.

CAMPBELL: I've just come across that recently.

CAMP: Well, it's only natural to assume that information officers and—well, not only information officers but presidential appointees throughout the government, their suggestions would be welcomed. You know, "Here is something you may not know about, you might want to mention it to your next press

conference.” This could be either to the President or to Pierre. “This is a plus for the administration on X legislation or X program and so forth.” I don’t recall that there was any organized method established. I think that numbers of the appointees throughout government were very public relations-minded in and to themselves. And it would be just nothing for them to send it over and say, “Here it is for what it’s worth.”

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask you a little more about Paul Southwick. You mentioned him last time, his coming over to the White House and his addition to the press office staff. How much did you see of him?

CAMP: I didn’t see anything of him because he was—who was his predecessor? Ed Bayley [Edwin R. Bayley]. He functioned in the same way that Ed Bayley did. It was announced that they were part of our staff, but actually we never had any contact with them at all because

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they were associated on the political end of it. It was just a mere way of explaining their presence in the White House.

CAMPBELL: You had nothing to do, then, with his duties?

CAMP: No, no. I wouldn’t even attempt to describe what they were because I don’t know.

CAMPBELL: I believe that he did have some relation to the plans for 1964. What do you recall about plans for the 1964 campaign of President Kennedy?

CAMP: Well, I don’t recall that there were any real set plans. I do recall that just prior to the assassination, prior to our trip to Dallas, that there was a big powwow of the so-called Kennedy strategists. I think it took place in the White House, as I remember, but I don’t know; it may have been at the Cape or Palm Beach. But I think it was at the White House, and I think this was the only meeting that the President attended. The only thing that I can recall about that meeting was that it had to do, as related to me—and I can’t even remember who told me, anymore; I’m assuming it would be Pierre—with how the campaign was going to be conducted and on what issue.

If you will recall, in ’63 we really didn’t have an issue. After all, the Cuban Missile Crisis was over; there wasn’t really a problem with the economy, and we really had an incumbent in search of an issue that would grab the American people. The one that came out of that meeting, as I remember now, was the war on poverty, which later President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] successfully campaigned on and got his famous legislative program off the ground. But it really was advanced by JFK and his ’64 campaign issue.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask if your office ever got involved in handling press affairs for the extended Kennedy family—for Robert Kennedy, or Mrs. Rose

Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy]. I read someplace, I think, that your office had to do with Robert Kennedy's trip abroad in 1962, perhaps providing press services.

CAMP: 1962. Was that to South Africa?

CAMPBELL: Yes, Indonesia.

CAMP: No, nothing to my knowledge, not as far as the staff is concerned. I recall the trip that he made. His press man, Ed Guthman [Edwin O. Guthman] at that time, may have asked us for advice or to get in touch with embassies abroad or something of that sort which we usually did or asked the State Department to do; but nothing physically, no.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask also if you recalled any particular problems that your office might have had with the navy. I've read someplace about a question of, perhaps, who should announce things—the

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navy from the Pentagon or your office. Do you recall any...

CAMP: The navy, the U.S. Navy?

CAMPBELL: Yes, any particular problems with them?

CAMP: The navy. Well, if you could give me some specific example, I...

CAMPBELL: I have none.

CAMP: Well, we have a number of projects which involve the navy, like the President going aboard an aircraft carrier and that kind of thing. I don't recall any particular instance, now, where they upset us, but they could have very well because they're aggressive people in the Pentagon. But nothing that we couldn't survive.

CAMPBELL: Also, something—just catching up from the last time we talked. You mentioned a little bit about General Clifton [Chester V. Clifton, Jr.], the army aide, and his particular habit of talking to the press. Do you remember any particular instance of a leak of his? Were they serious or minor things?

CAMP: Well, I can't give you an illustration. Again, you know, it's so long ago; it's six years. But I will say that it must have been very serious if Pierre wrote the General a memorandum. Did I describe that to you the last time?

CAMPBELL: You said that he did.

CAMP: Yes, and only one copy.

CAMPBELL: Oh, you didn't say that.

CAMP: There was only one copy, and I typed it and I'm probably the only one—in our office anyway—who knew the existence of it. And that memo was to the effect, as I recall, that we've got to make up our minds who's the press secretary. We'll let the President decide. Now, I know Pierre well enough to know he would not have gone to that length and put it in writing—keeping in mind there were talks before this, because we had cordial relations with the General and we did afterwards—but I know Pierre would not have done that unless he felt it were serious. Now, I can't give you an illustration, but I feel sure that Pierre would not have done it, and he would have been prepared to go to the President on it, too.

CAMPBELL: But as far as you know, he didn't have to?

CAMP: No, the General complied and agreed and everything went swimmingly after that.

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CAMPBELL: I also wanted to catch up from the first interview this detail: you mentioned that you were the person in your office responsible for the handling of classified material. I think it would just be instructive to know what sort of classified material passed through your office, just the general type of things.

CAMP: You'd be surprised. [Laughter]

CAMPBELL: How did it get there?

CAMP: Well, it got there by virtue of the fact that Salinger, as the press secretary who had equal rank with each of the other heads of offices like Sorensen and O'Donnell and so forth, was on the distribution list for a lot of material coming in from all over the government. Principally, foreign affairs is what it was: reports in from embassies on various press matters and that kind of thing; Department of Defense material on troop placements à la the missile crisis, the Bay of Pigs, and so forth. It was really, generally, a cross-section of government classified material, and I was the only one cleared to handle it and log it and file it and keep it. But it could be anything from any source.

CAMPBELL: Did your office ever view your mission as a little bit of using the press? Did you ever get the feeling perhaps, of using them?

CAMP: In order to get a point of view across?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

CAMP: Certainly not on a day-to-day basis. There were occasions—and I would say relatively few, relatively few—where you could maybe make that extension if we tried to plant a question. I can't give you an illustration of this, but I do know that during those circumstances this was directed at informing the people. And Pierre always managed to do it in such a way as leaving the burden of proof on the reporter or hence his editor because I'm sure most journalists would go to their editor and say, "This is the story." But it would be placed in, "We would welcome a question at the press conference today on such and such." And if the question came, fine. If it didn't, fine. But that's the only circumstance I can think of that you could make that judgment.

CAMPBELL: Basically, you viewed your mission as serving the press.

CAMP: Oh, sure. Well, serving the President, number one, and how we conducted ourselves and the manner in which information was presented to the press corps, that's the essential part. To that extent, sure, they're used. It's by the way you present it. Now, you might be able to put the label of "managed news" on that, but my view on managed news is it's okay as long as you manage it wisely. If you do it and do it badly, then you deserve every kick you get. And I can think that on balance and across those years, the Kennedy administration did rather well

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on that. On some thing we goofed, but we're human, too. But to that extent, yes, the press corps can get the idea that they're being used. But I think, on the whole, they're enterprising enough to catch us when we do that and, boy, they let us know and did.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to get to the topic of Mr. Salinger and his special relationship that worked out with the Russians. Do you recall your first knowledge of—the first thing that comes about, I think, is the debate with Salinger and Harrison Salisbury [Harrison Evans Salisbury].

CAMP: That was the famous debate, yeah.

CAMPBELL: Do you recall how that came about?

