

INTERVIEW WITH
William B. Ewald
on
December 16, 1977
for
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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William B. Ewald
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This interview is being conducted with Mr. William B. Ewald in his office in Armonk, New York on December 16, 1977. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Roosevelt Library. Present for the interview are Mr. Ewald and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: Why don't we start first with your background? Could you tell me where and when you were born and your formal education?

MR. EWALD: Well, let's see. I was born in Chicago and I grew up outside St. Louis, went to Washington University in St. Louis and majored in English there and a lot of side work in foreign languages and history. Have an A.B. from Washington University and then went on to Harvard and did work there in English literature and have an M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard in English. And I did a thesis on The Masks of Jonathan Swift at Harvard, 1951 and taught there after completing the Ph.D. degree. And the thesis was published. It wasn't a thesis by that time; it had become a book and was published in England at Oxford by Blackwell and in this country by the Harvard Press. And then by that time, while I was teaching at Harvard, I got into a second book on The Newsmen of Queen Anne, Queen Anne journalism, and that was published also at Oxford and in this country by Houghton Mifflin. [I] was working on it at Cambridge at the time I went to Washington.



SOAPES: What was it that drew you into the Washington circle?

EWALD: Oh, I think it was many things. I had known one person who was there on the staff, very friendly, had a lot of respect for him. It was really a combination of things. I got fascinated by the opportunity, possibility to go to Washington, certainly to the White House, and it didn't seem that much of a shift actually from the kind of thing that I'd been doing in Cambridge in the academic world. A great deal of research, a great deal of writing, and so it was, it was an interesting transition and I never regretted it.



SOAPES: Who was the person you knew on the White House staff?

EWALD: I'd known Gabe Hauge. I knew Gabe in graduate school at Harvard; he was there, he was in economics. I didn't know him terribly well but our paths had crossed, and I had a lot of respect for him and certainly as it turned out, I think he was one of the most highly respected people in the administration, although I never worked for him in Washington, his field being economics and mine being over really in the writing side.

Although we did have some association later on the in the 1960 campaign, late in the campaign when we were both doing a lot of writing, traveling around the country, with the nominee at that

time. But that was, of course after he had left, the White House in '58, come back into the Nixon campaign the way that I had at the very, very end of it when they had a great influx of Eisenhower people into that campaign when we had a hope of salvaging it. [Laughter] A kind of going across the finish line. None of us, as far as I know, had been in it from the start, at least not traveling.

SOAPES: Had you done any work in politics during your college years?



EWALD: I'd always had an interest in politics, Republican Party politics in Missouri. I grew up--my father was very much interested in the Republican Party out there and ran for governor subsequently a number of times, although by this time it was a heavily Democratic state and he did it, I guess, more as a public service, but I always had a strong interest in politics, and I'd really followed the various campaigns of,--, you know, back as far as I could remember in Missouri. I didn't do so much in college, actually, in this field, but certainly I always had a very strong, strong interest in political things. Of course, I think when I got to Cambridge everybody was interested in politics all the time and still are, no matter what their field

was, no matter what their competence was, which is another thing. People in the field of music or philosophy or fine arts criticism and so on, sometimes they can be the most opinionated, vociferous, avid in political discussions. So I've a long continuing interest.

SOAPES: Had you worked in statewide campaigns in Missouri, or primarily St. Louis city?

EWALD: No, not really. Really when I grew up there my father was very active in statewide campaigns and he worked for the senatorial campaigns.

SOAPES: Forrest Donnell and [James P.] Kem

EWALD: Forrest Donnell, yes, that's right, he campaigned for Forrest Donnell both for the governorship and for the Senate. And less for, by the time Kem was running, it seems to me, I had left--

SOAPES: That was '46.

EWALD: Well yes, fall of '46 I was at Cambridge. But up to that, you know, the '40 campaign, '42 congressional campaign, the '44 senate campaign, those are the ones I kind of remember and stick out. Forrest Donnell was a great personal friend of



father's. He did a lot of speaking for him, that's really what he did, kind of independently. He'd go to meetings and speak for Governor Donnell. He never was on his staff and never had that kind of a relationship with him, a staff relationship, but he was a spokesman, really. Volunteer, that is, at county meetings.

SOAPES: And Forrest Donnell had those two very close campaigns. The reason I'm asking, I did my doctoral dissertation on Missouri politics in the 1940s.

EWALD: Oh, for heaven's sakes. Well for goodness sakes.

SOAPES: So I was wondering if--

EWALD: I was curious because, you know, he's not terribly well known, I mean for our family, my father and so on, but I guess I heard about Forrest Donnell before he ever ran for the governorship and--

SOAPES: He was very active in civic work and in public work and University of Missouri alumni association.

EWALD: Oh, yes. Oh, sure. Well, the thing that I remember, he was a great close personal friend of Lawrence McDaniel whom



he ran against in 1940 and whom he later accused, or not personally but his organization, accused of trying to steal the election. It was a very bitter thing, but the first thing I ever heard about Forrest Donnell was a story about McDaniel. Forrest Donnell was very reserved and courtly and dignified and a teetotaler and very thoughtful of other people and gracious to women and men, you know, and all people. Lawrence McDaniel, I think in contrast, was very gregarious and had huge booming voice. They were coming home from a dinner or something, the two of them in the car together and some other people. The car stopped to let, he was governor then, Donnell out of the car. As he got out and I guess he was going to someone else's home at that point, Lawrence McDaniel got out, stuck his head out of the window and yelled in a big bellowing voice--it must have been about ten or eleven o'clock at night--he said, "Good night, Forrest." It was very embarrassing in a way to Mr. Donnell. That's the first story I ever heard and then the next thing I knew one of them was a Democrat and one was a Republican and running for the governorship. Then they had this big fight, and Donnell became governor and served and then, in '44 went to the Senate. Well, it's a long kind of digression but it's interesting that you did research in this field.



SOAPES: What was your portfolio when you went into the administration?

