

**Paul B. Fay, Jr. Oral History Interview – JFK #4, 2/5/1971**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Paul B. Fay, Jr.

**Interviewer:** James A. Oesterle

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**Biographical Note**

Fay was a personal friend of President Kennedy; Under Secretary of the Navy (1961-1963). In this interview, he discusses playing golf with President John F. Kennedy (JFK), JFK's reflections on being president, the Bay of Pigs, Robert McNamara's ability to communicate, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, among other issues.

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Paul B. Fay

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Paul B. Fay, Jr. – JFK #4

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Fourth Oral History Interview

with

Paul B. Fay, Jr.

February 5, 1971  
San Francisco, California

By James A. Oesterle

For the John F. Kennedy Library

OESTERLE: Red, we left off having started to look at the White House appointments list, and you covered your attendance at the movie "Spartacus," which is the first listing on the White House appointments list. And from there we went off into other areas. February 17, a Friday, 6 p.m., a number of the PT boat comrades including yourself and Mr. John Ayles...

FAY: Ayles.

OESTERLE: Ayles – is that the way you pronounce it – Mr. Ed Webb [Al Webb], Mr. Bill Battle [William Battle] and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] attended a meeting. It was at six in the evening,

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was it not?

FAY: Well, it was Al Webb and not Ed Webb. Mrs. Kennedy was at the White House when we arrived. We were over at the Sheraton-Carlton, which is very close to the Hay-Adams Hotel. It was really very interesting because although I had seen a lot of the candidate – I should say from Congressman through Senator, then

during the period during which he was running for the presidency and then also seen him during the period of the Inauguration – why these other fellows like Al Webb and Johnny Ayles and Bill Battle and a fellow named Carlton Byrd, had really not seen that much of him. So suddenly to have somebody who they'd served with in the PT boats who'd been just one of the gang, to suddenly have him President of the United States, why the relationship was different.

I can remember when – I was then in the Pentagon, so I agreed to meet these fellows. When I got down there, why, everybody had had a couple of drinks but they were just pleasantly happy, and some-

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body said, “Well we’ve got to get in touch with Shafy” – meaning the President [John F. Kennedy]. So Bill Battle I believe it was said to Al Webb, “Al, call him up.” And Al said, “Well what do I say when I call him up?” He said, “Well just say” – and he turned to me and I said, “Well just say, ‘Mr. President, Al Webb’.” Of course he said, “My God, if I call over there and they’re not going to let me through...” I said, “Why don’t you just take a try and see what happens?” So he picked up the phone and he dialed the White House number and he asked for the President of the United States, and the operator said, “Who’s calling?” He said, “Nice Al Webb,” which was his nickname. So the next voice that came on the telephone was the President of the United States. He was saying, “Al, how are things going,” or words to that effect. And Nice Al just froze. I mean suddenly the years overwhelmed him and the position overwhelmed him, and he really just handed the phone to me at the time. I said, “Mr. President, we’ve got some of the great

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heroes of the last great conflict” – or words to that effect – “here, and they would love to come over to see you.” He said, “Come over right away,” and that was really it. Of course Bill Battle just gave Al Webb the worst working over, “God, you blew it so bad,” or words to that effect. He said, “God, I mean your one moment of greatness and it collapsed on you.” But it was an interesting...

Then of course we went over to the White House, and I think at that time Al Webb kind of recovered his composure, and he certainly did recover it when we got there I remember the President’s great remark – I mean his remark and the President’s great remark when he was saying, “Now Mr. President...” And I must say this is, I think, you know, people have asked me this many times, “Did you always call the President ‘Mr. President’ when you were with him?” I said, “Certainly in public, and in private I called him the Chief.” I very seldom called him Jack unless pressure was on me, where he was kidding me to the point where I had to

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really kind of stand up for my own position. So people assimilate this without – I mean they want to know, “How do you address the President?” Since I’d been part of his administration



I said, "You address him as 'Mr. President.'" So everybody – here they had been old comrades who'd served with him during the war, but they all addressed him as "Mr. President." And it was done without any strain. It was done very easily, because he had the quality, whatever it might be, that intangible something, the dignity that went with the role. I can remember Al Webb saying, "Mr. President, it's nice to get in here, but boy, I'll tell you it was really a problem getting in here, trying to get clearance so we could go in spite of the fact that you said it was all right for us to come in here." That was when the President made the remark – and these aren't the exact words – he said, "Well you fellows are worrying about getting in here. My big worry is about getting out of here." Because I guess he's already, although he'd only

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been there a short while, the security and the confines in the White House really put a pressure on the President, and he feels somewhat like a prisoner. I think this is why not only John Kennedy but Lyndon Johnson and President Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] have all – you know they have their – well, President Nixon's got his La Jolla or – what do they call it – San....

OESTERLE: San Clemente, California.

FAY: San Clemente, and then he also has his Miami Beach, and he goes to Camp David. I think it's just the escape from the White House is kind of like getting out of prison. They fight to get into it, and then they look for any excuse to get out of it.

OESTERLE: There's another listing here which is interesting: Saturday, February 18, 1961, 12:02 to 12:23 p.m., Mr. Paul (Red) Fay...

FAY: 12:02 to 12?

OESTERLE: To 12:12 p.m.

FAY: Yes?

OESTERLE: "Mr. Paul Fay." And then it says, "10:30 to

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10:40 p.m. the President and Fay left the White House and motored to the Sheraton Carlton Hotel where they purchased a newspaper. They returned to the White House and said good-bye at the Northeast Gate." Is that very interesting?

FAY: Well, I don't think we motored to the Carlton Hotel.

OESTERLE: Was this the time that you walked over that you told me about?

FAY: It sounds like the time we walked over, because I don't remember driving with the President. Maybe I did, because you know, years have gone by. It's over ten years now, or it's just about ten years. My recollection was that, well maybe we did. Maybe we did motor over and buy a newspaper and come back and then I said good-bye to him and walked over to the Army Navy Club, where I was living until my family returned.

OESTERLE: "February 22, 10:58 to 1:32 p.m., the President and Mr. Fay left the White House for a Chevy Chase country club where they played nine holes of golf with Senator Stuart Symington and Senator

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George Smathers." Do you remember anything about that?

FAY: Right. Oh, I remember – I think one of the great disappointments of my life, and I think Stuart Symington and George Smathers feel the same way, is that we never had a picture taken of the foursome that played that day. Because if you go in the Chevy Chase golf shop they have the pictures of different presidents playing. I mean, they have Taft [William Howard Taft] I believe, and they have Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] and others, and it really would have been so nice to have a picture of the four of us playing golf. But at the time we played, it was winter time obviously, so the greens were closed and so they put rather large cans short of the greens so you played to the large cans. There was very little snow on the ground. Of course it had been cold, but there'd been a warm spell at that particular time.

We played, and that's the first time I played golf with the President when he was President. So the President and I played Stuart

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Symington and George Smathers. With a certain amount of conceit, I felt I was the best golfer. I think the record will show – if Stuart Symington and George Smathers will be very honest about it – that the President and I won. But we only played nine holes. I remember – I'm quite sure it was Phyllis Dillon [Phyllis C. Ellsworth Dillon] and some other lady were playing ahead of us, and we were moving ahead quite fast because the President played very fast. We went through them, and I remember how flustered and kind of, you know, in such a feminine attractive way, Phyllis Dillon said, "Mr. President, please come through." I guess she has to be one of the most attractive women that come on the Washington scene during his administration. Then when we played through then we would have probably played eighteen holes, but when we got to the – approaching the ninth green, the President spotted a whole raft of photographers just kind of over the crest of the green. He just turned at that time and said, "I just don't want to have my picture

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taken, one of the first things of my administration, playing golf. I'm going to leave." I can remember him – his limousine meeting him out someplace, I guess it was by the ninth tee – and there were Smathers and Symington and Fay left as the President of the United States went off in his limousine.

But he was very conscious of the idea of being tabbed as a, as always had the feeling that Eisenhower.... I think I said earlier about prior to the Democratic Convention, that he didn't want to be identified as another golfing President wanting to get in the White House, and he still had a very self-conscious feeling about being seen on the golf course after becoming President.

OESTERLE: And photographed?

FAY: Yes.

OESTERLE: The next listing in the White House appointments is February 24, 1961. "9:15 a.m. Paul Burgess Fay is sworn in as Under Secretary of the Navy, in the Blue Room of the Mansion." I think you talked a little bit about that in one of the

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earlier interviews. "February 25, 1961, 11:57 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. The President and Mr. Fay left the White House for Burning Tree Country Club where they played nine holes of golf with Senator Stuart Symington and Senator George Smathers." So that's another time – one time at Chevy Chase and another time at Burning Tree. Anything that comes to mind?