CAMP: I do indeed. It came about through the good offices of Mrs. Lucy Jarvis, who was then and, as I believe, still is, co-producer of the White Paper series on NBC [National Broadcasting Company] at that time. And she promoted the idea of having a debate between Adzhubei [Alesksei I. Adzhubei] and Salinger and then, later, Salisbury was brought into it. And so it was from that initial contact. It was her idea. I give her full credit for it. This is, you know, a great gal in my estimation. She's

served her country and her corporation very well. But she did it and pulled it off, and that's how it all started.

CAMPBELL: Did the State Department get involved at all in the planning, the briefing?

CAMP: We tried not to because we found that not only—well, we didn't on this one. I wouldn't rap them on that. But we found as much as we could get away with on our own without bringing in the bureaucrats. You know, if you can keep ahead of them, you're all right. Once you get into their clutches, why, they can pretty much deplan and disorganize. I don't recall that the department was in on it at the early stages, not at all, because Lucy was really the channel here.

CAMPBELL: Eventually, did State get involved in the late preparations, briefings or anything, to your knowledge?

CAMP: Do you mean on a day-to-day basis?

CAMPBELL: Preparation for Salinger for this event.

CAMP: Oh, prior to the date?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

CAMP: I would say yes, but limited. I would think that the one that really—no, I remember precisely. It was the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] who gave him the better briefings and worked with him on updating him on current things in Russia and Adzhubei's

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background and all of that. But we had a very close liaison with CIA all through the administration. The department did, too, to a degree, through Manning's [Robert J. Manning] office on that. We could pretty much rely on the department to come up if we worked through that channel. But I wouldn't say that they were instrumental in aiding or abetting the cause because Pierre, you still have to keep in mind, is a very egotistical, gung-ho, go-for-broke guy, and he's very smart and very quick. And a lot of time Pierre doesn't need briefing.

CAMPBELL: Did you have any indication of what the President thought of this proposed debate?

CAMP: He was all for it, otherwise it wouldn't happen. Absolutely.

CAMPBELL: Do you recall what he thought of the outcome?

CAMP: Well, I think, as I recall—again, I’m talking from a long distance of time now—he was pleased with it. Pierre, he thought, did very well for his first go around. And that contact them served later on to a great advantage during the missile crisis and later on, to help set up the first interview that Kennedy gave to Adzhubei, which was then replayed throughout Russia, which had never happened before.

CAMPBELL: Were you involved in the preparations for that?

CAMP: I was indeed. I remember that interview very well. It took place in Cape Cod at the President’s house. That was quite a thing, too, because we had the problem.... You see, the agreement with Adzhubei was that the transcripts of that interview would be released simultaneously in this country and in the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics]. And we were working against time because of the translations. They had to be cleared by both Adzhubei and his staff and by our side. We really had a lot of work on our hands that night trying to get that translation. I remember that Akalovsky [Alexander Akalovsky], who was our interpreter for the President, was sending translations over to the hotel where the staff was staying, and there were two or three of us who were typing up the English translation as it was coming in from him. And that, then, had to go to the Adzhubei staff who were enroute back to New York at the time. We had a shuttle going back, as far as I can remember, to New York. That English translation had to be cleared by him to make sure that it conformed to his Russian. And then, conversely, the whole thing. Their translation, that would be going into Russian would have to be cleared by us. So that was quite a performance, I must admit.

CAMPBELL: Do you have any indication of how the President felt about his performance in that case?

CAMP: Well, the published accounts of his reticence on how well he did, as I remember, are quite accurate. He didn’t feel that he had done all that he could have done. He was rather, as I remember,

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displeased at some of the questions that he got. He thought that maybe he’d been fed a lot of stuff that he shouldn’t have been fed. But I would refer that kind of question to others who were present or knew more about it because I wasn’t at the house when the interview took place. As I recall, the atmosphere at the time was very similar to the way Salinger and Sorensen and Schlesinger described, that he didn’t feel too comfortable about it. But after the thing was, in fact, released in the Soviet Union, I think that took the edge off of it.

CAMPBELL: It’s been suggested in this case, also, I believe, that the State Department was rather upset that standard diplomatic channels had not been utilized to arrange this meeting. In a case like that how would the feedback come? Would it come to your office? Would it come directly to the President?

CAMP: It could come through any channel. But one could assume, at that time, that State Department—well, you could really say any department or agency, but the State particularly, because of its own manner of doing things, would be particularly displeased by any innovation or any kind of a challenge to established protocol. And frankly, it got to become a game with a lot of us: Let's see how we can outwit the State Department today? And they deserved everything they got because it's such a huge place to start with, and they can't really figure out who's in charge.

And I don't know if I recited this little—my particular favorite about the State Department.... Maybe I recited this in the last interview, but I can recall one day that Pierre came back from seeing the President in the morning and said he had just gotten clearance to announce some such, which had to do with a minor foreign affairs matter. Let's say, for the sake of illustration because I don't remember what it was exactly, it was going to be an announcement of a new ambassador to another country, which required simultaneous release. And Pierre told me to call Mr. X in the Department of State, who was the desk officer for the particular country involved. Now why Pierre told me to do this, I don't know. I suppose the President told him to, to let Mr. Blah-Blah know that we were going to make the announcement at eleven o'clock and please carry through with whatever he had to do on the other side.

So I called him. I don't even remember who it was anymore. And I said, "The President has asked Pierre, and Pierre's going to do this at eleven o'clock. He asked me to inform you that the President's policy on...is..." Dead silence on the other end of the phone. Finally he says, "Well, that may be the President's policy, but it may not be the State Department's." [Laughter] And I wondered at the time, and I've wondered ever since, you know, who works for who anymore. But occasionally, you ran into that issue. I couldn't say across the board that was the general atmosphere. You did run into that element sometimes.

CAMPBELL: In between Salinger's debate and the President's interview with Adzhubei, Salinger gets involved in his courier duties with the

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Russians, getting messages from the Premier Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev] and delivering them to President Kennedy. I wondered if you were aware of this business going on when was it?

CAMP: Well—messages from Khrushchev through Pierre?

CAMPBELL: Yes, the secret letter business that I think started with the delivery of one or two directly to Salinger.

CAMP: Well, no, Pierre had.... I don't recall that there were any letters or messages from Premier Khrushchev at that time. Pierre did have very close contacts with the *Tass* man here, whose name escapes me at the moment. But I'm afraid to say history has eluded me now. Without doing some research, I couldn't suggest that he did, no. I knew he was all wrapped up in this, and I knew he was

meeting X, Y, and Z on X street corner, in a restaurant, and I could gauge what it was he was up to, but as for actually claiming that happened, I've have to really do some research.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Also at about this time and a little later, plans were formulated for a proposed TV exchange between the President and Khrushchev. Do you remember whose idea that was to start out with?

CAMP: Well, I'm sorry to be so evasive, but again, it was a long time ago. This was, I think, the natural extension of the Adzhubei interview. Who thought it up—I'm sure it was in conjunction with Pierre and Lucy Jarvis because this would have been a plume in her cap had she been able to carry it out. I think that was a possible—I'm sure the President would have been very intrigued by the whole thing. And actually, it was well on its way to being planned. Pierre was negotiating this with Adzhubei. In fact, this was part of the reason why he went to Europe that year. And then came the missile crisis and that scotched it; that was precisely the reason why it was cancelled.

I don't attribute—I can't, at this stage, attribute it to any one person. But I think it was a natural extension of where we were aiming the information policies between the Soviet Union and us. And I think, by virtue on the other side, Adzhubei was aiming that way, too.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Did you make that trip to Paris with Salinger for those plans?

