

Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger Oral History Interview –JFK #1, 5/25/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger
Interviewer: Diana Michaelis
Date of Interview: May 25, 1964
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 27 pp.

Biographical Note

Vogelsinger, Sue Mortensen; Secretary to John F. Kennedy (1958-1963). Vogelsinger discusses her responsibilities as a member of John F. Kennedy's [JFK] campaign and administration staff, her experience recording JFK's dictations, and her travels with JFK, among other issues.

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed January 8, 1991, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger, recorded interview by Diane Michaelis, May 25, 1964,
(page number), John F. Kennedy Oral History Program.

WS
7

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of
Sue M. Vogelsinger

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Sue M. Vogelsinger, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of personal interviews conducted on May 25, 1964 at Washington, DC and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.

Sue M. Vogelsinger
Donor

11/28/90
Date

[Signature]
Archivist of the United States

Jan 8, 1991
Date

Sue Mortensen Vogelsinger

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1, 5, 7, 18, 23, 25	Vogelsinger's work for John F. Kennedy [JFK]
3, 18	JFK's dictations to Vogelsinger
4	West Virginia primary, 1960
5	JFK and the labor bill
7	Democratic National Convention, 1960
9	JFK's time as president-elect
9, 25	JFK and his campaign staff in Palm Beach, Florida
10	JFK's presidential appointments
14, 22	JFK in the White House
15	JFK's interest with the press office
21	JFK's trip to Bermuda, 1961
23	JFK's assassination
25	Weekend trips to Hyannis Port, Massachusetts and Palm Beach, Florida

Oral History Interview

with

SUE MORTENSEN VOGELSINGER

MAY 25, 1964
Washington, D.C.

By Diana Michaelis

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MICHAELIS: Let me start, Sue, by asking you how you first came to work with then Senator Kennedy? At what time and under what circumstances and what job you had been doing before.

VOGELSINGER: I had actually just gotten out of college. I had worked for three months temporarily for Senator Holland [Spessard L. Holland] on a purely temporary basis. I then needed money and there was an opening on Senator Kennedy's staff in October of 1958. I was hired by Ralph Dungan, who was at that time counsel for the Senate Labor [and Public Welfare] Committee. The rest of the Senate staff, Kennedy's Senate staff, was in Boston working on his Senate campaign. Ralph was sort of baby-sitting the office at that time.

MICHAELIS: What did you do in those first days?

VOGELSINGER: I was hired actually as the second member of the presidential campaign staff, although they didn't call it such at the time. My specific duty was to work on a card index of delegates, politicians on local levels, state level, county, practically everything. We were putting on

a 5x8 card all the information that we could obtain about these people for future use during the presidential campaign.

MICHAELIS: This was so that Kennedy, when going to a town, would have the complete information about the political leadership?

VOGELSINGER: That's right. That was one of its uses. There were, of course, many others. For instance, from this information we could have a good idea of who might be immediately favorable to Kennedy as president, who might be willing to work for him right away, who would require more work, who was obviously, never going to help. that type of thing.

MICHAELIS: Do you have any idea how large that card catalog was?

VOGELSINGER: I really don't know how much it grew. It was by state and by county. It must have been immense.

MICHAELIS: And whatever happened to it? After it was used, was it retained?

VOGELSINGER: I believe that the Democratic National Committee has it now, though I'm not sure of that.

MICHAELIS: And what other things did you do other than work on the card file?

VOGELSINGER: I didn't work on that very long because I was rather bored by it. It gets rather dull typing out these cards, as useful as they may be and were. So, when Kennedy came back to the office which was January, 1959. He didn't actually come back, or I didn't meet him until I'd been working there for two months, and I was ready to leave after these two months. He had apparently heard that I was going to leave the office or that I was thinking about quitting, and he called me in the second day he was back. I'd met him the first day, but that was all. He called me in and said, "I understand you're thinking of leaving?" I said, "Yes, I was," and he said "Why?" And I said, "Well, I'm bored" He said, "Well, what are you doing?" And I told him I was working on the cards and I didn't care for it too much, and he said "Well, we'll see what we can find to make it a little more interesting around here for you."

And I went out of the office thinking that was very nice of him to worry about a new little member of his staff, but not thinking that he would do anything about it. But several days later I ended up on his legislative staff working on legislative mail, this type of thing. Still working on campaign things too, because

at that point everybody was. It was a small staff and there was an awful lot of work to be done.

MICHAELIS: Did that bring you into closer contact with him?

VOGELSINGER: Yes, he started dictating a lot of things to me. I don't know whether he was doing it because he thought that would make life a little more interesting, or because he really thought I could do it. I always thought he did it because he thought it made my work more interesting.

MICHAELIS: Well, that must have been true. How did he dictate? Did he have any particular....

VOGELSINGER: Terribly fast! And he also had that Boston accent which I was not at all used to, so it was a little difficult. It was not hard though because you never were in fear that making a mistake was going to be a vital matter. He would correct you and could do it over again, but it was nothing that he got mad about.

MICHAELIS: Did you say that he used to start dictating before you came into the room?

VOGELSINGER: He would. He'd call you in and you'd be walking in the door and he'd have a letter half dictated before you even sat down or even had a pencil out. There was one time I walked in and did not have either a pencil or a paper, just grabbed something off his desk and starting writing on it.

MICHAELIS: And you said something about working particularly on his dictation about his family memoirs for the James MacGregor Burns' book.

VOGELSINGER: Yes, that was one instance, he had called me in. He was doing some background work on his family's background for the James MacGregor Burns books. He dictated what when I look back on it is in the first chapter of Mr. Burns' book. It was pages and pages of things about New Ross and Lismore Castle and this sort of thing. But all coming out with a Boston accent, I had practically nothing right. He said, "Sue, I didn't say any of this." He then spelled everything for me, making sure that I got it right the second time around.

MICHAELIS: Was there anything about the way he recollected these things or did he have it pretty much on the tip of his mind?

VOGELSINGER: He seemed to just shoot it right off the top of

his head. I don't know whether he had read letters or something previous to having me in the office, but he seemed to know what he was talking about right away. He was actually dictating his recollections of a trip that he had made to Ireland when he was a congressman and visiting Lismore Castle and then going to New Ross and seeing the family home there, his memories of that.

