

This is an oral history interview with Irving Schoenberg, conducted on July 25-26, 2010. The interviewer is Daniel Franklin.

DR. DAN FRANKLIN: This is the interview of Irving Schoenberg for the Eisenhower Presidential Library. My name is Daniel Franklin. I'm the Associate Professor of Political Science at Georgia State University. We are at the home of Irving Schoenberg in Atlanta, Georgia. The date is July 25, 2010. Irving, do you want to tell us something about yourself?

IRVING SCHOENBERG: Yes, Dan. Thank you. First of all I was born in November 1925, so I'm approaching the age of 85. I'd like to think of my life as one of service to my country. I graduated from West Point in 1948 and was commissioned into the United States Air Force. I was among the first officers to graduate from West Point to be commissioned directly into the Air Force, which was established by the Defense Act of 1947. Forty percent of my class were commissioned into the Air Force and the other sixty percent were commissioned into the U. S. Army. So, I began my career as a Second Lieutenant in Strategic Air Command at Smoky Hill Air Force Base in Kansas. I progressed from that point. I served in the Korean War in Okinawa with the 301st Bomb Wing. We were flying missions out of Okinawa over Korea. One of three bomb wings; there were two in Japan and one in Okinawa. When I returned from Okinawa in 1952 I was assigned as an Air Force ROTC Instructor at the University of Maryland, which is just outside the District of Columbia and that's an important point which I'll bring up as we go along.

FRANKLIN: Can we go back to your service? You were in the regular Army for about a year and then...

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: ...and then transferred into the Air Force.

SCHOENBERG: I enlisted in the Army, in the reserves, actually in 1943, very shortly after I graduated from high school. And, of course, in 1943 the war was very much going on and there was no question about anybody my age who was in good physical condition, even if not in excellent physical condition we were all going into the military one way or another. I took an examination just before graduation from high school and passed that examination which qualified me for what was called the ASTRP, Army Specialized Training Reserve Program, which was to produce lieutenants for the Corps of Engineers. There was a great need during the war for engineering officers. So I was sent to the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas, for pursuing that career, that course in engineering. I was to graduate in two years and be commissioned. Now, it's a four year course, but everything was expedited, so I got into that program. But, in the meantime, shortly after I graduated from high school, I was nominated for appointment to West Point as a first alternate nominee, and that's kind of another story, but how it evolved and I've been reading a book called *Outliers: The Story of Success* by [Malcolm] Gladwell and I happen to think that a lot of those things that happened to me were fortunate. Of course, I had...

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FRANKLIN: That book, part of the thesis being that the planets kind of align themselves...

SCHOENBERG: ...Yes, exactly.

FRANKLIN: It's part personal effort, but also...

SCHOENBERG: I think it's very much applicable to me, because things fell into line, you know the planets align and...

FRANKLIN: In the spirit of that book, who was the person that really sort of propelled you along your career path?

SCHOENBERG: A man named Lewis Wallace was my sponsor in junior high school. I was president of the ninth grade class. He had married a woman named Tekla, very strange name, Tekla Anderson, and they were both teachers. Several years later when I was in my senior year of high school, and we'd become good friends, Mr. Lewis and I had a nice relationship. Several years later, when I was a senior in high school, Mr. Lewis had...

FRANKLIN: Mr. Wallace?

SCHOENBERG: Mr. Wallace. Lewis Wallace.

FRANKLIN: Right.

SCHOENBERG: had decided that he was not going to pursue his teaching career, but become a politician, and his father in law, Leo Anderson, Tekla Anderson's father, was the Chairman of the Republican County Committee. Mr. Wallace decided he would run for the state legislature in Missouri, and knew that my mother and father were both Jewish, obviously, but also very much like all Jews in St. Joseph, Missouri, Democrats. So, he came to our house and he said to my mother and father, "If you would support me as a candidate for the state legislature as a Republican, and if you would talk to your friends in the Jewish community, and get them to support me, I will see what I can do to help your son get a nomination to West Point." And at that moment I say my mother and father were converted to Republicanism.

It wasn't long after that I got a call to come to the office of the newly-elected Republican congressman whose name was Bill Cole, who said to me that he had received good comments about me from Mr. Anderson and that he was considering to nominate me as a candidate for West Point as a first alternate, not the principal, but the first alternate. Of course I was very, very happy about that and not long after that I was at the University of Kansas in the Army Reserve, going to school, I got a call. I got a letter, actually, from the Department of the Army saying as a candidate for West Point and in the military I could go to a West Point Prep School if I so chose. I decided that obviously that was the thing to do. So, I put in the word that I would like to go and I was told to report to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to go out of the reserves into the Army of

the United States, which it was labeled at the time, and from there I would go to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, to go to the prep school. And all of this, of course, in the uniform. So in January of 1944 I reported to Cornell University and began my prep school.

FRANKLIN: What were the chances, if you were in the prep school what were the chances that you would then end up in the Academy? Was there any chance that you wouldn't end up in the Academy?

SCHOENBERG: Oh yes. There were several things that could happen, and here again the blocks fall into place. The principal nominee, in my case, was the son of a very, very wealthy man in St. Joseph, Missouri, whose father was the head of a company called Anchor Serum Company, and of course being in the agricultural area that we were in, hogs, cattle, sheep, and so on had to be immunized against the various diseases, and that was the company that he ran. So, his son Carl Meyer, Jr., never forget a very, very fine looking young man, and a very good tennis player, who had all the wealth that he could possibly use, drove a convertible, had all kinds of good looking women hanging over him, you know. Well, he got the principal nomination, and this is what I have been led to believe, his father wanted him to go to West Point. I'm not sure that Carl, Jr. really wanted to go to West Point, but the father arranged for him to go to West Point Prep School at Cornwall, New York, on the Hudson River, just north of West Point. And I'm told that at that school there were 33 principal nominees from all over the country. Carl Meyer was one of the 33. Thirty-two got into West Point. He didn't. I was the first alternate. I got a telephone call in early June 1944 from the congressman's office that I had been appointed to West Point and I was to report to West Point on the first of July 1944. Be discharged from the Army, go home to St. Joseph, Missouri, and then report to West Point. So that's how I got to West Point.

FRANKLIN: You were discharged from the Army, and then you re-entered the Army as a cadet.

SCHOENBERG: When I took the oath of office as a cadet at West Point on the first of July, I was back in the Army, so there was a hiatus of about one month, approximately one month, when I was home on leave from the Army Reserves or the Army of the United States before I went to West Point, and was sworn in as a cadet. Once you're sworn in as a cadet at West Point, you're in the Army. You are a cadet. The rank cadet is just below master sergeant.

FRANKLIN: So, the fact that you had served in the Army before you got into West Point, did that give you any advantage in terms of seniority, and later on in your career?

SCHOENBERG: No.

FRANKLIN: That did not accrue. You started out with a clean slate.

SCHOENBERG: Yes, now that's an interesting question. Normally you would get credit for retirement purposes for active duty or active reserve, so I got credit for active reserve time from 1943 to July 1944, but strangely enough I did not get credit for pay purposes during my four years at West Point. And here you can bring in a strange thing about [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. When his class graduated in 1915, the Army, as usual, was short of money, and they decided they could save money by not crediting the graduates of the West Point after the class of 1915, Eisenhower's class, with credit towards pay later on. They never reinstated that credit. So from 1915 on, no one ever graduated from the academy or the Naval Academy or the Air Force Academy with credit towards pay.