CAMP: No, no I didn't.

CAMPBELL: Do you recall any White House debate about the advisability of this scheme, pros and cons?

CAMP: Oh, there was always debate because, you know.... I found that what the public does not understand—they think they're debating issues out in the boondocks and saying how awful government

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is; but what they don't understand is how much debate is going on inside government and how much debate goes on inside the White House. I'm sure that there were numbers of people who thought that was a crazy, gimmicky idea that only Salinger could have thought up. There were some crazy conservative people like Sorensen and O'Donnell who would readily agree to this kind of thing. I'm speculating now because I don't remember and I don't know. But we always talked about these things. I'm sure that the National Security Council would not see this in the best interest of the country and so forth. But this was the fun of it all, and this is what generated the ideas, and these are why you're able to get off the ground. And the President just said, "Yes, I'll do it." Then that was the end of it, and you go on from there. Everybody jumps in and carries on.

CAMPBELL: On Salinger's planning trip to Paris, I wondered if you, perhaps, knew how much of a free hand he would've had in negotiations like that.

CAMP: Well, my observation would pertain—since I wasn't on that trip—my observation would pertain to what the White House staff is able to do in speaking for the President on all general trips or all general appearances by the President. And that is precisely what the State Department diplomats do. You present what you're able to do. The President has told you he would consider X, Y, and Z. Okay, you make the considerations known. The other side presents their plan and then that's the point at which you have to go back to your principal and say, "This is what they say and this is my advice." Then, let the President make up his mind. This is the way all the decisions were rendered. In other words, you just couldn't say, "Okay, at eight o'clock Moscow time on January 31 the President of the United States is going to debate Khrushchev." No, you wouldn't have done that at all.

CAMPBELL: About this same time an invitation, I believe, was issued to Salinger and to Robert Kennedy to visit Russia. Do you recall what considerations were involved in his refusal or his regretting the invitation to Russia?

CAMP: Well, I don't. No, I can't remember.

CAMPBELL: That invitation, I've read, was announced on the front page of the *New York Times* in a news leak by Max Frankel a day before I think the administration was prepared to announce the invitation and announce that Robert Kennedy....

CAMP: They probably regretted it because of that.

CAMPBELL: I wondered if you recall any details about that one leak?

CAMP: I don't, no, I don't.

CAMPBELL: Well then, Salinger does go to Russia. Do you recall special

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preparations for that trip?

CAMP: Well, the same conditions persisted there. I do remember, rather amusingly, that Salinger decided he ought to take a crash course in Russian, and he started out to have Russian lessons at his house and in the office. I think we had about three sessions and it was decided that, no, he couldn't possibly keep up with that since it was going to be such a crash program. But the same thing: there were briefings by CIA and USIA [United State Information Agency] and the State Department. But other than a normal trip to any other place, really no intense preparation. There was a lot of stuff to get together and so forth.

CAMPBELL: There's been a lot of written, I think, about the objections of Ken O'Donnell and Congressman Alger [Bruce Alger]. Do you remember other people that objected strenuously to this?

CAMP: Well, a lot of people both in and out of the White House rather looked on Pierre as a lightweight and that he should not be let loose on mankind because he might tend to over-commit himself or the President and what-have-you. And they were rather cautious about their attitudes of—you know, "Here's Salinger flying off to negotiate with the Russians." Well, the pros wouldn't appreciate this whatsoever. That was the attitude and atmosphere, but after all, the one guy who could make or break that trip would be the President of the United States, and if he decided Pierre should go, he went, and that's all there was to it. And that's precisely the way Pierre would operate.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember what factors entered into the decision for Tom Sorensen [Thomas C. Sorensen] to accompany him on that trip?

CAMP: No. I remember Tom went, but I don't remember how it evolved that he was there.

CAMPBELL: What was Salinger's attitude as he gets ready to depart?

CAMP: Oh, he was as happy as a clam. You know, this was the big thing in his life—the premier of Russia, Adzhubei, going to the Soviet Union.... But aside from the personal thrill of it, which very much it was and who can deny that, he carried the blessing of the President. This is what he had going for him. But even aside from all those things, he was seriously intent upon improving communications with the Soviet Union and that is precisely the mission he went to do. He had his instructions from the President, and he knew where he was going and what he could do. Other people may not have believed that, but I'm confident, was at the time and still am.

CAMPBELL: On the way to Moscow he made a stop in Bonn for a meeting which was billed as a conference with German and American information specialists. Why did such a conference get called?

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CAMP: Well, that was not an unusual circumstance; it wasn't throughout the Kennedy administration. Pierre would attend periodic meetings of information officers in Europe. He did it in France; he did it in London; and he did it in Bonn. In addition to building two-way communications with the Soviet Union, we were equally hard working building it with the Federal Republic and with Paris and with London. This was part of the overall "open administration," and we were trying to encourage allies to feel more at ease with us. So this was not an unusual thing at all.

CAMPBELL: Did you work with Manning's office on the project?

CAMP: Oh, yes. Well, Manning was really in charge of the whole bit. The State Department was the leader in this. And this took into account not only the State Department and the White House, but also the Defense Department and all the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] command structures in Europe. It was very much a good communications liaison tool to deal privately and publicly and on a conference basis with your opposite numbers in those countries. And it's a way of maintaining leadership on information policy.

CAMPBELL: What was the reaction of—I believe Salinger got to Russia and found himself closeted with Premier Khrushchev for much longer periods than he expected to be. I wondered what the White House reaction was while that was going on? You surely found out about it quickly.

CAMP: Well, I can't recall specifically, but I do remember that people were rather surprised that the premier of Russia would spend that long with a mere press secretary, for one thing. But I think it was rather like.... I can't really lay this to the President at all because I don't recall anymore, but I would think that his attitude was, "Well, is Salinger still with him? Is he still talking?" And that's what the AP [Associated Press] was saying from Moscow, "Is he out yet?" It rather can be contrasted with the President's attitude about Bob Kennedy's fifty mile hike. I remember that Bob Kennedy did it up the C&O Canal [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal]. It went on forever. And the President every half-an-hour during that march was in our office saying, "Where is he now?" Now, the world had been going on outside, but he kept track, very interested. I don't know. I think the general atmosphere was one of interest, but they really thought, you know, "Ho, ho, ho, Pierre's at it again."

CAMPBELL: But what sort of reception did he get when he got home? Was it viewed as a successful trip?

CAMP: Yes, from the standpoint, I think, that he didn't make any boo-boos. This is from the immediate staff. I'm perfectly confident the President was quite pleased with what he did. He filed numerous reports from embassies and kept everybody up to date on what was going on. I don't recall there was any adverse criticism

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whatsoever, mainly because he didn't really conclude anything. He got general agreements on communication policy; he spent eight hours or more with the premier, which topped Humphrey's [Hubert H. Humphrey] previous record and was a pleasant surprise for all of us; and he genuinely, I think, established a pretty good rapport.

CAMPBELL: Do you think of anything else about Salinger and his Russian contacts that we should put into the interview?