MICHAELIS: You said he slowed down his dictation after he became president. He had just learned the technique of dictating more slowly or was he just being more considerate in what he was saying?

VOGELSINGER: I thought that he was thinking much more carefully about what he was saying, choosing his words more carefully. And he did slow down, no more problems trying to keep up with him.

MICHAELIS: Tell us about the primaries, particularly the West Virginia campaign.

VOGELSINGER: Well, I'm not too well acquainted on them. I went to Charleston, West Virginia, shortly after the Wisconsin primary. I think it must have been several days afterward. I was working in the Charleston headquarters which was the main headquarters. There was a very small staff there at the time. Just, as I remember, two girls from Washington, although more came out later. And there were a number of people who had come down from Wisconsin and other places around the country who were by now very ardent fans of Senator Kennedy.

MICHAELIS: They were volunteers?

VOGELSINGER: Yes. They were all volunteers and wanted to participate in this primary. Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] was working out of that office and working on organizing the state, trying to figure out what to do with all of the people who had come to help which was no small problem. The senator was not actually in that office very much because his time in West Virginia was spent campaigning.

MICHAELIS: And who really ran the office? Mr. Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] was there.

VOGELSINGER: Mr. Sorensen was there, in and out. Mr. Feldman [Myer Feldman] was there, in and out. The person who was in the office most of the time was LeMoyne Billings [Kirk LeMoyne Billings], who was an old friend of the President's, had gone to school at Choate with him and who is now an advertising executive in New York. He was sort of the campaign manager of the staff from Washington.

The West Virginian who was running that office was named Matt Reese [Matthew Reese], who had been picked early, apparently, in the year, in the event that we would go into West Virginia into this primary and who had done some groundwork on county situation and organization so that it would at least be a start for Larry O'Brien when he came in.

MICHAELIS: How do you spell his name?

VOGELSINGER: It's M-a-t-t R-e-e-s-e.

MICHAELIS: And Robert Kennedy also, of course, came down.

VOGELSINGER: Robert Kennedy was there. He was also busy with the other primaries which were coming one right after another as soon as the West Virginia one was over. But he did spend most of his time in Charleston working on the schedule and on the strategy of the whole campaign.

MICHAELIS: Then what did you do after the West Virginia primary?

VOGELSINGER: After the West Virginia primary, I went back to Washington and worked on legislation again. It was a long legislative session that year, and we had plenty of work left to do before we could concentrate on the campaign or before all the staff could concentrate on the campaign.

MICHAELIS: You work particularly on the labor bill?

VOGELSINGER: I did work on the labor bill.

MICHAELIS: You said there was one incident where you were invited by Senator Kennedy to come to a briefing...

VOGELSINGER: That was in the spring of 1959. The bill was going to be on the floor on a Monday morning, I don't remember the exact date. It was as Saturday morning, and he was having a sort of homework session with Arthur Goldberg and Ralph Dungan who at that time was still counsel for the Labor Committee. We all went out to the Georgetown house and sat outside around a glass table. And they were shooting questions back and forth, all three of them, trying to think of every possible question that might come up on the Senate floor, the holes that were in the bill, and how they could be fixed, and how it might have to compromise, and the whole thing. This went on for several hours.

I was supposed to be taking notes on it but it was pretty far

above my head. I did take notes and Ralph Dungan did help me put them together so that, by the end of the afternoon, I was able to take back a set of notes to Senator Kennedy at the house. He thanked me very much for having given up my beautiful spring afternoon. And it was a beautiful spring afternoon.

MICHAELIS: And you say Caroline [Caroline B. Kennedy] was playing around?

VOGELSINGER: Caroline was there, playing out in the yard. She was, I suppose, two and a half or three at that time and she was making many demands on her father's time. She wanted all of his attention. He was sort of playing with her while doing this at the same time, which I thought was a rather phenomenal feat because she would throw a ball out in the lawn, and ask him to go get it, which he would do and come back. And then they'd be back on the labor bill again.

MICHAELIS: I don't know whether it fits right in here, but I have a note about Kennedy's interest in the desks of his employees. Perhaps this comes at a time when it's actually ...

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes, this does sort of come in here, my specific experience with it. But he was well known for doing this and the staff warned me immediately that this might happen and to put anything you did not want him to see out of sight of your desk. He would come by and go through everything, and if he'd see a letter he would often dictate an answer to it right then and there or he'd ask what you were going to do with this letter, see what he thought about it.

And during the labor bill again, after Eisenhower's [Dwight D. Eisenhower] speech to the public saying that this bill is no good, the mail came into Senator Kennedy's office in absolutely huge numbers. It must have been in the thousands a day. We were hard put to even get it all open, much less answer it! And I had it in stacks of pro and con mail, mostly con because there was very little pro.

And the Senator came in late one evening and I was the only one left in the office still frantically opening all this mail. He sat down at the desk behind me on which, unfortunately, I had stacks of the con mail. And he started through it very slowly -- suddenly a loud cuss and many more for a couple of minutes, talking about why these people don't understand the bill and what we are trying to do here and why do they bother to write when they don't know what's going on. He was really quite furious at them for a while, but sort of pulled himself up short and then thought, "Oh, well, it's worth it anyway," or something to that effect.

[-6-]

Also during that time the door to the office was open. Two little boys were wandering down the hall, and they saw him sitting at the desk and wanted to come in and get his autograph which they did. In fact that's what stopped his talk because they were standing there.

MICHAELIS: He had come in to show you, apparently, the article in *Life*?

VOGELSINGER: He had come in, yes, to show me a picture of Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline B. Kennedy] in *Life* magazine which he had thought was particularly good. But then he started going through the desks as he always did.

MICHAELIS: And then after that came the period of the convention? What were you doing at the Democratic [National] Convention?

VOGELSINGER: Well, my job was that of locator. Apparently, from what I understand, the only time at a convention there has been such a thing. I was supposed to be able to locate at any given minute any member of Senator Kennedy's staff that was at the convention. This included the senator, all the way down to the lowest telephone operator.

MICHAELIS: Could you really always be able to locate him?