FAY: Well I'll tell you, you know, it's almost as if it was yesterday. We got out there, and once again, you know it's winter time and so they had closed most of the golf course, although there was very, very little snow on the ground if any at all. And of course what I didn't mention was that at both times the Secret Service, they're out there and they're carrying golf bags which look like they'd been made, say, about 1920. They're very slim golf bags, and of course you see the butt end of a machine gun or an automatic rifle sticking out of these golf bags as their walking. They're trying to be as inconspicuous

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as possible as they walk over in the roughs and kind of in the trees, but always walking with you and always with the walkie-talkie system. And on that particular day Burning Tree did not have any cups like they did at Chevy Chase, they had stakes short of the green – or they might even have been on the green – no, I guess they were short of the green. So we played, and the President had the ability to adapt to the game, because we played a two ball foursome. Let me see how that worked – no, we played a four ball foursome. But the President would get up near the stake – maybe it was twenty feet or fifteen feet, whatever it

was – when he felt when he got within range of it, he'd just take off and hit it, because he felt he could hit it truer if he hit it hard. He'd leave me, figuring that I'll be the safety valve against the two of them, and he'd let me get up close. But if he was about fifteen or twenty feet away he'd just whack away, thinking that if he hit it hard he had a chance of hitting the stake and it didn't matter whether it – as

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long as it hit the stake that was it. And I think of the fifteen or twenty foot shots, I think out of about eight of them he took, he hit six times. So we won.

But I can remember at that particular time there was a fire I believe at the French embassy. I did not know Herve Alphand at that time. But I can remember the President at that time when the word came through, "There's a fire at the embassy," getting a hold of one of the Secret Service men and conveying the message to the French ambassador that he and Mrs. Kennedy would be delighted to put them up at the White House during the period when the French embassy was being renovated as a result of the fire – which I thought was such a nice thing for the President of the United States, which I think also showed the depth of his understanding of really what made the major scene operate. Obviously he did something, a gesture which the French ambassador – and he, the French ambassador certainly had the presence of what was right and wrong – would never accept

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the invitation, but the fact the invitation was offered showed the President's understanding and appreciation of the human relations that had to exist if you were going to do your job well.

OESTERLE: The next listing is Saturday, March 11, 1961, "12:25 p.m. The Honorable Paul Fay."

FAY: I'm now Under Secretary of the Navy.

OESTERLE: Do you recall.... That was after this round of golf and after you were sworn in. Do you remember that meeting?

FAY: That's not the same day?

OESTERLE: No, this is in March.

FAY: We were just at the White House.

OESTERLE: You were sworn in on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February. The next day you played golf at Burning Tree with Symington, Smathers and the President. Then some time passes and March eleventh...

FAY: Is this a Saturday?

OESTERLE: It's a Saturday.

FAY: I think we hit golf balls out of the Rose Garden. And I think I wrote about this in my

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book, about Mugsy O'Leary [John J. O'Leary] not knowing how to shag golf balls and then driving one golf ball out of the grounds and somebody writing in to the President saying that he was from the Middle West or something and a golf ball went bouncing down the street outside the White House, and he just hoped the President was the one that hit it – or words to that effect. I forget just exactly how the story went. But it was just a very...

OESTERLE: So it became a collector's item.

FAY: Yes. It was a very thick fog and we couldn't play golf, and we were just hitting golf balls out into the....

OESTERLE: April goes by. One Saturday, May 6, 4:45 p.m., "The President and Mr. Fay depart White House and motor to Glen Ora, Middleburgh, Virginia."

FAY: Yes?

OESTERLE: Do you recall that?

FAY: I remember that very, very clearly. It was another very kind of depressing day. That was the time – and once again, which I mention in my

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book – we were leaving the White House, and the President was very despondent about the whole – it was after the Bay of Pigs. And then we went through the – I happened to be seated in the wrong side of the car. I was seated in the President's side of the limousine rather than where he was, and we went through the entrance all the crown that was there were trying to wave to the President, and you know, being a rather friendly sort I kind of waved back. And the President's comment – and as I say this is part of my book – that, "I hope their response is a strong indication of the love for the Under Secretary of the navy and not a lack of affection for the new President of the United States." But we drove on, and at that time he was so kind of down about the Bay of Pigs that he said, "If they are going to try to get me to run for this job, they're out of their minds."

And then we drove out to Middleburgh, and of course we're driving in the President's limousine with about three Secret Service cars driving behind us, and

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the President had this great appreciation of history. We'd be driving along – and I think Bill Greer was the name of the driver – and he'd say, "Bill, pull over to that historical monument." And God, you can't imagine – you know, suddenly a limousine would turn off the road at a very fast pace, and the Secret Service cars caught unawares would all start streaking to a halt, and you'd just kind of shudder and didn't dare look around, thinking that one Secret Service car was going to crash into another, because they were just blithely going along and suddenly they're told to come to a stop. But then the President would stop and we'd get out and we'd read, or we'd open the window and read the bronze plaque commemorating some battle of the Civil War. What always impressed me was his great depth of knowledge of the Civil War – of course I didn't have that – and he would recount what had happened, why, and how it happened. I must say we'd kind of relive a little bit what it was like at that time. This

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was to me one of the – you know, his great sense and love of history made all these things really become very alive. You know, you could almost feel the people and the type of people that were involved in it, because he generally had some personal comment about, well, "This general, if he'd had any sensitivity he would have realized this," or, "He was a cold, austere individual," or, "He was a warm guy." But he had a kind of a feel for the individual involved, which indicated how well read he was.

OESTERLE: Did he enjoy going out to Middleburg a lot?

FAY: Well he did. I think he really – I saw once again, getting away from the White House was to get away from, you know, being in prison. They rented a house out there – I forget whose house it was – I can remember going out...

OESTERLE: It was Glen Ora.

FAY: Glen Ora, right. We drove out there, and Anita [Anita Fay] was brought out by our chauffeur. And we didn't know we were supposed to spend the night, because it never had been brought up. He just asked us

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to come out. It was the first time that we'd been asked to leave, when they had left the White House to go out someplace, so we didn't bring any underwear or any nightgowns or anything like that, or whatever you need, toiletry items. You know, I can remember sitting before dinner or actually even before we went downstairs, the President and I – he had showered – and I don't know how we got together but we were chatting. And I remember he showed me something about Lem Billings [Kirk LeMoyné Billings], a picture of Lem Billings, and

saying that Lem Billings was the oldest friend that he had, and showed a picture of them I believe at Choate. And then he had a speech; while he was getting ready for dinner he had – not a speech, it was really a paper prepared by Ken Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith] about why we should fund foreign aid to India. I thought it was the most compelling argument, and I think the President was very influenced too, because he was citing as a comparison Red China and Formosa, saying that we are spending billions of dollars now

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arming and fortifying Formosa for the Nationalistic Chinese cause, for possibly a final invasion – I mean an invasion – of the mainland, but even if not that to prevent an invasion by the mainland. And he said, “We would have been so much smarter if we had spent some money maybe very much earlier in the game in the mainland of China so that we never had to be forced out to Formosa and never had to gear up. We’re really sitting, looking at the same situation now as far as India, that isn’t it better to spend some money now than later on having to spend literally billions of dollars to maybe have a government in exile on Ceylon or some island off the coast of India.” And I remember the President wanted me to read it because he really thought it was a pretty telling argument. He thought Ken Galbraith really had some pretty significant insight into the whole situation.

OESTERLE: You ended up spending the night?

FAY: We ended up.... Our driver, Oliver Washington, who had to be one of the great people during our

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experience in Washington – who is now the driver for the Secretary of the Navy, and who happened to be out here last week, and we had a very pleasant visit. He came in and had a chance to see our house and went over to see some friends that he knew from Washington. And he and I went out and had cocktails and dinner together. But he was the poor fellow, we alerted him by phone at his house, and he was able to go to our house, and because he was really such a bright guy.... In fact I’m sure here’s a man, he’s black, he’s a handsome looking fellow, and never really pushed himself, never really sought anything but just to do his job well, and I’m sure that if he had any sort of an opportunity of – if I had an opportunity to, say, put him in a position of responsibility, I’m sure I could just say, “All right, Oliver, you’re in charge of this area.” In a business, why the guy would have to be outstanding. You know, he really was so capable and is so capable. In fact this is getting on a sidetrack here, but

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he got injured in an accident where some woman crashed into the back of the Secretary’s car when he was walking around the back. He was laid up for about four or five months with his leg, and questioned whether he was going to be able to walk again. And during that period

the Secretary of the Navy went through about three or four drivers and finally ended up driving himself. And then when Washington got well enough that he could drive, the Secretary rang him up and said, "I want you to come back." And he said, "Well I won't be able to get out of the car and open the door for you." He said, "I don't care, just come back."

OESTERLE: Which Secretary of the Navy was this?

FAY: This is John Chafee, who is now the Secretary of the Navy. This guy is unbelievable. Well anyway, he had the capability, knowing what we needed to spend the night, to go into our house with our children and pick out all the things we want, put them in a bag and bring them out to us.

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OESTERLE: You stayed the next day?

FAY: We stayed, we went out there Saturday evening, Saturday afternoon, and then stayed all the next day. It was very cold. The next day we went out and walked around. I think it's the first time that we saw Macaroni, and there was a – I forget the name of the Airedale dog that was there, that was bouncing around. I can remember walking over with the President – it looked to me like what it must have been an underground cooler.