EWALD: Well, I went in really working on various writing projects. That was kind of the understanding with which I went in. I was interviewed by a number of people; by Bryce Harlow who then was the chief speechwriter for President Eisenhower, and also by Kevin McCann. And Kevin was then president of Defiance College in Ohio, but he kind of came and went. He took on special writing projects--big speeches. He did the Columbia bicentennial talk and major things like this, but he was not resided in the White House. On the other hand he was a big force in that whole area. So when I talked to Bryce and then he said, "Well, you ought to talk to Kevin McCann," and so I talked with him at length and between the two of them I came on board in the summer of '54 to work for Bryce.

And at this time the elections were coming to a head and so there was great deal of writing, all kinds, to do. Now when I talked with Kevin, the original idea was that I would work, really, mainly on messages. Shorter messages and that kind of thing, and various reports, in that area rather than on speeches. But going into the campaign, Bryce kind of changed the thing



around. He wanted some help on the speeches, and he was going to do some of the messages. In other words he was going to divide it up differently. So that was very intriguing and appealing and so that's really the way we worked through the campaign of '54. And if you look at the number of speeches made in that very short period starting in maybe the first of September, some in August, but getting really warmed up in September and then, of course, the great crush in October, it's an enormous volume of talks. And then there were off-the-cuff talks, and there were informal remarks, and meanwhile a great volume of messages to all and sundry--all kinds of outside organizations and political groups and so on.



And we worked around the clock, seven days a week, and it seemed to me, you look at the size of the White House staff since and now they get enormous numbers of people but at that time it was really Bryce Harlow and I was brand new, coming on board. I like to think I was some help in that crush, but basically he was carrying the load by himself, the speechwriting load, with kind of ad hoc help from around the White House. He'd get Jack Martin, Gerry Morgan, Bobby Cutler, Pete Carroll, Gabe Hauge, Arthur Burns. He'd get all kinds of ad hoc help from different people who weren't basically in the speech process but who were literate and each one

of whom had a particular subject area that he knew and who could be brought in on specific projects. But Harlow--he was the man. And then, of course, you get to an agricultural speech and you'd go to the Department of Agriculture and recruit their experts. We had Earl Butz coming over as a speechwriter, and Don Paarlberg coming over, and they would spend long hours there in the White House working on what had to be done. So that was very fascinating, those months of campaign speechwriting.

SOAPES: Could you tell how much of the speeches that Eisenhower gave that you had had some input to were really Eisenhower and how much were staff?

EWALD: Well, let me give you an example. I'll give you a good example of just one speech, then I'll try to answer your question generally. He gave a speech to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jewish community in the new world in 1654. And it was a Jewish dinner in New York and the work began on the speech and the question was, it was the same old thing-- the Arabs and the Jewish struggle in the Middle East was going on continually. It was always a problem. It wasn't a fighting war there and wasn't a terrible crisis, but it was always there in the background. So the question was, should you talk about that or



should you talk about something else? And the first piece of advice that everybody got was stay away from the Middle East. Don't talk about it, it's so tricky and so dangerous that we can't really say anything constructive and anything the President says, people will criticize him for not saying more, especially to this audience which is a partisan audience. And if he says anything nice about the Arabs then that hurts him, and it hurts the Republicans running in New York.



The speech was scheduled, I think, you may have to check the date, I think it was early October, so a number of attempts were made to talk about civil rights and about the things the Justice Department was doing to protect the rights of citizens and protect people against defamation, that kind of thing. Well that cranked through a few drafts.

Pretty soon, it was either the President or it was Bryce who said that this is just nonsense to go before a group like that and try to circumvent what's on everybody's mind. They're expecting to hear him talk about the state of Israel, its relations with its Arab neighbors. So it became a foreign policy speech.

The solicitor general of the United States at that time was Simon [E.] Sobeloff, who had been working on the early drafts on

civil rights, he stayed right on, being Jewish, a very prominent Jew and very brilliant man, he stayed right on and helped write the foreign policy speech.

And we got a draft from State Department. I believe it was done by Bob [Robert R.] Bowie over there, who was Foster Dulles's head of the policy planning staff and a very key idea man for Foster Dulles. He did the first draft at his home over a weekend or something like that. And that came in, it was a beautiful document very scholarly, and read very well and very logical. It wasn't a speech in the way Harlow liked speeches which had a lot of good sounding lines and that really were addressed to an audience.



So we had this document which was fine as a solid policy document. And then we split up into two groups. We had a Jewish contingent--Simon Sobeloff, Jack Martin, and Bob Kieve who worked for Bryce. I think those were the three, and they went away and they wrote the section on Israel. Then we got another group of people they were not Arabs but they were non-Jewish, Bobby Cutler was in that, Gerry Morgan, I was in that group, and I've forgotten, Hauge or Persons or maybe that was all. But at any rate, this was the group to write something about the Arab side of the question. And so we had one group in one room, one group in another, and then eventually we pooled the result.

I think I did a draft at that time weaving the two sides together, taking a cut at that to put the two together. Then it went to Harlow and this whole process began--let's say we had the Bowie draft in hand like three o'clock in the afternoon. These two groups went to work at like three-thirty and worked at hammering out their work until about nine at night when everybody got together and went to dinner. At midnight it went to Harlow. I guess maybe I worked on it, maybe from midnight till about two or three in the morning, and at that point Harlow came in because he'd been catnapping, you know, waiting his turn. Then he came in on it and he was very happy with it but the way he ordinarily did, just take everything and completely rework it. So by six or seven in the morning, we had a Harlow version of this whole thing. He was due to see the President at eight.



And at eight o'clock he went in to see the President with this draft, which now, as you can see had different staff--it had the Bowie part, it had the Jewish part, it had the Arab part, it had my synthesis, it had Harlow's reworking of my synthesism, so you can say at that point it's a staff effort. Went through President's door at eight a.m. and the President and Harlow continued and worked on it. The two of them worked on that draft

for the next three days, and everybody else got out of the act at that point and in that process, it became an Eisenhower draft.

So if you ask how much was left of the original effort, I would say that I'm certain a lot of ideas and thoughts and so on. Of course, this was subject area, that he worked on with the greatest concentration in the Presidency and by the time he got finished reworking all those sentences in there it really had his style. You wouldn't say he thought it up and put it together from the start, but you sure would not say that he took to the podium something somebody else wrote for him.