FRANKLIN: That is interesting. So, Eisenhower was further along advanced in his career, at least in terms of pay...

SCHOENBERG: But, nothing else really.

FRANKLIN: But, nothing else really. Okay. Let's move on a little bit and you said that you had contact with Eisenhower. You saw Eisenhower at the academy.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. A memorable thing in my life. I finished my first year, my plebe year at West Point, in May of 1945. The classes before me, the class of 1944, which Eisenhower's son was a member of, had graduated in June of 1944. June of 1944, as you remember was D-Day 1944, so Eisenhower was obviously not going to be at his son's graduation. It is my opinion that he came to West Point right after the war ended in May of 1945 and returned to West Point as a kind of a symbol that he could not be at his son's graduation, but he could be there very shortly thereafter. So he came to West Point...

FRANKLIN: Excuse me, was his son there when he came?

SCHOENBERG: No, he had graduated.

FRANKLIN: I know, but his son didn't come back?

SCHOENBERG: He did not come back. He was on active duty in the Army.

FRANKLIN: Right.

SCHOENBERG: So in 1945 there were no other classes at West Point except mine, the class of 1947 at the time. And obviously you can't have a five-star general come to West Point and not have a parade. So the authorities at West Point, the Superintendent, of course, decided we would have a parade, but only with one class, and these were my classmates with just one year at the academy. Very unusual. And by golly, we put on a full field-dress parade, full field-dress parade with nothing but one year cadets for General Eisenhower. And we did a very, very good...

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FRANKLIN: The other classes were on vacation, or?

SCHOENBERG: Or in training, summer training.

FRANKLIN: Summer training, oh I see.

SCHOENBERG: So we were the only ones there, the only one class at the academy at the time. So we put on the parade, and my classmates acted as lieutenants in command of the platoons, company commanders, battalion commanders, and even one regimental commander, and we did a very good job. I have to say we did a darn good job. And right after the parade was over we were dismissed, went back to the barracks, put on our regular cadet grey uniforms and went to the mess hall, Washington Hall, to have lunch. We were standing at rigid attention waiting for General Eisenhower and the staff to come into the dining hall. And I mean rigid attention, you know, one year cadets waiting for the five-star general. He comes to the poop deck, which was the balcony overlooking the area where the cadets were waiting. We were all standing very rigidly at attention. He leans on the balcony rail and he says, "What's the matter gentlemen, don't you all have seats?" At which point we broke into laughter, he broke the ice and from that point on my classmates and I looked upon him as a kind of an uncle. He was the old grad, we were new cadets, to be graduates, and we were all in the same military professional army. And that had a tremendous impact on me and all of my classmates. That was his personality. That was the signal point of his leadership technique. He knew people, [and] people respected [that] he had charisma. There was no doubt about it. He was a man who, the old saying in the military is, if you told me to go to the edge of the cliff and jump, we would jump. And I think that's true, and I felt that in many ways when I worked directly for him. So that was my first...

FRANKLIN: Your first brush with him.

SCHOENBERG: Brush with him, yes.

FRANKLIN: Just very quickly, who were some of the notables in your class?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, I have several. Al[exander] Haig, Brent Scowcroft. Some of the other names you may not remember. Donn Starry became a four-star general. We had several lieutenant generals and four-star generals. Three of my classmates became superintendents. Two of them at West Point and one at the Air Force Academy. Four-star generals.

FRANKLIN: So, let's fast-forward a little bit to what was your duty immediately after the academy?

SCHOENBERG: My first duty was in Strategic Air Command at Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas. It was a B-29 bomber wing, and eventually a few months after I got there we got a new wing commander. A man named Joe Kelly, class of 1932 out of West Point, and he became my mentor in the Air Force. He was much like Eisenhower. He was a charismatic guy.

FRANKLIN: What happened to him?

SCHOENBERG: He became a four-star general. I worked for him on three occasions. I worked for him when he was Bomber Command, Far East Air Force Bomber Command, with the three bomber wings of which my wing, the 307th, was there. He had been my wing commander in the 301st wing, and then in Okinawa the 307th wing which I was assigned to. Those three bomber wings were under the Far East Air Force Bomber Command, and he was the brigadier general commanding that. I saw him there, and typical of his charismatic ability, all the officers were called together in a quonset hut and he was getting ready to depart, and he had brought with him a brigadier general to take his place. Well, all the colonels surrounded him up at the platform in the quonset hut, and I, as a newly made captain, was sitting in the back and I'm being very, you know, a background kind of guy. When the departure speech was over and he introduced the new general to take over, he saw me and he literally parted these full colonels who were blockading, or you know, surrounding him and walked off of the platform and back to the end of the quonset hut, stuck out his hand and said, "Schoeny, how are you?" At that point I could hardly believe first of all, that he knew me, and that he thought enough to come to me, not that I went to him, but he came to me.

FRANKLIN: We were talking earlier and you said something about the role that General [George] Marshall had in Eisenhower's career, and it seems to me that one of the ways you get ahead in the military is to have a sponsor of some kind.

SCHOENBERG: No question.

FRANKLIN: So would you say that from what you've heard, that General Marshall was General Eisenhower's sponsor, or was it [Douglas] MacArthur?

SCHOENBERG: First MacArthur. Eisenhower was a major. Now this was, if he graduated in 1915, and by the way he was a lieutenant colonel, Eisenhower, at Fort Colt in WW I. I think it was Fort Colt, Pennsylvania. But when the war ended he got back promoted, undemoted from lieutenant colonel to major, because the Army's system was you could only have so many colonels, and so many lieutenant colonels, and so on. As we have talked before promotions were very slow in those days, so he was eventually assigned as a major in the Philippines under MacArthur, and this was before World War II. Well, there was no question about Eisenhower's personality. It showed when he and Omar Bradley were classmates at West Point, and on the football team by the way. They were very good friends and though Eisenhower did not graduate high in the class, among his classmates he was very well regarded. They used to say in the corps of cadets that you could pretty well know which of your classmates were going to do well in the military, it was by their personality, by their leadership demonstration, or whatever it was. Eisenhower was one of those guys. He was known to be a born leader, he was a leader. So he ended up after World War I...

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FRANKLIN: Now, you were going to say something about Omar, is this related to Omar Bradley and Eisenhower, the story, you were about to say something about Omar Bradley, and that sounded really interesting..

SCHOENBERG: No, oh yes, the fact that Bradley was such an important part of his operations during Europe.

FRANKLIN: Okay, it's part personal connections.

SCHOENBERG: Oh yeah, Bradley's career up to World War II had not been such that he would be that high, but with Eisenhower's influence he became a key member and more so than was [George] Patton. Patton was way ahead of Eisenhower in terms of seniority, but he was not the man that Omar Bradley was in Eisenhower's eyes. So, Omar Bradley was the man who was given the opportunity to really lead large elements of the Army in World War II. So their relationships are so important.

FRANKLIN: Their relationships are very important.

SCHOENBERG: Very important.

FRANKLIN: Even though you think of it as bureaucratic structure, in fact the..

SCHOENBERG: Look at civilian life. A man takes over as chief executive officer of a corporation. Inevitably he brings in people on his staff that he knows, and he trusted, and he has faith in. And Joe Kelly, the man I mentioned, my mentor was exactly that way. He had people, we called them Joe Kelly's boys, and when Joe Kelly got promoted and went to a new job, he usually took one or two.

FRANKLIN: Okay, so you were at the University of Maryland, and this was when Eisenhower made his trip to Korea.