VOGELSINGER: No. He was very hard to find and so were most of the other members of the staff. The only ones that it really worked with were those that had newspaper experience and were used to telling people where they went, but it got so that the long distance operators in Los Angeles used to call me and ask if I knew where people were. They had heard I was locator. It was a good indication of how organized that was. Across the hall from me were girls working on these cards -- these same cards that I had originally been hired for -- keeping track of what delegates were doing at the convention and where they'd been and who they were and what their families were doing.

MICHAELIS: So the system really worked.

VOGELSINGER: Oh, it worked. Yes.

MICHAELIS: But wasn't there a time at the convention when he was particularly hidden away?

VOGELSINGER: Yes. The night...

MICHAELIS: So the press could not get to him.

[-7-]

VOGELSINGER: Yes, the night of the day of the balloting. That wasn't the day of the balloting. I thought I knew. I just don't remember now.

MICHAELIS: Wasn't it after he had actually been...

VOGELSINGER: Actually after he had been nominated? I think it was, but that doesn't quite fit.

MICHAELIS: Well, I was going to ask you, did you know where he was at that time?

VOGELSINGER: I did not know where he was at that point, no. I assume somebody did.

MICHAELIS: Probably the *Life* magazine photographer knew.

VOGELSINGER: That's right.

MICHAELIS: And then afterwards, after the successful nomination, what was your assignment then?

VOGELSINGER: Then I went back to Washington to finish up the last of the Senate session which was still going on and on and on. And then I began to travel with the campaign. During the time between the convention and the time that the campaign actually started, which was Labor Day weekend with the exception of a few trips, I had started working with Pierre Salinger. And I became a member of his immediate staff during the campaign then, in fact, at the beginning of the campaign.

MICHAELIS: That was your choice?

VOGELSINGER: That was my choice, yes. So then I travelled for the first five or six weeks of the campaign. That is all a great big blur in my mind. It just was too fast. After that I went back to Washington for ten days and worked in Bob Kennedy's office. I had done that because they switched the girls. Senator Kennedy felt that all the girls should have a chance to work on the campaign on the road, since that was the most exciting place to be. So that he began switching girls for two weeks.

MICHAELIS: You were substituting for someone else?

VOGELSINGER: I was substituting for someone else back in Washington. After that, I was sent up with two men, Chuck Henderson and Cornelius Ryan,

[-8 -]

the author of *The Longest Day*, to set up for election night in Hyannis. We spent a little over a week there making arrangements for election night, getting the armory set up and getting Bob Kennedy's home set up as the listening post, I think they called it, I've forgotten now. It was a fascinating procedure because Hyannis was pretty well closed down because it was November. We had no money to operate with, so we were borrowing right and left.

MICHAELIS: Borrowing equipment?

VOGELSINGER: Equipment. Everything. Borrowing people. We even borrowed a carpenter and talked him into building the stage we needed in the armory and some of the tables that we needed out at Bob Kennedy's house. We borrowed chairs from nearby churches and everything else. We often hit Republicans because that was a Republican area. By that time they were all pretty interested in what was going on.

MICHAELIS: Local pride had probably overcome partisanship.

VOGELSINGER: Yes. I think the last thing that was returned from that night was a clock which we had borrowed from a local restaurant which didn't get returned until something like six months later when we found it, much to our horror, on a weekend trip up to the Cape.

MICHAELIS: Well, probably now it is an historical item for the restaurant.

VOGELSINGER: I'm not sure they even remembered that it was there, but someday I mean to tell them.

MICHAELIS: And then you had the period in Palm Beach?

VOGELSINGER: Yes. From Hyannis, Pierre was appointed press secretary on the ninth of November and he asked me and two other girls that had been working with him, Christine Camp and Barbara Coleman, to join his staff. Barbara and Chris both went back to Washington, and I went directly to Palm Beach with Pierre and President-elect Kennedy.

That was another interesting period. We talked the President-elect into stopping for an hour in Washington so we could switch from all our winter clothes to a couple of bathing suits for Palm Beach. And that's what we did. We stopped for one hour, and everybody went home and packed and got back to the plane and then down to Palm Beach.

The first couple of weeks down there were very relaxed because everyone was exhausted. We had our telephones out by the swimming pool in a very lovely hotel. The President-elect had us

[-9 -]

over quite often for relaxing, swimming, cocktail party with movies.

MICHAELIS: You say he was a great movie watcher?

VOGELSINGER: He was. He had a movie there every night. It was a great problem with

the local movies theatres to get enough movies in to keep him satisfied. I can remember one night...

MICHAELIS: Were these in the living room?

VOGELSINGER: No. He showed them out on the patio of the house. There was a lovely patio sort of in the front of the house and that's where he had the movie screen put up. I don't know how many movies he actually wanted all the way through. My experiences were that he watched about fifteen or twenty minutes, and then we would all go into the living room and have a drink or something. I guess there were a very poor selection of movies at that time.

MICHAELIS: About how many of you were there at that time? How many staff people?

VOGELSINGER: Very few staff at that time. His personal secretary, Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln], was down there, Pierre and Don Wilson [Donald Wilson], who was then still with the press staff of the campaign, and I believe two little girls. More came down then as things increased and the President started choosing his cabinet and members of the government. That, of course, brought more people down. But for the first three weeks or a month there were just a few of us.

MICHAELIS: And he went out of his way to make this a relaxing time?

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes. He did.

MICHAELIS: What people did come down? What were the new appointments that were announced there and people who came to see him?

VOGELSINGER: Well, there were.... This, again, is really confusing in my mind because for a period of time, between about the eleventh of November and Thanksgiving, we were spending three days in Washington and four in Palm Beach of every week. We were going back and forth and quite a few of the appointments and people that he was meeting were in Washington, some were in Palm Beach, some he would meet in Palm Beach and announce in Washington. So it was all very confused.

