

INTERVIEW WITH  
E. Frederic Morrow

by

Dr. Thomas Soapes  
Oral Historian

on

February 23, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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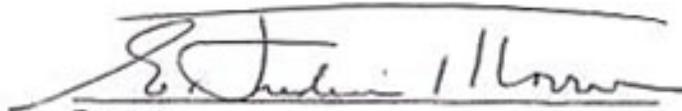
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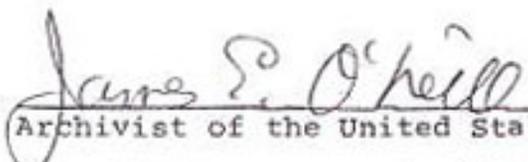
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This interview is being conducted with Mr. E. Frederic Morrow in New York City on February 23, 1977. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library; present for the interview are Mr. Morrow and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: First of all, in that period when you'd resigned from CBS, until you actually had your appointment take effect in the White House, you were at the Department of Commerce. Could you describe for us what your duties were there?

MR. MORROW: Well, I was what was referred to as the adviser on business affairs to the Secretary of Commerce, and one of the responsibilities in that job was to survey and investigate all the legislation proposed by the administration to see what effect it might have on the Department of Commerce. And then advise the Secretary and suggest to him what I felt his actions should be; whether he should support such legislation, or require more information, or just completely veto it. There were a great many areas--of course, I had a sort of an across-the-board responsibility in the Department of Commerce. Here again, it was the first time that any black had had an executive position in the Department of Commerce, and I guess both the administration and I were very anxious to make sure that it was a success, so the Secretary was always interested

in giving me great exposure in a great many areas of the Department of Commerce, and we got along very well and apparently the operation was a success.

SOAPES: Do you remember any specific episodes that were particularly noteworthy?

MORROW: Well, I think one of the things--my getting to the Department of Commerce, of course, is quite a story. I travelled every step of the way with the, then, candidate, General Eisenhower, in 1952. Went all over this country with him and at the end of the campaign, he told Sherman Adams to tell me that he wanted me to accompany him to Washington. And, consequently, I resigned from CBS, and they had a farwell party for me, and then all of a sudden, nothing happened. Weeks and months went by with no word from the administration. This was a very difficult period for me, because I had an invalid mother who required around-the-clock nursing, and my source of income had stopped and I was living off personal resources. So it was a very disturbing situation. I had no communication, whatsoever, with the White House, not in nor out. And finally--

after about six months of not hearing--I finally reached Bernard Shanley, the President's first Appointment Secretary at that time, who said to me he'd try to find out what the hitch might be, and he called me back one day to say, well, "I just can't get any answer, but apparently there just isn't any spot here for you." Well this was a difficult thing to explain, since the FBI had been all over the community and the county and the state investigating me, and people thought, well, Fred Morrow is in a lot of trouble, and it was personally embarrassing. Many years later, I found out what happened. Some of the President's closest advisers were just sort of awe-stricken that he should take such liberty as to invite a black, on his personal staff. And one of his friends, one of his very close friends in the White House, who happened to be a southern gentlemen, suggested that the day I arrived, he would certainly walk out with all the secretaries and female clerks. You can look at this two ways; it could be very flattering to think that you could impose such a threat; on the other hand, it's also very insulting. But it took many years for me to find out what happened. So, they arranged for me to go to the Department of

Commerce as an interim thing, hoping that the time might eventually develop when I could get to the White House. So that's what happened. I spent, let me see, I guess I was in the Department of Commerce for about a year when in July, 1955, the President called me to the White House to be executive assistant to him. So that's the story; I don't know whether that's been told before. I may have mentioned it, just briefly, in my book, but it's one of those things that happened that, unless you're an insider, you wouldn't know.

SOAPES: Did you find out who the exact people were who were the most vocal opposing your coming to the White House?

MORROW: Well, I think, I can say this very honestly; I think one of the most vocal was one of the President's long-time military friends--(his brother was the Governor of Alabama at the time)--General [Wilton B.] Persons. Later, after Sherman Adams left, General Persons and I became, not close friends, but we came to be friends because we had to work together. And I found him a very estimable gentleman. But I guess not having had that kind of close contact in his lifetime

with Negroes and particularly, I suppose, on that level, it just was difficult for him to conceive of me being able to fill a niche in the White House. So I'm sure that through the years, he was not happy about that situation, but I think he was probably the main person, along with a lot of others, who naturally fell into line, because General Persons was very powerful man on the White House staff.

SOAPES: Once you got to the Department of Commerce, did you run into this same reaction?

MORROW: Ran into the same thing. This was also the first time in the Department of Commerce. I might, just as an interlude, say that for forty years of my life, I have been a human guinea pig. The kind of person, the kind of Negro, who was always used to see if the time was right, or ripe, to try a noble experiment in greater depth; and so, in all the jobs I think I've held, with the exception of one, since I got out of college in 1930, have been the kind of jobs where you are the pioneer and pioneers always have sort of a rugged time, because

there are no blueprints; no one's been that way before. So it's one of those things that you have to go alone with. The Department of Commerce was the same kind of situation. The Department of Commerce is one of the high-ranking departments in the government, where some of the great tycoons of business are always visiting, or they're interested in what it's doing;--and as a representative of the department--I was an assistant to the Secretary of Commerce--you are thrown into the breach with these men, either representing department policy or representing the Secretary at a given time. And there again, it was a matter of trying to convince people that this really was my responsibility, that I'd really been sent by the Department of Commerce. Both in the White House and the Department of Commerce they would make reservations for me in some hotel someplace to attend a meeting, and it was sometimes a real chore trying to get the reservation through; and after getting there the chairman of a meeting, or whatever it was, making sure that this was the man who had been sent to do the job. So it gets to be a game after awhile and if you have a sense of humor you can have a lot of fun. But in the beginning, it's kind of trying.

SOAPES: I know that you were consulted frequently in the White House on some political matters and at the RNC in terms of response of the black community to the administration and the Republican party. Did you think that the Republican National Committee or the White House political operatives made a sufficient effort to recruit black support?

MORROW: No, they did not. The effort all along was lukewarm. I suppose in the archives, maybe in the [Eisenhower] Library, there are indications from memoranda, frantic memoranda, that I sent through the years, trying to make the party understand and see that maybe blacks could not win an election for them, but they certainly could lose an election for them. And that has happened so many times, where blacks have been the difference between winning and being defeated. I think it happened to Mr. Ford just recently, and it certainly happened to Mr. Nixon in 1960, which was the most trying period that I had in the White House--when the President loaned me to Vice President Nixon to accompany him on his trips about the country, to make sure that he would not make any faux pas in that direction.