It was really a composite and I'm sure that it really has the Eisenhower stamp on it, although in any Eisenhower speech that he ever gave you could always see the traces of where it came from, I think, or in many of them. In other words you could see the hand of Harlow when he was doing these speeches, you could see the hand of McCann when he was doing them, you could see the hand of Arthur Larson, you know, when he did them later, Mac [Malcolm] Moos same thing. That is, if you were given the documents you could tell who had had a hand. And sometimes you'd find a strange one where you didn't know the author and this would turn out to be somebody you'd never heard of.



So you could detect the origins, but I don't think you would ever find a text that didn't have that Eisenhower reworking all through it. I don't know whether that's a good answer, but basically you'd have to say he did rely on his staff and he used their work. He expected them to come forward with something that had a stamp of their own thinking and way of saying things and individuality, things like Emmet Hughes, for example. He loved the way Emmet thought of phrases, you know, very brilliant man with words, and Eisenhower said so repeatedly and said so in his book and always thought that. And you could tell a Hughes phrase, you could tell Hughes speeches and the wording that has that particular kind of ring. Well, he didn't feel bad that it didn't sound like Eisenhower off the cuff. He could take it and he would use it. But everything went through the mill. It had to pass through his own review process, and rewording process, and rephrasing as he wanted. But when he had a phrase for things and somebody else said something that he thought really said it in a good way, he'd use it. And those things would pertain where you had strong input from the staff, strong people on the staff doing this type of work.

SOAPES: Are there particular clues that we can still find that



would tell us that this is Harlow, this is McCann, this is Hughes?

EWALD: Well, it's hard because you were always working backwards. You know the answer before you start, and I always thought I could tell them apart but I'm not sure if I were given, you know--. It's possible that you would mix them up. I think there were certain pet words, certain stylistic habits that each one had.

Bryce particularly he'd come off the Hill and up on the Hill everybody is combatant. And he's very combative, you know, he believes that speeches basically are political arguments. They ought to be very forceful and they ought to grab people by the lapels and make some kind of a point which is the way that the Senators and the Congressmen worked and lived day after day. That was the milieu that he came out of, and so I think you can find that kind of political energy, force running through the Harlow, certainly when he got into the campaign. He was, you know, hammer and tongs he'd go after a position.

Now Kevin was a college president and basically he came from a different milieu. I think he tended to be much more idealistic, much more philosophical, and tended to be more general in the kinds of comments that he wanted Eisenhower to make, and I think you can see that running through the McCann text.



Emmet Hughes was great on metaphor, are frequently things we think of, or unusual turns of phrase. I think of an unusual word or way for saying something. For example, you know thinking back, it's probably the best one he ever did/or the President on April 16th 1953, the foreign policy speech.

SOAPES: Right, before the American Society of Newspaper Editors on the death of Stalin.



EWALD: Newspaper editors. That's right. After the death of Stalin and basically that is like the first inaugural address or the second inaugural address. That's pretty pure Emmet Hughes, but you know you think of humanity hanging on a cross of iron. Well, you know it's a religious symbol, it's a very imaginative symbol and the kind of an extreme. I think Kevin would have shied away from that. And I can't see that coming from Harlow particularly, but with Emmet Hughes he thought that was a fitting thing and obviously the President agreed, liked it.

SOAPES: Wasn't C.D. Jackson involved in some of the foreign policy speechwriting?

Ewald: Well, C.D. Jackson, in the '52 campaign--and I think you'd get this better probably from Emmet Hughes--I mean he's described

as the head of the speechwriting crowd back in New York really, kind of presided over by a number of high-level people. Over C.D. Jackson you have Brownell, in part, and Stassen I think was there. At any rate when they did the "I Shall Go To Korea" text there in New York, according to Emmet Hughes' version of the events, he gave that to C.D. Jackson and to Stassen to carry to the train to run interference for him because he knew that these people had an instinct for the jugular. They will like everything in the speech except the idea about going to Korea. Take that one line out, great speech. You take that one line out, you got no speech, no speech. Emmet knew that and C.D., he was in that role as an emissary rather than as a speechwriter. He's a very articulate man, and I don't know whether you've seen his diaries but he--

SOAPES: Yes.

EWALD: You know, he's very articulate.

SOAPES: Very colorful phrases.

EWALD: Very colorful. And his letters, his letters to Eisenhower and his letters to other people on the staff expressing his views were very forthright. And he wrote, or he helped write a number of key speeches.



SOAPES: The Atoms for Peace ---.

EWALD: Well, the Atoms for Peace thing is C.D. Jackson, there's no question about that. The Atoms for Peace speech doesn't have that kind of literary richness I think that some of the earlier '53 speeches. You can see Emmet Hughes out of the picture by that time, and though I think some people have credited Emmet with the Atoms for Peace speech, they think he was there, but he left--when did he leave, September, I think.

SOAPES: I think so. Yes.

EWALD: He left the first of October or something like that, '53.

SOAPES: I think he did see some of the drafts of Atoms for Peace in the early stages, according to Jackson's log, but it was mainly Jackson and Lewis Strauss was involved in that.

EWALD: Well, that's right because the early drafts went back into July and--

SOAPES: Right when it was Operation Candor.



EWALD: --and August, that's right. And a lot happened. But by the time that they got down really to putting that speech together,

and you remember they didn't finish putting it together--

SOAPES: They were in the airplane. (laughter)

EWALD: --the airplane, flying over I guess Idlewild, wherever they were landing. It was, I think, C.D. Jackson. Of course, he chronicles all of this in very great detail. But as I recall it, I would say that the speeches I really associate with C.D. Jackson just in recollection are that one in '53, his role as an emissary in the "I Shall Go To Korea", the '53 Atoms for Peace, the 1957 remarks to the NATO conference after the President's stroke. He had some drafts and so, how much was really C.D. Jackson and,--. But it seems to me that he had a role in that NATO Conference. And then, of course, the 1958 speech to the U.N. on Lebanon. That was C.D. Jackson and Walt Rostow. And the two of them worked very hard on that. And Jackson's kind of the emissary in a sense and in a way those speeches read differently than most of the others. I don't associate any others--

[Interruption]

EWALD: He's always kibitzing and I don't mean that in the pejorative sense, but I mean what would happen is that they knew



he was up there in New York. They knew he was interested and eager and willing to help, and he had the President's confidence, and he had the confidence of a lot of people on the staff. And so when something would come along, say somebody like Pete Carroll, he'd send C.D. Jackson a draft see what he thought. He'd come back sputtering that this is awful, this is a disaster and has to be changed and so on, and they would get that kind of reading from him. There were, I'm sure, many projects where you had that kind of a hand in the making of the final speech. But to be the complete architect, I think those are the main ones at any rate.

