

A Newsman in the Nixon White House:
Herbert Klein and the Creation of the Office of
Communications 1969 to 1973

by

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ABSTRACT

Herbert G. Klein was one of the important political figures of the mid to late 20th Century. Born in 1918, Klein's career spanned 63 years. He retired as Editor-in-Chief of Copley Press, a company he worked for from the start of his career as a young journalist covering an up-and-coming Richard Nixon and was active in public affairs up to his death in 2009. Klein is best known as longtime advisor to Richard Nixon, and was with Nixon at peak moments in his career, including the Checkers Speech, as well as Nixon's 1960 and 1962 campaigns. Upon Nixon's election as President, Klein became the White House Director of Communications, a new position Klein was tasked with designing. For four years, Klein is known as one of Nixon's chief advisors. But then, for reasons historians never have fully explored, he disappears from Nixon's political landscape as well as from scholarly and public prominence.

The purpose of this dissertation is to establish Herbert G. Klein as a formative figure in the Richard Nixon White House, whose contributions to Nixon's television strategies, their subsequent impact on the President's actions and attitudes and eventual fall, have been largely overshadowed in the scholarly literature. The work draws from previously unexplored materials on Klein in the Nixon Library. The account is notable for the first examination of Klein's only known oral history, lessening a gap in the existing literature on Nixon's aides and his relationship with the media.

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CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE UNDERSTATEMENT OF HERBERT KLEIN

Introduction

Herbert G. Klein was arguably one of the important political figures of the mid to late 20th Century. Born in 1918, Klein's career spanned 63 years. He retired as Editor-in-Chief of Copley Press, a company that employed him from the start of his career as a young journalist covering an up-and-coming Richard Nixon and again decades later as an executive until his death in 2009. Klein is best known as a longtime confidant to Richard Nixon. Upon Nixon's election as President, Klein was tapped to serve as the White House Director of Communications, a new position Klein was tasked with designing. For four years, Klein was one of Nixon's chief advisors, but for reasons historians have never fully explored, he disappeared from Nixon's political landscape as well as from scholarly and public prominence.

The purpose of this dissertation is to establish Herbert G. Klein as a formative figure in the Richard Nixon White House whose contributions to Nixon's television strategies, their subsequent impact on the President's actions, attitudes and eventual fall. His work has been largely ignored in scholarly literature. This dissertation draws from the Nixon Library and fills a significant gap in the existing literature on Nixon's aides and his relationship with the media.

The role of communicator within the White House has held a degree of significance throughout history. Those who serve as a conduit by which the public can understand the President, his positions, and his Administration face a compelling

dichotomy. It is one in which they must serve the public ensuring the credibility of the holder of the nation's highest office while also managing the Office in maintaining and engraining its image in historical memory. Already a formidable balance to maintain, instability ensues when truth and image find themselves in such immediate conflict as they did during the presidency of Richard Nixon. While existing literature on Nixon and the press establishes the significance of the credibility gap as well as the impact his attitude had on the truth, little is discussed of the individual responsible for balancing the two.

This study argues that although Klein provided Nixon advice as to how to handle the press, Klein's openness with the press and inclination to suggest the point of view of the press resulted in his dismissal from Nixon's inner circle. The argument is supported by research that includes an overview of Klein's early life and career, his time with Nixon during Nixon's campaigns, the creation of the Office of Communications, and ultimately his frustration with Nixon's attitudes toward the press that culminated in his alienation from the team and his resignation. The dissertation concludes with lessons learned.

Klein, Director of the Office of Communications and a career newsman, knew and worked with Nixon from the late 1940s onward. Klein played a significant role in the development of Nixon's relationship with and response to the press. Additionally, those at the forefront of Nixon's historiography have theorized, but not fully investigated, that Klein provided the President with the best counsel but his friendly demeanor with the press resulted in his outsider status with the inner circle.