I can remember we walked and the dogs, and then we went over and he and I just walked and walked down kind of a lane, a little bit away from things – you know, one of those treasured moments you have with a friend. We were away from everything, and we talked a little bit about his job, you know, being President of the United States, and his kind of thinking about his role. This was, as I remember, after the Bay of Pigs, so he was kind of reevaluating himself as President and talking about it. And of course I was inquiring, and I said,

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"Do you realize you're President? Does it overwhelm you? Is it something that you feel is a lot more than you thought?" And instead of that it was really, he learned so much, and he said, "No, I really don't think it is, because when I look at it I don't look at it... I realize it's such a demanding job, but I really look at it in the relationship, well, who had it before and who else do I know that I think could do a better job." And it wasn't a matter of conceit, it was a matter of really the ability to do what he thought was a capable job as president.

I think as – maybe I'm editorializing a little bit – but I think his real concern was that it was such a vast job that how was he going to be knowledgeable in everything that was going on in the government that he thought he should be knowledgeable on, or how was he going to have an effect to make sure that things he wanted to accomplish were accomplished? Because he felt the government was so big that it was kind of like if you punched it one place it just came



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out the other side. You didn't really achieve anything. This I think in itself – I mean, I know he felt this about the State Department. In fact he went over and he spoke to the State Department. I went over with him. I don't know whether that shows in the record. But I can remember I was so moved – and I would love to hear a transcript, which I'm sure somebody has, of the speech he made over there, because it really was going over to tell people in the State Department how important their job was, how important it was that they really should think about what they can accomplish, rather than just keep status quo, how there is a new chance and that they really have a chance.... Do you know the speech?

OESTERLE: Yes, I've read that address. In fact I'll get you a copy.

FAY: I'd love to get it.

OESTERLE: Okay. May 19, Friday, 3:00 to 5:05, you met for the first time with the National Security Council [NSC]. And that day, according to the records,

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the military implication that was involved in the resumption of nuclear testing was discussed.

FAY: The military....

OESTERLE: Implication involved in the resumption of nuclear testing.

FAY: I can remember the issue, but I don't remember anything really being resolved. It was really just kind of a broad discussion. I don't remember anything coming of it.

OESTERLE: The only reason I'm going through this is just to see if it does...

FAY: No, it doesn't ring a bell.

OESTERLE: Okay. Well, do you have any impression of the NSC meetings? I think you attended three, at least according to the White House appointment schedule. Well, let me get into the others later, and we'll see if they come in.

Wednesday June 7, 1961, 10:05 to 12:26 p.m., "The President, accompanied by Mr. Fay, Congressman Richard Lankford, Mr. Connally [John B. Connally, Jr.], and Commander Shepard [Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr.] left the White House by helicopter for the U.S. Naval Academy graduation exercises at

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Annapolis, Maryland.

FAY: Yes, I remember it well. He was very anxious to go up and speak before the Navy. He had a great love of the Navy. In fact, the time of the commissioning of the *John F. Kennedy*, the carrier, when the different radio and television stations or companies were looking – they came and they asked everybody I'm sure who was associated with John F. Kennedy what were some of the things that were important that had to do with the Navy. I said there were really about three important things, but one of the important things was his speech that day at the Naval Academy. I don't want to even attempt to paraphrase his speech because it's part of history. They played it back in the television program that was done at the time of the christening of the carrier the *John F. Kennedy*. I've heard since then, really quite frequently, young officers who were part of that graduating class or even though they weren't part of the graduating class were there as part of the Naval Academy student

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body, who never forgot the speech because it really was. . . . In essence, if I might attempt to paraphrase it, was that what an important role that the naval officer played today. It wasn't just your job as a naval officer in the sense of being able to said a course or fire a gun, but your responsibility went so much farther. And how important it was to the welfare of the nation, because we were no longer a nation that had just been very – I mean, you as a military man went so much farther into some of these countries that didn't have strong ambassadorial or didn't have strong connections with our country, and so therefore the naval officer played so much an important role. But I'm really kind of searching for what he said, because it was so eloquently put. I'd love to hear it again. But I have all his speeches upstairs, so I can read it again for my own satisfaction.

OESTERLE: Wednesday, July 26, 1961, 12:13 p.m., "The President presented the Distinguished Service

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Medal to Admiral Arleigh Burke. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Fay and others. Mrs. Fay also was present." It took fifteen minutes.

FAY: Yes.

OESTERLE: Was that followed by...

FAY: No, I think that was just kind of an in and out operation.

OESTERLE: 1962, January 18, Thursday, from 10:15 to 11:25 a.m., National Security Council meeting attended by you and others. On that day – again, according to the record – the military aid program was discussed.

FAY: Yes, this was to me the most momentous one, and really I think I covered that quite well in my book, so I think that's really the best source because I... You know, there's a humorous happening with McNamara's [Robert S. McNamara] – really kind of an insight into Bob McNamara and his total admiration for John Kennedy. John Kennedy I'm sure – you now, Bob McNamara could be uninhibited in answering, which I'm sure he can be. I think John Kennedy was everything that he would have

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liked to have been. In other words he had the qualities of brilliance that McNamara knew that he had, but McNamara didn't have his ability to communicate with people the way John Kennedy did. I think that day when the President came in and McNamara was kind of ill at ease and difficult to talk to – not unpleasant, but just ill at ease, just wanted to be so ready and to be so much on his toes when the President came in because he admired him so. And that was when the President came in and how with such tremendous ease that he spoke to everybody there, hardly without notes but with such great continuity. But I think I got that darn near covered.

OESTERLE: Friday, May 4, 1:15 p.m. “Military honors were rendered the President at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Then for the next four hours he witnessed Air Proving Ground Center Manned Weapons Fire Power Demonstration” at which Mr. Fay and others were also present.

FAY: You know, to me that gave me a real insight into the so-called old guard of the Senate, and I

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must say that I bridled a little bit at that – I mean the back of my neck kind of bristled – because when we went down in the plane I spent quite a bit of the time with the President up in the forward part of the plane. But aboard the plane were people like Dick Russell [Richard B. Russell, Jr.] and John Stennis and Carl Vinson and you name it, all the kind of senior people who had something to do with the military program, either the appropriations or the authorization committees. When the President finally came – during the flight the President came out of his section of the plane and walked into the area where these gentlemen were, and none of them got up. It really got me. Maybe I was over-sensitive about it, but I thought, you know, the President of the United States comes in and if you're a senator or so, why you stand up. And then the President says, “Oh, please sit down,” you know, “we're on board a plane.” But these fellows who had all been senior to the President in the Senate – and in the House in some cases –

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they just didn't get up. And to me, it made me irritated and ill at ease for them, that they didn't do it. But I thought it really was one of the problems that he had with the Senate, because I think that they looked on him and here are these fellows that.... I mean, let's face it, we all know the seniority system that exists in the senate and the House is so archaic, and it certainly does not represent the best leadership you can have. Just because you're a congressman or senator that is constantly elected from some Southern state – and I guess I am a little...

OESTERLE: Same district.

FAY: Yes, the same district or the same state if you're a senator. Maybe I am a little bit biased, but I just don't think that they are the best educated, informed people in the United States. If they are, I think they're so biased in their outlook in certain things that they elect people for seniority rather than how well he represents them. But I think the representation

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that some of the Southern states have is so completely, you know, not in the best interests of the United States but more in the interests for their own electorate, for their own constituency. So maybe I'm not the best person to judge in this area, but at least I thought that they didn't give the recognition to the President of the United States that he deserved.

I think this made it difficult for him to get his programs through. I think this is what happened. I think that these older men who had served for years and years still looked on John Kennedy as kind of a guy who'd gone through the House and the Senate, who'd never really reached the position or prominence and authority that they had. I think they kind of resented it – I mean I just had a feeling that these men.... I would have liked to have said, "Russell, get off your tail and stand up to the President of the United States." But I think he looked at the President of the United States as, "Aw, you're President but I'm the tough guy in the Senate and you'd

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better answer to me."

OESTERLE: Did he have any conversations with any of them that day?

FAY: Oh yes, he spoke to them briefly. He went by every one of them really – all the people of importance – and kind of discussed it with them. I mean nobody really – some of the younger ones got up and he said, "Please sit down," but not the old-timers. They didn't get up.

OESTERLE: And how about the demonstration?

FAY: Oh, the demonstration was fantastic. I must say that the military was

unbelievable. I was with the President at times and not with the President sometimes. It was just whatever was convenient.

OESTERLE: July 18, Wednesday, 11:30 to 11:44 a.m. “The President presented the Collier Trophy to... Major Robert White, Mr. Joseph Walker and Mr. A. Scott Crossfield and Commander Forrest Petersen, U.S. Navy.” Mr. Fay was among many others who attended the ceremony.

FAY: I only remember that it was a short formal occasion.

OESTERLE: Friday, August 10,

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5:05 p.m., the President left Andrews Air Force Base for Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine, where he received full military honors. He was accompanied by Mr. Fay, Senator Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie], Senator Smith [Benjamin A. Smith, III.], Congressman MacDonald [Torbert H. MacDonald], Captain Shepard and Dr. Burkley [George Burkley].