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: Okay, and he said, "I'm going to Korea," during the campaign. He made his trip to Korea in November 1952.

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: You had nothing to do with that? You had no knowledge of that?

SCHOENBERG: No.

FRANKLIN: Okay, alright. So you're the ROTC instructor at Maryland, and how did you get to be a White House aide?

SCHOENBERG: Let me back up just a little bit. I think it's pertinent to what we're doing here. At the University of Maryland, I taught ROTC. I taught freshmen and sophomores in the Air Force program. I also was asked to teach a course outside of the ROTC program for the University of Maryland. Maryland had a course leading to a degree in military science. You'd get a B.S. in military science. Because we had such a large enrollment of military people as well as the largest Air Force ROTC detachment in the country. I had had a course in the psychology of military leadership at West Point, and I was asked to do a seminar. Well, in my seminar I talked about Joe Kelly and his technique, his leadership.

FRANKLIN: Your sponsor.

SCHOENBERG: My sponsor, Joe Kelly. To me Eisenhower and Kelly are peas of the same pod. They learn from, I don't know whether Joe Kelly learned from Eisenhower, but Joe Kelly knew enough about leadership and psychology, that he was a very effective leader. So I used to talk in that seminar about Eisenhower, and what I knew about him. I told a story many times about his coming to West Point when I was plebe, and how, just after my plebe year and how impressed I was of him. But I also talked about many stories about Joe Kelly and things that he had done. Okay, how did I get to be a White House aide? Well there were several criteria that you had to fall into in order to be eligible. First of all...

FRANKLIN: I'm going to stop you right here.

Sound file 1 ends.

Sound File 2 begins.

FRANKLIN: This is the second part of the interview with Irving Schoenberg. I'm Dan Franklin, I'm a professor at Georgia State University. Today is July 25th, 2010, it is about 12 o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday. Irving, you and I were just talking about Eisenhower's trip to Korea in November, 1952, and also his meeting with MacArthur before he became President, but while he was the president-elect. I was saying that maybe Eisenhower was a little out-of-line because he was a private citizen at that point and Truman was still the President. Now, of course, Truman baited him and basically said go if you want to, so Eisenhower sort of took him up on that, and you were telling me about Eisenhower's personality.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. I think, Dan, how I would summarize this, I would say that Eisenhower was mission oriented. He was a man who had gone through World War II faced with probably some of the toughest military questions any commander had ever faced. His job was to win the war, and Korea was a case in point, to win the war. A commander has to know what's going on. Now, he could have waited a couple of months, I agree. Maybe it was the wrong time, but on the other hand, people were being killed and that's against his grain to have people killed when there was a way to stop the killing. The mission is to end the war, to win the war. So, why wait a

couple of months for political reasons or for whatever reasons to go there and get a feel of the land, to talk to the people in command. "What is the military situation? What would I do if I were the general in command of the troops over in Korea? I'd been the commanding general over in Europe, I knew what it was like to be commander over there. This is no different. It's just a different location. The circumstances are very much alike." He had to get on the question. He had to get to the job. Yeah, he could have been politically correct and waited until so and so and so and so happened, that's not the way he thought. Win the war. I think that's the primary thought in his mind. "I can sit back and wait, but people are going to get killed while I'm waiting. If I can do something to prevent those deaths, I will do that." That's my own conclusion. I can't tell you that it was correct. I can't tell you whether he should've waited, what he should've done. But, that's how I feel.

FRANKLIN: Okay, thank you. Let's talk about you becoming a military aide in the White House.

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: How did that come about?

SCHOENBERG: Well, as I said there are several criteria involved. You had to be a bachelor, and never been married. You could be a bachelor but could not have been married.

FRANKLIN: Couldn't be divorced.

SCHOENBERG: Couldn't be anything, I mean. The thinking behind that was you didn't have any obligation to a former wife, or to any other children you had spired, the word spired, or fired, whatever the word is.

FRANKLIN: Sired.

SCHOENBERG: Sired, that's the word. That you had to be completely free of those obligations, because when you were a White House Aide, you had to dance with other women. For example, when they had the ball at the White House, you danced because you had to make sure that everybody was having a good time. You didn't want anybody sitting on the sidelines, that's a wall flower. And a good looking officer in a uniform was the kind of attraction, you might say that an elderly woman would like, and could relish or revel in. By the way, that's how I met [Barry] Goldwater's daughter, and began to date her when I met her at a ball at the White House. That was behind the thinking, that you had to be socially available and socially acceptable at the White House.

FRANKLIN: And it wouldn't do if you were a married man.

SCHOENBERG: Of course not. You couldn't.

FRANKLIN: Were you vetted in part of your dancing and social skills?

SCHOENBERG: Well, I never was asked whether I could dance, but I was interviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Bill Draper, who incidentally had been Eisenhower's pilot during World War II in Europe. He was the Air Force Aide. You know, there's the Army Aide, a Navy Aide, and an Air Force Aide. Bill Draper, lieutenant colonel, was the Air Force Aide to the President in the White House. And one day I got a telephone call from Colonel Draper, who asked me to come over for an interview. Now, how he got my name I don't know, but my guess is, knowing what I know about the personnel system within the Air Force, he probably got in touch with the personnel people and said, "Pick out somebody who is assigned in the Washington area, and therefore available to serve as an aide, because we don't want to pull somebody from Washington state to come to the White House. We have to have somebody who could come immediately if we need somebody right now. We have to be able to get him." So that was one of the criteria. You had to be available, and then of course you had to be selected. So, how do you get selected? Well, the Air Force personnel pulls my file, and they read everything that's ever been written about me. Any awards and decorations I have received, what schools I've gone to, what my commanding officers have said about me, and the officer effectiveness reports that were written, and based on that he was able to draw some sort of a picture of what kind of an individual I was before he ever called me on the telephone. And then decided it was somebody that he should talk to and to see whether or not I had the social graces, or whatever he would call it.

FRANKLIN: So, being sociable was something that you had to demonstrate.

SCHOENBERG: Oh, absolutely. You had to be able to speak. You had have a look. You had to be attractive as an officer. You had to make an appearance and you had to look good, because you were representing the President of the United States. And that was very important.

FRANKLIN: Okay, so you were contacted and had you ever met Colonel Draper?

SCHOENBERG: No, never. Never.

FRANKLIN: What are some of the things he asked you? Do you remember the interview at all?

SCHOENBERG: Slightly.

FRANKLIN: And what happened?

SCHOENBERG: He just sort of probed me. Who are you? What did you do? He was sizing me up, and making his own judgements. He knew what White House Aides were. He'd been in the White House with Eisenhower. He had exposure to other Air Force Aides, because there were seven of us all together during that time. So, he knew generally what an aide should be, and what he should look like, and so on.

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FRANKLIN: So you said that there were seven aides.

SCHOENBERG: Seven Air Force aides.

FRANKLIN: Seven aides from the Navy...

SCHOENBERG: No, no. Seven from the Air Force, five from the Navy, seven from the Army, and two from the Marines. Total.

FRANKLIN: Was Draper in charge of all the military aides, or just the Air Force?

SCHOENBERG: Just the Air Force aides.

FRANKLIN: Was Lieutenant Colonel Draper, was he in residence in the White House, or did he have an office?

SCHOENBERG: No, he had an office.

FRANKLIN: He had an office in the White House.

SCHOENBERG: Yeah. The Navy Aide had an office. The Army Aide had an office.