CAMP: Well, I just thought of one very marginal but amusing sidelight which might throw some atmospherics on the White House operation itself. After Salinger left Moscow, he got to Paris, and he called me from Paris. He said, "I'm going to be on Pan Am [Pan American World Airways] flight blah blah arriving at Idlewild airport at such and such a time tomorrow morning and please have a car meet me at Idlewild and take me over to La Guardia so I can get the shuttle down because I want to see the President right away." The President was expecting him at this time. And this was the only way it could be done. He couldn't do it just by bus or taxi, he needed to be chauffeured over. So I—this was just at lunch time, and I called the White House garage, manned by the U.S. Army transportation corps and I put my request in to please have a car meet Mr. Salinger at Idlewild, such and such a flight, and take him to La Guardia so he could make the next shuttle because he has an appointment with the President. I went to lunch.

I got back from lunch and there was an urgent call from the White House garage dispatcher saying, "Miss Camp, you did ask for a White House car to go to Idlewild to pick up Salinger on a Pan Am flight and take him to La Guardia." I said, "That's right." And he said, "Our driver just called in from Baltimore, and he doesn't think he can make it." And I said, "Well, if you're sending him from the White House, that is true: he will never make the flight." They actually sent a White House car from the White House garage in Washington en route to Idlewild to merely transport Salinger from there to La Guardia. Well, we had a communications breakdown. I said, "No. What I wanted you to do is call your Secret Service contacts or the U.S. Army right there in New York." Well, we got that unstuck and the taxpayers were at least saved that lengthy chauffeured trip. They did have to pay tax for the little turn around in Baltimore, but we made it.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to talk about some of the President's trips of longer duration. I thought, perhaps, we'd start with a trip you made back home to Ohio with him, January of 1962, when I think he appeared at a birthday dinner for the Governor at the state fair grounds. Do you recall what the reasoning was this trip? The Governor at that time he announced he would not seek reelection that year. He was soon to change his mind.

CAMP: This was DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle]. No, I don't remember that, but I do remember that trip very well for a completely amusing reason. Well, I would think, looking back on it, that—as I recall,

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it was a birthday party for DiSalle.

CAMPBELL: January of 1962, yes.

CAMP: Was it a fundraising?

CAMPBELL: I think so.

CAMP: Well, I'd have to look at that. But there would be every good reason why the President would go in honor of DiSalle because DiSalle was the first governor to announce in support of JFK's candidacy when he announced in 1960. That was a political debt certainly.

CAMPBELL: What was the particular incident that you...

CAMP: The particular incident was.... Well, this again will show you some of the atmospherics regarding the President's sense of humor and his conviviality with members of his staff. During the flight out to Columbus I was the only secretary aboard on duty. The speech was already prepared for press release, and he had his manuscript all ready to read from during the speech. The one thing that was not prepared and which there were always later additions was the humor to launch the speech, which were always on notes; we never put them in the manuscript at all or in the press releases. They were just added on top of his manuscript. And they had not been typed. Some suggestions had been made by Sorensen's staff and by others.

I was busily whacking them away on the typewriter to get them in form for him—keep in mind it's not a very long trip between here and Columbus. Furthermore, I do remember that the night was terribly stormy; it was terribly hard to operate because of the turbulence. And all during the time I was working, Pierre and some of the crew were in the stateroom, and they were talking with the President, and I could hear laughter coming out. We were on the approach pattern to Columbus airport when the President called me into the stateroom and he said, "I want you to throw out everything that's just been prepared on the humor. I've got the best joke that Pierre just told me to introduce the speech and I want to use it." So he started to dictate the joke which Pierre had told me earlier in the day, and I recognized it, and I couldn't imagine how he was going to put the punch line to the audience. I have to tell you the joke first.

The joke is about a small troupe of traveling actors, a repertory theater, who were very broke, and they traveled from place to place. And on one occasion, they got to this small town and their lead and only actress fell ill and could not go on that night. So the director of the troupe called for local participants to sign up, and they finally found one. And the lady, the local girl was told this was a very easy part to play. The director said, "Now, when the lead man points a gun at you, and he pulls the gun, all you do is just fall down dead, and then he will ask, 'What have I done? What have I done?' And then the curtain will

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close and that's all you need to do." So the joke goes on that the lady fell down dead after the gun was pulled and the actor said, "What have I done? What have I done?" And the response from the back of the audience in the hall is, "You shot the only whore in New Jersey."

Well, as the President was dictating this to use as a lead, I thought, "How is he going to get away with the punch line?" The punch line was, "You have shot the only Democrat in Columbus, Ohio." [Laughter] Well, as he dictated the punch line, he convulsed in laughter, and then he looked at me and said, "I guess we better use Sorensen's humor because," he

says, "I'm afraid I will use Pierre's line instead as my model. I don't think the President should fumble this one." So he came up with—I'll have to look at that speech again—"I've lost more votes and had more friend in Columbus, Ohio than any other place." Something to that effect. (Actual Quote: "There is no city in the United States in which I get a warmer welcome and less votes than in Columbus, Ohio!")

CAMPBELL: Later, in the fall of 1962, he made at least two campaign trips to Ohio in support of DiSalle's losing effort. Do you remember any details about that at all?

CAMP: No, I don't remember details. I was probably on them, but I don't remember.

CAMPBELL: Just generally on the President's trips and first of all, on the advance work for them, who went on advance trips? What sort of complement would go to advance a presidential trip of major proportions?

CAMP: Well, first of all, every presidential trip is a major trip, regardless of where he goes whether it's Poteau, Oklahoma, which I was on, or to Berlin, Germany, which I was also on. When the President of the United States travels, he is, in effect, picking up the whole White House and the whole government and carrying it with him. So the survey or the advance trip, as we call it, number one, starts out on the thesis that.... As I recall, it originally started in Eisenhower's [Dwight D. Eisenhower] term, principally (possibly Truman's [Harry S. Truman]) that the driver of the airplane had to practice getting in and out of the airports. But in addition to that, you not only need air transportation, both in the form of airplanes and helicopters, you also need ground transportation—limousines, cars, buses, the whole thing. The Secret Service has unusual responsibility in this regard. You also need the White House communication system, not only to and from the White House but around the world. The same communications that apply in the White House apply while the President travels.

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The military, it we're going to a military base, they enter into it very much because they're the complete channel through the Pentagon. The press is a major part of it because we're holding press conferences to and from and en route and during, just like we are in the White House. Oh, let's see, who else? Well, then there's always the entertainment side of it. The President gives luncheons for his counterparts or he hosts receptions, so there are cooks and bottle washers and protocol people and the East Wing is involved. If Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] is going, that's another part of it. That's the general scope. And then, of course, the speech writers.... Oh, the whole makeup of the White House is really represented.

CAMPBELL: In the press office operation per se, how are people chosen for advance trips? What sort of consideration went into who did what?

CAMP: Well, first of all, it depended on which of the press officers went. If Pierre went, he would rotate the trips more or less between Sue [Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger] and me. On some occasions, depending on the length of the trip and where we were going and what the facilities were like, there was a necessity that both of us go. If Andy did a survey or went on a trip, Barbara Gamarekian was likely to go. But we rather worked on a rotation system, regardless of who was on board or who wanted to go. We did the same thing with duty in Palm Beach and Cape Cod. We worked it out among ourselves usually, depending on what responsibilities we had here at home or what plans we had. I mean, it kind of evened itself out.

CAMPBELL: You mentioned a trip to Oklahoma? Was this the trip that included a stay at Senator Kerr's [Robert S. Kerr] ranch?

CAMP: Yes, good old Poteau.