SOAPES: Did you serve in any other capacities in the White House other than wordsmith, speechwriter?



EWALD: No, I really didn't. And what happened, see at the end of the '54 campaign, the winter of 1954-55, there was a change -- well, the Republicans lost the Congress. You had a Congress now under Democratic leadership, and so there was a change to be in the Congressional relations staff. It had to be beefed up. And at that point Bryce went back into Congressional relations. He had come out of there, of course, he'd served in that when he first came into the White House and he'd worked for Jerry Persons up until he took on the speechwriting assignment in '53. Now with

the change in the election, and the Congress, he went over there and by this time Kevin, of course, who had become more and more into speechwriting I guess through 1954, came on board full time as the resident speechwriter and that was December '54. And when this happened there was no campaign and so at that point I worked largely on messages. And working with Kevin, that was largely the way it was. Oh, he would work on messages--

SOAPES: You're talking about messages to the Congress?

EWALD: No these were largely messages to organizations the President could not address. If you can't make a speech, send us something to read.

SOAPES: A telegram to read.



EWALD: Telegram or a document or something. And so basically, accept one speech and you turn down ten other people, but you end up with one speech and ten messages to them. And so as I say Kevin did some of those, I'm certain I did the lion's share, but of course I was working for him, under his guidance. And that was largely the way it worked. It seems to me I did work on a few speeches in that period, early in that period, but that was largely while it was getting shaken down. And then, of course,

what happened was the speech schedule in the fall of '54 was so bad and so heavy that the President, you know, he was tired of making speeches going into '55. It was going to be a brave man who would get him on a podium, and he cut back after the '54 campaign. He paced himself; he had a lot of things to do--the Quemoy and Matsu crisis was on, and he had a Democratic Congress to deal with, there were a lot of headaches.

And so basically he cut back on the speaking schedule and the speeches that he had, Kevin did one by one working with him very closely. And then, of course, in September of '55 he had the heart attack and there were no speeches at all for a great long period thereafter, during the recuperation. And then, of course, eventually the '56 campaign come along. So the pace changed, the requirements changed, but I worked really on whatever writing had to be done, whatever writing was needed, I did. That was the mission I had.



SOAPES: And how long did you continue doing that?

EWALD: Well, I was there really through the campaign in '56 and I was working on a kind of a special arrangement there toward the end. But basically it was the same thing, just a heavy lot of writing especially with the campaign going on in full force.

What happened was that in May, '56, Fred Seaton had gone over to Interior. I'd known Fred at the White House, and I had a lot of respect for him. He was going to take over the Department of the Interior and, of course, that had been one of the departments that had had a lot of problems. And something was always going wrong, and you couldn't necessarily blame anybody but there was always something over there. I remember in the fall of '56 in the campaign there was one man out of the group that I was working with who spent all his time answering letters from conservationists complaining about the Department of the Interior--they're doing this, they're hurting the fish and they're hurting the birds, and they're giving away public lands and so on.



And so Fred had his work cut out for him, I think, before he went over there. But on the other hand, he obviously had the backing of the President, and he's a very persuasive and bright man and you could see things were going to change and they really did. He campaigned a lot in the fall in '56 and was making talks and so on and doing very well, but there late in '56 I got a call from Fred. He asked whether I'd come over and help him, really take on the key writing responsibility over there for him. And I did that. And I must say I really have always looked back on that with a lot of warmth of feeling and so on because I was over there

at Interior through much of the second term. I must say, I found it a lively, very fascinating place to be and, really, because of Fred Seaton. He had a lot of the staff changes there immediately upon coming in. We put together a very good group of people. It seemed to me when you look around the government at that time there were two places that really, and I'm biased, prejudiced and so on, kind of stood out for having really good staff people around the Secretary. And one of them was the Department of Labor which had Mitchell. I don't know whether you know the people who were working for him---

SOAPES: I don't know them well.

EWALD: You know, Jack [John J.] Gilhooley who's been in New York politics since then and Steve [Stephen] Horn, later on he was president of the University of California at Long Beach. Mitchell had Walter Wallace who's over there--two, three, four people who were very bright. You'd call them and boy you got an answer. They were out helping their boss; he was out making good talks, making good policy, being an effective Secretary, and it was just a lively place.

Well, that was one place and the Interior Department was another. And the Under Secretary was Elmer Bennett who I think



at that time was one of the youngest under secretaries in the history of the department, a very brilliant lawyer, very knowledgeable. Ted Stevens, who's now minority whip up on the Hill, number two Republican Senator in the Senate--we worked together all the time--he was an assistant to Fred and legislative counsel for people on the Hill. He was there four years; he later became Solicitor to the Department. George Abbott, who's Nevada state chairman, very engaging and lively young Republican figure in politics out in the West. He came in as an assistant to Seaton and then, of course, a group of assistant secretaries who really, really it, was just a very, very fun, interesting group. And we worked hard and had incredible hours, but it was a very fine association.



This went on, I guess, working with Fred until the spring of '59. At that time I was offered an Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship which permitted my wife and me to take a year of travel overseas to study the information and educational programs of the government in foreign countries. So we did that in '59 and '60, and I returned to Washington in the summer of 1960 and at that time Fred Seaton moved in almost as Nixon's number one staff aide, you know, his campaign manager. Of course, there were several people who were kind of campaign managers. Fred was with Nixon, traveled

with him, most closely of anybody, and so he was really from that point on kind of running the close in part of the Nixon campaign.