FRANKLIN: So, all the other aides were not...

SCHOENBERG: White House social aide is the term.

FRANKLIN: Okay, alright.

SCHOENBERG: They were not in the White House, except for those functions, when they were called in to serve.

FRANKLIN: Right.

SCHOENBERG: What did you do serving as an aide? You represented the President. You greeted the guests. You made them feel comfortable in the White House. I may have told you the story about my meeting about [Abba] Eban, as the ambassador.

FRANKLIN: We'll get to that in a second. I want to get the structure down, the organization. There were aides in residence and there were social aides. Were there other kinds of military aides?

SCHOENBERG: No.

FRANKLIN: As far as you know, Lieutenant Colonel Draper's responsibilities were just to supervise the social aides, or did he have other responsibilities?

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SCHOENBERG: Oh yes, he had other responsibilities to the President, and exactly what they were I'm not sure, but I know he had other things to do.

FRANKLIN: Alright.

SCHOENBERG: I think his primary responsibility was selecting the aides.

FRANKLIN: Okay.

SCHOENBERG: And he also wrote one of my effectiveness reports.

FRANKLIN: What was your rank at this point?

SCHOENBERG: Captain.

FRANKLIN: Captain, okay. Who was your immediate supervisor? Who was your immediate commander? Do you remember?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yes. Colonel Joe Ambrose.

FRANKLIN: Okay. In terms of the organizational structure you were on loan to the White House?

SCHOENBERG: You might call it that. You might say that at any point when the White House said that they needed me, Colonel Joe Ambrose had to say yes.

FRANKLIN: Okay.

SCHOENBERG: If there was a conflict between what I had to do at the University of Maryland and what I was expected to do at the White House, the White House took precedence.

FRANKLIN: So you had your interview with Lieutenant Colonel Draper. He told you what it was about and you were happy to do it. Is this duty station a career-enhancing position?

SCHOENBERG: Oh yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

FRANKLIN: Okay.

SCHOENBERG: Once you were selected as a White House Aide it was evidence that somebody recognized you as a good officer who could represent the Air Force. If you could do a job in that environment, obviously you could probably do a very good job in the Air Force environment.

FRANKLIN: So you were interviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Draper, and you were excited about this. I suppose this is a career-enhancing job.

SCHOENBERG: Oh, I wanted the job very badly.

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FRANKLIN: How long was it between the time that you were interviewed and you were informed that you were going to be appointed.

SCHOENBERG: About a week.

FRANKLIN: About a week, okay. We're going to get back to that letter from your mother.

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: Okay, just to give listeners a little preview.

SCHOENBERG: Alright.

FRANKLIN: There's a letter from your mother in the mix here.

SCHOENBERG: Yes.

FRANKLIN: Okay, so you were appointed as a social aide.

SCHOENBERG: On official orders, I should say.

FRANKLIN: Okay.

SCHOENBERG: The Air Force Headquarters published orders assigning me as an additional duty, with no change of position, this respect to the University of Maryland, but understanding that the White House had precedence if they needed me.

FRANKLIN: Now how many times were you called to the White House?

SCHOENBERG: I think about 15-20 times.

FRANKLIN: How many?

SCHOENBERG: 15-20.

FRANKLIN: 15-20 times. How would it go? What was the procedure that was followed, and how do you call the White House? Did you get a call that said, "Come on over?" Or would they say, "We need you next week"?

SCHOENBERG: Yeah, both.

FRANKLIN: Okay.

SCHOENBERG: When they were planning an official reception or dinner or something of that sort it was well planned and there are people in the White House that were part of the organizational structure. The usher, for example. The Chief Usher at the White House worked very closely with the military aides—the Air Force, Army, Navy aides—and could call on them

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for help if the usher needed it, but it was planned. "X" number of aides were needed for this function, and we wanted five from the Navy, or whatever the case was. So you would know a week or so in advance, or maybe even more, that you were going to be on duty at the White House. Now, being on duty at the White House involved a full uniform, it was a tails uniform, a winter and a summer uniform that changes with all the epaulets and the decorations that go with it. You had to have that uniform. And I had to go to a tailor and get it all made, I mean...

FRANKLIN: At your own expense?

SCHOENBERG: At my own expense, which I loved it.

FRANKLIN: You were happy to do it.

SCHOENBERG: Of course.

FRANKLIN: Where is that uniform, do you have it?

SCHOENBERG: No, I gave it to the museum. It's going to be on display at the Breman Museum.

FRANKLIN: Oh, really? Okay. The Breman Museum in Atlanta.

SCHOENBERG: Here in Atlanta.

FRANKLIN: Okay, alright. But you said there was a summer and a winter uniform. Did you give them both?

SCHOENBERG: I gave the winter uniform.

FRANKLIN: So you have the summer uniform?

SCHOENBERG: I think I still have it.

FRANKLIN: Alright, okay. So, there were two types of calls.

SCHOENBERG: The other kind was they would call very quickly and say we need somebody within the next two hours, and I would drop whatever I was doing, of course. I was in uniform because I was on duty as an instructor in the military at Maryland. I would get into my automobile and drive in through the White House gate, park on the White House grounds, of course, I had a pass.

FRANKLIN: In the parking area between the executive office building and the west wing, is that the area where you parked?

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SCHOENBERG: Well if you go in from Pennsylvania Avenue, the circular drive that leads up to the –

FRANKLIN: Yes.

SCHOENBERG: I could park right there on that circle.

FRANKLIN: No kidding?

SCHOENBERG: Oh yes, and the guards at the gate knew me and were like, “Hi, Captain!” It was a very pleasant kind of a thing.

FRANKLIN: What sort of things would you be called up to do at the last minute? I understand that they would plan state dinners in advance.

SCHOENBERG: Well in advance. Two examples I can give you. One I got a call to come over right now, because Mrs. Eisenhower was going to lay a wreath at the Jefferson Memorial. Whether the President was supposed to do it, and couldn't do it, I don't know, but I was chosen to come to the White House. I got Mrs. Eisenhower. We went into a Secret Service limousine [and] had a chauffeur drive us over to the memorial. I escorted her up to the Jefferson Memorial. [I] stood beside her as she laid the wreath, and of course we talked in the car on the way up there.

FRANKLIN: What did you talk about, just where you were from and your family?

SCHOENBERG: Well, yeah. Mamie was an Army wife. Mamie knew what young officers were and how to treat young officers. And of course she learned how to treat young officers by watching Ike. She knew what Ike would do and she knew how to deal with it. She was a pleasant lady. She was very congenial, and very nice. I had no feeling of discomfort. I could talk to her as if she were my aunt or some relative of some sort.

FRANKLIN: They were social pleasantries, she didn't say, “That darn...”

SCHOENBERG: Oh, no.

FRANKLIN: No politics.

SCHOENBERG: No, I kept my position. I was a junior officer. She was the First Lady. I knew where I stood and how I had to act, and I knew my place.

FRANKLIN: But she recognized you and she treated you well.

SCHOENBERG: Very well. She didn't treat me at arms length. She treated me...

FRANKLIN: There was no pretentiousness.

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SCHOENBERG: It was the same feeling I had with her that I had with Ike when I first met him at West Point. "Take a seat, gentlemen." That kind of thing. She had, not the same personality, but much like him. She was a good Army wife.

FRANKLIN: And you said there was another occasion when you were called to the White House?