FAY: Well, they missed a few people, because they missed Jim Reed [James A. Reed], who was the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was along. Chuck Spalding [Charles Spalding] was along. I’m trying to think of a fellow who was in the President’s wedding – a writer who writes for the *Chattanooga Times* – also Charlie Bartlett [Charles Bartlett]. One of the things I remember, Torby MacDonald, Congressman MacDonald did not go with us because after we landed up there in Brunswick it was kind of rainy weather. The Governor of Maine came up, who was a Republican, and Margaret Chase Smith, who is Republican, also came up there. I can remember the President, you know, when we went up there, realized he’d have to get along with Margaret Chase Smith but really not looking – waiting for her to say something that

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was going to be serving her benefits and maybe in a way sticking a little bit in the President, but he wasn’t quite sure. But at least he was kind of suspicious of her. But then when he was ready to leave, the Blue Angels were all lined up there. I went up to the President before he left and I said, “Mr. President, the Blue Angels have been standing out here in the drizzle.” He said, “I’m going to have to say hello to them.” So he got up to the target perimeter and he went by each Blue Angel and had his picture taken with each one. And then he inscribed to each one of them just an appreciation for what they had done – I mean for their role as Blue Angels.

And then the next day – I guess it was Sunday night, which would have been two days later – why, we had a clam bake on Johns Island, which is owned by Gene Tunney [James Joseph Tunney], the former heavy weight champion of the world. And the Blue

Angels were due to come by at five o'clock. At five minutes of five, no sign of the Blue Angels, and somebody said, "Well maybe

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there's been some slip up." And then at two minutes of 5 and one minute of 5, no sign of the Blue Angels. Somebody said, "Well maybe they just got mixed up and couldn't come." At 5 o'clock the Blue Angels came over us at treetop. You didn't see a thing until literally you could have struck the bell at 5 o'clock when the Blue Angels came over treetop, all six of them going out at about five hundred miles an hour on the deck, you know, they were no higher than say thirty feet off the top of the trees, trailing red, white, and blue smoke streamers. And they came right over the top of that island and then went up in the air and went through all their acrobatics above the President and our party right there as we were having our clam bake. And then turning – you know, because they went so fast – they turned off on the horizon, and then when they finished coming by, rocking their wings as they went by, it really was a most memorable thing. And of course these fellows – I've seen them time and time again after that – and to them

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getting the picture from the President with his own personal inscription, some word of, you know, complementary phrase on each picture, was one of the most – and then being able to perform for him was one of the most memorable things because he was young enough that they related to him. It was to me a very inspiring thing. And of course the President was so oriented towards the Navy that this was a very, very pleasant occasion.

I can remember that one thing. You know, you never realize what it costs or the preparations or the number of people that are needed when the President moves. Well now we went up to Johns Island, which is an island, maybe it's a hundred yards wide and maybe two hundred yards long, and a lot of it is wooded. And then there's a very nice kind of house lodge that Gene Tunney had, which has maybe about five or six bedrooms and a great big... [Interruption]

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

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FAY: The place was really so hospitable, but before dinner time and before the cocktail hour, why I wanted to do my exercises so I was going to run around the island. And then I realized the support that the President of the United States has whenever he moves. They had moved in tents back in the woods with these tremendous generators. There must have been literally fifty or sixty people on the island that you otherwise wouldn't have seen unless you went out there to see them. And then it was wired all the way around the island, particularly around the house, and when I ran around I ran into a Secret Service man about every forty or fifty yards, who was on duty out there, who had a phone connection back to the main area. The phones were all interconnecting but

separate so that one got cut the other one would still go through. I mean it was a very sophisticated communications system, but you were really not conscious of it while you were in the house.

OESTERLE: Yes, it helps to have a little advanced notice

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in setting all this up...

FAY: Oh yes, God, I mean this last minute thing that President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] did just drove the Secret Service up a – you know, they were really up in arms because they had to make all these last minute arrangements without a chance to see where they were going to go, where they were going to get power, what sort of equipment was going to be available.

OESTERLE: I guess some of these other names are mentioned under the Saturday entry, August 11, which followed the earlier one. The President, accompanied by you, Senator Muskie, Senator Smith, Mr. Charles Spalding, Mr. James Reed spent the day cruising on various Coast Guard ships at Johns Island, Maine. Later in the afternoon the President and his party went to the Watson Blair Estate – or the W. Blair estate – at Ensign Island, Maine, and returned to Johns Island and the Gene Tunney home a while later.

FAY: That was kind of an interesting visit actually,

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because Watson Blair was the home, and Josie Blair was his wife. Watson Blair was known as “the little prince” by a lot of the contemporaries, and also by some of his contemporaries known as “the little prick.” And I think he filled – in my opinion – he filled the latter image as much as anybody I know. Because here his wife had extended an invitation to the President if he was sailing to drop by. And they were having a sailing race around the area of his home, and Watson Blair would not give up the sailing race to greet the President of the United States in his own home.

So when we arrived there Tom Watson [Thomas J. Watson, Jr.] and Olive Watson [Olive Cawley Watson] were there, and Tom Watson has a home on – I believe it’s Northaven. He had come over with his wife Olive, and I guess Tom was really about the only man there to greet us when we came in – to greet the President, I should say – when we came in. We came up from the dock and went up to this really very attractive summer home. Josie Blair has got to be one

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of the more attractive, vivacious women – cracked champagne for everybody. In my opinion I'm still that much affected by the presidency that I think it's kind of exciting to think that the President of the United States and his party would come by your house, even if it's for a short visit, and maybe a sandwich. So she cracked the champagne, and there were an awful lot of wives of people who were sailing – except for Tom Watson, the President and the chairman of the board of IBM [International Business Machines]. And of course, Tom Watson has got to be one of the more attractive men business-wise or any other way that you'll ever come across. So it was interesting that the President told me, he said, "I want you to find out when that race is over." He got me on the side and, "I want you to find out when that race is over, because the last thing I want is to have that little prick walk into this house and say, 'Oh, I would have been out racing and sailing. You

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fellows are in here trying to impress our wives while we've been out competing.'” He just didn't want any sort of confrontation with this guy. Now I've never met him, so I'm not in a position to evaluate him. I just get an impression of people. And I know that in my book I wrote a chapter about this whole incident, but Jackie convinced me to take it out and she was right, because it would have given him a certain amount of satisfaction to think that the President of the United States was upset that he wasn't there and didn't want to have a confrontation with him.

There was something else I took out of my book that was kind of interesting. A girl named Armany Clark, a good looking gal, who was just dying to meet the President and have a chance to chat with him. I knew her because I'd known her – she was married to a fellow – I think she was separated at that time, maybe not separated but she since is divorced from him. I don't know what she's doing now. But she – he was kind of an alcoholic – and she was a very

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attractive woman, and she was dying to meet the President. He was talking to somebody at the end of this rather long couch – the couch is bigger than that one over there – and she was chatting with me, and as she was chatting with me she kept moving a little bit so that we were kind of moving down the couch towards the President. And then I said, "Armany, would you like to meet the President?" She said, "I'd be delighted to meet the President." The President had an instinctive sense about women who were aggressive. It was interesting to watch them because after I introduced them I moved and I went over and I stood and I chatted with Olive Watson. We watched this thing with interest because Olive had gone out with Jack when he was in high school and college, and so they'd known each other for years. So she was watching this happen and watching Jack just kind of leaning back and pulling away, realizing that he was caught in the situation. And then he caught my eye and he had a way of kind of widening his

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eyes and indicating that, "Bail me out." So then I came over and made some comment and then we kind of moved the situation along.

But then when it was time to leave we were going to go back by helicopter, not by boat. I can remember when we were leaving all the domestics – which were really mostly Irish Catholics who came up with all the summer swells – were all out there. They just idolized the President. There was that communication, that kind of Irish charm that he was able to give that he was their type of person. And of course the Secret Service were on, and some woman who must have been in her sixties – sixty-five or something – and was obviously a cook for somebody up there, couldn't restrain herself and she ran out and she grabbed his hand. And she knelt down as if she was with the Messiah, and she kissed his hand. Some Secret Service man come up to kind of push her aside, and the President just looked at him. And he stopped. And she said, "Oh, God bless your soul." And you know, he said, "God bless

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you, my dear, too." You know, the woman's life was made. Knowing how the Irish are, she felt that she really had communication with God. To me it was one of the most moving scenes because of that complete adoration and then his kindness, "God bless you, my dear." You know it was really a very touching, moving scene, because the tears were streaming down this woman's face when he said this.

OESTERLE: Monday, April 29, 1963, twelve noon. "The President presented the Distinguished Service Medal to Admiral Robert Dennison at a ceremony in the Rose Garden." You and Mrs. Fay attended.

FAY: Yes, well, Admiral Dennison, who had been the commander – I believe it was the First Fleet or the Second Fleet, whichever one of the fleets is stationed in the headquarters in Norfolk – was retiring. And at the ceremony my father and mother who were out from the West coast were invited by the President to attend. And after the President presented the medal to the admiral he came down from the steps in front of his office

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down into the Rose Garden and took my mother by the arm and asked my father to join him as he went from Cabinet member to Cabinet member introducing my father and mother. Then after this, after he chatted with a few other people, he asked that they'd come back into his office and they came back into his office, and he asked Anita and myself to come in, and we went in his office and chatted for a while. After my father and mother left, the President as we were going out of the office, the President said, "Well I hope the entrepreneur" – which he called my father – "I hope the great entrepreneur will appreciate the President of the United States really values having his son back here." That afternoon when my father and mother went back to Georgetown – they were staying at Jack Warnecke's [John Carl

Warnecke] home – why my father for the first time told my mother, “Well maybe it’s not such a bad idea having the Redhead back here after all.”