And the dramatic situation of the jailing of Martin Luther King! I was with Mr. Nixon on his campaign train somewhere in the middle West, and I tried to recommend, over the protests of the rest of his staff, that he send a letter--or send a telegram--to Mrs. King, lamenting the fact and offering to use his good-offices to see what he could do to ameliorate the situation with the mayor or the governor. The staff figuratively threw daggers at me, telling me this was a stupid move, and "you're always thinking up things to get us into difficulty, so forget it." So I got off the campaign train at the next stop and went back to Washington, told the President that Mr. Nixon certainly didn't need me because everybody aboard was an expert in the area that he wanted me to oversee. We lost the election largely for that reason, because the Negroes were standing in the wings waiting to see which one of the candidates was going to make some specific pronouncements in the areas of civil rights, and so on. Mr. Kennedy did an excellent job and did the very thing that I suggested that Mr. Nixon do, by sending telegrams, and not only that, but sending his brother Robert to reassure and comfort Mrs. King. So

these are interesting footnotes, I guess, to this period which I think was an historic moment in this country. I want it understood, that I did not go to the White House to be the President's adviser on Negro affairs; that was anathema to me, and I told him one day that I just could not sit at his elbow to suggest to him how he ought to treat me. That just obeying the Ten Commandments, or treating blacks the way he would treat anybody else, was adequate. He didn't need an adviser. It was inevitable, of course, during the civil rights struggle, and certainly during the Little Rock situation, that I be thrown into them all because the thing affected me very deeply, and then I just couldn't escape it. Maxwell Rabb had left at that time and I guess I was the only one there with the contacts in the black community that were essential to try to keep down a great deal of strife that might have occurred. So I was up to my neck in this problem during that particular period. However the administration was very careful to give me an across-the-board assignment, to make sure that there was never any suspicion that I was merely there as some kind of window

dressing to advise the President on what to do about black affairs.

SOAPES: What you are saying is that, in terms of an appeal to the black community, that your feeling was the best thing that the administration or the Republican party could have done in the 1950s was, to use your words, to use or follow the Ten Commandments, rather than making any specific overt appeal?

MORROW: Correct. Because overt appeals, of course, always-- there's always a great deal of suspicion to them that, "this is an ad hoc thing," and, "What do they think we are now?" But it's a matter of creating a climate where people feel that the administration, in every facet of its responsibility, is going to make an effort to include, or to think about them, to remember. And the Republican party has been very remiss in this kind of thing. I think for almost a hundred years it had always felt that blacks, owed a great, or--what am I trying to say--owed a great sense of duty to the party because Lincoln was the President when they were emancipated. I think this thing, of course, was overworked through the years, because there was a

lot more to it. I think the black people worked for and they won their freedom, and they should never have been in the situation they're in anyhow. So it got to be a little heavy to keep reminding them, "Don't forget that we are the party that.....blah-blah-blah," and it didn't work. It got to the place where blacks were just as concerned about taxes and about education and about all the things that citizens are concerned about. And the party failed to see that. They tried to make specific overtures to them and talk in a manner that was sort of talking down to them rather than including them. And this is still true today. I see where the party is making an effort to develop a new spirit of inclusion, because they realize that, you can no longer talk down to people and you can no longer refer to blacks as "you people," or "you folk," which is a kind of thing that so many speakers in Negro communities use. I remember a particular situation-- to give you an example of what I mean--I remember a particular situation when President Eisenhower finally consented to address the Negro Associated Press, holding their Fiftieth Anniversary meeting in Washington. I struggled for many weeks to get him

to consent to go, and also at that time, I was one of his speechwriters and suggested an outline that he might follow in talking to them. It was a great occasion, a tremendous crowd, and the Negro representatives from the press from all over the country, and Jim Hagerty went with us. Jim and I went with the President to the meeting and there was thunderous applause when he entered, and he was using the notes and he was making--it was really a dramatic appeal. And he took his glasses off and he started to ad lib. And he made the fatal mistake that, I'd been trying to tell him about for many, many months; and he said, "Now, you people have to be patient." And when he said that, the roof fell in. It was this exclusion, it was this referring to them as a particular group. This always suggests that you are a problem, you are apart from the body politic. And it was a very difficult thing. When he left, the applause was muffled and there was a great deal of murmuring, and I remember, I received sacks of adverse mail because the President had made that one slip in his presentation, which otherwise might have been pretty good. So this is the kind of thing I mean. The feeling that the party has not quite come to

grips with "including in," I guess, not only blacks, but maybe other ethnic groups that would like to feel that they're in the body politic.

SOAPES: Did you feel that anybody in the administration or at the RNC was beginning to get the message that you were trying to get across?

MORROW: Well, I just don't know. After a national speaking tour for the party, I guess it was--when Nixon ran in 1960, I was the main speaker at the luncheon session of National Women's Club in Washington, D. C. The Republican women were meeting there at the same time the National Committee was having an executive meeting. Well, there was quite a turnout, and I tried to suggest to them at that time that they open their ranks to Negro women and make a particular effort to make the party see the problems, and so on. And they were incensed that I should presume to stand up and tell them how to run their club. There again, a great effort was made to have the President relieve me of my duties, which he just would not do. But he got sacks of mail and that kind of thing. I think, maybe in the archives

out at the Eisenhower Library that speech is there, because now it is listed as, really, one of the things that might have turned a lot of things around if the party had listened in 1960, because it forecast what was going to happen in the election. That they just were going to lose it, and the reasons for it. So, I don't know. I never had--no, I never really got the feeling that the message got through, because through the years there had always been a--you appease blacks, you tolerate them, you hand them a few crumbs and they're supposed to be happy. And, of course, this was a period--this was the beginning of the period I call, the "New Negro," who was responding, or his children were responding, from the fact that their father had served in World War II and had come back with a new resolve that things are going to change for my youngsters. And the whole period, for example, of the '60s that followed was this response of the children of the men who fought in World War II--in a segregated army--that gave them the resolve they were going to come back and try to change things. Now that's another thing that I don't know whether anybody else in this country has ever heard the President say--

and maybe this is what Steve Benedict was referring to when he said there was something that, maybe, I certainly ought to have on record somewhere in the Library. I was saving it for my autobiography but I can, I will put it on the record here today, because I think it may be interesting to some scholars, sometime, to understand the President's thinking. One of the great crosses I had to bear as the black pioneer in the White House was trying to answer for blacks--and, particularly, for black servicemen--why General Eisenhower vetoed an integrated army when he came back from Europe to testify. I think it was 19--, was it 1945? A bill had been introduced in the Congress to integrate the armed forces. The feeling being that here we are, strung around the world, fighting for something--for somebody else--that a great many of our own citizens do not share, and the bill had been introduced and the General had been called back to testify. and he testified that no, absolutely no, the time had not come when we should or could integrate the forces with any marked success. And this was a tremendous blow because we still had blacks overseas in segregated units, and--their morale just went to the bottom

of the barrel. There just wasn't any. So, during the campaign in 1952, he had spent the day at West Point--and we were coming back in his special car on a train. Coming down along the Hudson, he was very relaxed, and he set aside an hour or two for me to talk to him, because he wanted to get my point of view on things and we hadn't had very much time to talk during the campaign. He wanted to feel me out and I wanted to feel him out, so this time had been set aside for me to talk to him alone. He's sitting there stretched out, watching the view along the Hudson, and reminiscing about his days at West Point; how much it meant to him; suggesting to me that if he had not gone to West Point, he didn't know what might have happened to his life. Maybe he'd still have been a farmer. That he owed everything to his country and he would be eternally grateful for that opportunity. I said to him, "General, you expect me to go out and stand on platforms all over this country and make speeches in your behalf, but I have to be armed with information about questions that are going to be asked me that only you can answer. One of them is: why, in your testimony in 1945, did you testify against integrating