SCHOENBERG: Yes. One of the senior aides, one of the social aides at the White House, who happened to be a full colonel, was getting married to a woman he knew in Washington. Mamie knew this colonel, because of his service at the White House, and she wanted to go to the wedding for whatever reason, I don't know, but she wanted to go and she needed an escort. They called me. I was available, and I went. I took her to the wedding.

FRANKLIN: And how long were you at the wedding?

SCHOENBERG: A couple hours.

FRANKLIN: And you sat next to her at the table, and she must have been at the head table.

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yeah, yeah. No, there was no table. It was just a ceremony in the cathedral. The Washington Cathedral.

FRANKLIN: The National Cathedral?

SCHOENBERG: Yes, the National Cathedral.

FRANKLIN: Let me ask you about your first day. How you sort of got "checked in." Did you get issued special credentials?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yeah. I had a White House pass.

FRANKLIN: Okay. You were issued a White House pass. They took your picture. When did you first run into the President?

SCHOENBERG: I can't remember the exact time. I think it was at a reception for the diplomats, and there were several sorts of receptions, and it was one of those receptions. I saw him in the receiving line and I may not have been the aide assigned as the receiving aide, the man who stood beside the president and introduced the guests as they came through. That was a standard procedure. Whenever there was a reception, anything at the White House, everybody met the President, the First Lady, the Vice President, and his wife. They all formed that line and they all went through the line. There was always one aide who stood at the head of the line and the President was on his left. You would come through the receiving line. You would be introduced to the President. You'd get the name of the individual, and pass that name on to the President. Obviously he couldn't know the name of everybody, so you had to tell him the name.

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FRANKLIN: Did they tell you their names, or did you have a card or something?

SCHOENBERG: I asked them their name, and they knew they had to give me their name. Lyndon Johnson, for example, had been into the White House many times. He was then the majority leader in the Senate. He knew exactly what to do, and most of them did. They were Senators and Representatives and ambassadors. Whoever they were, they knew enough to know that when there was an aide standing by the side of the President. He was there for one purpose, primarily to get the name to give to the President.

FRANKLIN: So you would stand there and Lyndon Johnson would say to you, "I'm Lyndon Johnson, the Senate Majority Leader."

SCHOENBERG: Yes sir. He had to say that. And if he didn't say it, I would ask him.

FRANKLIN: It might be embarrassing if the President forgot a name of somebody who was important.

SCHOENBERG: That's exactly why the aide is there. The aide is his extension. The aide is there to help him, so that he looks the best that he can for his guests.

FRANKLIN: Right. So, the first time you met Eisenhower in the White House was at one of these receptions and you were not his direct aide, but you went up and spoke to him, or how did that go?

SCHOENBERG: It varied. I would be milling around, depending on whether it was a dinner, or a ball, or whatever it was, but eventually he knew who I was, and that's the kind of man he was. And he began to call me "Schoeny." And that's an important thing we'll talk a little bit later about an incident.

FRANKLIN: So what you're saying is that he went so far as to inquire as to the names of aides, the social aides or the military aides, so he would know to call you by name?

SCHOENBERG: He did.

FRANKLIN: Before you introduced yourself? You introduced yourself once, but then he had the ability to remember.

SCHOENBERG: He had the ability to know and to remember. That is one of the traits of real leaders is to know your people, and he made that a point.

FRANKLIN: And he knew the names of all the aides?

SCHOENBERG: Yes, twenty one of them.

FRANKLIN: So, did you ever have a conversation with him at all?

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SCHOENBERG: Oh, yes. And I think I've told you that every Christmas time, the Eisenhowers had a party in the White House, on the second floor, in the living quarters. They had a receiving line, the President, Mrs. Eisenhower, and Mrs. Doud, who was the mother of Mamie.

FRANKLIN: Mother-in-law.

SCHOENBERG: Mother-in-law, right. Mother of Mamie. The three of them would be there and each aide would go through that receiving line, and at that point I would have bet my life that he would say, "Schoeny!" He wouldn't say, "I don't remember your name," or he would somehow finesse the way...

FRANKLIN: He would look at your rank and say, "How are you, Captian?"

SCHOENBERG: Most cases he would say, "Schoeny." Or he would say, "Captian Schoenberg." One of the two. But it was always this personal relationship. It was never this standoffish kind of thing. That was the wonderful thing about him.

FRANKLIN: You had a conversation with him at one of these parties?

SCHOENBERG: Yes. It was December of 1955. I was getting ready to go on leave to Kansas City, Missouri. I had been dating Ann for a while and I had planned to propose marriage to her. So I said to the President, "Mr. President, I'm going home on leave and I'm going to ask my young lady to be my wife."

And he said, "Don't worry, she'll accept." Those were the exact words. I'll never forget. We formally invited him to the wedding, and Mrs. Eisenhower. Obviously he couldn't come, that would mean an entourage flying in an Air Force plane to get to Kansas City. [He] couldn't do that. We knew that. But, he did send a personal telegram congratulating us, sent to the synagogue where the wedding took place.

FRANKLIN: When you announced that you were going to marry Ann, that was effectively the end of your career as a social aide at the White House.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. I called it my abdication, like Prince...

FRANKLIN: Oh, what's his name?

SCHOENBERG: Yeah, when he abdicated his throne.

FRANKLIN: When he decides to step down. And then did you make a formal declaration when Ann said yes? Obviously Ann said yes, because you've been married now for how long?

SCHOENBERG: 54 years.

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FRANKLIN: 54 years. When Ann said yes, you went back and said well, look I can't do the social aide anymore, I'm engaged.

SCHOENBERG: Yeah, I reported to Colonel Draper and told him that I was engaged and that we were going to be married in June of 1956. And he, I'm sure at some point very soon after I said that, he reported to the personnel people that Captain Schoenberg would be officially relieved of his duty, on orders. They were published on orders. I have copies of the orders. And he would be terminated on that temporary assignment.

FRANKLIN: You were saying that the aides got together and bought President Eisenhower a gift and that President Eisenhower gave you a gift in return.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. We knew that he liked Steuben glass. He had a great admiration for Steuben glass. So, one of our aides, I don't know if he had a contact or not, but he was designated to go to the Steuben company and tell them that what we wanted to do was to present the President with a Steuben glass piece, as a gift from the aides to the President and Mrs. Eisenhower. Well, the Steuben glass people saw an opportunity which they couldn't pass up. So they produced a tremendously large glass punch bowl, absolutely beautiful, with all the cups that go with it, with presidential seals around it. That thing probably would have cost, God knows how many thousands of dollars. We paid 200 dollars apiece. Now in those days, 200 dollars was a lot of money.

FRANKLIN: My father was making 35 dollars a week when I was born, and that's about the time I was born.

SCHOENBERG: When I was a lieutenant, I made 21 dollars a month, a month.

FRANKLIN: So, that was a month's salary.

SCHOENBERG: Well this was several years after 1948, like four or five years later, but 21 dollars was still a lot of money. So each aide, 21 of us, each put in 21 dollars, and whatever that came out to, 400 and some dollars. The Steuben glass people said, "That's okay, fellas, we'll accept that." We presented the President with this beautiful, beautiful punch bowl, and in return, he gave each of us a lithograph that he painted, of the [Gilbert] Stuart [painting of George] Washington. And the story about why he got into painting, I think, is kind of interesting. During World War II when he and Winston Churchill had many, many meetings, like at Malta and various other places, they got to be friends. Churchill had taken up painting when he was in his sixties and he convinced Eisenhower that it was a wonderful way to relax and was enjoyable. And, sure enough, Eisenhower became a painter. And this is one of his first efforts, very well done.