So in the course of that, this is how I got into it. I went in working with Fred as part of the Nixon campaign at a time when Fred was bringing in a lot of the Eisenhower stalwarts. He brought in Gabe Hauge, he brought him out of New York from Manufacturers Trust to help work on speeches. He got Bryce in there from the Eisenhower White House, and Roemer McPhee came in. There were several others. In fact when we started this '60 campaign, started out on the train, the train had a lot of places to sleep and places to sit and so on, took on a lot of people. But then after a couple of weeks, a week, whatever it was, of traveling around in the train we had to switch to the Convair or the 707 and the number of staff places diminished and a lot of people were left behind at that point. They picked the ones they wanted to go through to the end, and as I recall it Roemer and I kind of were the junior members of that--well, let's see, Roemer and I and Gabe and Bryce, and Fred plus some other people who weren't really working very much but couldn't be dumped. [Laughter] That's a kind way to put it, but that's kind of what happened. Well anyway, people run out of steam, but you can't--and they are important for certain things, but basically there toward the end that was kind



of the group that was carrying the load.

And all these speeches and excerpts from speeches and position papers were published right after the '60 campaign on the Kennedy side and on the Nixon side. I've been through those recently and it's incredible how many of those things we did in a period of just very few weeks. But it was not enough; it didn't salvage the election. But that was a very thrilling windup.

SOAPES: Was there a feeling among the staff on that '60 campaign that Nixon was, as he's been accused of, taking too much decision making on himself, wasn't letting the staff really do the staff work for him?



Ewald: Oh, yes. I think he really was isolated. He was isolated from this immediate group, on the plane. There was a compartment up front and that was the Nixon's, the vice president, his wife, Rose Wood, Don Hughes I think was a kind of a military aide was with him--but Hughes wasn't always up there. But that was really on the other side of that panel.

Then right behind there you have the first-class section and that was this group; that was Fred and Gabe and Bryce and, you know, about a half dozen of us sitting there. And Fred would go through that door, he was the emissary, to talk with Nixon, but

that was all. In other words, there wasn't a lot of interplay.

And then right behind this section, separated only by a flimsiest of partitions, was the press. The whole rest of the big 707 filled with seething, hostile, mad, increasingly--you know what I mean, that feeling that grew up there in that '60 campaign. They did not like Nixon; they did like Kennedy, most of them, and those who started out neutral I think as time went on became less and less friendly, although I must say I think when you read the reports on the campaign, even the people you knew to be the most hostile, I mean, say that they maintained a very high level of reporting. Even men like Bill Lawrence, Bob Donovan, any of these people, you read their reports and good reporting. But they were not friendly to the candidate, and they couldn't help it and he couldn't help it either. So sure, there was plenty of isolation and that was I'm sure, part of the trouble. And it was probably the key to the trouble.

It started off over-organized. You know, in the '60 campaign they were going to have ideas and braintrust contributions such as you've never seen before. Jim Shepley was kind of the mastermind to this in the summer of '60 and along August and September, that period. And George Grasmuck from the University of Michigan, political science, he came. He was organizing all the various



task forces to write about various issues. And late in the summer, I think Ted Stevens went to a meeting that had representatives from every department of the government who were going to take part in bringing this flow of ideas into the Nixon campaign. He said there were about sixty people in that room, he was one of them. Now he went over there from Interior and they had people from everywhere. They all came together to give their input. And they were going to tap the brains outside the government, and these people would be invited to come in. Well, the whole thing just became musclebound, the papers turned into waffle papers or they weren't produced at all, and the process just kind of bogged down. And actually there at the end you were kind of going along as best you could with what you had.



And basically at the very end, and I imagine it was even before the end, the candidate was pretty much isolated from all of us, including his immediate staff. Because what happens, he got there in the late days of the campaign--you might say that was the last month--giving what was in effect a single speech everywhere he went. He had it from memory or he'd do it from notes and he'd repeat and repeat and the only way you'd get any variety into this process was that if you had somebody write something or come up with some new idea maybe there was a way of

shoehorning it into the text or maybe there wasn't, and if there wasn't, the candidate would not use it.

And I remember, for example, he went down and spoke at the Alamo. Well, you could down at the Alamo say something about the Alamo and, especially if you're there at the time you're talking about Quemoy and Matsu--there were a lot of opportunities to talk about the brave men at the Alamo. I think the Alamo got about half a line in passing, it couldn't be ignored, he was there, he's in the Alamo itself speaking to a crowd, and so he gave the Alamo a half a line in passing. We put out maybe a page or two, I've forgotten even what the content of it was, having something to do with the Alamo as excerpts from the remarks of Richard Nixon.

Well, these excerpts were released at every Nixon speech. Everytime he spoke the press would be handed excerpts. Well, the press soon realized that the excerpts had nothing to do with the speech. The excerpts were concocted by the staff, the candidate might or might not have seen them. Usually he would see the excerpts, clear it and so on for release. He approved it, he wanted people to write about it and so on, and sometimes would set forth his policy on dams in the west, or coal research, or oil and agriculture, or you name it, inflation. And these were things he wanted, but he just didn't want you intruding on his



speech, his basic speech, which was attacking Kennedy, for a tendency to shoot from the hip and get the whole world and the United States into war. And that was the thing he was hammering on.

So there he was by himself with that speech, and the rest of us were doing this other kind of ancillary work and who knows, that was his style. And it was a close election. We were really cut off, and I think people, any one would tell you that, and people who were a lot closer to him, far closer to him than I was. And I was just there as an invited guest in a way, by my friends. There's no question but that he ran things out of his own mind. Always has and always did.

SOAPES: I believe you then had contact with Eisenhower in the post-presidential period in regard to his memoirs.



EWALD: Yes. And this period was really the great period in my personal association with him, working on the two books that he did, The White House Years. I had, after the change of administration, come to New York with IBM and very shortly thereafter had this call, an invitation to come down to Gettysburg, to talk about working on the books.

So I did about a four-year sabbatical, leave of absence from here, while I stayed there in Washington. We had not yet moved and stayed there in Washington and commuted out to Gettysburg, and some of the time lived out in Gettysburg to work on the book. And that was wonderful, a wonderful privilege and association and so on.