the armed forces?" Well he got very red. He hesitated for a minute. He looked at me and he said, "Son, your father's a minister, isn't he?" I said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "That's right." He said, "Did your father ever teach you anything about forgiveness?" I said, "Yes, he did." He said, "Well, that's where I am now." He continued, "When I was called back to the United States to testify on that problem, I sent for all my field commanders to let me have their viewpoints." And he said, "Their viewpoints were negative." He said, "I never, never questioned them. I just thought that here, a man commanding these men, and they had a responsibility, they ought to know," he said, "so the bulk of my testimony came from the reports from these field commanders." He said, "I want to confess to you that it has only been in the last few months that it dawned upon me that most of these men had a southern exposure and this, in itself, would color their decision." And he said, "The thing that I will never forget, as long as I live, is the sacrifice that black soldiers made at the Battle of the Bulge when I had to call for every able-bodied man, no matter what his situation or position in the army, to

help to stem the tide." And he said, "The inferior training those men received," he said, "some of them would die with a rifle in their hands they'd never fired before. They came off the trucks and out of the kitchens and out of the labor battalions and," he said, "they fought nobly for their country. And I will never forget." And that was the end of the conversation. Now, the only people that I've ever told this story to have been the members of my family, in a family situation where we're talking about our experiences. And this had a great effect on me, you know, because I don't think he ever told anybody else. I didn't blab it out. It just gave me the inner strength that I needed to stay on platforms and speak for this man. And he was that kind of a man. I had a relationship with this man that was, it was just a beautiful thing. The problem was that most of his close friends were from the deep South. And I could sit in the office today and we could talk about Little Rock, and a lot of the problems that afflicted the Negroes in this country, and this man's reaction was just a wonderful thing to see, because he was fair and decent and honest. But perhaps that night he might have a bridge game with his cronies from the South, and

the next day his attitude was just altogether--it was just altogether different. Because, I guess, every man wants to be well thought of by his cronies and his close friends, and most of them were from the South. So he had this kind of cross to bear, I guess, trying to be fair, trying to be himself, and yet, at times, trying to respond to the pressures that came from his social friends. I'm trying to think of the man--big stocky fellow that was one of his real close friends; sort of a court jester who--I think he's the one that handled all his financial affairs while he was in the White House. I just cannot think of his--George what?--George Allen! I think I was anathema--when George Allen would see me around the White House, he'd just almost have a nervous breakdown. So this is the kind of thing I'm talking about. This was what he had to go through, but maybe that thing about the army--someday, some historian going through the files will find that and that letter will explain, perhaps, a lot of things that are still a mystery to a lot of blacks. Because that's one of the first questions any old veteran always asks me. "How in the world could you work for a man, could you fight for a man, could you be with a

man who"--I was in the army, a field grade officer in the army; I caught hell in World War II in the army and I know what they're saying. But I have accepted these attitudes that--. The other thing is that he told me, in his contacts, that one of the first assignments that he had, as a second lieutenant out of West Point, was to be the instructor for the Illinois National Guard, and he was assigned to the black outfit there. The black outfit that had notoriously infamous white officers who were rejects from other outfits. This is a story also in World War II, in our divisions, where we had officers who were not good enough for the white divisions, but were sent to us. And he said that he was a spit and polish man right out of West Point--he said he'd take this outfit of his, to these rifle shoots at Camp Perry and other places. He said, "They just couldn't do anything." He said, "They just were pathetic." He said, "A young whippersnapper, I just took it for granted that black people were stupid. These men, they can't fire a rifle; there's nothing you can do about it." He said, "It never dawned on me they hadn't been trained." He said, "Also they had inferior equipment, and the motivation wasn't there

because they'd been kicked around and hounded," and he said, "I didn't realize this until later." So there are a lot of things that can shape a person, and that was one of the things that we had, talked about for years. He just was not in favor of civil rights legislation, because, he said, "You cannot legislate the kind of thing that you want. Men have to feel it in their hearts first before they'll do anything about it, so my signing a bill doesn't mean anything." But my argument was, "Mr. President, you see, now let's not forget the story you told me about these men that you trained who were not motivated, or who had been kicked around all their lives, and so they just didn't have the right spirit." I said, "If you make it a law to make it possible for Negroes to go in public places, public place of accommodation, to have equal job opportunities, it will give the whites an opportunity, working next to them, to discover for themselves whether all of them are scoundrels, or whether some of them are decent, and they will form their own opinion, rather than form it through hearsay or through tradition, or whatnot." Well, these are the kind of things that we used to talk about and the kind of touch and go arguments we had.

SOAPES: Would it be fair to say that Eisenhower's attitude towards civil rights issues was then not a tough-minded--

MORROW: No. No, it was not. It was not--let me tell you this. This was a--and, of course, I can't forget also that the President was born in Texas and raised in Kansas. I mean, he had a legitimate little touch, southern touch, himself. And I think, and I say this kindly, I think too the people around him, I think that Eisenhower would have ordered someone shot at sunrise who deliberately did something to hurt Fred Morrow. His personal man--what's the fellow's name?--who served him in the war. I can just--

SOAPES: John Moaney?

MORROW: John Moaney. I think John Moaney was as close to that man as his brother. I think if anybody had tried to harm John Moaney, they would have died like a dog. It was this attitude toward people he knew. He knew he could trust me; this is one of the things that our relationship was built on. He knew if he wanted the unvarnished truth, he'd ask Fred Morrow. Fred

will tell me. But as far as the rest of people outside, I don't think he could have given a tinker's dam. It just didn't touch him; it didn't dawn on him. As I said, he wanted to be decent, and he was a decent man, but he just could not bring himself to come to grips with the thing. And there was no reason for it other than, perhaps, Fred Morrow in the White House, a couple of other people; because, as I point out again, all of his social friends and all of his golfing companions were Southerners and whenever the subject would come up, you know darn good and well what the philosophy would be. So I think that's a fair question and I think that's an honest answer.

[Interruption]

MORROW: Just a footnote here. Is that okay?

SOAPES: Sure. Fine.