CAMPBELL: In this trip I believe that Bayley handled the press.

CAMP: Bayley did indeed. The only time he ever did because Pierre and Andy—well, in any event, none of the three press officers were available for various reasons, and Ed was drafted to take it on. I was appointed to go along and help him and he did very well, and it was a nice trip.

CAMPBELL: Was there some problem about what to call that trip, exactly how to explain it?

CAMP: Well, we always had that problem. When it came to political events, the press would always come in and say, "Is this a political trip or a presidential trip?" Well of course, the response to that is that every time the President moves, it's a presidential trip. After all, he's the President. But it's hard to characterize these things. After all, presidents have personal friends and commitments as well as anybody else, and they might as well take a weekend off

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at the ranch like normal human beings. But sometimes, presidents are expected to do more. I think we went to a ribbon-cutting ceremony or we opened a highway or dam or something because I do remember that ribbon being cut and helicoptering into that site and then from there going into Poteau, where we lodged, the staff and the press. A very small town, very pleasant place. But it was decidedly a political trip, I must admit.

CAMPBELL: Was there any indication in your office—did your office ever view Bayley as perhaps a competitor for Salinger's job?

CAMP: No, never. No. Salinger had no—he may have had a lot of competitors, but they were clearly on the losing side because an incumbent in that kind of job has always got the edge as long as he's got the number one in back of him.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to talk about the President's first European trip. Who made the advance trip for that from the press office?

CAMP: Well, let's see, that was Paris, Vienna, and London. The advance trip I made as a secretary. Pierre made that trip.

CAMPBELL: What sort of things were you people delegated to handle on that advance trip?

CAMP: Well, on all survey trips, be they at home or abroad, but mostly abroad—in fact, the presidential trips abroad are very well defined, more so than they are at home. But the general rules apply—you're on a very tight schedule. For a presidential trip that's going to take four days in consummation, for example, a survey trip will take one. Now, that sounds like a terribly short time to do it, but it can be done—I've seen it done—if you've got real pros on board. Now, the schedule is drawn up depending on the mission. Well, I forgot one essential part of the survey, as I was describing earlier, is the man who is actually negotiating for the schedule and where the President is going to appear and on what platform. And in our case, it was Ken O'Donnell. He was the staff sergeant on that kind of thing.

Now, as soon as we'd land at a given spot, O'Donnell would go off either with the protocol officers or the foreign ministry official or, in the case of domestic places, whoever the local host and sponsor was to negotiate the President's schedule and line of march for the whole show. He'd go off and do that. At the same time, the Secret Service would by prearrangement—and all of us did by prearrangement—would go off with the security officials, either their local FBI contacts or their own Secret Service contacts or the sheriffs or the police and what have you, and they'd negotiate the security arrangements, having a general plan already in mind as to what the President had in mind, that he was going to work around and which O'Donnell was going to negotiate, but at least to establish contact and to establish what they'd be concerned with. The Air Force people driving the airplanes would work with the airlines or if it's on a military base with their opposite

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numbers at that particular site or with commercial people or, abroad, with the host government airlines or military, whoever. The same thing would be true with the protocol people on the luncheons and the dinners and that kind of thing. In our case, we would meet with Pierre's counterpart in setting up press facilities. Abroad, it would be with the press secretary of whatever government or president with whom we were dealing. And we'd all go

our separate ways and then be back at the airplane to take off for the next stop and do the whole thing all over again. That was the general line which we followed.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember particular problems with the French pressman?

CAMP: Oh, there are always problems with the French. Constantly. We were always bugged by them. Yes there were problems because, again, the host government in the case of a trip abroad is always anxious to get their name on the front page first as being able to negotiate for the President of the United States and do thus and so. Even though you come to a general agreement that we're not going to announce it—"It will be simultaneous after we do thus and so." But the French usually managed to scoop us on that kind of thing. Later, the Germans got on the same tack and did the same thing.

CAMPBELL: How successful was the advance work for the first European trip? Do you remember major problems once the trip got underway that could have, perhaps, been handled?

CAMP: Well, of course the problems involved with that trip really centered on Vienna. It was the first time that any of us had to deal with the Russians, keeping in mind that we were very new in this business of president tripping. It was a very serious and highly delicate feature trying to negotiate just policy and guidelines between Pierre's opposite number and himself on how many press conferences to hold a day, whether they should be joint or whether they should be translated from English to Russian and Russian to English, and whether they should be simultaneous or each holds his own. Then we had to take into account, certainly, the host government, which was the Austrian government. After all, they made the site available, and we had to pay respect to their wishes as well.

So in that case it was a double whammy: We had not only the Khrushchev contingent in Moscow, but we had the Austrians, too; plus the fact that we knew this was the first meeting of an American president with the premier of Russia, and we could easily expect about three to four hundred members of the press to show up. We were doing this kind of things all the way through. It's part of our mandate to make arrangements on behalf of the press corps, whether they travel with us or whether they pick us up on location, as to housing and transportation and pressroom sites and typewriters and communication lines and telephones and that kind of thing. We did it all.

CAMPBELL: Did your office ever make an attempt to discourage the great numbers of press?

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CAMP: Absolutely not, no.

CAMPBELL: It would have been difficult to do.

CAMP: No. First of all, you can't do it in the free society we live in, and furthermore, we would absolutely not get away with it, and thirdly we always operated on the premise that you cannot overexpose the President of the United States, and if the New York blah blah wants to assign eighteen reporters, that is their problem, they're going to pay for it. It's not like we're assigning them. On occasion because of physical capacity we had to set a limit of how many representatives could work for a given organization on certain legs of a trip, but organizations were never excluded. We had to sometimes set criteria for those who covered us the most times; we had to equal it out between broadcasters and the written press and magazines as opposed to newspapers, et cetera. But I think, over the long haul, it was pretty fair.

CAMPBELL: What considerations—or were there considerations involved in the selection of members of pools, or was that simply passed around on a rotational basis?

CAMP: Well, the pool assignments always devolved upon the press secretary who was in power at the time. We really didn't keep any notation of revolving pool assignment. How we managed it was very simple: We would put what is known as "press list" or "press sign-up list" in the press room. Once a trip was announced, we put a "press sign-up list" on the board, and they had every chance in the world to sign up to go on the trip, which meant that it would reserve the space on the press plane; it would reserve them a hotel room at each stop because we asked them to tell what leg of the trip they were going on if not all of them; it would assure them of transportation, ground and air, and so forth. That was that. It was from that assignment list that the pool was drawn up. We never looked back at the last one and said, "Okay, *Newsweek*, you cover this," or, you know, "The *Albuquerque Times*, you're off." It had to do with the trip at the time. Now, we would favor, when we were traveling in this country and also abroad, to an extent, we would try to favor and rightfully so—we never had any flack from the press corps because they all recognized this was fair—the local representatives who don't usually get on to covering the President regularly. For example, if we're going from here to Philadelphia, we would probably ask a Philadelphia paper to be on the President's plane as part of the pool to cover that leg of it, because it's his story. And of the two Philadelphia papers, whoever signed up, "Okay," we would say, "*Inquirer*, you're on from the helicopter to the airplane." And the other paper would be on from *Air Force One* to landing in Philadelphia. Then say, we're going on from there to Chicago. Okay, the Chicago paper might have that leg, helicopter, and so forth. And this is really the only fair way you can do it, and it worked rather well.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember any details that should be put on about that first European trip, how it worked out?