Of course then the next night – I guess it was Monday night – we had a dinner aboard the

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*Sequoia*, the Secretary of the Navy’s yacht, at which the President came on board. The dinner was for my father and mother, and they didn’t know the President was coming, and of course he arrived on board, my father being very emotional – I mean not being very emotional but being very Irish in many ways – When he saw the President, it was so touching to him because he’d known him as “Jack.” And his comment was, “Oh, Jack, how nice of you to come,” and at the same time the tears welling up in his eyes. You know, the President was very sensitive to the feelings of people.

OESTERLE: Friday, May tenth, 1963, at ten o’clock in the morning the President received you and ten others in connection with Operation Sail.

FAY: Jim, I really just don’t remember anything particularly about that.

OESTERLE: Okay. Wednesday, May 29 at 8 p.m. “Boarded the *Sequoia* at the Naval Gun Factory for dinner and cruise in honor of the President’s birthday on the Potomac. Mr. and Mrs. Fay attended,

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among other family and friends of the Kennedys.’

FAY: Well, it was one of those very, very happy occasions. I remember David Niven and his wife were on board. And in my book there’s a picture of everybody giving the President presents on his birthday. It was a very warm, friendly, happy occasion. I think a fellow named Bardyl R. Tirana who worked in the Justice Department – who has a very attractive wife, and he ran for, just recently ran for school board in Georgetown, a very attractive young man who plays a good game of tennis and has got a very attractive wife – and he was saying that when the President came on board, he said, “I can’t really express it. It was one of the most exciting experiences just to have him walk on board. I can’t equate it to my first date, but it was just something about the magnetism of this man that you just got so excited, and the anticipation and just the excitement of somebody who really had this magnetism coming on.”

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OESTERLE: Sunday, June 2, 1963, at Camp David, Maryland, “The President and Mrs. Kennedy and their guests, Secretary and Mrs. Fay and children, went to the pool.”

FAY: Well, you know, we were up there for the weekend and it's pretty hard to...

OESTERLE: It's funny that it mentions in here that they went to the pool.

FAY:

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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OESTERLE: Monday, July 8, 1963, 7:50 p.m. "The President arrived at Pier #1, Naval Annex, and was greeted by Fay and Lieutenant [Commander] Ismay [Arthur P. Ismay], who escorted the President aboard the *Sequoia*. The *Sequoia* departed with the President and thirty guests aboard and cruised the Potomac."

FAY: Well this was my birthday, and so the President came on board, and you know we had really a very attractive.... I mean Bob [Robert F. Kennedy] and Ethel Kennedy [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] were aboard, Joe [Joseph D. Tydings] and

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Ginny Tydings [Virginia Campbell Tydings]. We have some wonderful pictures of it. You know, so many of the people which we saw – Rowlie [Rowland Evans, Jr.] and Kay Evans [Katherine Winton Evans] – people who were our friends during the time when we were in Washington, and I always loved everybody to speak for their meal and believe it or not I was the master of ceremonies at my own birthday party. But everybody kind of picked it up, like Lee [Lelia W. Bullitt] and John Bullitt. And John Bullitt got up and read really a great poem. Chuck Spalding was aboard, and Cooty Thompson [Clark Wallace Thompson] was aboard – I mean there's so many names that come up. But I can remember the President getting up – he was the last person to speak – and getting up and saying, "I never realized twenty years ago when I was out in the Pacific that one day Red Fay would be Under Secretary of the Navy and that I would be privileged to sit to his right," which I thought was really so great.

OESTERLE: Friday, July 12, 7 to 7:50 p.m., "the President

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and Secretary Fay played golf at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts." So you must have been up there for the weekend.

FAY: Right.

OESTERLE: The next entry is Saturday, July 13, 10:25 a.m. "The President, John, Jr. [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] and Mr. Paul Fay went to the Ambassador's [Joseph P.

Kennedy, Sr.] residence, to the toy store and to Ted Kennedy's [Edward M. Kennedy] residence. Later that afternoon the President, Fay and Ted Kennedy played golf at Hyannis Golf Club. That night the President, Mrs. Kennedy, Fay and Mrs. Fay went to the Shriver residence."

FAY: Yes. That was – if I have the right – let's see, if we'd gone to Shriver on, what date was this?

OESTERLE: This was July 12, 13, and actually the 14 too, because the following day on the 14<sup>th</sup> you go to St. Francis Xavier Church. "At noon the President and Fay went for a cruise on the *Nomad*. That night the President and Fay, Ted Kennedy and Ambassador Gore [William David Ormsby-Gore Harlech] played golf."

FAY: I can remember that, but I'm trying to think of

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the, really a memorable night – maybe it was later, maybe it was another year later. No, I think that night at the Shriver's – now I remember it – the Shriver's had the house which the President had had at one time. I don't want to be confused about this – where did the President live? Did he have Squaw – this is '62, isn't it?

OESTERLE: Yes.

FAY: In '62 we went to the Shriver's.... I don't remember which house the Shriver's had. That's the only thing that – I must say my memory is bad.

OESTERLE: I wonder if the Shriver's were provided with one of the houses in the compound?

FAY: Well, you see I believe it was the first – I'm not sure whether the first summer of '61, or '62.... In '61 the President went out I think to Middleburg quite a bit and maybe ended up going to the Cape. And then there was a house which the Shriver's, that the President took first, and then the Shriver's took it after the President went out to Squaw Island. Then Bob and Ethel

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had a house right near – there was kind of a triangle of houses there – and the President had one of them to begin with.

I can remember a very controversial evening – not a controversial evening but it was a night that – well now this must have been in '61, it had to be in '61, because when we got up to.... It was Bob and Ethel and the President and Jackie and the bride and myself. And Jackie had said, "We don't want to bring up the issue of the Bay of Pigs." I can remember it was just the six of us for dinner, and why she seated us the way she did, I don't know, but she

seated so that Bob and the President and I were really kind of in line so that it was easy for us to talk. Evidently she felt this is the way that he'd enjoy it, so we'd all be able to converse together. I didn't bring it up, but the conversation turned to the Bay of Pigs. He really – you know, it was such a sore to him, the whole Bay of Pigs, and it really inflamed him. And he got into a big kind of discussion about the military and the military training and

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well, trying to, you know, he'd been saying about Arleigh Burke and George Decker and Tommy White [Thomas D. White], and I want to be reasonably fair to these men – how that he didn't admire them, you know, that he thought if they had achieved the positions of prominence they achieved in the different services that their judgment would be a lot better than it was. He was concerned about the damage it had done to the prestige of the country, the damage it had done to his administration, getting involved in this, and that, you know, he had typical names like it was “fat-assed Arleigh Burke” and “big-ass George Decker” – you know, which they were, they had big tails on both of them. He was really irritated, and of course the dinner table became very quiet for the girls, and Jackie made some comment to me, you know, “This is the last thing that I wanted to have him get all worked up over something. He gets enough of it all week to have to have it on Saturday nights too.” I believe I was sitting

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next to her and said, “I can't see, well you know, I don't really have anything to do with it. I mean this thing came up and there's nothing we can do about it.”

Well then there was a movie over at the big house so everybody was going to go to the movie, and the President said he didn't want to go to the movie. And I said I didn't want to go to the movie either. So the President and I sat and played dominoes. I think I wrote up in my book how the President – he was on crutches – and here the two of us were, playing dominoes, and then we once again got on the Bay of Pigs and he got on the role of his as President of the United States, you know, what his role was. And his role was that he wasn't going to be forced into anything by the press or by the Pentagon; that he was taking care of the people of this country.

And he cited the example of the children because our children, our oldest daughter Kathy [Kathy Fay] had arranged all the children to put on a little play. And they put on a play early in the afternoon, and he asked her to come

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put the play on again, and they put it on. He said, “Do you think I'm going to be responsible for the souls of those children by not leading them properly?” It inflamed him so that he got up on his crutches and said, “I think it's time I go to bed.” And he started up the stairs on his crutches to go to bed, and he stopped in the middle. He turned around to me – and I wish I could remember the words – because he said, “I'll tell you I don't care who it is, nobody's going to force me to do anything irrational just because they feel that this is going to save the

image or the name of this country. What we will do will be for the best interests of this country but not to live to some archaic image of what we should live to.” I’ve got to say, Jim, that these were the times when I realized that I was really with a truly great man because his ability.... Even though he had been so crushed by the Bay of Pigs, to be able to see the light and to see it all, of what it forced him to do things and how he’d been pinned to do things, and still to

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to be able to realize what his role was. Quite a guy.

OESTERLE: Thursday, August 1, “following an address by the President at the U.S. Naval Academy the President left for Havre de Grace, Maryland, the Oakington estate,” accompanied by you and Mrs. Fay, “attended a dinner given by Mr. Joseph Tydings in honor of the President with about ten other couples present. Later returned to Washington, D.C. with the President by helicopter.” Does that job....

FAY: Oh yes, I remember well. The President was very fond of Joe and Ginny Tydings. And I’ve got to say that I think Ginny Tydings, in his opinion, was really one of the more attractive women in the whole Washington scene – I mean really a beautiful woman. So the trip up to the Naval Academy was really the cover to go up to Havre de Grace that evening, because as President unfortunately if you’re suddenly going up to the Tydings’, why then you’re really saying

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“All right, why then I should go to see all these other people.” Joe was in political life so it was a great plus for Joe.