MORROW: Just a footnote here. I think, if the President had been more of a political animal, for example; if he'd been able to go that whole mile on this matter of race relations, a great

many of the problems that we fell heir to in 1960 would not have happened. I'm talking about the riots in this country. I think the Republican party, if he could have come to grips with that, this--for example, I don't think John Kennedy would have been elected. This is all, this is not necessarily hindsight; I think you've seen in my papers the kind of thing where this was spelled out in some of the memorandum that I sent. Because the blacks in this country were set to love Eisenhower like they were set--I mean, he was a great hero, and despite what happened, as I said, this thing about integration it was pretty hard for anyone not to like this man. But when he failed to come to grips with these, with the hopes and the aspirations, as I said, of the men who had fought under him or with him, this was the beginning of the souring in the communities and this was, as I said before, we got the period of the '60s, when these expressions were physical rather than just oral. Now, he was just that kind of a person. Because Kennedy also was a disappointment; he didn't live long enough for it to become a disaster, but he also was not completely honest when he said, for example, that with a stroke of a pen he could change conditions

in housing, and so on, and so on, because anybody who served in Washington knew that he couldn't do that. And he didn't do it. And this is one of the expressions of the President, at the time John Kennedy was elected, was nominated, that, "By golly, I hate to turn this chair over to that young whippersnapper." What he meant, Kennedy was standing on a stump making all these wild and idle promises in September that he knew in November he couldn't do anything about, or in January. Because trying to turn the old ship of state around, you know, is like trying to turn the Leviathan around in a small channel; it can't be done like that. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of time and maybe a lot of years. So there again, Negroes were fooled into believing that Kennedy was going to be a saviour, which he could not be. They're wiser now; they don't expect this any more. So--but they are learning how to use, utilize the laws of this country to try to effect changes. So, Mr. Carter, for example, is going to be in a lot of difficulty if he cannot bring about some of the things he proposed. And as a veteran of the Washington scene, I know there is no way--and particularly this first term--that he can do some of these things, so this

could be a disillusioning period for a lot of people after a while, but we'll just have to wait and see. But the President [Eisenhower] was not a political animal. As a matter of fact, I think he probably hated politics. He was at his best, I think he was at his best, when he was reasoning with people, having good conversation with foreign visitors, because his personality came through, and I guess that's what he liked. He was a great success in the army because he could always come up with a consensus. He could always get men in a room and get them--but I think when it came to the hard, maybe--the power broker business was anathema to him, and that's why other people did it. That's why he needed a Sherman Adams. The President wasn't going to touch--he didn't want to be bothered with these two-bit politicians and these people coming in taking up his time trying to get some misfit into a job. And this is the kind of thing I loved about him. He wanted quality, he didn't want any--if you couldn't tell him in two or three minutes what it was all about, if you couldn't write something on a page so he could grasp it right away, why forget it. Don't come to him posing as an expert and have him give you a problem and then ask him, "How do you think

I ought to go about it?" I tell you [Laughter]--you could hear noise from here to Kansas City, because he was that no-nonsense kind of a person, and I liked that. So that's I think that's one of the keys to this man's success in public life.

SOAPES: One of your duties, as you said, at the White House was as speechwriter. Could you give us a little of the mechanics of the speechwriter in the White House?

MORROW: Well, let me tell you, I was a speechwriter at a funny time, and the main speechwriter at that time was Arthur Larson, a very personal individual who kept his thoughts, and everything else, to himself. Arthur Larson, after having me assigned to him as a speechwriter--because he read several of the speeches I had delivered representing the President around the country and a couple of places abroad, and he liked the tone and the rhythm, and the so on, and so on, and he just felt this would be very helpful. But Arthur Larson also liked to do everything himself and it was a real difficult problem trying to work with him, because you just didn't know what to do or how he was going to put the thing together. However,

we--for example, the State of the Union speech, which is one of the important speeches of the President. It takes months to do. All the department heads, all the cabinet members, contribute material on their areas of responsibility and the features that they think are important that ought to be mentioned in the State of the Union speech. And then out of all this gobbledy-gook you have to whittle this thing down into a few sentences that the President can insert in his speech and yet mention, in some degree and with some force, the elements that the various departments are interested in. You have to know the President's style. One of the things that happened during his early campaigns, for example, was his speechwriters were, whoever they were--I think Gabe Hauge was one of them, but there were several of them--they were using what we would call twenty-five dollar words that just didn't fit into the President's vocabulary, and very often he stumbled over them and spoiled the whole effect of the speech. When you're speaking to farmers, you can't talk to them like you're talking to the philosophical society at Harvard; it doesn't go. And it doesn't make any impression. And I think they were quick to discover that,

because he was losing audiences and just losing people in the early days of his campaign because his speechwriters hadn't grasped--really, they hadn't studied the man. You have to study the man. You have to use the language that he uses and put the speech in the terms that come easy to him, so that he won't make these fluffs. So it gets to be a real--to be a wordsmith for a man like this, it takes a little doing. It's tremendous training, and he was a kind of person that liked everything short and succinct and not a lot of ruffles and flourishes leading up to something. Just, let's just say it. So I don't think you'll find, you won't find too many scholarly speeches in the Eisenhower years. I think you'd find they're full of a lot of common sense and the kind of stuff that a Truman--the same kind of thing with Truman. I can't imagine Truman having a flowery speechwriter. Now John Kennedy, yes. This is a difference. But it took days and days and days, and then you'd have to spend time sitting with the President, from time to time, because this had to be, really had to be, his speech. You had to get his ideas from the few minutes you could get with him now and then, and keep notebooks on this and then try to put

it together. And no one can say that Eisenhower didn't participate; he did. I mean his speeches just weren't somebody just sitting down and writing his speeches, and asking, "What do you think of this?" It wasn't that. It had to be Eisenhower. It was an interesting assignment. But I didn't stay--I was a speechwriter, I guess, for about a year and then went on to other things because it was kind of difficult working with Mr. Larson, who was dedicated to it and wanted to do it, and he wanted to be the sergeant and the commanding officer and everything else, and that was just the way he worked, his personality, he was a scholar, no question about it. He'd disappear for days at a time and no one could find him sometimes, not even the switchboard operator. You can generally find anybody, anywhere, but he'd just hide somewhere till he got what he thought he wanted to show the President, and come out of a cubbyhole someplace. But it was interesting.

SOAPES: I think you also had responsibilities as the administrative officer in the White House. Could you describe for us what--?

MORROW: My title was administrative officer for special projects, and special projects were these groups in the White House that the president had to lean on and depend upon to help him do his job. For example, we had a public works section headed by one of his old classmates, a man from West Point, General--

SOAPES: Clay?

MORROW: No. No., what was the man's name? Well, I'll try to think of it Major General John Stewart Bragdon. He had--Nelson Rockefeller was there in charge of Latin American problems and affairs; Harold Stassen was there in charge of some of the peace programs that they were trying to test out; Clarence Randall was there in charge of foreign policy, which really was the council of foreign--what they'd call economic--the thing that Kissinger was head of for awhile. They didn't give it that fancy name then; we called this the Council on Foreign [Economic] Policy. Well, all these groups had internal administrative problems; they had budgets that had to be handled; they had a lot of things like this, so these headaches were thrown into my lap. And, for example, a typical White House project that came

up all of a sudden, that was thrown into my lap, was helping to organize the office to take care of the refugees from the Hungarian revolution. This was the kind of thing we had to do over a weekend, when nobody's in Washington on a weekend during that wonderful period, because we were not at war. You know, I can remember getting a call one afternoon, one Saturday afternoon, at four o'clock (I was the only fool in the White House at that time, and why I stayed) from Sherman Adams, saying the President had directed him to call me to tell me that he was sending Tracey Vorhees, his Secretary of the Army, over to make a three-day survey of the situation in Hungary. When Tracey got back, he wanted an office with staff established to take care of the Hungarian refugee situation. "Tell Fred Morrow to get on the ball and do it." You can imagine, four o'clock on a Saturday afternoon in Washington, DC, with the departments closed, with no one around, except the pigeons over there in the park, and I came about as near losing my mind that weekend as I ever hope to. But using the magic word "the White House"-- and I'll just give you one example. I tried to get myself together. I didn't know how many staff members were needed. I