I would say going into that, I guess anyone would bring something to it, but I always felt that I had had that experience at the White House itself and then I'd had--. See Fred at Interior was the most varied department in the government. You talk about water policy, you talk about the land, and talk about oil and gas, you talk about mineral resources, you talk about future energy sources, or solar power, or saline water conversion, or a whole raft of things in his own department. A far broader spectrum of things than you'd get in most departments of government. But in addition he would talk on foreign policy or he'd talk on economic policy simply because the President wanted, the administration wanted, White House people wanted the cabinet officers out there helping to talk on various key, critical questions that were the big ones before the country. When Sputnik went up, everybody was out talking about Sputnik whether you're Postmaster General or whatever. And Fred took on more of these, I'd say big Presidential

types of subjects, than anybody else and he did more often and he was out traveling more and he had more invitations and so on. So I really had working with him, a lot of exposure to every major issue that was going on with the administration. A lot of times we would send things over to the White House and they would incorporate them.

And then finally the Eisenhower Fellowship which was on the foreign policy side or understanding the kind of world we live in was just a magnificent experience. I never learned more in my life than in that year. And then, of course, the final campaign of 1960. So, I'm saying all of that, every single piece of that experience, was helpful when you got to writing an account of the Eisenhower years, and I enjoyed it.

SOAPES: What was the routine of working on the memoirs?



EWALD: We tried different things. At the very beginning, with the initial chapters, the President really dictated. As a matter of fact I imagine he dictated the first three chapters anyway, four chapters, of the book before I came into the project. He was eager to get started. And it's a funny thing about people's memory. People's memory is strongest at the start and at the finish, and he had a very, very vivid recollection of the things

that led him to decide to run in 1951 and of the campaign of 1952, that period. And he really dictated, certainly the outlines, and I mean in large part that was just Eisenhower dictation at the start.

But once you got into the presidency itself and you had this day-to-day action--who did what, foreign policy problems, McCarthy problems coming along, various economic problems, difficulties they had with Senator Taft, and the death of Senator Taft, and Martin Durkin and all that--it becomes a mish-mash and nobody can look back over eight years and sort that kind of thing out day by day or minute by minute without some help. And at that point, that's really where the research burden began.

And we tried all kinds of things. There are some chapters, very few, where he would do what he did in the early chapter. You know, give his recollection of it and then you take the chapter and you take it apart or you would try to work into it additional information or details correcting misrecollections, and all that kind of thing. And then put it into a new draft that would incorporate the thrust that he'd started out with plus the new information. But we didn't do that too often.

The most frequent way of doing it was to work through the documents and get the information in some kind of an order and then present it to him. We tried presenting it to him as a set of



cards that would trigger memory and that didn't work terribly well. And we tried to do it in outline form and that didn't work terribly well. So basically you ended up with drafts of chapters that were largely research drafts, I mean factual background, and he would work from that. Use that as a starting point and then proceed.

Now sometimes in the course of this, you had questions that you wanted answered and you'd put the question into the text, and that didn't work too well because he responded best to the questions if you asked him face to face. If you were in a discussion, you were going through a chapter working over it page by page, you ask him and then he would recall and start to ramble and we had people taking it down. We didn't record sessions, it would have been interesting if we had, but you had things that he would recall that you would put into the text.

And so this would get you through that initial draft and then the initial draft and he'd reworked it. Then he would do what he always did with any piece of paper, he would rework it and rework it and rework it, and change it, and cross out, and write in, and add, and so on. And then you ended up with what you would call the end of the beginning, I guess. It was a draft that was ready to be seen by the editors from Doubleday.



And then they would come into the process and the President and John and I would sit there and we'd answer questions. We were on the President's side then. We were answering their questions because this was an Eisenhower draft being confronted by Doubleday questions, that kind of thing. And so we worked through that process, trying to deal with questions that they brought up and adding in things they thought ought to be added in, and modifying and so on. And so that's basically the way it worked.

SOAPES: Did he personally work through the documents himself?

EWALD: You mean the files?

SOAPES: Yes.

EWALD: No, I would say not. I would say that the culling was done before, as a prelude to that first draft that went to him. And it seemed to me most of the time what I'd do would be to give him a draft and you'd do the connectives and then--

[Interruption]

EWALD: You do the connectives but then you just dump a copy of the entire document in there, so he could see what it was. In other words you wouldn't do any editing job on the documents.



Then he would do editing on the documents that way. So you basically had a lot of raw documents going into these early drafts so it made the flow--it wasn't intended to be polished; it was intended to provide the pieces.

Now there were a number of occasions where a question would come up where there'd be something in the draft he wouldn't agree with or he wouldn't believe. Sometimes this would even happen during the editorial session. Then you would have to go get the files and bring them out, and we'd all read them and look through the memoranda in question, and decide where we went from there. But that was kind of late in the day. I would say that the time back there on that back porch in Gettysburg where we had all the files--there was a glassed-in porch--but that was something that was preliminary to the first draft and preceded his own coming in.

I don't know whether this brings up the question, is it predigested or, were things being hidden from him and the thing tilted and twisted and in a way. All I can say is that it wasn't done. You tried to weed out what was valueless, and there's a lot of stuff that's valueless in those files, and you try to seize on the things that really have some significance. If there's a question about how something is to be done, you obviously have to present the--, A said this and B said that and here's the problem.



You'd lay out the conflict so you're not going through a process of protecting him. I notice what was said about the White House staffing process, by the time it got to him all the differences would have been combed out, you had a kind of an agreed on thing. We never did that, to my knowledge.

Because what was interesting in those circumstances would have been the conflict or difference of opinion. There were episodes, for example, that he would recall in one way and a very vivid recollection of it that you knew were wrong, and you knew his recollection was wrong because it was not supported by the documents. And so you then had the unpleasant task of saying, "Well, here's what you say but here's what was written the afternoon of the event by the man who was there. Here's what you yourself wrote. And it just doesn't square with this recollection." And he would always face up to that very straightforwardly. I'm sure it's upsetting; it's upsetting to anybody to find out that your memory is playing tricks on you, and he'd just shake his head and he'd say, "That's what's it doing, my memory is playing tricks on me." Obviously he would go with the demonstrable, with the best evidence that we could present. Now if somebody else came in with a counter recollection, that was something else because his memory could be playing tricks, too.



It's his memory against your memory, and then you have to try to adjudicate the thing. But he was very honest about that kind of thing.

SOAPES: In these sometimes rambling sessions that you mentioned, would he ever make some very candid remarks and evaluations say about Joe McCarthy or other important people or events that he just wouldn't put down in the book?