[-10-]

One I remember most distinctly is Walter Heller who came down to Palm Beach. I had been assigned to drive him out to the house and take him in and see that he got to the right place. The president-elect was some place other than in the house immediately when I got Mr. Heller there, and we sat in the den. The house, you walked in a long, Spanish-like corridor from the street and then hit this patio that I was talking about, where the movies were. He did

almost all his interviewing in a small den which was right off the patio and that's where we automatically took people. And I sat with Mr. Heller there, and he was a little bit nervous about this whole thing. He wasn't quite sure that he wanted to give up a fairly lucrative salary which he had in Minnesota and he had children in high school there. He was not too sure he wanted to have to put them in a position of changing schools by bringing them to Washington in the middle of the school year. He was sort of talking mostly to himself but sort of to me, about this as he was pacing the floor. Then the President-elect came in to meet him and I went out.

When I went back there to get Mr. Heller to take him back to the hotel, he was worried no longer about how much money he was going to lose or the children or anything else. He was convinced that this was a good opportunity, a marvelous opportunity, to work with a great man and he was not going to think about it again.

MICHAELIS: And how about Dean Rusk? Did he come?

VOGELSINGER: Dean Rusk was interviewed, I believe, originally in Washington and for some reason, I guess, thought -- there was some confusion -- that President Kennedy didn't want him or something. But anyway the next thing we knew, he was down in Palm Beach and that's where his appointment was announced also. They would be announced, usually, on this same patio at the press conference. The President would introduce them to the press and tell them what job he had accepted and give them some background. Then whoever it was, Mr. Rusk or Mr. Heller, would then speak to the press themselves, answer questions.

Then, also, of course, everybody will remember in Washington too the thing standing out in the cold in front of the N Street house when they were being interviewed or when they were announcing their appointment. So I suppose it must have been about half and half, half in Washington and half in Palm Beach.

MICHAELIS: At this point, the office in the Senate Office Building was...

VOGELSINGER: The Senate Office Building was no longer working. That's right. Everything had been moved out of there. We were working out of, when in

[-11-]

Washington, the Esso building which was rather crowded by this point because the whole staff was down there. This was before we had at least two offices in the Democratic Committee. Everything had also been moved out of the committee into the Esso building, and back and forth several thousand times, so I'm sure we've lost a great deal of things from those moves. In fact, we just found one set of files one time last year which we had not seen since the winter of 1960.

MICHAELIS: And this was the period that John [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] was born?

VOGELSINGER: That's right. He was born at Thanksgiving.

MICHAELIS: Were you with President Kennedy when that was...

VOGELSINGER: No. I had stayed in Palm Beach over Thanksgiving. He was just going to be gone two days and Pierre said, "Why don't you just stay down?" which I did, gratefully. And I had gone out to the airport then to greet them on coming back and the plane landed and the President-elect Kennedy ran off and into the airport. Nobody seemed to know quite why. The next thing I knew they said the plane was going back, that Jackie had gone to the hospital. And, of course, I didn't know this, but then right after they got back into the air, she had the baby, and he got the news, so they went back.

MICHAELIS: And John Rooney. Was there anything much on....

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes. Congressman Rooney came down. President-elect Kennedy was very interested in getting good ambassadors and very worried about the problem of ambassadors having to spend so much of their personal money, especially in the big posts like London and Paris. He was not opposed to wealthy men having to spend their money, but he was worried about having to appoint a wealthy man for one of those big embassies. And he thought that if could talk to Congressman Rooney he might talk him into being a little more kindly in the appropriations for the State Department that involved the ambassadorial posts. So he invited him down. Actually Lyndon Johnson invited him down.

MICHAELIS: To Palm Beach?

VOGELSINGER: To Palm Beach. He came down. I took him out to the house -- that was described in *Time* magazine, I remember, as a shapely blonde giving him a bird's eye view of the Kennedy home, a guided tour, which was not quite the situation. But he spent the day out there with President-elect Kennedy. The President took him to play golf twice, as a

[-12-]

matter of fact. They had a nice luncheon under the trees and he was even allowed to look at John-John who, at that time, was very young. He met Jackie. He was really given the real treatment.

And then back at the hotel later that evening, Congressman Rooney gave the press a fill-in on his day. They asked him whether President-elect Kennedy had been able to sway him at all. Congressman Rooney said that he thought that probably there was a little bit of inequity about the money on these posts and that they ought to look at it a little more carefully.

MICHAELIS: Which in fact did happen.

VOGELSINGER: Which in fact did happen.

MICHAELIS: President Kennedy was able to appoint people who did not have vast private fortunes.

VOGELSINGER: That's right.

MICHAELIS: You described one situation where you were working in the house on a magazine article for President Kennedy very late at night, I think, wasn't it?

VOGELSINGER: Yes, I had taken out the manuscript of an article which was to be his. He wanted to rewrite it. We had taken it out late in the evening. Jackie was there and Caroline was there. We were all sitting in the den of the house again. He was flipping through this manuscript at an extremely rapid rate, dictating changes. On page seventeen, I'd still be on page two while he was seventeen. That was how fast he went, and you were expected to get it. And you usually did, through some miracle which I'll never understand. But during this time, Jackie said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we all had a drink. Jack, why don't you make us a drink?" So he went to the bar. There was a little bar in this den also. He said, "I'll mix some daiquiris," which he then proceeded to fix. He poured one for Jackie and one for me and one for himself, and sat down. Jackie took one taste of it and said, "Oh, Jack, this is awful!" He said, "What's wrong? What's wrong? What's wrong with it." She said, "Well, I don't think you put any sugar in it." He said something like, "Oh, do you mean you put sugar in those things?" And she said, "Would you mind terribly if I made them over again?" He said, "Not at all. You should make them anyway, I can't." Also he spilled his drink then too. He put it on the floor and knocked it over with his foot. Caroline said, "Oh, Jack, you bad boy, you spilled your drink." He sort of looked startled and said, "What?" She laughed again and said, "Daddy, you spilled your drink."

MICHAELIS: And then shortly after that was the trip to Texas.

[-13-]

VOGELSINGER: I don't remember the chronology but during the time we did go to Texas to visit Vice President Johnson. We also went to Miami to see Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] during that time. I didn't actually sit in on any of the meetings so I don't know what happened.

MICHAELIS: But on the trip out in the plane to Texas....

VOGELSINGER: Coming back from Texas, he worked all the way back on answering his own correspondence actually. He dictated almost all the way back -- letters and memorandums to staff people, things he wanted done for about two hours.