didn't know what we're going to do about a budget. I didn't know what space. [Lost short phrase here] President get it going. So it dawned on me, the first thing I needed was some space. Well, there wasn't any space. So I sat over in Lafayette Park for awhile just talking to myself, "What are you doing; here it's ten minutes to five." So I walked down K Street and I saw some new buildings there: "Well, first I guess we need some space," so I went into a building to try to find out who was in charge--I wanted two or three floors of space. Well, of course, the man there got so excited about it; he thought I was a wino or something and he called the police and they came. I had an awful time trying to prove that this was legitimate, and finding cabinet members and routing them out of places, and telling them the President directed me to blah, blah, blah, and I need so many secretaries from you and I need so many clerks, and so on, and so on. We got painters to work over the weekend and we got carpenters in there to put up partitions. And I was just authorizing stuff in hundreds of thousands of dollars and didn't know whether I'd go to prison for it or not. But it was done. And this

was the kind of thing you did for Eisenhower because, as I say, if you asked, "How?," don't come in Monday, because that's why you're there; to figure out how. So when you say special projects, a lot of people--the word "special," I never liked it because that's always been the sort of euphemism for black, you know. They always have something "special," but we had to make sure that it was understood that this had nothing in the world to do with race or color. But these were special projects that involved the President, from time to time, that he had to do something about them right now. So this was my headache.

SOAPES: What I'd like to do is to go through some of the personalities that you dealt with in the White House and get your candid reaction to these people. We've already mentioned General Persons; how about Andrew Goodpaster?

MORROW: Andy Goodpaster was my friend. Andy Goodpaster is one of the finest human beings I have ever known. He was very definitely on my side, on my team. He was a favorite of the President. Andy was the kind of person that when I was really

in distress or trouble, I could call him and tell him and he would do something about it. It's very evident to me that this man was on his way to the stars. He had a mind like a steel trap. Very calm and cool and collected and you always thought that when Andy was around that things are going to be all right. I had the pleasure, the day he was made Brigadier General, of running out to some jewelry store and getting a couple of silver stars for his first stars; but it was very evident that Andy was headed for a great career. And he really held things together as secretary of the staff of the White House. He really kept things going and he operated in areas that were really high level. The President had every kind of confidence in him because--and I understand he had been a very brilliant soldier in World War II. So I can't say too much about Andy Goodpaster. Sherman Adams was also--I got in the White House because Sherman Adams insisted that the President had to hold to his promise of bringing me there, or else the whole administration would have no--well it just wouldn't, it would just be one of those things they would have to be apologizing for through the years, and the credibility of the administration would be

eliminated. I think Sherman Adams was one of the great public servants, certainly, of my time. He gave a hundred percent every day to his country and insisted that those working under him or with him do the same thing. Only Eisenhower could tell what Sherman Adams did in that administration. I saw Sherman Adams take over the campaign train when it was nothing but confusion and chaos and make it into a viable, effective administration. He took a lot of--he handled a lot of hot ones for the President. He never wavered one minute, and the mistake he made, if it was a mistake, I will always be sure was an honest one and an earnest one--I mean, honest one--because I think what got Sherman Adams in difficulty was his New England frugality. If anybody needed an overcoat, he certainly needed one, because the kind of clothes Adams wore were clothes--he wore them because the threads were still holding together, and he was just a New Englander, and this was what he was taught, I remember his wife telling my wife, Catherine--some of the staff, the Morrows among them, were invited to the reception at the White House when the Queen of England came here for her first visit. It was, I guess, the greatest la-di-dah affair

of the administration and, as you know, everything was white tie and tails and so on. And I remember Mrs. Adams saying to Catherine, "If Sherman Adams thinks he's going to wear that suit he wore in 1917 when he sang in the Glee Club at Dartmouth, he is mistaken! He's going to get a new suit or else we're not going!" The point I'm trying to make is that the suit, he felt, was good; it might have been a little short but, whatever, it was still a good suit. So he had a coat. We went--the Adams were very close to us, they were really decent, wonderful people--and the rug they had on their floor before the fireplace in their home was something that you probably wouldn't even use in the cellar. So he needed a rug. When he came to New York and he stayed--they loved music, they'd come up to the opera--and so, if he stayed in the suite of his friend at the Waldorf it was because it meant a saving. So I realize that any time you called an office in the government and you would say, "This is the White House," everybody would snap to attention and things would happen. So his friend, Goldfine, who was in some difficulty--and Adams called to find out the posture of the case; I'm sure that things started to happen. And this just wasn't done. Now

this man was much too shrewd to have willfully--I'm sure this was just one of those things you would do for a friend, because that's why Congressmen, for example, are in Washington, so they can serve their constituents. I do not believe, I will not believe until my last day on this earth, that Sherman Adams willfully did something that he knew to be wrong. I just think he didn't think about it; he was dealing with a friend, and the White House was never the same after that man left. The quality of the work, the spirit, it just wasn't there. Because that human dynamo just kept things going and he was on top of everything. So I hope, someday, some historian, or someone, will write the true story of what that man meant to the administration. And the tragedy was that Sherman Adams was hanged by his own party. Men, I suppose, that Adams, in trying to serve the President honestly, refused a lot of favors; and they determined to get him, because a lot of people felt that he was the millstone around the President's neck, so far as the party was concerned, because Adams just could not say yes to harebrained schemes. I've seen Senators come into his office to try to recommend some character for a job that certainly wasn't qualified, and Adams

would invite them out of his office and tell them never to come back again with some kind of situation like that. But that's the way he felt he was serving the President. I hope, someday, the record will be set straight that I think Adams was a great patriot.

SOAPES: Did you work frequently with Bill Hopkins?

MORROW: Bill was a wonderful man. I talked to Bill and I-- oh, no, I wrote Bill, I guess, about last year. Here's a man that knew everything, where everything was--this is a kind of public servant that--sort of like a deed; he runs with the land; he's been there, unsung, for years. I think it was President Johnson who finally honored him. I think Bill-- didn't he get the public service medal, or something, before he retired?

SOAPES: I think he might have, yes.

MORROW: Oh, how well deserved. This was a calm, collected character with no flair; nothing impressed him, he did his job, he was there. Presidents had come and they'd gone and

Bill Hopkins had still been there. But Bill Hopkins was a man who knew everything. Every niche and corner. He knew precedent for everything. He knew the protocol. This is one of the great public servants and I really like this man. Bill never interfered with me; he didn't make any overtures, but whenever I would test him, he stood up like a man. He wanted to see me make it, too, because he felt that this just had to be. So he was one of these rocks. I'm glad you mentioned his name because, somehow, I'd like to get Bill in something that I've said. He's been unsung too long.

SOAPES: How about John Eisenhower? Did you have much contact with him when he was there?