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CAMP: Oh, I could talk about that for hours. I think as far as the press office is

concerned, that became the standard upon which we operated thereafter because it was the first trip abroad for the President, and it was the first “biggy” that we had. Keep in mind it was de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle] and Khrushchev and Macmillan [M. Harold Macmillan]. Also, it was the first time Mrs. Kennedy had gone, which added to the general atmosphere and part of the schedule. It was the first time we dealt with State Department and other agencies who necessarily had to become involved and which operated very well, I might add. And that rather set the whole operating feature for the conduct of trips after that, particularly those abroad.

It wasn't all that dire because we had had very good briefings by Hagerty's [James C. Hagerty] people on overseas trips—a couple of the guys who are still in the White House, particularly in the transportation office. Wayne Hawks who was a very great help, was able to assist us in how to do things. So I would think that outside of just learning the ropes and how to manage and how to conduct oneself abroad—and also, it was the first time that Pierre was dealing with his own host government counterparts, which is a whole different kettle of fish. I mean, you could knock down a press secretary to a governor here in this country, but I think it's very tough to take on your own counterpart in another nation. I think that launched us on our tripping after that.

CAMPBELL: It's been said that perhaps there was a noticeable change in atmosphere, a more somber atmosphere, among the President and his staff upon departing from Vienna after the rather difficult meeting with Khrushchev. Were you in a position to notice any of that?

CAMP: Yes. I was. There were two ways I was in a position to notice: Number one, I remember going out to the airport for takeoff to London. And I do remember standing at the foot of *Air Force One*, and I couldn't for the life of me understand why the President was delayed. I mean he was delayed a great, long while; to the point that it became very embarrassing because the President of Austria was there to bid him good-bye. And this was clearly something unusual, by just the atmosphere of the crowd and the people around the airplane. Eventually, he arrived at the airport, and I can't remember, again, the details. But I do recall the famous quote alleged that—and it's not an allegation at all; I heard it. I can't quote it verbatim anymore, but the President caught Bill Lawrence [William H. Lawrence], who was working for—his first time out—for ABC news. And he did come out of the stateroom door, and Bill was getting off the airplane, and he stopped Bill, and he said, “Tell them that I'm very somber.” And indeed, he was. So that is all true.

CAMPBELL: That's what you remember from that?

CAMP: Yes.

CAMPBELL: I believe that the next “biggy” abroad was to South America.

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Did you advance that one, too?

CAMP: Let’s see. Was that Caracas?

CAMPBELL: It was Caracas, Bogotá, a little stop in Puerto Rico.

CAMP: Let’s see, did I advance that? I’m pretty sure I did, but I don’t remember anything unusual about it.

CAMPBELL: How about the trip itself? Did it present any special problems?

CAMP: Well, not.... Venezuela was very interesting because this was during the time when the guerillas were blowing up various American companies. That whole atmosphere had never happened to me before, and I’m sure to most of the President’s staff. You could literally sit on the deck of our hotel, the Tamanaco, and hear submachine fire going on in the streets below. It’s rather disconcerting to know that when the President of the United States is right there, and you don’t know what’s going to happen. Yes, it had its peculiarities, every trip did, but I can’t think of anything extraordinary to relate on it.

CAMPBELL: I believe that you made a trip with the President in the fall of 1962, a swing around to the NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] sites—Huntsville, Cape Canaveral, Houston. What do you recall about that? Was that a political trip or a non-partisan?

CAMP: Well, now let me think. Was it Mac Dill Air Force Base in Florida or Cape Canaveral?

CAMPBELL: Cape Canaveral, I believe, and Houston and St. Louis.

CAMP: Oh, at St. Louis, McDonnell [McDonnell Aircraft Corp.] and Houston at the Manned Spacecraft Center. No, I couldn’t characterize it as political, although everything the President of the United States does is political to a degree. But this is the first time.... When was that, did you say?

CAMPBELL: It was September, ’62.

CAMP: Of ’62. That would have been before the Cuban Missile Crisis.

CAMPBELL: Yeah.

CAMP: And also before the '62 congressional elections. Right? That's my old political mind coming back to operate, here. The President was always on the alert to take advantage of anything he could to get out and see people and talk to people about. Presidents, I think, are often classified as ribbon cutters, and all of this, but after all, the space budget was also important and he launched the whole idea

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of a man in space by the seventies. It was, indeed, to support his own space program. He'd never seen any of this before. So I'm assuming that it had to do with spurring the space program, as well as to capture any loose voter on the sidelines in the '62 congressional.

CAMPBELL: Were you in Nassau in December of '62, the meeting with Macmillan?

CAMP: No, I did the survey trip on that, but I did not go back on the main trip.

CAMPBELL: Then there's the "biggy" in 1963, in the summer, again to Europe. Did you survey that one?

CAMP: I surveyed everything except Ireland. I did, with Pierre, Germany. Let's see, it was Bonn and Wiesbaden and Berlin and then, later on, Rome.

CAMPBELL: Then down to Italy. Now, in Italy he appeared on Italian television. Did you get involved in the arrangements for that?

CAMP: Well, I remember it, but I don't remember the negotiations on that. That was a "new first," too.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask a little bit about the President's press conferences just as a general week to week, month to month thing. What factors converged when a decision was made to hold a press conference, after they were not held on a week-to-week basis? What sort of thing happened when one finally was scheduled?

CAMP: Well, again, it would depend on the issue at the time. Sometimes the President would decide he'd have one anyway, just for the hell of it. It was just, you know, a snap decision. Sometimes Pierre would urge him to do it. "You haven't had one for several weeks and the natives are restless in the pressroom," and this kind of thing. Or there might be some issue to which the President would address himself or wanted to put forth. I don't mean to sound that it was entirely whimsical; it wasn't at all. It had to do, principally, with whether or not there was sufficient need and interest and pressure, either by the Hill or the press, or whether the issues of the time demanded one or whether his schedule would permit it. It could be just as simple as, "I'd like to do a press conference, but I just don't have the time." So a lot of considerations would be taken into it.

CAMPBELL: Over the Christmas holidays in 1962 in Palm Beach, I think the President

held a background session with some European newsman concerning his trip to Nassau. And there was a leak out of that. Do you remember the details about that?

CAMP: I remember the leak very well because that mean that I had to stay up all night, type the transcripts and get them out, so

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everybody in the country was covered. It was a goddamn mess because of that leak, and I'm not talking just from sheer mechanics. I can't remember who the joker was that did it. I want to say it was Brandon [Henry Brandon] of the *London Times*, but I'm not positive.

This is a perfect example of how, when you're dealing in good faith with a diverse, loose kind of structure—I wouldn't every classify the press as an organization per se—but when you're dealing in good faith with people like this, one guy can make the difference on how something is treated. And this would be true of anybody. I'm not defending the presidency in this regard. But, you know, if you have an agreement and things aren't done in good faith, why, it can be terribly disturbing and distressing. You're only human—if you wouldn't feel that way. And I must say you're on guard with such people again. This is not to say that they were ever cut off or their sources we dried up because, to my knowledge, that never happened in the Kentucky administration. I'm not saying it wouldn't, but you're always on guard after that. And that was clearly a breach of faith. That's all it was.

CAMPBELL: You were in Texas on the trip in November of '63. Had you advanced that?