EWALD: Oh, yes, I think so. I mean like anybody else he'd maybe would kind of sound off and he did this in the White House, too. He would sound off about people. And, for example, if he had been recorded and what he'd said had been written down, the next time around in the draft, the facts would go down, that would come out. He would change, he'd modify it. I mean he spoke very forthrightly, forcefully, and vividly, and very interestingly in talking, holding people and they'd listen.

And yet when it came to the written word and what was going to be in a book and it'd survive him and be there generations and so on, he was always very, very--cautious is not the word, but--he really felt that that kind of remark, offhand remark which might reflect a momentary surge of anger or surge of frustration or something, didn't really reflect what he thought ought to be



reflected over a long period of time about somebody. He'd get mad at anybody for a brief instant, but he was not a man to stay mad with people or nurture a long term grudge, so that if you thought he said something about somebody last year that this year's evaluation is the same. It probably wouldn't be. There were people he'd be mad with and a year later he'd be, great friends with.

Remember they had the same problems with Lyndon Johnson as I understand it. Doris Kearns says the same thing. They tried to get him to--. And Lyndon Johnson, of course, is far earthier and more uncouth than Ike. With Eisenhower, I never heard anything, a real obscenity. No dirty stories, no nothing like what you get out of the Nixon tapes or Johnson, he just didn't talk that way. Cuss, he'd blow up and he'd get mad, he'd use barracks language and that kind of thing, but no real vulgarity, never. He had no amount of anger that could bring that out of him. But Johnson had the same kind of feeling, I guess, about the majesty of the Presidency. I mean he was concerned with the honor of the office or what was wise to put down in a book.

SOAPES: Would it be proper to say that Eisenhower pulled his punches when he wrote?



EWALD: Well, I think you can read between the lines if you know how to read, how to interpret, you can understand the feeling. That is, if you know the man and if he says that I made my feelings known to him in no uncertain terms, a lot of that's kind of a weak sentence. But if you know the man, and you know the man being spoken to, and you know the circumstances of the meeting, the thought comes through all that. But he would not stand up and write down on paper exactly what he said to him. So I guess you would say to that extent he edited, and he qualified, and he made it dignified. But many times I think you could see his true feeling about many of the events coming through there.



But he always felt that, I guess you ought to take the long view, that is that there were a lot of little, temporary, annoying things that went on in the White House, things somebody would do, that they were stupid, or that bothered you and if you hit the ceiling over it--. And yet he didn't think that served much of a purpose just to write a thousand pages of episodes like that, end to end. He'd find that well, that's just kind of a normal way of the world, and it's a certainty, but let's to try to find out what are the really more significant things to talk about, think about, and so on. These are things we ought to be focusing on. That's kind of the way he looked at it, but to a lot of people,

I'm sure they said, "Why wasn't he more unbuttoned in his writing?" He just wasn't. He was reserved and had a strong sense of the obligations of the office; whatever office it was that he held, the Presidency or being a general in the army, or soldier, or an officer in the army. He had responsibility to the electorate.

SOAPES: You emphasize this feeling of reserve about the man. Were there other traits in working with him closely over those four years that stood out to you?



EWALD: Well, I don't know that reserve is exactly--self-discipline is certainly a key trait and, he said he never let his temper go unless he really intended to. I guess that was probably true because the doctors told him to watch his temper after the heart attack and I think he did. And so he was a man of great self-discipline.

I think the thing that I probably was most impressed, I asked Ann Whitman the same question and she said she thought his intelligence was--. You watch his eyes and watch him considering a question and a phrase, or something like that. His eyes were always moving around, and very sharp, and you knew things were going on in his mind. He was thinking about the problem and thinking about how it was going to come out. He was not just a

simple, impulsive person. His mind worked very rapidly.

And just as an editor working on the text, now I'm sure you've seen the manuscript. A very tiny handwriting. Never a misspelling. Never a mistake of punctuation. Never a mistake of grammar. Even though the thing was looping around and coming over the top of the page and around the other side and the bottom. He was very sharp with a pencil and with words. And he'd seize on a bad word, and I don't mean that the editing always made the thing more flamboyant, but he got it to do what he wanted it to do. And he could write with conciseness and concentration. And this was very impressive and he'd go on hour after hour in these sessions, and he was not as young as the rest of us and he'd be in there all the time.

I remember one time he came back from the publishers--you know the most important man is the man who finally does the printing, the binding or whatever it is--and to give him six months, tell the author the book's going to come out in October, you deliver it to us on the first of May, say, done, you can't touch it thereafter. From May to October it's worked over by the linotype people, they don't have I guess, many constraints on them. But at any rate, the author, the publishers sent him the final galleys out in Palm Desert at the end of the winter when he's ready to come back to Gettysburg.



And they say, here are the galleys, we need them back within a week, or three days, or something like that. Make any last minute changes you want on that.

Well, he got on the train because, they used to come back and forth by train, Mrs. Eisenhower will not fly. And he got on the train and he had a table in the train, he had these flapping galleys there, I'm sure the thing was jiggling all across the United States as they came to Gettysburg.



When he arrived he'd gone through these galleys and interlined things, changed things, made comments and so on. He was supposed to meet with us. I've forgotten, a Monday morning or whatever it was, and he came to me with his glasses on, and he had a wad of kleenex up under one eye. It looked like an eye patch. I asked him what in the world was wrong, and he said, well, reading was so hard on that train coming across the country, and the editing and writing and figuring out that he got that eye all agitated. He needed something up there to stop the flow of tears or whatever it was, fluid was coming out of it.

They'd put him through something that, a publishing house shouldn't put a President who's seventy-four years old, seventy-five, whatever he is, through. But he said, you know, okay if they want it within a week, I'll get it to them within a week.

No difference if it's on a train and it's going to jiggle, he just carried on. And so he really, as I say, did work with that concentration.

SOAPES: In the conversation you were having with him, did he ever express feelings of regrets or feelings of elation about any particular part of his Presidency?