MICHAELIS: Well, that really covers the period of the President-elect time and moves us into the first day in office. Where were you on inauguration day?

VOGELSINGER: I was in the hospital. I had pulled a great collapse the day before the inauguration. In fact, my last duty was to take a copy of the inaugural address to President Truman [Harry S. Truman] who was around the corner in the Mayflower Hotel. After I did that I staggered off to a hotel and was sick, and the next thing I knew I was in the hospital.

MICHAELIS: Was that President Kennedy's wish that Truman should have a copy?

VOGELSINGER: Yes, that President Truman should have a copy before he delivered it the next day.

MICHAELIS: Were there any other people who received advance copies?

VOGELSINGER: There were others. I know that President Eisenhower got a copy of it, Vice President Johnson. I'm sure there were a few others, but I don't remember right now who they were.

Then my first day in the White House was January 21st, rather than the twentieth because I didn't quite make it that day. The main thing I remember about that day was very late that night, I was the last one leaving our press office which was in the West Wing and right around the corner from the President's office. I was turning out the lights and President Kennedy was out in the hall sort of looking at the tile floor, muttering about how awful this looked. "Don't you think that looks awful?" I said, "Yes, it certainly did look awful but if you think this looks awful, you ought to see our office." So he said, "Where is it? Let's go look." So we went back into our office and turned on all the

[-14-]

lights again. He didn't say anything for a minute, just looked around. He said, "My gosh, this is worse than our Senate office." Which it was indeed and our Senate office was very small. He was rather horrified and came back to look at it, in fact brought somebody back to look at it the next night, saying how small it was and laughingly suggesting that we cut into Pierre's office to give the girls a little bit more room.

MICHAELIS: And that, in fact, happened?

VOGELSINGER: No, it never did. There were always great plans for it and apparently there have been for years and years but nothing, so far, has increased the size of the White House press office.

He was always interested in all the offices and used to appear in very strange places sometimes where I understood no president had ever been for instance on the second floor of the West Wing where there are a number of offices. He would appear in somebody's doorway, come up to ask a question or to look around or to see who was doing what and was very interested in everything that was going on.

MICHAELIS: These were in the early days?

VOGELSINGER: No, he always did it. He never stopped doing that. And, of course he loved that rose garden and had that completely redone which we always considered our project too as well as his because it was quite a procedure tearing that whole rose garden out. He used to get out there and look at the plans with the gardener and say, "Now, what's going here?" I remember he wanted trees, he wanted some big trees out there that he could look at, and apparently they'd been slow in coming. So one day he went out and asked the gardener where were those trees. The trees were down on the south lawn all wrapped up ready to be planted. So they went down and got the truck and just stuck these two trees, didn't plant them, just stuck them outside the office. And he was very happy with them until they could be planted there.

MICHAELIS: And did he continue to come around to the press office?

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes. He came around all the time. He used to like to come in and read the ticker before he'd go to lunch. We had four ticker machines -- an AP [Associated Press], UP [United Press International], Reuters [Ltd. of London] and Agence France-Presse -- which were in Pierre's bathroom. He would come in and read them quite frequently before going over to lunch. He would comment on them or come in and sit

[-15-]

and read the latest newspapers, often did that before going home in the evening, too, because we always kept that office going until he went back to the house at night. So, he was in there quite a bit of the time relaxing...

MICHAELIS: Was the installation of the Reuters and Agence France-Presse new or was it something that...

VOGELSINGER: Yes, they had not been there before. That was Pierre's addition. Nobody read Agence France-Presse, I'm sure but Pierre but it always gave a great feeling to see all these machines going frantically every day.

In fact he came in one time and found on Pierre's desk a book which had been sent to Pierre of early American homes. He said to me, I happened to be standing in the office when he came in, that he thought Jackie would like to see that book and why didn't we send it over to her.

Quite often lost things in those offices because of him. Men always talk about losing their fountain pens, and it got to the point where you lost at least two or three fountain pens a day if you had that many. And at night -- the President knew he did this but it was sort of automatic and he never thought about it -- he would take all the fountain pens out of all of his pockets that he had snatched during the day and put them on a dish on his dresser. And everybody would go in there in the morning and collect their fountain pens, and then lose them again by the end of the day.

MICHAELIS: And the *Mad* magazine, what was that incident?

VOGELSINGER: Oh, he saw a *Mad* magazine on my desk. Somebody had taken to sending us copies of *Mad* magazine. In this one was a very, I thought, derogatory cartoon episode on President Kennedy. He came in -- it was one thing, unfortunately, that I had not put away -- and he picked it up and sort of flipped through it and he said, "Am I in here?" And I said, "Yes." So he asked me to point it out, so I did. He looked at it for a while and then he said, "is this supposed to be funny?" I said I sure didn't know. But he didn't seem to mind it one way or the other. He did take the magazine off with him, though.

MICHAELIS: I think he also came in one time and asked about the meaning of a particular story? What was that?

VOGELSINGER: One time I was standing outside his office and he was in there reading the *New York Times*. I remember the paper but I don't remember

[-16-]

the article. And from clear across the room he saw me near the door and said, "Sue, what is the meaning of this story?" And I had no idea what story he was talking about or anything else but decided I would pretend to be intelligent about the matter, which I couldn't. It had been a story, actually, that had come out of the State Department -- I did find out later, because you always found out if he asked you to do something -- that it had been actually a story that was the result of a background briefing by a member of the State Department. It had been all right but the emphasis of the background was wrong, and he was upset about that.

MICHAELIS: He followed every story very carefully?

VOGELSINGER: Absolutely everything. He would spot something on the back page of some paper that nobody else would ever see. I must say he had the

members of his staff reading the newspapers from cover to cover and very, very carefully. But even so, he would always find something that nobody else had seen.

I can remember Pierre used to get up extra early in the morning so he could read the papers before the phone would ring. But quite often he was caught, the President would call him about some story that he had already seen that Pierre hadn't. It would be a rather embarrassing situation for Pierre.

MICHAELIS: And then on the press conference? The episode where he felt the lights were....