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FRANKLIN: Very well done. Sitting behind you right now, I'm looking over your shoulder and I see the painting, and you said that Eisenhower gave you another painting?

SCHOENBERG: The next year, the second Christmas that we had at the White House, he gave us a lithograph of the landscape of Colorado, and Mamie was from Colorado, so painted it in her honor.

FRANKLIN: Now, you were in attendance at a number of White House dinners?

SCHOENBERG: Um-hm.

FRANKLIN: What would you do at those dinners? Did you have a table where you sat with the other aides?

SCHOENBERG: Yes. In the basement of the White House were many, many rooms, and because we were there at dinnertime, you don't ignore the fact that aides have to eat, too. We had dinner on our own. The aides were served a meal, but not at the table upstairs with the guests. We were not—

FRANKLIN: Alright, so you greeted the guests, you went down and had dinner—

SCHOENBERG: We brought them in. We took them to where they had to go. If we had an opportunity we'd talk to them about the White House. "This is the Blue Room, this is the Oval Office." We gave them a little bit of a tour and then they would go in and do whatever they did at the reception, or the dinner, or the ball, or whatever. So, we had opportunities to be with them, but when they sat down to eat their meal, we were downstairs having our meal.

FRANKLIN: —and then, after your meal, did you come back up?

SCHOENBERG: We came back up.

FRANKLIN: For the dancing and the shows.

SCHOENBERG: For whatever we had to do, whatever we had to do.

FRANKLIN: You said that you had a conversation with Abba Eban?

SCHOENBERG: Yes, I did. When we had guests coming in, they came in through the Pennsylvania Entrance of the White House. That's the one you usually see where the distinguished guests come in.

FRANKLIN: The formal entrance.

SCHOENBERG: The formal entrance. The procedure was the White House aides would line up and wait for their turn to receive the next guest, whoever that was. So I was in line waiting for

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my turn to step forward into the vestibule of the White House, and stand there and wait for the next guest to come in, to receive them. "Welcome to the White House," etcetra, etcetra. And fate would have it Abba Eban was the man that I brought in.

FRANKLIN: And that's just fate, you didn't maneuver that?

SCHOENBERG: Pure fate.

FRANKLIN: Because if you're Jewish, and a big supporter of the state of Israel.

SCHOENBERG: That had nothing to do with it, but during the conversation with him, and his wife was pregnant at the time so she was not with him, and I became his "partner" so to speak. I remember, usually after dinner the men would be invited into the Green Room and they would be served after-dinner drinks, cigars, and so on, and I would be there with him. That was the opportunity I had, and I said, "You know, Mr. Ambassador, it may be that you and I are one of the few Jews in the White House. There may be others, but I don't know who they are."

FRANKLIN: I have to ask you, did you notice there were not a lot of Jews in presence in the White House? Were there African-Americans? Hispanics? There were no women.

SCHOENBERG: Well, when they were ambassadors from various countries there were obviously Hispanics and blacks.

FRANKLIN: Right, as far as the staff, and the Chief Usher. Who was the Chief Usher?

SCHOENBERG: He was a civilian employee. He was an employee of the government.

FRANKLIN: Right. What did Abba Eban say when you said that?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, he was pleased to meet me, to know that I was Jewish. A very pleasant man. I went to see him many times at Georgetown University when he spoke, and others places that I could get in. I was always impressed, with that British accent, but he was such an intelligent man.

FRANKLIN: So, the way the dinners would go is that you would do the greeting. You all would go downstairs for dinner. Would you eat the same thing that the guests ate?

SCHOENBERG: Sometimes. It depends.

FRANKLIN: Was the food good?

SCHOENBERG: Oh yeah, sure. The White House always served good food.

FRANKLIN: Alright. Well not always. My understanding is the Roosevelts, their food wasn't very good. As a matter of fact, people used to eat before they went.

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SCHOENBERG: Could be. I don't know.

FRANKLIN: The White House had just been renovated.

SCHOENBERG: Yeah.

FRANKLIN: Did you notice any of the, did that make any impression on you?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yeah. I was always impressed with the interior of the White House.

FRANKLIN: Because it had just been renovated, you know. The Trumans had been in the Blair House and had just moved back in when Eisenhower became President.

SCHOENBERG: Right, and I remember the Blair House quite well.

FRANKLIN: So, the order of the proceedings were, dinner was upstairs and then after dinner the men went to the Green Room and had brandy.

SCHOENBERG: The women would go in another room.

FRANKLIN: The women would go in another room and did the aides ever go accompany the women, or it was always your responsibility to accompany the men?

SCHOENBERG: That's a good question. I don't remember. I never personally had to accompany any of the women.

FRANKLIN: Okay, so the women went off, and I suppose Mamie Eisenhower probably presided over them.

SCHOENBERG: Oh, Mamie was there, yeah.

FRANKLIN: And the President presided over the men in the Green Room?

SCHOENBERG: I would say he presided over them.

FRANKLIN: Alright, so you were the legislative liaison in the Pentagon.

SCHOENBERG: Yes, under General Kelly, who assigned me to escort Congressman [Shepard J.] Crumpacker, a member of the House Armed Services Committee on this trip. He was an Air Force Reserve Officer, but as a member of the Armed Services Committee, Joe Kelly realized he was an important individual that we should get to know. So I took him on a trip around the world. We hit 17 countries in 30 days, just he and I. We went on military transport, went on commercial transport, it was a very interesting trip. I learned an awful lot. When I got back, I decided to write a report that was more than just, we stopped here, and did this. I reported on the people that we met. The thing that I observed was if any of the ranking officers, both military

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and diplomatic, did not fully appreciate the roles that congressmen could play in making a policy and law. So I wrote my report as an analysis of the personality, not only Crumpacker, and his reaction to what he saw, but also to the people that he met and their knowledge of congressional military diplomatic relations. I've had a very good background in writing, and I still think I can write fairly well, and I have to believe that report was very unusual. When it came down to the General, and they saw what I wrote, they recognized I had something better than just "the usual" to offer.

FRANKLIN: So you did this on your own initiative?

SCHOENBERG: Of course.

FRANKLIN: Okay, and you gave the report to?

SCHOENBERG: General Kelly, or his staff. And very shortly after that, I was promoted to a special job as the special projects officer, and I wrote speeches, and did all kinds of things other than just liaison with the members of Congress. So, in 1955 while we were in Cairo, Egypt, I remember distinctly, the word came out in the press that Eisenhower had an attack of ileitis and was confined to the White House. I got back, and not long after I got back they had scheduled a diplomatic corps reception. Protocol says you cannot have a reception event, can't have anything social, in the White House when the President is sick. He is in the White House, but he cannot be receiving guests. He can't do all the things he would normally do. To take his place under those circumstances, the Vice President steps in. Well, you can't have it in White House, so you have to have it someplace other than the White House, not too far away from the White House. The Organization of American States, it's a beautiful building, not too far from the White House, and the interior is an atrium there. They had birds, and tropical foliage, and even a waterfall, if I remember correctly. So I got there early of course, everything went very punctually.

FRANKLIN: You were called back from Cairo for this?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, no. I was already back in the states, it was after that.

FRANKLIN: Oh, okay.

SCHOENBERG: But the President had gotten sick while I was on the trip.

FRANKLIN: But you were no longer a social aide?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yes.

FRANKLIN: But this was 1955.