CAMP: Let's see, no, I had not. No, I think Kilduff had. Yes, he had advanced it, and then he ultimately was the press officer who went on it.

CAMPBELL: What could you see—the President had been there a day on this fence-mending trip—what could you see about the success of the trip up until that time; a question of Yarborough [Ralph W. Yarborough] and Connally [John B. Connally, Jr.] and the Vice President and who would ride in whose car....

CAMP: Well, I saw most of that or I heard reports because, you know, we were all political animals per se, and Texans are a political breed in and to themselves, I think, in a lot of ways much like California politicians are a breed in an to themselves politically in this country as are other pockets; I'm not just saying those two. Texas, of course, as we all readily accepted, was of value in the '60 campaign, and they delivered the vote but these intramural fights were, frankly, a bore. And some of us felt this was a wasted trip, but one has to bow to the ultimate judgment of the party leader, in this case the President. And by jove, everything that was predicted by the pros happened in this inner jockeying of position. But to answer your question, that leading up to Dallas, in Fort Worth and, oh, wherever we were before—I've forgotten.

CAMPBELL: Houston.

CAMP: Houston. And there was another stop, too. San Antonio, I think.

CAMPBELL: Oh, I believe it was San Antonio, Fort Worth.

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CAMP: But your judgments are based on really the circumstances of the time. The crowds were great; people were friendly. Sure, there's a lot of politicking going around, but that's part of the game. I do recall the dinner of—oh dear, the congressman?

CAMPBELL: Albert Thomas.

CAMP: Albert Thomas, right. I was at that dinner that night. And everything went splendidly, according to plan, nothing unexpected. The President and Mrs. Kennedy were greeted with great cordiality. So it was an anticipated kind of foray that we had met in other parts of the country—up until Dallas.

CAMPBELL: How did the Dallas newspaper that came out with the rather unpleasant advertisement the morning of the assassination hit the staff—or had you even seen it?

CAMP: Oh, yeah, sure, we saw it the first thing in the morning. We were not surprised by it because we had had—we, meaning the White House and the President, in particular—an earlier foray with Mr. Dealey [E.M. Dealey] of that outfit. If you recall, it was Dealey who, at the invitation of the President of all Texas editors at a monthly luncheon, had expressed himself to the effect—I don't recall the quote anymore—that the Kennedy policies were about as fraught with imagination and verve and sincerity as Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] running around the White House on a tricycle or a pony. Well, we knew that Mr. Dealey was not one of the Kennedy fans of all time—no more than was his paper and his editorial policy over the years. So this was not news to us.

I must admit that Mac Kilduff—who was on that trip—and I were terribly shocked at the way that the paper carried their presentation. And we just rather tossed it off as, “Well, this Dealey has done it again. He's gone too far, and this is Texas,” which is probably a very naïve attitude to assume, but we'd been in this kind of thing before, that, you know, politicians stoop to great lengths and publishers particularly. And after all, I had gone—Pierre and all of us—on the 1960 campaign, we were exposed to Mr. Loeb [William Loeb] of the *Manchester Union Leader* in New Hampshire, who I think Ted Dealey probably got his lessons from. But in any event, it was shocking; it was uncouth; it wasn't in the tradition of

cordially that we had experienced before in the country, and it was on that basis we made a judgment.

CAMPBELL: Oh, a couple of things to catch up. You come across suggestions once in a while—and particularly out of some of the presidential trips—that rumors began and rumors continued concerning relationships between some of the very young girls in the White House and some of the senior officials. Was this a concern to the press office, a concern that this sort of thing might get in print?

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CAMP: Well, I can only express my own opinion; I can't speak for anybody else. It was a concern to me in certain instances because there was a member of my staff who would have fit that description, if you're going to put it on those grounds. I dislike, I admit, talking about this kind of thing because I really, frankly don't understand what, if anything, this has to do with the historical record of a presidency. But I did find it rather disconcerting because there were opportunities that presented themselves which might have been misinterpreted or at least overblown or misread. And it did, yes, it did concern me. Absolutely.

CAMPBELL: There was no effort, no organized effort, made to try and manage that situation?

CAMP: Well, again, I can only speak for myself and the situation which confronted me. To be absolutely candid about it, we had a member of the staff, the press staff, who served as a receptionist, who could, I suppose, have been described as a presidential favorite or a staff favorite. Her abilities and skills and capacity to maintain a job in the press office were not immediately apparent to anyone who was associated with her. Very pleasant girl; did what she could, but she was not a typist; she did not take shorthand; she was not skilled in clerical or stenographic work. In other words, she was filling a chair which could have been filled by somebody else had those skills been readily needed—and they were.

But the difficulty on that kind of thing is how you do play it, because you don't know. You're not told; you only suppose. You are not immune to gossip and suggestion, as any other human is. But the point to be made is how you conduct yourself and how you do it, because after all we've got the whole press corps right outside our door, not only in the White House, but also traveling in the same airplanes with the staff. And it's readily apparent to anyone that if you're not pulling your full weight and doing a job, how can you assume that you're there for the part of the trip on business?

So I expressed myself along these lines to Pierre on several occasions, and my suggestion was, "Okay, if this girl is going to be a member of the staff but not readily available to me in the normal course of our duties, then take her off the press plane, take her off *Air Force One*. Either put her on the staff plane in advance or on a commercial flight in advance or behind and don't put her in motorcades." And that is precisely what happened later on.

CAMPBELL: It's helpful to get your point of view because it's something that crops up.

CAMP: I know it does, and I know it will persist. And the only thing I'd like to make a comment on—having gone through the campaign and on into the White House—is that I have no proof or evidence or personal knowledge, by either observation or hearing or in any other

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sense of any kind of liaison such as might be suggested by this kind of talk. I would think that the opportunities would arise wherein that could be possible, but anybody who says that they have evidence to that effect, I'd like to see it.

CAMPBELL: How long did you stay at the White House after President Kennedy's death?

CAMP: I stayed there until.... I have to recall. I stayed there until Pierre announced his candidacy for the Senate, which was in March of '64. And Pierre had asked and I had agreed to leave with him and go to California, to help him in the campaign. And as a matter of fact, I was standing at my phone with my coat on calling a cab to go home and pack, because he left in a very great hurry, only having a few hours to get to San Francisco and file, and as I was dialing the phone President Johnson came in the back door and asked if I wouldn't stay on at least six month to help George Reedy [George E. Reedy], who was Pierre's successor, over the hump. Six weeks rather. Not six months. And so that's that I did.

CAMPBELL: Stayed on the six weeks?

CAMP: Yes.

CAMPBELL: Were you involved at all in Salinger's deliberations about whether to run in California? Do you remember any details about that?

CAMP: Well, yes, I can remember. Pierre confided in me that he had this in the back of his mind much much earlier than that. It was not a snap decision, I might add. He recognized, as all of us did, I think, early in the game that President Johnson needed his own people. But Pierre operated on the theory that as long as the President wanted him to stay and needed him and thought he was doing what he could for him, he would be glad and willing to stay, which was the operating philosophy of all of us at that time. But we all really had the gut feeling—we were all politicians enough to know that President Johnson would be better served by his own people, as he could get them in and get them established. Keep in mind this was a dreadful time for both sides, dreadful time, from the standpoint of grief and from the standpoint of the government and the continuity and the whole thing. But Pierre, I think, recognized soon after Mr. Johnson decided acceded office

that eventually we'd all go, and that's precisely the way we all should have looked at it and did, to a large degree.