MORROW: I had some contact with John. John, of course, suffered from the malaise that so many sons of famous men suffer from; he just couldn't walk in his dad's shoes, his father's footsteps. I think John was a nice social animal, but John never impressed me as being, well, brilliant, for example, or whatever degrees of that you want to use. There is another item--when you mentioned John Eisenhower--there is another item,

after the White House, that apparently John was involved in concerning my life that did me a great disservice that has never been told outside of my family or--I don't know whether I mentioned this to Steve Benedict or not. I may have. But anyhow, when my wife and I left Washington, we walked out of the White House with the President the last day he was here. And I was out on my, literally, out on my ear, because I was the only member of the staff for whom the President could not find a job. The Christmas party, the last Christmas party he had, he called me into the old room where President Roosevelt used to have his fireside chats and he said to me, he said, "Son, I've done my damndest to try to help you find a job." And he said, "Unfortunately, industry in this country is not yet ready to accept Negro men like you on the level that you ought to be used. I've tried everything; friends, everything else, and they all say, 'Yes, he's qualified, but...'. He said, "I'm sorry." He had tears in his eyes. I left the White House without a job. Well, what do you do? Not only that, but everywhere we went, every city we went to in this country, my wife and I were ignored and rebuffed by the blacks. They said, "You spent eight years

in the White House with that man and you never did a darn thing to help us get out of the situation we're in." Well that was-- oh, God--that was an awful thing, because I had really--I'd given my all, above and beyond the call, but no one knew it because it didn't show in what they felt were tangible things that they could look to. So I remembered that I had kept these rough notes every night, no matter if it was two o'clock or three o'clock in the morning, I had a dicta--a machine that had been given to me--and I would dictate little things in there, what happened today; thinking that someday some grandniece or nephew or somebody in the family might want to know what Uncle Fred did. So I thought, well, now, why don't I get these raw notes out and see if I can put them into some kind of book? So I wrote this book Black Man in the White House, not to make any money, but to let people know what Fred Morrow tried to do while he was there. Well, I called Doubleday and they said, "Why, of course! Oh, my golly! Anything about Eisenhower, of course we'll take it! My goodness!" I went down and the man who's presently the--oh, [Douglas M.] Black, Black who was then--he was a good friend of President, and "Golly, oh, yes!" They were going to--

"We're just going to make this a best seller." I gave them the manuscript. Six months went by, seven months, eight months, nothing happened. So I kept calling; I couldn't get any response. "Well, it's still in committee, still in committee." Well, the fellow who is now the head man up there, what's his name? [Ken McCormick.] Very fine man. Oh, God, he was assistant chief editor at the time. Anyhow, he had a secretary who was a black girl--assistant secretary, that is--whom I knew. And she called me one day and she said, "Fred, I have just insisted that they tell you the truth about your book." And she said, "So tonight, Mr. Somebody," who was a vice-president, "has consented to meet you at the Sky Top Club in the Rockefeller Center for a cocktail to try to tell you, because nobody else will." She said, "He's a very decent, honorable man and," she said, "he just feels so badly about it that he will take responsibility of telling you exactly what happened." So I met him, and this is what he said, "Dear Mr. Morrow," he said, "we were going to take the book. We were going to publish it and we were going to put money behind it and it would have been a good seller." He said, "But one day, John Eisenhower came in with his father's

last draft of his memoirs, and we said, 'Oh, by the way, John, you'll be interested in knowing that we're just getting ready to publish Fred Morrow's book.' He said, 'Do what?' He said, 'Oh, yes, Fred Morrow wrote a book called Black Man in the White House.' He said, 'If you publish anything that Fred Morrow writes, my father will withdraw his memoirs.'" And he said they had hundreds of thousands of dollars in this, so what are they going to do? And yet nobody had-- All right, now; the sequel to that? So, of course, not only that, but I was blacklisted among all the big publishers in this country. Republican friends of the President, when they heard about this thing--John took the message back--and they said, "We'll fix him; he won't get a book out." Well, Coward-McCann, which was just very young in the business at that time, they took the book. They didn't have any money to put behind it, but they could only get out about fifteen, twenty thousand copies, or whatever, and sold out. They couldn't do it again because they didn't have the money. But the sequel to that, two years later President Eisenhower decided to have a reunion of his cabinet and his principal staff in Gettysburg to look at the posture of

things and what had happened and what the party needed to do to recapture the presidency, I was invited. And we all stayed at the hotel there in--well, it's a candy town--Hershey Hotel.

SOAPES: Hershey?

MORROW: Hershey. We had a big room there for the meeting the next day. Milton had a couple of drinks with me and we had a very pleasant evening together, but I didn't see the President till he arrived that morning. And he got up on the platform and they were talking about what was wrong with the party, why we lost the '60 election, so on and so on. So Clare Booth Luce said, "Mr. President, why don't we talk about Topic A? Why don't we stop fiddle-faddling and talk about Topic A?" And he said, "Well Clare, what's Topic A?" She said, "The black problem. Civil rights and the blacks." And he got kind of red and he said, "Well," he said, "Oh, well, if you want to go at that, all right," he said, "that's vital." He said, "Let's stop and have a coffee break; we'll come back, we'll talk about Topic A." Well, we had little desks, each one

had a little desk--about fifty of us there--so when he passed my desk on the way out to get coffee, he said, "Fred, how are you?" I said, "Fine sir." He said, "Fred, when we come back, I'm going to throw you to the dogs." He said, "Clare wants to talk about Topic A," he said, "you were always ranting about this thing. Now you're here; here's an opportunity; so, I'm going to throw you out there and you do whatever you want to do." I was just so shaken up, I didn't know what the dickens to do. I hadn't come prepared for anything like that. I didn't go get any coffee; I was trying to get myself together. When we got back with the President, this is how he introduced me. He said, "There is a man here today whom I felt was my friend, but he wrote a book. I don't know whether he's my friend now or not. But I'm going to let him get up here and tell you whatever he has on his mind and you ask him anything you want. Fred Morrow." I got up.

[Interruption]

I got up on the platform and I said, "Mr. President, I am certain you have not read my book, because if you had, you could

not have introduced me the way you did this morning. I'm devastated, because in my book I bent over backwards, sir, to let the world know what a great, honorable, decent man you were and how, together, we sweated blood to try to make this country a better place, not only for blacks but for everybody." And I said, "The only reason why I wrote that book was because I caught unshirted hell for being loyal to you, and that was the only way I could let the world know that I had tried to serve and serve decently and honorably." And I sat down. And I tell you that the emotion in that room was something else to see. After that, and I had some beautiful correspondence with the President during his last days from his farm, and in each letter it looked like he was trying to make amends. Of course he hadn't read the book. Neither had John. Neither had anybody else. They just--this was guilt! They knew darned good and well the things that hadn't been done, and John was there, and John knew it and John knew my frustrations and how I suffered and how I begged and petitioned. And he never asked me, because he knew he felt that if Fred Morrow writes a book, it's going to be a book that's going to make Dad look bad. And that's