So he went to the Naval Academy first and went through the museum. And that’s where he made his address before the midshipmen which – these were the plebes in the summertime who were there for training, and you know, they’ve only got maybe about – this was August so maybe they’ve got about five weeks training. He stood up in front of Bancroft Hall and he was introduced by Admiral Kirkpatrick [Charles C. Kirkpatrick]. The President, being a very informal person by nature, and all these plebes were standing at attention, he said, “Why don’t you all stand at ease?” Well, they’d never heard an order so informally put so nobody moved. And so the President turned around to the admiral so that all the plebes could hear, he said, “I guess, Admiral, that comes later in the course.” Of course then they just all burst out laughing, all the plebes did. And the admiral stepped forward and said, “Stand at ease,”

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or words to that effect, and they all stood at ease. But it was done so very well. And then we left and went up to the Tydings’ and landed up there on the lawn – which is kind of fun to

come in on the helicopter – and had this dinner which was very nice. It was great for Joe and Ginny, and I think the President enjoyed himself, turned around and came back.

OESTERLE: Friday, August 2, the next day, the President, Mrs. Kennedy, yourself, Mrs. Fay, Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] and John, Jr. departed for Squaw Island, Massachusetts.

FAY: Gee, I don't remember specifically. Is this '62 or '63?

OESTERLE: '62.

FAY: Yes. You know, we had so many great weekends up there that I really can't identify one against the other.

OESTERLE: Saturday, August 25, 10:25 a.m., "the President and Secretary Paul Fay spend the day visiting at the Joseph P. Kennedy residence and the Morton Downey residence, cruising on the *Marlin* with a

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stop at Cotuit Harbor, walking on the beach and returning to the Kennedy residence at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts."

FAY: Yes, well it was kind of interesting. You know the President was so conscious of everybody and what they did, and his interest in their lives and the influences of wealth, the influences of, say, race, whether it'd be an Irish or Jewish or black or whatever it might be, he was very sensitive of all these feelings. And also I think that...It wasn't Morton Downey but a gentleman whose name slips me right now, but a very, very prominent industrialist in this country, of Jewish extraction, who was a very close friend of Morton Downey's and Morton Downey's wife – who I believe is deceased now, was a very wealthy woman in her own name, and she was a very good friend of this gentleman's wife. But this gentleman had a daughter and the daughter married a very attractive looking son, I mean, a young man who became the son-in-law. I can remember the President's reaction, because this fellow

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was working for his father-in-law, and the President meeting this fellow and noticing the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law, and the President saying, "My God, how can that guy sell his soul just for the.... In other words, everything he's getting is a handout from his father-in-law. He's an attractive guy but he really has sold his soul just to – you know, this daughter is not that attractive and she's now running him." In other words, I guess the point I'm making is, the President really was very conscious of the relationship between people on every level.



And I can remember we were driving down to – and we met on this very narrow road, and Tony Biddle’s [Anthony Joseph Drexel Biddle, Jr.] widow.... Tony Biddle was the ambassador in Spain, and we met her on the road. And you know, it was a tight road, and the President recognized her. Instead of just kind of waving to say hello, he stopped and got out of his car. Maybe he’d seen her – he didn’t know that I knew her because I’d been over in Spain when they were

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over there. Tony Biddle had been a very attractive guy and a great athlete in his time. I loved the President because he got out and he introduced me, and his [Biddle’s] wife said, “Oh, no, I know Red Fay.” And then the President stopped to tell her really what a great strength that her husband had been, what an asset her husband had been to his administration, and how much he and his administration and the country were indebted to the service he’d given to his country. It really made it – you know that woman left, you could just see the satisfaction and happiness to think that the President of the United States had stopped and given this very personal kind of statement of his feeling towards her husband who was now deceased. And then we went over – I think we played golf that day – to Mr. Joseph Kennedy, Sr. What does it say in the record, Jim?

OESTERLE: “The President and Secretary Paul Fay spent the day visiting at the Joseph P. Kennedy Residence and the Morton Downey residence, cruising

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on the *Marlin* with a stop at Cotuit Harbor, walking on the beach and returning to the Kennedy residence at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts.”

FAY: Yes. I think, if I’m not mistaken, there was something to do with Cuba that day. I can remember the President writing some message out – I can’t remember what the substance of it was, but it had to be a response to something that had happened. He wrote it out and after he wrote out the message which was – in other words, which he gave instructions to send – he took the piece of paper and he threw it on the sand as we were walking – in other words walking along and he found it in his pocket or wherever it was and he threw it on the sand. And I immediately picked it up and I said, “You can’t do this. This is part of history.” I would have loved to have kept it. He said, “My God, you’re right.” And he kept it. I’d be interested to know whether it’s part of the Archives or whatever it might be because that was what the message was that I think.... I forget who the message went to – maybe it was to

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Castro [Fidel Castro], you know, answering the threat or whatever it might be. But at least he wrote it out in longhand and this is the way it was. I mean, nobody told him what to do and

there wasn't any tremendous staff. The President of the United States wrote out what he thought the answer should be and said, "This is what I'm sending back."

OESTERLE: Sunday, September 16, 1962, 4:20 p.m., "the President and Mrs. Kennedy went to Bailey's Beach, Newport, Rhode Island, with Under Secretary of Navy Fay and Mrs. Fay, and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and Mrs. James Reed."

FAY: Just a really very pleasant day at Bailey's Beach, swimming and having fun.

OESTERLE: Before we go through 1963 in much the same manner, we might spend our time more profitably by going into some of the other specifics that we've covered that I might question you a little further on. In our third session you had talked about the firing of George Anderson [George W. Anderson, Jr.] as CNO [Chief Naval Officer], this occurring at the Navy League Convention in Puerto

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Rico. Do you know what the nature of the friction was between George Anderson and Fred Korth?

FAY: I think really the initial cause for the friction was the fact that George Anderson would not accept McNamara's philosophy of running the Defense Department. He felt that the military people were the best qualified to make the decisions regarding force levels and whatever it had to do with developing the overall policy of the Defense Department. And he picked all sorts of areas to try to attack the system. He attacked the systems analysis system, tried to imply that some of the people in the systems analysis group under Alain Enthoven were not patriots because one of them was an expatriated German who had been very, very young but had grown up in Germany prior to World War II.

My outward feeling was that George Anderson was frustrated in that he had some of the older admirals telling him, "McNamara and his system are taking away the authority of the Navy and the naval officer knows best about what's best for the Navy and the country, and you've

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got to fight it." And I think that George Anderson felt this was his role, to try to really stop what McNamara was trying to do, which he honestly, I'm sure, felt he did in the best interests of the United States Navy and the country.

I think Fred Korth was the McNamara representative in the Navy and so therefore he had to oppose George Anderson. George Anderson thought that Fred Korth was a liar and misrepresented it. You know, George Anderson really – I'm sure if you were able to pin him down today – just still thinks Fred Korth is one of the more despicable people in the country.

OESTERLE: During that luncheon, Korth received a phone call from Gilpatric to confirm the decision that McNamara and the President had made earlier, that Anderson would be relieved and Dave McDonald [David L. McDonald] would replace him. Do you have any insight?

FAY: Well all I know is – I mean, to be very quick about it – they had the Navy League meeting down there. George Anderson was speaking at the Navy League meeting. I think he was speaking on

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the subject of “aye aye, sir” and “yes sir” – which in the Navy means two other things: “yes sir” meaning that, “I got the order, sir. I’m carrying the order out. I don’t necessarily agree, but I’m carrying it out,”; “aye aye, sir” meaning, “I’m carrying it out. I agree with you, I’m going ahead.” So at least the officer giving the order knows what the officer junior to him feels about the order. During the middle of this speech – which you know was really an important speech – why the phone call came for Fred Korth. Well, the message came up to Fred Korth that he was wanted on the phone. It was the middle of George Anderson’s speech. George Anderson had no idea that a phone call had come for Fred Korth. Fred Korth got up – at a time when George Anderson thought there was something in his speech that Fred Korth was upset about – so he got up and left the head table, instead of leaving a note or saying, “I’ve got a phone call, I’ve got to go.” It just created all the more friction, friction that existed earlier. And of

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course it was a phone call from Ros Gilpatric saying the decision had been made to relieve Anderson and bring Dave McDonald on.

Well the mistake that the civilian hierarchy had made is that they called Dave McDonald to ask him would he consider the job and would he come right home. Well, the minute Dave McDonald got the phone call he immediately phoned George Anderson down in San Juan and said, “What’s going on? I just got a phone call saying that I hear that you’re going to be relieved as CNO and that I’m the candidate to take it.” And then Anderson kept waiting for Fred Korth to tell him something about it, because Fred Korth was the principal speaker that evening. And they ran into each other three or four times and Fred Korth never mentioned it.