Considering the existence of a Klein within the Nixon Administration and the formative television press strategy that he pioneered, there exists a clear gap in the literature where comprehensive and substantial analysis of just how Klein influenced the rise and fall of the Nixon Administration. Despite the fact that ample literature exists about Nixon, his era and his legacy, and that most of that literature positions Klein as a central figure with ties to Nixon that go further back than any of his more studied aides, there remains no comprehensive work on Klein and his contributions to the press legacy of the Nixon White House. The existing literature provides a wealth of information to help frame this dissertation while establishing a need for further investigation into the less well-known, yet important figure of Klein. This historical study seeks to fill this gap.

Literature Review

An initial search of the existing literature revealed no study on Klein nor his role within the White House. A search of all available databases (including the complete Communications & Mass Media database, database of American Doctoral Dissertations, Historical Abstracts, and the Military & Government Collection) for “Herbert G. Klein,” with no time constraints, resulted in only 62 entries, most of which are periodicals, not scholarly journal articles. Of the seven journal articles that did appear, two were written in 1969 and 1970 and three were book reviews of Klein’s own work. Searches for “Herbert Klein” or “Herb Klein” generated just under 900, but the vast majority of those results were not in relation to Herbert G. Klein. However, a search of the same databases for “Richard Nixon” results in 33,491 results. When “Richard Nixon” and “Herbert Klein” are used as keywords, 36 results appear but consist mostly of periodicals or book

reviews. A search of "Office of Communications" and "Herbert Klein," two entries result, one of which is a journal article with a single sentence regarding Herbert Klein's role as the first Director of Communications. When a search is conducted for "White House" and "Herbert Klein" 22 results appear, over half of which are Klein's obituaries. When "Director of Communications" and "Herbert Klein" is searched 22 results appear, again most of which are Klein's obituaries. No journal articles appear. A search of surrounding terms related to Nixon's aides, image, and press management was undertaken. The articles referenced in the literature review were a result of searching surrounding subjects in an attempt to find references to Klein in footnotes and indexes as major studies had not been conducted on him or his contributions to the Office of Communications. The journal articles that provided some substantive, though limited discussion of Klein, were included in the body of the literature.

Study of the aides within the Administration is limited due to the availability of primary sources. Nixon himself has been dissected across numerous disciplines. Of the literature that deals with Nixon's image, there is little mention of Nixon's team as image creators.¹ Instead, they operate largely through a psychohistorical lens, juxtaposing Nixon's upbringing and temperament with his presidential personality. While most of these works fail to focus specifically on Klein, there are a few that provide valuable understanding for the purposes of this research project.

1 Druckman, James N. "The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate Revisited." *The Journal of Politics* 65, no. 2 (2003): 559-71.; Brown, Steven R. 1978. "Richard Nixon and the Public Conscience: The Struggle for Authenticity." *The Journal of Psychohistory* 6 (1): 93.; Bill O. Kjeldahl, Carl W. Carmichael & Robert J. Mertz (1971) Factors in a presidential candidate's image, *Speech Monographs*, 38:2, 129-131.; Sheldon, Catherine A., and Lynne M. Sallot. "Image Repair in Politics: Testing Effects of Communication Strategy and Performance History in a Faux Pas." *Journal of Public Relations Research* 21, no. 1 (2008): 25-50.

Link and Glad's 1996 work "President Nixon's Inner Circle of Advisers," examines the advisors of Nixon, a significant work in light of the limited research available that focuses on the aides themselves. However, this work largely deals with the organizational structure and the relationship between the President and his aides, not the aides and their relationship with each other.² It does note the absence of focus on advisors in most interpretations of administrations, particularly in the case of aides such as Klein.

Kumar, evaluates the consistent turbulence of the Office of Communications noting that:

While the Office of Communications is vital to the communications of an effective presidency no matter who serves as chief executive, the position of communications director has proved to be a volatile one. Since its creation in 1969, twenty-two people have headed it. That is less than a year and a half per director. There have been approximately the same number of press secretaries, but that position has existed since 1929, forty years more than the Office of Communications. The casualty rate of communications directors reflects the difficult environment he or she operates in as well as the multiple and sometimes conflicting demands placed on the person.³

Kumar contends that, "In the period from President Nixon forward, communications was featured as an important factor in how the day began." However,

2 Glad, Betty, and Michael W. Link. "President Nixon's Inner Circle of Advisers." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (1996): 13-40.