what happened. So instead of the book--maybe it would have been a best seller, maybe it wouldn't; maybe it would have reached a million people, maybe it wouldn't. The only thing I know today is that this book is the only one of its kind in existence that anyone going to any decent college today--who is studying history, or a history major, or getting a doctorate in history--has to read the Morrow book to find out exactly what happened in that great period of the civil rights strife while we were in the White House. So now I get--I don't know how many letters I get a month asking, "Please, where can I get the book?" Well, people can get it in libraries but they want their own copy. It's out of print. So these are little things; whether they will help in any degree, I don't know, but in the twilight of my life they're very much on my mind. I lived this story, I have lived this story, and these are the kind of things you think about over and over and over again; what might have been. So it was sort of propitious that you called me. I'm right in the middle now of my autobiography and, of course, using the files, this comes back to me over and over and over again. And you see so much more clearly; a lot of

things now, I think I understand the President much better now than I did then. I can appreciate his position much better than I could then. A man who's President of all the people, and also the leader of the free world, has a lot of things to think about, and he can only give so much time to so many things. This is one of them, even though it involves human lives, and so on. I can understand the impetuosity of blacks trying to get out from under the rock, thinking that, "Gee, we've got one of ours there; all he has to do is nudge the President's elbow and he'll do things." They don't know how many hours you have to spend to get one minute to get to the President to nudge his elbow. Because when you're on the staff, you realize what this man's responsibilities are and you're just not going to be stupid enough to be running in his office every time with a problem. You have to work on a lot of people in a lot of areas to try to get something to move. These are the things you learn later on. And that's why I sit back and I think, sort of objectively, can almost predict what's going to happen in this administration--with so many hopes up, because that's the way we are. We always hope that this time around it's

going to be different. And I doubt that it will. We already are beginning to see that the things that you can say when you're running--oh, boy; oh, God, that if you could just get to somebody and say to them, "Don't say that; you're going to be sorry, you know you can't do that. And no matter how much you want to chase all the scoundrels out, you can't do it, because some of those people know where the booby traps are." But that was one of Nixon's mistakes, wanting a brand new everything; he didn't want anything that smacked of Eisenhower at all and yet, just think. If he had retained some of the people who, through experience, had learned--he had a lot of sharp, young fellows who were sharp in the way of books, and this kind of way. Or maybe in merchandise, or whatever. But it takes a peculiar kind of a character--it takes a Hopkins, for example, who has been there through everything and knows exactly what the score is on these things.

SOAPES: One of the names that comes to mind that Nixon did have on his staff for awhile, was also on the Eisenhower staff, was Bryce Harlow.

MORROW: Yes, Bryce. I'm sure it must have been a very difficult thing for Bryce to serve Nixon. I'm sure [counsel,] that Bryce knew that some of the luster was going to wear off, but he's a loyal--and he's a very shrewd, very able kind of a man. Bryce and I have corresponded and Bryce--the last letter I got from Bryce, just before--I mean during the Ford election--not the election, but during the period when they were running--and we shared notes and I was telling him how Ford was going to fall on his face, particularly on this minority thing, because the blacks were going to kill him. And I had been to the White House to talk to some of his aides and, there again, these youngsters sort of laughed at me--"Bringing in the old grey beard loon; we don't need that advice, we've got experts that--." I can just see them now, sitting there, and I just thought, oh, Lord. And so I got the memorandum out--that I tried to get to the President--the other day, because this goes into the autobiography. And it was almost like I had been forewarned from heaven, because everything, everything that's there, and it really is--it just comes out of experience, it just comes--you can see it, you know it's going to happen! But

I'm sure Bryce--and I think Bryce--we owe him a great debt of gratitude, I think he tried and he got out just before the thing caved in. I guess he could see and could smell what was happening. Also poor Bill Rogers, I guess, was another one who--the load was just too heavy, and I'm sure this was the kind of fellow who could also see the handwriting.

SOAPES: In your book, you mentioned many times when you had contact with Richard Nixon. Can you kind of capsulize for us your reaction to him as vice president?

MORROW: I travelled all over the world with this man. I was always proud to be an American. I was always proud when it came time for Richard Nixon to respond to a toast, or to make an observation in a foreign country, or anything like that, because the man was able; he was brilliant at times, no question about it. He was an excellent vice president. I think he got a little peeved on our trip to Africa when he found out that, for example, [Kwame] Nkrumah spent more time with me than he did with him, and a few things like that. As I remember, when we got back to the White House and we were

reporting on the trip and the President would ask him, he'd say, "Why don't you ask Fred Morrow; he seems to know more about--." And so I told the President, when the President asked me what was my single greatest impression of Africa, I said, "For the first time in my life, I was a member of the majority; it was a damned nice feeling." And, of course, he just cracked up--which is true--but Nixon was an able man. There was never any indication to me when he was vice president that he would end up like this. He was obviously a very ambitious person. He obviously had been a very--had come from very menial background, and you could just feel the man trying to get away from, and trying to get above, and certainly not have his family suffer the way he did--I remember on the trip to Africa in March 1957, when we took off one rainy, snowy morning, Pat was my roommate--my roommate! Good God! strike [Laughter]--Pat was my seatmate on the trip to Senegal, and she said to me, "Oh, you know, I'm so excited because today Dick went out and bought our first home." Then she said [whisper] "What he used for money I don't know, but we got a house." Well, [lost short phrase] shape of things to come. However, as I said, I--and when I left the

campaign, left Nixon's campaign train, in November of 1960 because I could not get through the importance of dealing with Mrs. King and the officials of Georgia, even then, it was his advisors who did me in rather than Nixon. When he moved to New York, I saw him a couple of times and, as a matter of fact, his office was right across the street from mine. I was a senior officer, one of the senior officers, at the Bank of America, an international bank on Wall Street, and we'd see each other occasionally, and he said he wanted me to be very close to him in his last election. I mean, when he ran the last time. The difficulty there was, also, that I couldn't see eye-to-eye with his man he put in charge of minority affairs, who was a lawyer in his firm. Who was in the White House, too-- just lost his wife, just--

SOAPES: Oh, Leonard Garment?

MORROW: Leonard Garment. Garment was a novice; I mean, was a novice in this thing, and the people he was trying to recruit to assist him, I felt, could do nothing but bring discredit on Mr. Nixon's efforts. So, we agreed to disagree

and I never had any relationship with him at all. My name came up a couple of times to be an ambassador during that administration, but obviously some of the people felt so keenly about my disagreement with Leonard that it was quashed, and I'm very fortunate that it was. But this is a great tragedy. There again, I feel that if a President can recruit a couple of tough no-men, men who can say no; it takes a lot of courage to tell the President of the United States unpleasant news. It takes a lot of courage to have him spin something he thinks maybe will be feasible, and after you mull it over and you can see some flaws in it, and have to go back and say, "Sir, I'm afraid that--" And I must say, and I say it very honestly, that I believe whatever the respect was that President Eisenhower had for me, he discovered early in our relationship that if I felt something in my heart and believed it to be morally right, that there was never any fear in expressing it. Not using myself as an example, but there were many men, several men, in the administration like that who had courage. Jim Hagerty, for example, a man of great courage who could always stand before the President and say, "Sir, I respectfully disagree with you."

I think that was missing in the Nixon administration. I think these young men [were]? so anxious to serve and to do the President's bidding that this desire always would override any sense of morality, or whatever they might have had. Well, I didn't come to preach to you.