I didn’t know anything about this because I was so called holding the fort back at the Pentagon. I was headed over on Monday morning to give a speech over in BUPERS [Bureau of Naval Personnel] to some Navy reservists when I saw Anderson’s limousine out in front of the Pentagon

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and Admiral Smedberg, the Chief of the Bureau of Personnel, was in there with him and the door was open, anticipating Anderson getting out. I stuck my head in and in a facetious way

said, "All right, what are you two fellows plotting?" And Anderson jumped out, flushed, and said, "What do you mean, plotting? I've just been fired." I said, "You've got to be kidding." He said, "I'm not kidding at all. I've been fired." And I said, "Listen, I'm going over to make a speech over at the Bureau of Personnel. Let me come back and speak to you after it's all over." Anderson said, "Well, I'll come into your office the minute you come back."

So then I came back and Anderson came into my office and he told me of this whole thing down at San Juan, and he said that he had gotten word that he was finished – either from McNamara or from Korth. I guess Korth eventually told him that they were going to ask for him to submit his resignation. He was really upset about it. I said, "Listen, George, you're the CNO of the Navy. You're

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number one. The President doesn't have that many people that should respond to him. If you've got an axe to grind, you go to the President. Just call him up and ask for an appointment." So he called him up and asked for an appointment. No sooner had he asked for the appointment when the President called me up and said, "What's going on over there in the Pentagon? I just got a call from George Anderson wanting an appointment." And I said, "Well, I was the one that told him. You know, he's CNO of the Navy. If he's been fired he has the right to get it from the President of the United States." And the President – which I must say I appreciated – said, "What am I going to do?" I said, "Well, this guy really served his country well. I think it's a crime. I don't care if he's entitled to be fired, fine, but I think the way he's been fired is totally wrong. I think if you can find some other place for him to serve, I think that's fine." "God," he said, "why the hell can't somebody else do something around here? Why do I have to do all

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the dirty work?" And he said, "Well, maybe we can get him an ambassadorial post. We just told somebody he might get the job of ambassador to Portugal, but it's not pinned down. Maybe we can put him in there."

So Anderson went over to see him, and it was a very tense meeting. The President got worked up about it. Anderson had a lot of charges – but I mean he was respectful to the President. The President was so damn mad about it. Then Anderson came back to me – I was in having lunch then – he came in to me and he broke down and cried. I said, "George, I just can't take it. I just can't take you crying." I don't know if I said "crying." I said, "I just can't take an emotional scene like this. You're saying, 'What do you think I ought to do?'" I said, "Well, you ought to take the position of ambassador." He said, "What I really think I should do is go out and just tell the nation what a despicable person Bob McNamara is." I said, "You're going to go out and it's going to be nothing but sour grapes. You've been fired and

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it's sour grapes if you do it. They're just going to say it's some – another disgruntled naval officer. Nobody's going to believe you. That isn't the way you made your name. You've

made your name serving your country, and that's what you ought to continue to do." George said, "I'm going to talk to my wife Mary Lee." So then he accepted the position.

Then he made the mistake of accepting an invitation, after he had accepted the position and been sworn in as ambassador; he spoke at the Press Club. He submitted the speech to the President, and the President read the speech, but it was really condemning McNamara and his policies – not all of it, you know, most of it was motherhood and things like that. But say 15 or 20 percent of it really was very derogatory towards McNamara. The President read the speech but he didn't want to intervene and say, "No you can't give the speech," so the President rang me up and he said, "That son of a bitch. You know, he sent this thing over. I don't want him to know that I've read it."

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So I went over – I was asked to go to the luncheon and sit at the head table, before I knew all this background of what George Anderson was going to say, and the President having read his speech.

So I arrive over there about ten minutes before the lunch begins and George Anderson comes right up to me. Now I know at this time the President has read his speech and the President doesn't want to be in the position of telling him he can't say what he wants to say. So George Anderson said, "You know, I submitted my speech to the President and the President didn't have time to read it. I'm sure there's nothing in it that he'd be upset with." I said, "Listen, George, you've been around here long enough. You know what is right or what's wrong. You've just been sworn in as ambassador. You've got to conduct yourself accordingly." What he did was, he didn't change his speech, but what he did was, in the question and answer period he really tried to absolve himself....

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[BEGIN SIDE I, TAPE II]

OESTERLE: Anderson gave a copy of the speech to the President. This certainly wasn't the normal course of things; that would not normally be done.

FAY: Well, I don't think it would have been necessary to give the speech to the President unless George Anderson felt he was going to say something that the President wouldn't want to have said. But the President at that time felt that – you know, he had a lot of serious problems in the country and he didn't want to get in the problem of fighting with an appointee, an ambassador-designate or an ambassador that had just been sworn in. But anyway, so I was seated at the head table, really about a seat away from Anderson, and so when he finished his speech everybody rose up and clapped because most of them were naval officers and they were damn happy to hear George Anderson sticking it into Bob McNamara. Well, I had a decision to make: am I going to sit down and not get up? So what I did was, right or

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wrong, I got up and clapped very briefly and was the first one to sit down. And then Anderson got up and proceeded to try to reverse his position in the question-answer period. When he finished his speech and George Anderson asked me – or maybe I went up with him and said, “George, I could accept 80 or 85 percent of what you had to say because nobody could argue with what you had to say because it was just general facts of life.” But the other 15 percent I said I thought was out of order.

Then somebody came up to me and said, “You’re wanted on the phone: the President of the United States.” So I got on the phone and the President said, “God, I just heard from Pierre Salinger that you’ve been in there just cheering George Anderson on what he had to say.” And I said, “The hell I have been cheering George Anderson. I was in the position as a close friend of yours, and I had to make the decision myself. Am I going to sit down here and indicate your total displeasure because of being your friend? So therefore the press is

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going to play it up. So therefore you’re going to have to make a decision: do you keep or do not keep George Anderson? I’m leaving that responsibility to you. I’m not taking it.” And then the President said, “Okay, don’t get worked up about it,” or words to that effect. He said, “I’ll tell you right now, if I didn’t have so bloody many problems right now, you know, I’d fire that bastard’s ass out of there so fast he wouldn’t know what hit him. But under the circumstances I’m going to go with it.” And it turned out – George Anderson turned out to be a very good ambassador.

OESTERLE: What was the President’s initial feeling when he had that meeting with Anderson? Was it that it had just been handled so badly?

FAY: It had been handled so badly. He felt that – he didn’t argue at all with McNamara’s decision to fire him, but he thought the way it had been handled was so deplorable, and he was very sensitive to Anderson’s feeling as a naval officer – which I’m very sympathetic to, Anderson and the

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President’s feelings on that. I thought they....

McNamara had a real gap as far as his human relations with people. I mean you know, it wouldn’t take that much time for McNamara to try to communicate with people but he never took the time to try to communicate. I saw him at a dinner one night at the Argentine embassy in which the Secretary of Defense at the Argentine embassy, which was also a military man, was up there. The Secretary of the Army, Steve Ailes [Stephen Ailes], I believe was there, and I was there and McNamara. And we were really the only people from the Pentagon. McNamara didn’t know Ailes too well but he knew me fairly well, and we started to chat, and I got in a long discussion – not a long discussion, because you don’t have long discussions with McNamara – but I really said, “You know Bob, there’s so many people over in the Pentagon that are working so darn hard for you and for the administration and the

President, who have given up a lot. It would be really important to them to have an opportunity, maybe once a month, that

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you have – maybe it means four times a month to you or three times a month – but maybe you have the different assistant secretaries and under secretaries of the different services come up and meet with you for an hour in your office, say between 5:30 and 6:30. It means so much to them to have this.” McNamara said, “I don’t have the time.” You know, I thought this was such a blind spot to think he doesn’t have the time to communicate with these people who were going to in many ways spread his gospel among the different services.

I heard something over the weekend in the House from Russ Blandford [John R. Blandford], who is the chief counsel of the House Armed Services Committee, and he was talking about the last time that McNamara appeared before the committee when – who was the fellow that just died? The congressman?

OESTERLE: Rivers [Lucius Mendel Rivers]?

FAY: Rivers, Mendel Rivers. When Mendel Rivers was chairman, and McNamara came up to make his presentation. I don’t know whether this was in

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’66, ’67, or whenever it was, ’68, but any time between the time of – prior to Medel Rivers’ death – from the time he took over the chairmanship when McNamara was Secretary of Defense. But McNamara came up there with all his books – because he generally came up alone and made his own presentation – he had some people for back ups but he did it himself. He came up and he made his statement which really summed up the whole program the military were proposing, which maybe could have taken forty-five minutes. And then when he finished with great satisfaction why he closed the book and he said, “Now gentlemen, are there any questions?” Historically, a Secretary of Defense is interrogated maybe for an hour or an hour and a half, two hours. When he finished, Mendel Rivers said, “Mr. Secretary, there are no questions from any one of us. The meeting is adjourned.” And as Russ Blandford said, “That was the end of Bob McNamara.” In other words they indicated that the Congress no longer wanted to communicate with him.

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OESTERLE: Do you think that McNamara had an appreciation of this after a while – the difficulty?

FAY: I don’t know, you see I don’t.... I did one thing with McNamara. Bob Pirie [Robert B. Pirie, Jr.] asked me to intervene with McNamara on the TFX, and we had a long discussion. I wasn’t going to just go down there – it was a

Saturday morning and John Connally was out of the city – and the Navy wanted somebody to go down there and speak to McNamara on this issue. Maybe Bob Pirie figured I was the lamb that he could send me down, the sacrificial lamb, and I'd go down there and tell the Navy's story and maybe get the word through, but if I didn't, why what would it matter to the Navy?