EWALD: Well yes, I think on the whole I would say that his posture was very clear. I think as we were working on the book a couple of things had happened. First of all, of course, he had given over the reins within the party to a successor, and the successor was then the candidate and that has in itself certain problems. Secondly, he was being attacked, not directly because I don't think Kennedy mentioned Eisenhower's name in the 1960 campaign at all, or not very much. He did not attack Eisenhower personally, and he knew that was not wise, but he attacked Nixon, he attacked the policy, he attacked the party, he attacked the administration, he attacked the do-nothing conservatism of the opposition. He'd attack anything but not General Eisenhower because that would backfire on him. Even Hubert Humphrey's mother voted for Eisenhower; she didn't care what Hubert said and I'm sure Hubert tried to change her vote, he tried to change everybody's

vote. You know there were just certain things people would not stand for and he was enormously popular. But at any rate, his administration was being impugned, was under attack by this incoming group and they would turn everything around, get things going and fix everything up that he hadn't done. He was being made the goat and that really bothered him.

And then along about '62 the professional historians, Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., went around with the poll, and they placed him kind of below the salt, down next to Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. He was a little ahead of Calvin Coolidge and about with Herbert Hoover. And here was Harry Truman up there, and for those who bow and feared their opinion, Jack Kennedy was already up there with George Washington and with Franklin Roosevelt, and so that hurt.

And he felt throughout that he had done a far more creditable job as President than people were giving him credit for. And he felt that the attacks were undeserving and without merit, and maybe not completely without merit. I mean if you're honest with yourself you have to allow a certain--you know they can't be wrong all the time. But on the other hand he felt that he was being underrated and that he really had tried to do a good job. There were many things with which he hadn't coped, but nobody could have



coped, and he generally coped as well, or better than most people. So that was kind of the way, going in and throughout, he approached this account. Now he would admit that there were individual appointments that he had made along the way that he'd say, "Well, okay, maybe that one wasn't too good." And not very many major ones, though.

SOAPES: Did he ever mention that Earl Warren appointment that he's supposed to have, supposedly regretted?

EWALD: Yes, I've heard him mention the Earl Warren appointment.

SOAPES: In negative terms?



EWALD: Yes. But again you really have to ask yourself whether, a man's mind changes, and if you read the book--which is really what he wanted left as his legacy and his opinion--you know, he came down on Earl Warren's side in the 1954 desegregation decision; thought that was wise on the whole. But he wouldn't necessarily feel that way every day of his life. He'd sound off to different people. And he didn't do it very much either. I think he had some good things to say about Warren. I think there were many things about Warren that he liked and admired. I was just trying to get away from the view that it's a simple thing that, deep down,

he hated Earl Warren and all his works. I've always felt that, if the chips were down, he would be far more inclined to praise Warren than to blame him, even though he might on a given Thursday, have said, well, it wasn't too smart an appointment I wish I had done things differently.

But I must say when it came to major appointments, Martin [P.] Durkin [Secretary of Labor] was an obvious mistake and everybody knew it. I think he knew what he did was a wrong thing to have tried probably, he and the staff reached that far into labor management to bring somebody into the cabinet.

But I think he always felt great regret, that he really hadn't put together some kind of a settlement of international differences, achieved some kind of a peace in the world, but he said that. He said that, I'm sure it was in his farewell remarks along with the famous line about the military industrial complex. And I'm sure he said it other places in public that that was a great disappointment to him. And I don't know that he blamed himself for it. As I say, he just hadn't been able to do it. And I don't know that he felt that, anybody could have done it. But he hadn't done it and he recognized that.



SOAPES: Did he ever comment on his White House staff?

EWALD: You mean about the functions?

SOAPES: Either the functions or the personalities or the quality of work he got from staff?

EWALD: Yes, I think on the whole he was really pleased. He was pleased with his staff, he liked them, he trusted them, he felt they served him really well. And the acid test as we were working on the book, everybody who's on that staff who worked with him, he'll be calling constantly, we'd send them chapters for their comments. We didn't send them the whole book, we didn't want to dump the whole thing on--and there's no point in dumping the whole thing on everybody. He did dump the whole thing on certain people who had kind of a complete picture, Milton Eisenhower was one of them, Bryce read many chapters, just to name two people. But on the whole, he was fond of them personally, and he was on the phone to them and writing to them, and they'd come see him in Gettysburg, and so on. And I'm sure if he felt that he had a dud, he would have fired him. If he wouldn't have fired him, he would have moved him or done something with him, I think at the very beginning of the administration there were certain people in the administration who were dropped overboard. Clarence Manion was one of them, he headed intergovernmental relations and they had some hassle with him, he went out of sight.



SOAPES: Right, Bricker Amendment.

EWALD: Yes, but I've forgotten what specifically it was with Clarence Manion. Manion's still alive isn't he?

SOAPES: Yes. Yes, we've interviewed him.



EWALD: Oh, really. Well, I'm sure he's got plenty of things to say, but on the other hand it was a ripple. And Sherman Adams, he recognized the things everybody was saying about Governor Adams, you know, to be short and man of few words and brisk and curt and so on, all that kind of thing. And he said, you know, look, that he did not ever have the close personal kind of relationship with Adams that he had with Al Gruenther or Beedle Smith, in comparable positions. And, of course, Gruenther is really an incredible man, choice. He was the one man, he'd kid and joke and, you know, he's a wonderful intellectual kind of companion, a real relaxing sort and yet a man whose brilliance and grasp of what was happening in the world Eisenhower really respected. He didn't have a higher opinion of anybody than he had of Al Gruenther. And so you had that kind of comment about Adams where he thought the world of Sherman Adams as a chief of staff. Of course, again he had a high opinion of Jerry Persons, had had for many years, very different kind of man. A man with whom he worked very easily.

No, I really was trying to think, there were people who would irritate him with mannerisms. Charlie Wilson, for example, tended to talk at great length and everybody knew it. And he would talk to the President at great length and sometimes Eisenhower, he was an impatient man and he wanted people to get to the point. Well, that could annoy him from time to time, but he kept Wilson as Secretary of Defense, and I've heard him say any number of really complimentary things about him and he used to tolerate this other thing.

SOAPES: Well, we've covered an awful lot of ground. I was wondering if there was anything that we haven't covered that you would like to put into the record before we close.

EWALD: I don't know. I've been working all through this period. I can't think of anything off hand that I particularly want to add, but, anything else you want to ask, it's okay with me.

SOAPES: Okay.