SCHOENBERG: Yeah.

FRANKLIN: And you had proposed to Ann. Just to get this straight, at the same time as you were a social aide in the White House, you were also legislative liaison, and that you had been traveling with Congressman Crumpacker, and one of your assignments was to help out at this reception.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. And because the President was sick, he could not be the receiving official, so the Vice President, Mr. Richard Nixon was to take over in that position. So we met at the Organization of American States, in the atrium, which is a beautiful setting. I got there early, of course, in my uniform, and I had a Captain Walt Adams, who has remained a very good friend of mine. Retired Brigadier General, I should add. He was my assistant, so I posted him at the iron gate, which was the entrance way to the atrium, and I said, "Walt, keep the guests there," which was the usual procedure. "Keep them there until I get signal from the Vice President that it's time to let them come in."

So I'm there and I'm waiting with all of my decorations and what not, so he [Nixon] knows what I am. He walks in with his wife, Pat, and they proceed not just to talk, but he proceeds to chew her out. He was really angry. I don't know what he was angry about, and I didn't want to listen, I didn't want to hear what he had to say, but it was obvious that he was very upset about something, and he just gave her a piece of his mind. He never said hello to me. He didn't say "Good evening, Captain. I'm sorry I don't remember your name." He certainly wouldn't call me by Schoeny, because he didn't know it, but I looked at my watch and kept everything like a pilot getting ready to take off on time, trying to get on time, at one minute to eight, I said, "Mr. Vice President, it's time to let the guests come in."

And he said, "Hmmp." He didn't say okay, he didn't say alright, he grunted. I signaled to Walt Adams to open up the gate and they came in. I have described the situation this way, it's like he pulled the shade on his face, and that anger that was so obvious, became the official smile. So that when I stood next to him to receive the guests, and to give the names to him, he was all peaches and cream.

FRANKLIN: Did you ever look back and see how Pat Nixon was during the reception?

SCHOENBERG: Pat Nixon was a lady, very gracious, and she didn't show any emotion. She took it. She didn't talk back to him. I think she was aware of the fact that I was there, and I've always said in talking about leadership, condemn in private and praise in public. She probably knew that and understood that and he didn't. And I think what he did as President, when he became President, demonstrated that. He didn't understand the principles of leadership.

FRANKLIN: So then you, after this, left the White House and continued your career in the military until you retired in?

SCHOENBERG: 1973.

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FRANKLIN: 1973.

SCHOENBERG: I had 30 years of service.

FRANKLIN: Okay, alright. Did you ever see President Eisenhower again?

SCHOENBERG: Yes, yes I did, before I retired. In 1966 I was selected to go to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, which is the senior level schooling for senior officers. You can either be selected for the Army War College, the Navy War College, the Air Force War College, or the Industrial College of the Armed Forces [ICAF], or the National War College. The Industrial College and the National War College were composed of officers usually in the grade of Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, and then civilians of equal grade, like GS15 and GS16. The National War College and the Industrial College had this various selection of officers and obviously the National War College was sort of focused on strategy, national strategy, security strategy. The Industrial College was focused on logistics and preparation for war time.

There's a very interesting relationship to Eisenhower. Eisenhower was a student at the Industrial College in 1933, and when he graduated he was held on as an instructor for four years at ICAF. Mr. Bernard Baruch, who I'm sure you've heard of, you know very well, was instrumental in helping establish the curriculum at ICAF. I have a strong belief that Eisenhower, in his year at ICAF as a student, and his four years as an instructor, gave him a solid foundation which paid off tremendously of his understanding of what the country could do and had to do in time of war. Industry had to be mobilized. Transportation had to be mobilized. Everything had to be geared towards winning the war. He understood that, and it went into play, and we won the war in large measure because people like General Motors, who had been making automobiles, began to make tanks, and people that had been making washing machines, began to make cannons, and people who were making sewing machines, began to make rifles and machine guns. It was that kind of conversion. I think all of that is indicative of what all of this was meant to be, preparation for emergency. I have to add here, the Eisenhower Highway System, the Interstate, is named Eisenhower Interstate, he specified in the law that when you build those Interstate Highways, one mile out of every five, has to be long enough and straight enough to land an airplane, because he realized there may be a time when you have to land an airplane in the middle of the country.

ICAF, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, was one of the two major senior schools, the Industrial College and the National War College. And by the way, they are side-by-side at Fort McNair in Southeast Washington, D.C. I couldn't say which one I wanted, but in my own heart I knew that the Industrial College was much more to my career path. I was not going to be a pilot, because I was not a flying officer and I was not going to be any strategic kind of person, but I could be a logistics kind of a guy. I could do that much better than I could be in a strategic position, at least I thought so. If I had a choice, I would've chosen ICAF, and fortunately, and I

guess this is the blocks falling into place, I got chosen as a Lieutenant Colonel to go to the Industrial College and I was living in Annandale, Virginia, so it was not a long commute.

We had people come to speak to us and usually we had joint sessions, the National War College and the Industrial College side-by-side and we had a big auditorium which was named, by-the-way, the Bernard Baruch Auditorium and the building itself, which was built in 1960, was the Eisenhower Hall, so you can see the relationship there. One of the speakers was President Eisenhower, now he was about 76 years of age at that time. We had people who were Secretaries of Defense and Ambassadors, people of very, very high positions in the government, and the procedure was that for 45 minutes. The speaker would give his presentation. Then there would be a break, the coffee break, students from both of the schools would be selected to be with him. It was sort of like the Green Room I was talking about, the social time. Well, when I knew that Eisenhower was going to be there, I went immediately to the ICAF front office and I said, "Look, I used to be an aide to Eisenhower in the White House, and I would really like to be assigned as one of the students to be with him during that break." They let me do that. So at the coffee break, there was Eisenhower and five others, myself included, and that was the last time I got to be with him. Not only had he spoken about his philosophy of leadership and what he thought about his presidency and various other things, that's when I got to hear him personally talk about those things and we had a chance to ask him questions. Then we had the Q and A section afterwards and of course there was a chance for everybody in the audience to ask questions. That was the last time.

FRANKLIN: Did he recognize you? When you reminded him, he sort of knew?

SCHOENBERG: We didn't have a chance to really talk and I didn't want to take advantage of the other five students and try to monopolize the conversation, but I think he did realize who I was, even though he didn't outwardly say, "It's good to see you again." Maybe it was because of his age or whatever it was. I was a little bit disappointed, but on the other hand, I was very pleased to be in his company at least one more time.

FRANKLIN: Is there anything else that you think we ought to know? Is there any other story, or incident, or something that I had forgotten to ask you?

SCHOENBERG: I guess I would summarize it this way, he had a tremendous influence on my way of thinking. I feel myself very privileged to have been in a position to see him up close and to absorb, if that's a good word, his way of doing things, his outlook on life. If I could compare his kind of leadership, to what I saw that one time from President Nixon, I am lucky, very lucky, to have had that experience. You can't ask that you get those opportunities, they just happen, and I was fortunate that they happened to me. They influenced my life more than I can tell you, everything I have done even before I retired from the Air Force. My style of leadership in the Air Force was largely an extension, a reflection, of what I learned from Joe Kelly and

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Eisenhower. I can't imagine anybody who influenced me in the way than those two people did. I've tried to emulate, and I guess I have to tell you one more story.