VOGELSINGER: I looked at my notes more carefully on that, and now I see that he came racing into the office one day shortly after a press conference -- and I was again alone in there -- and said, "Sue, the image on that picture is fuzzy." I was watching the rerun of the press conference. I had no idea what he was talking about. He said, "That picture is fuzzy and I want you to write Pierre a memorandum and tell him that if he doesn't do something about that fuzzy image pretty soon, I want to know the reason why. And you tell me tomorrow morning what he has done about it." And off he went. Somebody else had come into the office to hear the end of this, Mr. Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher]. And he started laughing. He said, "This has been a fight for a year now." I said, "Well, I wish somebody had been in on it besides me, I didn't know what he was talking about."

The image actually was the fault of a light being placed in the wrong position and every time he looked at a certain angle, the image was fuzzy on the screen. There was no question about it being fuzzy. And I do believe that it finally did get straightened out, but not until he yelled loudly several times.

[-17-]

MICHAELIS: He did watch his playbacks?

VOGELSINGER: Yes, he watched them all.

MICHAELIS: On the TV conferences?

VOGELSINGER: And all his speeches that were played back.

MICHAELIS: You said he had a remarkable capacity for remembering details?

VOGELSINGER: He really did. This didn't take you more than one go-around to find this out. He would ask for or tell you or suggest one small little thing that you would think he could not possibly remember and two weeks later he'd say, "Did you do that?" or "What was the answer on that question I asked you two days ago?" or whatever it was.

My personal story in this regard -- I had taken a vacation to Mexico in early in November of 1962. Later that year, late in December he and Mrs. Kennedy had a staff party for the White House which was an annual affair, a Christmas staff party, and there were, I suppose, 1500 people there, easily, at this thing. This was before he'd gone down to Palm Beach for Christmas. And he saw me, and he saw all members of the staff that were there, which were thousands, and he came over and asked me how I enjoyed my vacation in Mexico? This absolutely stunned me because in the first place, I didn't even know he knew I had gone. I guess somebody had told him, but the very idea that he could remember that about one of hundreds of people was astounding.

MICHAELIS: And did you, at that time, do some work for him himself?

VOGELSINGER: Not as much directly with him. Some, because we were on the same floor. Most of the work that I did for him from that point on was traveling. The press staff always had at least two or three people on every trip. Then, when you would be on the President's plane and he wanted to do dictation or to rewrite a speech, you would work with him. But that was pretty much the extent of it then.

MICHAELIS: How about the economic message?

VOGELSINGER: Oh, that was an exception to the rule sort of. He was working on the economic message and apparently did not like the drafts that had been submitted for approval or for his decision. And so he called myself and another girl in the press office, Christine Camp, in one Sunday -- oh, I guess it was a Saturday. No it wasn't, it was Sunday -- to work on the speech. He was in his bedroom. We both went over there. We didn't even know where the bedroom was. We had a bit

[-18-]

of trouble finding it. And he had us both over there then for an hour. He'd dictate to one of us for fifteen or twenty minutes and send us off, and then the other for fifteen or twenty minutes. That was the way he would write the message.

MICHAELIS: You were going in relays?

VOGELSINGER: We were going in relays all day long. We actually then put out the press release on it that night. That was the economic message he gave the next day to Congress.

MICHAELIS: Why was he in the bedroom? Because he was tired?

VOGELSINGER: Well, I guess he had been there. I guess that's the place he liked to work. I think he did, from what I hear from other people. He had a

giant bed in there and it was cool and calm and telephones couldn't get at him and neither could people. It was, I suppose a very good place for him to work when he wanted to really concentrate.

MICHAELIS: And then you were with him on the plane when he went to Amherst [College]?

VOGELSINGER: Yes. That was in October of 1963. He was going to Amherst to give two speeches: one, at a special convocation for him, and the other was the dedication of the Robert Frost Library which was on Amherst's campus.

And again he had drafts submitted to him which apparently he did not like, so he decided to rewrite both speeches on the way up. It is only an hour flight so that's not very much time to write two major speeches. He did write them on the plane dictating. I must admit I was rather panicked about the time, not about the speeches, but the time available. But he didn't seem to be worried about it at all, so I stopped worrying about it too. He was sort of tearing little sentences out of one draft that he'd like and then dictating from the sentence and on. For the speech at the dedication of the Library, he actually did not have a written speech. He used an outline. He dictated an outline, just words actually, to remind him of a quote he wanted to use or a particular statistic that he wanted to use about education which was what he was talking about that day.

It turned out that the speech at the convocation was, I thought, one of the best speeches he ever gave, and apparently some historians have also said the same thing. It was an excellent speech written in a very short period of time. He did it in complete calmness. It didn't bother him that there was only twenty minutes or so left before landing. I took the last page of the speech out of the typewriter as he went walking to get off

[-19-]

the plane.

MICHAELIS: I was going to ask you how you had time to actually type it once he had dictated it?

VOGELSINGER: I didn't have an awful lot, but managed. Did that another time, too, on a trip to Yale [University], Yale graduation. He didn't like the speech and he rewrote the last half of it. He was still dictating it as the plane landed at New Haven. And I was sort of typing it under the grandstands as he was giving the first of it. A horrifying experience, as far as I was concerned. Again, it didn't seem to bother him at all but everybody else was also in a slight panic. They were screaming for pages of the speeches.

MICHAELIS: This was the speech where he inveighed against the economic myths

of business?

VOGELSINGER: That's right. Yes.

MICHAELIS: And he rewrote that on the plane going up to New Haven?

VOGELSINGER: He rewrote the last half of it on the plane. He had written most of it the night before in New York where we had been previously. Because I had worked on it then, rewriting it too. So he did do that one himself. People always say that his speeches were always written by Ted Sorensen. That wasn't the case.

MICHAELIS: In that case, wasn't it attributed to both Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith?

VOGELSINGER: It was. As a matter of fact, I rode in the car from the New Haven airport to Yale with Mr. Schlesinger, and he wanted to know how much of the speech had been cut out -- how much of his speech had been cut out? I was sitting there with a whole notebook full of notes and I said, "An awful lot of it," which did not make Mr. Schlesinger too happy, I'm afraid.

MICHAELIS: Did he use some of the Galbraith draft?