But the immediacy of it: Where do you go once you've been at the top? How do you gracefully exit from something like that, which really was not a concern of Pierre's, to a large degree. But he knew he had to move on and he wanted to. He always liked California politics, and he started just making little queries, I think more out of amusement and jokes, to start with. He'd tell Tom Kuchel [Thomas H. Kuchel], "Well, I'm going to come

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back to California and run against you," and this kind of thing. You know, he'd test that. And then he talked to numbers of Californians that he'd been in touch with all through the years. And finally he grasped on the idea that, by jove, maybe he could swing it. And that's how it all evolved.

The last two people that he told were Governor Brown [Edmund G. "Pat" Brown] and—keep in mind that the Governor had already pretty much endorsed Mr. Cranston [Alan M. Cranston]; and the Governor, who'd known Pierre for a long while, welcomed him into the fray; said he didn't know what he could do, but he'd be glad to have him—and President Johnson. And President Johnson was very, very cordial to Pierre. In fact, so very much so that he gave him half of the filing fee as a good-bye present.

CAMPBELL: It's been charged I suppose, in many places that the Kennedy administration was perhaps remiss in assigning to women places of responsibility within the White House and within the administration. Do you have some feeling along those lines?

CAMP: Well, I'm not a "feminist" per se because my theory has always been don't make a problem where there isn't one. And I feel much about this kind of question as I do about any ethnic group or any minority group. I think a lot of campaign promises are made and not generally carried out, and that was true of the Kennedy administration like it is with any other one. I think appointments of women just because they are women are not necessarily good ones. I think that one had to consider ability and experience and availability. I think, ultimately, the Dungans and the John Macys [John W. Macy, Jr.] and the Presidents that I know and loved had to make those judgments. I wouldn't have any beef on it at all if... I think that the campaign expectations were not lived up to, but you never know until you're actually in charge and who can do it.

CAMPBELL: When you joined the State Department—and tell us when—how do you judge that your experience in the Kennedy White House served you and is serving you?

CAMP: Well, I joined the State Department at its request through the good offices of Jim Greenfield [James L. Greenfield], whom I'd known way back when; he was an old friend I'd dealt with in the department. And he offered me a job in the department within that six weeks period I was talking about. And for

personal reasons, now having anything to do with politics or Pierre, I decided that my best future prospects lay in that direction because I'd been in foreign affairs before, and I was rather anxious to get back to it.

It's had an odd effect. I think that from my standpoint, not as a woman, but as having been in the White House, one who has "been there" is always regarded as being rather suspect. Even at this late date—here I am five years in the State Department and still I am looked on rather suspiciously by my colleagues who are professional diplomats and have been. The White House is not regarded as a sister agency or department of government; it's regarded solely as a political source from which everything

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emanates. They compete with the White House. They compete with anybody who had been in it. They feel that you're either.... Okay, so you've been to the pinnacle; but even so, we've got the other edge. I wouldn't say it's helped, professionally, whatsoever in terms of strict State Department bureaucracy; I think it's rather been an impediment. It's mere attitude and atmospherics more than anything I can say, because I've gotten raises and I've done well. I have no problem along that line. But it's the suspicion of a politician, is what really comes to force.

CAMPBELL: That's interesting. Since you left the White House, I am wondering what sort, if any, contacts you've had with the Kennedy family. Any connection with Robert Kennedy in his....

CAMP: Only in connection with burying him. I seem to be one of several people who have experience in burying Kennedys. Over the years, yes, I had because his secretary, Angie Novello [Angela M. Novello], and I were very close friends so we kept in touch a great deal. But the Kennedy family have been very generous in keeping in touch insofar as public events have been concerned. Oh, invitations to stowing the *Caroline* in the air museums and launching the JFK aircraft carrier and those kind of personal touches which wouldn't emanate from any place other than the personal staff. You're not forgotten, I might add. They're very generous in that regard.

CAMPBELL: Anything else that we should put on here?

CAMP: Yes, I would like to make a comment about Dallas and about the atmosphere on *Air Force One* at the changeover of the Kennedy staff and the Johnson staff. I was on that airplane. I was there when the parties arrived because that's where I was working on typing up the manuscript for the speech in Austin that night. And there were only two of us aboard, Sue Vogelsinger and myself. And we were working on the speech and—just to record—we heard the announcement of the death on television just like anybody else. But the one thing that I'm most concerned about.... I wasn't on *Air Force One* as it was coming back to Washington, but I was there up until the time the casket was loaded on the plane. And the one myth I would like to explode insofar as—the jockeying of position of various staff members is, in my mind, a complete

myth because the Johnson staff could not have been more cordial or more helpful during those terrible times. And what happened on the airplane coming back, I have no way of knowing because I had to get off of *Air Force One* because there just wasn't room for all of us. And we all recognized that somebody had to go, it couldn't carry all of us. But, in any event, up until the time it left, they couldn't have been nicer, more cordial, they kept us going and on our feet, which was a terribly traumatic experience at the time. And it worked both ways. I never witnessed any scene that would support this so-called legend of difficulty between them.

CAMPBELL: Did that originate in the Manchester [William Manchester] book, *Death of a President* do you think?

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CAMP: No, I think that happened before the Manchester book. That story was floated soon after, as I remember, which is in contradiction to everything I've known or learned. I'm sure that under such circumstances tempers are short and—keep in mind we were all under terrible tension because we didn't know who had done this. We didn't know who was going to be blown out of the sky. We didn't know if *Air Force One* was going to be shot down. And I think that, given the temper of the moment, that some things could have been said by members of the staff which you wouldn't have said under normal conditions.

The atmosphere at that time was just not anywhere near being able to support the allegation that there was terrible division at all. After all, the country was uppermost in everybody's mind. What happens next? How do you change power? There was change right there in that airplane. I can remember in my own case that I soon recognized right away that that was it. That was the end. And we picked up all of our belongings, loaded them into our briefcase, and when—what was her name?—Marie Fehmer [Marie Fehmer Chiarodo], who was with President Johnson at the time, and Liz Carpenter [Elizabeth S. Carpenter] both came up and embraced us and expressed their condolences, I remember saying to Liz, “Just do as well by your president as we tried to do for ours.” And that was essentially the way continuity of government went on.

CAMPBELL: How did operations change? You were in the Johnson White House for several months. Was there a noticeable change in the press operation in that time?

CAMP: Well, of course you had the whole advent of the funeral and the family and the grief immediately after that. I think what saved a lot of the people's emotional withdrawal in our office was the fact that we had to work twenty-four hours a day. We had something to occupy our minds and keep us busy. We were working really for two presidents at that point. And gradually it changed, sure, because the number one man has to assume his own stance. But President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson [Claudia Alta “Lady Bird” Johnson] were both very, very cordial to all of us. They couldn't have been nicer in the way of personal attention, and I think they set the scene very well. But

there were gradual changes. I can remember most of all that where President Kennedy's door was open to everybody, including the messengers and anybody who might walk in, President Johnson closed his door. But he was operating in a different milieu, a different way. And well the whole.... Trips to the ranch were different in contrast to going to Cape Cod or Palm Beach, that kind of thing. But it had to do with the man, not with the operation necessarily. We still issued press releases. We still had press conferences and that kind of thing.

CAMPBELL: Anything else that we should....

CAMP: No, I can't think of anything right now.

CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW #4]

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