When I was down at Warner Robins, Georgia, at the Air Force Base, my last duty station, I was the Director of Materiel Management. I had 3200 people working for me, 10% of them were officers in the Air Force, 90% were civilians. That was the right proportion. Because most people had continuity and they carried on the logistics of the Air Force, it was very, very important. There were five depots and we were one of the main depots. I learned that those 10% of my staff were young officers, mostly lieutenants and captains who would never have the opportunity to see senior leadership in action. I had a responsibility to convey to them some of what I had learned, so I established a program called the "shadow program." Every morning at 8 o'clock, I had one of those captains or lieutenants report to me at a reserved parking place for him, next to mine, outside the office. There was a badge I had created that they wore on their uniforms from 8 o'clock in the morning until whatever time we finished, they were with me all that time. We had lunch together. Every briefing I went to, if I went out onto the tarmac to visit the aircraft, whatever was going on, they were with me. At the end of the day they sat with me like we're sitting here today, and talked about what they had seen and what they had realized. Did you like the way the general did this? What did you think about so and so? Informal, but an opportunity. And I say three things happened. Number one, they got to know me. I was their boss. Number two, I got to know them, much like "Schoeny" was the name that they called me. And third, those young officers were no dumbbells. They were bright, and I got good ideas, many of which I implemented. I learned a lot from them, but they learned a lot from me. To this day I still get Christmas cards from many of those young officers.

FRANKLIN: Do you think that in part your initiation of that program was directly related to your experience, and having, not intimate contact, but having seen President Eisenhower?

SCHOENBERG: Without a doubt. I can, to this day, visualize walking down the hall of the Pentagon next to General Joe Kelly, and see him and hear him greet everybody that passed by name. He would say, "How's your wife?" "How's your kid?" I thought to myself, this is amazing, and these people would eat out of his hand. He was that kind of a leader. Call it charisma, call it whatever you want to, that's leadership. In my view, that's real leadership. We don't have enough of those people in our government today, I wished to hell we did, but we don't. Real leaders, who can look above politics, can look above personal gain, for the good of the country. That's what we are lacking so much, we're lacking that. People think about, what am I going to get out of this? What's in it for me? Don't think that way, think in terms of the broader view. Kennedy said it beautifully, what can I do for my country? I believe that. That's right in the heart and soul of me. That's what I believe.

FRANKLIN: Well, thanks Irv. Thanks for spending this time and I really appreciate it, I'm glad we have this on tape.

Irving Schoenberg interview, July 25-26, 2010

SCHOENBERG: I enjoyed it, Dan. Thank you very much for asking me.

FRANKLIN: This is part three of an interview with Irving Schoenberg. I'm Dan Franklin from Georgia State University. It's July 25, 2010, and we had forgotten one little thing that we want to add to the interview. Irv, you went to the Eisenhower Library, or you contacted the Eisenhower Library.

SCHOENBERG: Yes. I was in the process of writing my memoirs and a friend of mine had suggested that I write to the archivist at the Eisenhower Museum and Library in Abilene, Kansas, so I did.

FRANKLIN: When was this?

SCHOENBERG: Probably two years ago, maybe a year and a half ago. Sure enough, I got a very fine letter back from the archivists, who said he had gone through the data, gone through the files, and found a letter that my mother, may she rest in peace, had written to Lieutenant Colonel Draper at the time I was being considered for appointment as a White House Aide. I didn't know that she had written the letter, but it basically said, my son is a fine man, and you should seriously consider him for appointment. I have to add, because I'm very proud of my mother, she came to the United States at age seven in 1909, born in 1902. She was the youngest of ten children in an immigrant family. They came from Bessarabia, which was a part of Romania. She had nine siblings, of course, and the family was poor as were so many immigrants, and she had to go to work when she was old enough to do that. She went to work to help support her parents and some of her siblings, as well. She had six grades of elementary school education and she was in a class, this is interesting, she was in a class with people who were many years older than she, but they were also children of immigrants. There was one teacher in this school who could speak German and most of these kids could speak Yiddish, and that's all they could speak. This German-speaking teacher was the teacher of their class. My mother was one of those students. My mother went on after six grades of elementary school. She went to secretarial school and became a secretary, and I told you the story of how she converted to Republicanism. Not only did she become active in the Republican Party, but she became the Vice Chair, under Mr. Leo Anderson, who had helped me get my nomination and appointment to West Point, became Vice Chair of the Committee and eventually became the Chair of the Committee. As the Chair of the Committee, Eisenhower came through Saint Joseph, Missouri, on his campaign train and made a whistle stop. She was invited to come on board to meet the President. She shook his hand, and I like to think that she probably, knowing my mother, probably kissed him on the cheek and wished him well. She never forgot that meeting. She spoke about Eisenhower all of her life, so I guess a lot of that came to me.

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FRANKLIN: I wanted to add that, as long as we're talking about your mother and her relationship with the Republican National Committee, you knew the Jacobson's who were Truman's business partners?

SCHOENBERG: Yes, Harry Truman and [Edward] Jacobson. His daughter was a sorority sister of my sister at the University of Oklahoma.

FRANKLIN: I'm just throwing this out there, there was a very crucial moment in the history of the State of Israel, when whether or not the United States would recognize the State of Israel was kind of on the edge and one of the people who was deputized to go contact President Truman was Jacobson. Do you know if your mother, or anybody in your circle, had anything to do with getting that started?

SCHOENBERG: I don't know anything like that, but I do know there is a general feeling among the Jewish community of Kansas City and Saint Joseph, Missouri, which are fifty miles apart, that had he not spoken out to Harry Truman, that it may not have happened. We were the first country to recognize Israel as a state and I think that tipped the balance. The tipping point was the fact that the United States was the first to recognize Israel.

FRANKLIN: Right, and also may have tipped the balance in the case of getting Harry Truman to agree to that may well have been the deputation of his business partner by the community, and I'm wondering if you've heard about any sort of intrigue, or organization, or move in that regard.

SCHOENBERG: Well, not exactly in that regard, but there is a story that I have to tell you and it's on Ann's side of the family. Her family was Viner. The Viner family lived in Independence, Missouri, which is a suburb of Kansas City, and across the street lived the Truman family. Harry Truman and Abe Viner, Ann's great uncle, were buddies. Very close buddies. Harry Truman, if you know the expression, Shabbos goy. This is a gentile who would come into a Jewish home, who could turn on the lights, turn on the stove, do things that Orthodox Jews were not supposed to do on the Sabbath. He was the Shabbos goy. He and Abe Viner became very close friends. That friendship remained all the time Harry Truman was President. Abe Viner was invited to the White House many times, and I think that's also a background factor in Harry Truman's attitude towards Israel. He was not necessarily known as a strong supporter of Judaism, but he had this connection.

FRANKLIN: My understanding is Truman's mother-in-law was, in fact, quite anti-Semitic.

SCHOENBERG: Yes, that's true.

FRANKLIN: And that Jews are not allowed in her house.

SCHOENBERG: That is true, and his wife, Harry Truman's wife, Bess, was not inclined to have Jews come to her home either.

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FRANKLIN: Really?

SCHOENBERG: Oh, yeah. However, and this is kind of a sideline, Harry Truman would go to the Viner home for his meals quite often. Mrs. Viner was a very good cook. Mrs. Truman, Harry's mother, was lousy. He loved to eat good food and he ate much of the food that he got served at the Viner household. Whether all these things connect, the dots connect, who knows, but it ended up with his recognizing Israel. Whatever did it, I'm glad it did. I'm glad it happened.

FRANKLIN: Thanks, Irv. I appreciate it.