So we had a long discussion and he was talking about the capability of the plane, and then I hit on the subject of, "All right, the plane is so big. Maybe the lack of utilization of the carrier – maybe that hasn't been taken into consideration in the cost evaluation." So I went down to McNamara to see him, and I said – you know, because I knew him as Bob

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McNamara thanks to my association with the President and with Bob Kennedy – and I said, "Bob, I've been up with the Navy officers and they're very concerned about the TFX. I really don't know all the facts about this, but it would appear that with the new plane, which will be 25 or 30 percent larger than the one that they're using right now, that you're going to lose a lot of the utilization of the carrier, and I just wonder whether that's been pumped into the cost figures for the carrier." Well geez, McNamara went off in a stream of figures and facts and things like that. Well, I thought the way I'd put it to him was really kind of, "I'm just really kind of asking the question. I'm not committed one way or the other."

But about four days later I'm with the President, and the President told me, he says, "God, I hear you're in the bag of the admirals. McNamara tells me that they've already got you so you're jumping through hoops or you're doing whatever they ask you to do." And I said, "Because of the TFX?" He said,

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"Well, this was the issue." And you know, I blew sky high because I thought it was so totally unfair of McNamara to take that approach. In other words I thought, "How narrow of him to think just because I questioned or asked the question that I suddenly was taking a position opposed to his."

Well as time went on and the weight of the plane grew up, I became more positive that it was a bad decision. And I told the President that I thought it was a bad decision. But you know, he was with McNamara on this, and McNamara never forgave me for it. I never had any communication. Now maybe McNamara didn't forgive me for that, maybe McNamara didn't think I had the capability. Maybe he didn't think I was bright enough, or didn't grasp the major issues that were in the Pentagon, because I asked him once. I went up after Paul Nitze was going to be selected – after John Connally left, when Fred Korth came in, then I heard Paul Nitze. So I went up to see McNamara

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and I said, "I hear that Paul Nitze is going to be selected as Secretary of the Navy. I'd like to know in what areas you feel that I have fallen down as Under Secretary, and why I wouldn't be qualified to be the Secretary of the Navy." He could have been right because he said, "Well, because you really haven't dealt with the major issues." I said, "Well, is it really my



position to deal with the major issues when I'm not really privy to the discussions that go on, dealing with the major issues that deal with the strategy of the Navy in relation to the Defense Department. I have certain responsibilities to see that the Navy runs. But the major strategic issues are really not mind unless they come to me. And then I can argue the issue after it's come to me and say..."

OESTERLE: On its merits.

FAY: On its merits. So this was his statement, so maybe it was that he didn't feel that I had really interjected myself, in a way. And I can see, being very honest, I think

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Bob Baldwin [Robert H. B. Baldwin], who came after me, played a much more dominant role in decision making involving the Navy than I did. So he might have a role. I'm not going to....

OESTERLE: Was it because the Secretary of the Navy permitted him a greater responsibility?

FAY: I wasn't there, so I don't know. I think it was maybe Bob Baldwin's character. I think maybe Bob Baldwin came down there with the idea he was going to rock the boat. He came down there and he was – not that it's, you know, in fact being liked by the admirals is not the answer of how good a job you're doing. But, really, being at a point where you antagonize the admirals – which he did – you don't really get a job done well. Now I think Dave Packard right now from all accounts seems to be doing a good job. He seems to be wrestling with the major issues. He's running the Defense Department, but he still has the respect of the military because he's not giving them everything they want, although they've done very well under him.

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OESTERLE: I'd asked you if other shared Anderson's opinion of McNamara, and you had answered some did and some didn't. I wonder which ones didn't like him and who did? Can you....

FAY: Well, the military.... You know, I mean it would be hard for me to remember who, but I know that in the military it was almost across the board. You know, they had no use for McNamara. Some of the young people who, say, worked for Alain Enthoven, who was the director of system analysis, I think that they were bright enough and realized what McNamara was trying to do. And I think that some of the people in the comptroller's part of the house – maybe the younger people – they thought McNamara had a tremendous amount of capability, because the planning, programming, and budgeting that he brought into the Defense Department – really revolutionary, and particularly the

systems analysis. It's awful hard to argue against systems analysis. I mean, I'd like it in anything I do. Today in business, whatever it is, I think you have to look at it. Systems analysis, in very

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short terms, is looking at the whole, looking at all the problems and then seeing what tools you have to apply against all the problems, rather than try to take problems in isolation of others and say, "I'm going to devote that much of my resources to solve that problem," and then in isolation say, "I'm going to devote this much resources to deal with that problem." Well maybe there are ten problems and you've already given up all your resources in eight problems. So the other two go unanswered, and maybe they sink the ship.

And that was what McNamara did by systems analysis. He looked at everything in one and said, "You're duplicating here, you're duplicating there. We can do it here, and this is the best way to do it." So I think that's what he brought into the services. Systems analysis was something not totally new, but it was the first time that anybody gave it the recognition it did. In fact there's a new book out by Alain Enthoven, entitled *Is It Enough?*, which I just started to read last night, which

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I think is fascinating reading.

OESTERLE: There's a new article out entitled "The Programming of Robert McNamara" by David Halberstam.

FAY: In the *Saturday Review* or *Harper's*, is it?

OESTERLE: *Harper's*.

FAY: I haven't read it, but I want to get a hold of it. I was talking to Herb Caen this evening after we played tennis, and he was saying he thought it wasn't very well written because he thought it – you know, he just didn't think it was very good, and he's not a McNamara disciple.

OESTERLE: Did McNamara have any strong supporters in the military?

FAY: Oh, I think that Dave Shoup [David M. Shoup], the Commandant of the Marine Corps, was a strong supporter. He said, "McNamara's the only fellow" – in his opinion, he said – "I've been around here off and on for" – I think he said twenty years. But he said, "This is the first man in my opinion that's really had the guts to deal with the real tough problems. Most of the other Secretaries of Defense just pushed it aside and hoped it would

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go away, but McNamara's had the courage to really dig and meet them."

OESTERLE: ...were not privileged to a lot of the insider information at the time – regarding the missile crisis, but just a few questions might be appropriate. When, where and how were you first told of the offensive missiles in Cuba?

FAY: I was at mass at St. Luke's Catholic Church on Sunday morning, and Ethel Kennedy said to me, "What are you doing here?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Don't you realize what's happening with Cuba and the missiles?" I was due to leave that night to go out to Idaho to the nuclear reactor training center out there, and then to head out to the coast to make some speeches. So I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." And she said, "Well kid, you'd better get down to the Pentagon and find out what's going on." So then when I came back from mass I got in my car and drove down to the Pentagon and, God, here were all these offices open. I went into the Secretary of the Navy's office and I said,

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"I don't understand this. Here I am – sure maybe I'm not going to have an active role in any of the decisions that have to be made on an immediate basis to meet the Cuban missile crisis, but wouldn't it be embarrassing for me to go out to the West coast and start making speeches if all of this tension is existing relative to the missile crisis?" Fred Korth said, "I was not going to let you – I was going to let you go, because the President said, 'Only those need to know'. And so I was going to call you back on Monday because the President is going to make a speech on Monday night, and I wouldn't have let you go any farther." So I mean I had to accept that on face value, and from then on in I knew what was going to happen.

And then when the President spoke I was so proud of the President because I thought – you know, really one of the tense times – probably the tensest time in my lifetime other than World War II. But since World War II this was the time, and even with almost more gravity than World War II, because if this

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thing didn't work out maybe the missiles would have flown. When the President spoke that night I was so proud of him. And this was once again this understanding of the whole picture, which I think was the greatness of this man, because he really sensed Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev], he understood him. I mean, this was not a rash man, this was not a rash gamble. This was really a very measured decision. Every word was carefully weighed to really convey a message to Khrushchev so he wouldn't be locked into a corner, but that he would realize that, "Boy, this is for real, and you'd better make some plans. But I'm going to let you get out of this thing without losing too much face." I wrote him a little note next morning when I got into my office, and I just threw it in my out box, and God, it must have gotten over there by my driver, Oliver Washington, it must have been over there a half hour

from the time I threw it in the out box, because I got a phone call from the President just thanking me for the note and then complimenting the military

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for the role that they had played during this whole period, because they had – the importance of security was so important because if the Russians... [Interruption] If they knew that we knew about the missile sites in Cuba, that they could have put out a big propaganda campaign throughout the world saying, “The United States is claiming we have missile sites in Cuba, and it’s all built up, and it’s all fabricated.” But the fact that we came on first and go the information out and spread it out for the world to see, they didn’t have a chance to do this. And that’s why the President felt it was so important and why he complimented the military, because so many thousands of people knew about what was under way but so few of the public knew it until the President’s speech.

OESTERLE: By the way, did you cancel that speaking tour?

FAY: Oh yes.

OESTERLE: You did right at that point?

FAY: I said I was not feeling well; in other words, I was sick. The President, if you’ll remember,

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was supposed to go out to someplace in Chicago and someplace, and they passed him off as not being well.

OESTERLE: They started calling people back, too, that had been out campaigning, including the Vice President.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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