VOGELSINGER: I don't know, since I don't really know what Mr. Galbraith's contribution was to that speech, I didn't see the actual drafts except for the last one that I was working on. I really wasn't working from a draft. I was just adding, or doing the last of the speech from my notes which was quite a bit, three or four pages I think.

MICHAELIS: That must have been a terrible responsibility if there was no time for him to look at it.

[-20-]

VOGELSINGER: It was. It scared me to death. I just was praying that he would glance at it before but with his ability to read I'm sure that he did look at it before he gave it. It didn't take him very long to just whip through a couple of pages. There were a couple of words here and there that I was horrified about, putting big circles around to be sure this was right, and that kind of thing.

He once dictated very early in his presidency, going to the Cape one weekend. This was before I knew any security clearances or top secret or what was top secret and what wasn't, he dictated a scathing memorandum to three of our ambassadors behind the iron curtain countries asking them what was the meaning of a particular story that had gotten out? And he used a couple of words that I just had no idea what they were. I'd never heard them

before and I didn't have a dictionary on the plane. I was in a real state. So I just left them blank and gave him the memo back. He told me the words again without spelling them, so I still didn't know. So when we landed.... He also didn't tell me whether this was top secret or not and I had no idea. Happily, the President's naval aide was on the plane and said, "Don't you think this is top secret or something?" He looked at it and said, "It certainly is." And I did get to a dictionary then and found a word which I thought was what he was using. I still was not quite sure. The next day he asked what word I had used in there and said, "I hope you used the right one because if you used the wrong one we are all in trouble." And frankly I still don't know what it means. I did look it up and I immediately forgot it again. It was something I had just never been in contact with. I had used the right word though, thank goodness.

MICHAELIS: And then skipping in time a bit, you went to Bermuda in 1961?

VOGELSINGER: We went to Bermuda in 1961. This was, I thought a marvelous story about his ability to relax in the midst of any kind of circumstances. He was meeting with Prime Minister MacMillan [Harold MacMillan] in Bermuda. The meetings had gone on for one day, and we were into the second day. I was at the home where the meetings were being held. I've forgotten what it was, it was probably a state palace or wherever they have there in Bermuda. Mr. Bundy [McGeorge Bundy] and the President and the President's secretary, Mrs. Lincoln, and Pierre Salinger and myself were sitting in a room waiting for this afternoon batch of meetings to take place. The prime minister was taking a nap and that was what was holding everybody up.

 And Evelyn had done some personal shopping for the President. He wanted to take some sweaters back to Jackie, so she had gone out and gotten a whole load of sweaters for him to pick from. He

[-21-]

picked a few asking us all what we thought about the sweaters and which one was good and which wasn't. Then he and Mr. Bundy started talking about the agenda for the afternoon meetings. And then in the middle of this, the governor of Bermuda came in and said that the prime minister had gotten up and the meetings would start again in about five minutes and he would come back and let us know when. So the governor went back.

 Evelyn said to the President, "The next time he comes in, would you please give him this present?" She gave the president a nicely wrapped box and he said, "What is it?" And she said, "It's a present for the governor." He said, "Yes, but what is it?" And she said, "It's an autographed picture in a silver frame, an autographed picture of you in a silver frame." He said, "I don't want to give him that. I wouldn't want to get an autographed picture for a present and I don't want to give anybody else one." And went on and on for about five minutes about how awful it was to get an autographed picture. He said, "I've got more pictures hanging around my office than I know what to do with." And he had us all just in hysterics by the time he finished this.

MICHAELIS: Was he serious?

VOGELSINGER: Sort of. He was laughing also, but he did mean that he did not want to give an autographed picture for a present to anybody. So at that point the governor stuck his head back in again to announce that the prime minister was ready to begin the meetings again. The President said, "Oh, Your Excellency", and the governor came back in. And he said, "I'd like to give you this present to thank you for all your help down here." Then he said, "If you don't like it, you can always take the picture out and use the silver frame for something else." Then he went to the meetings.

MICHAELIS: Thank heavens he did that. That's probably one of his most cherished possessions right now.

VOGELSINGER: I'm sure it is. I'm sure it would be for anybody, but he didn't see why anybody would want a picture of him in a silver frame.

MICHAELIS: It's a wonderful story. Did you have any sort of general observations on how his method of operating changed in the White House from the early days to the later days?

VOGELSINGER: He remained pretty much the same. I always thought -- the same interests, the same intensity, the same determination to get to the very root of any problem. He did slow down considerably in his speaking and his dictating, I don't think ever in his reading, however.

[-22-]

People used to write that he lost a quite a bit of his humor, that he was more serious. I never really thought that he did. I never really thought that he did. He may have used it less in public but it was always there and even in the midst of the most serious crises. In fact, I'm sure that's what helped him handle all these things so well. That he could hold on to his objective point of view and his ability to look at things in something less than a crisis way of thinking.

MICHAELIS: Did he become tired and irritable at any time?

VOGELSINGER: You could tell that he was tired, but he was really never irritable. There were times, of course, when he would get mad at a stupid mistake that somebody had made or a situation, an international situation, don't mean a local one. But he never spent much time being mad. I'm sure he thought that was just a waste of time and it didn't accomplish anything, which, of course, it didn't. And he, I don't really remember...

MICHAELIS: I meant with the staff particularly. Did he...

VOGELSINGER: I don't really remember instances of his getting mad at people at all.

MICHAELIS: And how did you feel as far as working for him?

VOGELSINGER: Working for him was marvelous. He had the ability to make you do a better job than you thought you could do. I don't know exactly what it was but he always seemed to ask a little bit more of you, not consciously, but you felt he was always asking a little bit more of you than you were capable of doing. And somehow you always managed to do it. I always felt I did a much better job working for him than I did for anybody. When he asked me to do something, I was always able to do it much better and much faster and always felt much better about the job I had done when it was something I was doing for him. And I think everybody felt that way.

MICHAELIS: You felt you were working above your own capacity?

VOGELSINGER: I did.

MICHAELIS: Where were you when the news of the assassination came through?

VOGELSINGER: I was in Dallas. I was not on the motorcade. I was on Air Force One was at the airport working on the next speech.

MICHAELIS: What was the next speech on?