SOAPES: That's all right; we're anxious to have all of these observations. One of the people that you've mentioned in your book that you had a sense of trust in is one we don't know very much about, and that's the President's personal secretary, Ann Whitman.

MORROW: This is a--and I say this very honestly, as far as I'm concerned--this is Morrow's viewpoint. Ann Whitman was a noble woman as far as I knew. Ann Whitman had a feeling for the underprivileged and the denied, the downtrodden and the damned. She had a feeling for this kind of thing. And one of the reasons for whatever success I had in the White House, Ann Whitman was the conduit for me to the President. She trusted my judgment. She felt, if Fred Morrow has something he thinks the President ought to see or to know, she got it to

him. And she was the kind that could issue little warnings about some of the dogs that might be after me because they didn't like my point of view. She's just a great person. I don't know whether everybody liked her. Don't forget she had a great responsibility and she also had great power. Personal secretary to the President of the United States is a very powerful person because she can make it tough for you to get in to see him. Or she can drop little things along the way that make it difficult for you when you get in there. So I guess there are a lot of people--maybe a lot of people don't think too kindly of Ann because, I guess, she was sort of a guard at the door. But you asked me this question; as far as I'm concerned in my book, I still talk to her and she still sees my wife and certainly she's still a great and loveable friend.

SOAPES: Did you have much dealing with Gerry Morgan?

MORROW: Yes, I did. Gerry Morgan was one of the first persons in the White House to do what I call, extend the right hand of fellowship to me. Now Gerry Morgan did a very significant thing; a very wise man. He was a very close friend of General Persons.

And Gerry liked me, and Gerry used to have, every once in a while, have Sunday morning breakfast, or something, and invite some of his friends. And he invited Catherine and invited me, too, to come to one of these affairs, sort of early in the administration, when he had the Persons there. And it was a wonderful beautiful day. And I think that this-- that General Persons was able to meet me in this kind of situation where, what can you do? And his friend had invited me, it was social. We all got along. Now, the thing you would have to understand is that General Persons was a gentlemen. This he was. He never insulted me. When Sherman Adams had left and the President made him his first assistant, General Persons called me on the telephone and asked me if I'd do him the courtesy of coming to his office, he wanted to talk to me. And he said--and I won't use the southern dialect; I do that sometimes, I won't do it--he said, "Fred, I have a tough job to do now; I need all the help I can get. I just want to ask you to do me a favor. If you have any more Little Rock problems, or whatever don't come to me with them. Go to anybody else," he said, "this damn civil rights, black business has broken up my family! And

my family can't understand how I can serve a Yankee President, anyhow, and then when I got your situation on top of it," he says, "it's a little more than I can abide! Now you're my friend and you just, just don't ever come to me." I said, "I won't, General." But, as I said, he was a gentleman. He respected me in my position, and after I got to the White House, I don't know that he ever did anything untoward to keep me from staying there, or whatever. Because I knew his feelings and he knew mine and on that basis we were able to make it.

SOAPES: Now an individual we mentioned earlier was Max Rabb, and I know he left the White House in that period and that you did have some disagreements with him, didn't you?

MORROW: Yes. Yes, we did. I can say honestly, however, that no matter what I think of Max Rabb--all our disagreements--that other than myself, Max Rabb was the only person in the White House that took seriously the minority problems of this country. And he really made an effort. How don't ask--I will never discuss motive, I don't know--he really made an effort to do something about it. And he was a tower of strength in that area for the

years he was there. I didn't always approve of the method. Max is a very suave, smooth, able man and he can really butter people up. A lot of times the follow-through is faulty; a lot of times the promises are more than can be produced and they just sort of hang there. And after Max left, of course, there were myriad problems that were not in view when he was there, and they had to be dealt with. There's an interesting feature about our relationship that I have never been able to clear up. And I don't want to at this stage of life. At this stage, I don't want to hurt, <sup>+</sup> buy my situation of getting to the White House had been placed in Max's hands by Sherman Adams during the early days of the administration, because he had so many things to do and he wanted Max to ride herd on Fred Morrow getting here. And for about a month, every time I'd call Max there was always one more thing that they'd have to do, one more thing, one more thing; and then, finally, he just faded out of the picture and I had no contact at all. One of the things he seemed adamant about always: "Your salary is too high; your salary is too high. Why don't you just voluntarily come down a thousand, or come down fifteen hundred?" "Well, why? The

job is pegged for x number of dollars." "Yes, but--." Now, whether it was because the salary was the same as his, or what, I will never know. But this is one of the little things that was just very interesting to me, and Max did not follow through! I mean, I would never have gotten to the White House if it hadn't been, I guess, for pressures from other people and other forces. Now don't forget--I think you can really appreciate the fact--but don't forget that Max, of course, was also, I think, the first Jew in prominence in the White House. He was secretary to the cabinet, which was a first, and also his specialty was minority problems. And you--if you can sort of put two and two together--to have another expert come into the White House on minority problems, I think might have been a little more than he wanted. Now, I was not going to go as that, but just being there it would be inevitable that things would be referred to me because after all, I lived the story. You read about it and you can see it, but I'm living it, so you refer things to me, and I have often felt that that had something to do with whatever. Now, I won't say that he opposed it, but I just have a feeling he was lukewarm and it just didn't--so after awhile it

just dropped and was forgotten. We serve on a couple of boards together today; we see each other, I'm always an old friend, and this kind of thing, but I just don't discuss--we just don't discuss this, and the march of time has eased the strain.

SOAPES: Unless you have something else that you would like to put into the record, I have one final question to pose.

MORROW: I don't think so.

SOAPES: Okay. And that is, from your insider's position at the White House, what do you think is the most important thing that historians should remember about the Eisenhower administration?

MORROW: Well, from my viewpoint, when I went to Washington, you know, segregation was still de rigueur. That's an interesting thing. An assistant to the President, there was no place for me to live in Washington; there was no place downtown that I could get a cup of coffee or a drink of water, unless I went all the way over to the Union Station. I remember when the White House tried to use its influence to get me into--what's the name of the place, the one with the great contributors to his

to eat; to be so thirsty on a July day that you're just going to fall in the street, but you can't go into a store and get a soda, you just have to keep going to get to the black area. Now Eisenhower called in the merchants and the hotel owners in Washington, told them he wasn't going to have that foolishness. He hoped they would quietly open their places of business to blacks, and if they didn't he'd have to do something about it. And they did. The other thing is that Eisenhower completed President's Truman's beginning of desegregating the armed forces. Another thing is that for the first time since the Lincoln administration, the Eisenhower administration passed in 1957 the first civil rights bill in a hundred years. Now those things are --I know there are things that perhaps, in perspective and in relation, relatively are more important but you asked me the question and these are the things that are meaningful to me because they affected my life. It's sort of a paradoxical thing that these things are particularly meaningful to blacks, and yet neither the administration nor the Republican National Committee ever considered these things vital or important as far as strengthening the party, or as far as making the country

a completely democratic entity, and yet these were things that were done in his administration.

SOAPES: Well, thank you very much.