VOGELSINGER: It was the Austin speech. In fact, the night

[-23-]

before -- I was thinking about that today -- he had given a speech in the same room or in the same hotel where he had given his famous [Greater] Houston Ministerial Association speech during the campaign, when he explained to the combined audience of Protestant Ministers, his stand on what it would be if he were elected president, which, I think, was the great turning point in his campaign. He had been there at the same hotel the night before he was killed.

MICHAELIS: Did he dictate that Austin speech to you or had you...

VOGELSINGER: No, it had his changes in it, but he had not actually sat down and dictated it to me. There were two of us, Christine Camp and myself, and we were doing the press release copy and a speech copy for him to read from when we got the news that something had happened. A steward came running through the plane and said, "Get ready to go, we're leaving." And we were not told why, just to get ready to go. So we started piling up stuff and then moments later somebody came in

and said that somebody had been shot in the motorcade and they did not know who. And there was a television set on the plane, we turned that on and soon found out what had happened. I don't remember very much after that. We did get back to Washington that night around 2 o'clock in the morning, I guess.

Chris Camp and I got off the Air Force One because we thought that Johnson's staff, who were all there in great number, would probably take up all the room on AF1 and we did not know what they were going to do with President's body, whether it would stay. We wanted to stay with it. As it turned out, they flew his body back on Air Force One. Chris and I went back on the second backup plane and got there around 2 o'clock in the morning. And then were there, I guess, for a solid week with just a few hours off to go home and change clothes.

MICHAELIS: In the press office?

VOGELSINGER: Yes.

MICHAELIS: There were details to be handled for the press.

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes, it was a horrible period of time. Of course, the press were coming from all over the world. A lot of them couldn't speak English. We had to make arrangements for them to get everywhere. We were working out the funeral arrangements ourselves, but our major job then was to try and keep all the press that were in Washington informed as to the details of the funeral and what they could go to and what they could not and how to cover the whole thing.

[-24-]

I don't remember an awful lot about it. It was a big blank period. Very hard work which was probably a very good thing for all of us because we didn't have time to think for three weeks at least and by then, suddenly, everything was going again.

MICHAELIS: Is there anything else that you think we ought to cover?

VOGELSINGER: I think that that is probably about all. We've covered everything on my notes.

[INTERRUPTION]

(It appears that a question may have been omitted here or that the following may be an insert)

MICHAELIS: Sue, why don't you just say what the procedure was when you went to Hyannis Port, on summer weekends?

VOGELSINGER: Well, on weekend trips we did not have to work very hard, usually.

There weren't a lot of routine things. We had a number of state visits through and during those times we worked very hard. For instance, Lester Pearson came to Hyannis for a meeting with the President and that involved quite a bit of work since his whole press corps came down with him, as well as our own press corps. We were trying to make our relations with Canada a bit more friendly at that point.

MICHAELIS: Did you have to actually make housing arrangements and so forth for the foreign press?

VOGELSINGER: No, by that time we had a transportation office. The White House has a transportation office that makes all the arrangements for traveling press. We quite often, actually, on the weekends that we would go up to the Cape, and also in Palm Beach this happened and Newport, the President would give us the *Honey Fitz* on an evening and the whole crew. And we would take the press out for cocktail parties or the staff out for cocktail parties, and this became a very routine thing after a while. If he was not using the *Honey Fitz* he would...

MICHAELIS: The yacht. The presidential yacht...

VOGELSINGER: The presidential yacht. He would ask Pierre whether he wanted to use it for entertaining the press. We always said, "Yes," needless to say, and off we'd go. We also, earlier, before that before he was elected, he used to give us the *Marlin* up there, which was the family boat -- it was much smaller than the *Honey Fitz* -- for

[-25-]

staff parties or just riding around on. I thought it was very nice of him to worry about our entertainment on weekends up there.

In Palm Beach, as a matter of fact, in 1962 on Christmas Day he gave a cocktail party for the staff and for the press that were down there. It was a big intrusion on his limited privacy anyway, but he invited all the staff and their wives and children or husbands and all the press that were down there and their wives and children to come over around 4 o'clock on Christmas Day. The adults were served drinks and they had punch and cookies for all the children. All the toys were out under the tree and Caroline came in and said, "Hello", and Jackie came down. It was quite a project for Christmas afternoon.

MICHAELIS: Because he had to talk to all the press people.

VOGELSINGER: Oh, yes. It was no party for him. The national press, wherever they are and if he's around, they will immediately corner him and they did.

MICHAELIS: Were there any more little incidents on those summer weekends which certainly must have been an unusual departure from past

presidential....

VOGELSINGER: The same weekend that Lester Pearson was there, he gave another cocktail party for Canada's press and our press that were there for the weekend. The prime minister and the president both came and made themselves available for questions and answers. It was more of a social affair than it was a working party, although, of course, both of them didn't have any time to relax.

MICHAELIS: It wasn't a press conference it was simply...

VOGELSINGER: It was not actually a press conference. It was come and have a drink and meet the prime minister and meet the president, depending on which press you happened to be. It, of course, turned into something of a press conference though.

MICHAELIS: Was that privileged material or was it for quotation?

VOGELSINGER: The President usually felt that any thing he said was pretty much on the record because he found out the hard way that off the record material had a way of backfiring at him. He usually did not say anything unless he expected it to appear in print somewhere.

He did give a year end press conference down in Palm Beach twice, 1961 and 1962, to which the regular White House correspondents

[-26-]

were invited. That is a rather nebulous term because there is some twelve hundred correspondents accredited at the White House. But there are about twenty or twenty-five that consider themselves White House regulars and these were invited to meet with the President at his home in Palm Beach for a year end roundup background which was supposedly off the record. That was about the only occasion he would have those things, the only two that I can remember. They lasted two or three hours usually.

MICHAELIS: Did he prepare things with you for that or was that off the cuff?

VOGELSINGER: No, I was never involved in that, other than preparing material. It was always off the cuff but he would always bring himself up-to-date on the latest statistics on things that he might be asked about, which, of course, he couldn't keep up with day-by-day. And, as far as that was concerned, we were involved in that but he did not do any writing of statements or speeches as such. Just, really, a give-and-take between these reporters and the President.

MICHAELIS: Fine. Good. I think that covers that.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-27-]