3 Kumar, Martha Joynt. "The Office of Communications." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2001): 609-634.

the work neglects providing significant information on Nixon's own aide, Klein and the origins of the Office of Communications. Instead, it focuses on administrations following Nixon's.⁴ Where Klein is mentioned, Kumar labels Klein's directorial style primarily as that of a "press advocate" over a "strategist," "planner" or "events manager" though implied that all those roles are part of the contemporary position of Director of the Office of Communications.⁵ Based on the review of the literature, this is not uncommon in existing studies dealing with the Office of Communications. This further suggests Klein's unique status as a friend of the press in an Administration known for its combative relationship with it.

Kiousis and Stromback's study examines the links between presidential communication and public opinion. Through the analysis of PR activities, speeches and press conferences between 1961 and 1997, the researchers determined a positive link between presidential news conferences and foreign policy job approval and between presidential speeches and general job approval ratings. While this sheds some light on the areas in which Klein was involved, particularly as they pertain to communications strategy and news conferences, the longitudinal study does not dive deeply into the Nixon Administration. In fact, despite the study's focus on the link between communication and image, there is no mention of Herbert Klein at all.⁶

4 Ibid., 617.

5 Ibid., 622.

6 Kiousis, Spiro, and Jesper Strömbäck. "The White House and Public Relations: Examining the Linkages Between Presidential Communications and Public Opinion." *Public Relations Review* 36, no. 1 (2010): 7-14.

Klein is mentioned in Walcott and Hult's study. They suggest that among Nixon's major innovations were "to supplement the press operation with a variety of carefully organized, aggressively managed public relations structures..."⁷ Klein is credited with the task that the researchers consider a significant contribution of the Nixon Administration in shaping White House interaction with the press but an in-depth analysis of Klein is absent.

"The Caretakers of the Presidential Image" positions Klein and Ziegler within Nixon's White House. Ziegler was recognized as dealing only with the White House press corps while Klein dealt with all other media. Swartz suggests that the technological evolution of "potential and real Presidential power have caused a steady progression toward specialization in Presidential press relations, calling for image caretakers ever more specialized in the arts of mass persuasion, i.e., public relations, opinion formation, advertising, electronic media."⁸ "On the Margin: Between Journalist and Publicist," provides further insight into the precarious dynamic of image-building and truth-telling, though it does not handle Klein in depth.⁹

This is echoed in Towle's study "On Behalf of the President: Four Factors Affecting the Success of the Presidential Press Secretary" that positioned Klein as a central figure over Nixon's press secretary: "One factor which made Ziegler's position in

7 Walcott, Charles E., and Karen M. Hult. "George Akerson's Legacy: Continuity and Change in White House Press Operations." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2008): 599.

8 Burkholder, Donald R. 1974. The Caretakers of the Presidential Image. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 4/5: 35-43

9 Swartz, James E. 1983. On the Margin: Between Journalist and Publicist. *Public Relations Review* 9 (3): 11-23

the Nixon White House more uncertain was the creation of the post of Director of Communications held by Herb Klein...Ziegler was technically a subordinate of Klein at the beginning of the Nixon Administration.”¹⁰ Ron Ziegler himself described Klein “...as much a vital part of the presidential and communications history as Jim Hagerty is.”¹¹ In addition, a careful assessment of Haldeman’s diary entries, later compiled and annotated as a popularized book, suggests the routine involvement of Klein in decision-making early in Nixon’s first term.¹²

In a similar vein, Hassencahl posits that there are rare examples within the Nixon Administration where Nixon was able to navigate the press and his image but doesn’t investigate the individuals who motivated or contributed to those moments. Upon further investigation of the instances that were noted as positive, Klein was a significant figure though not mentioned in the research. The researcher wrote, “Rarely was there ever a middle-of-the-road between Nixon and the press; either Nixon seemed to be working the press to his advantage, or the press seemed to be working against Nixon. Incidents falling into the former category include the Checkers Speech that secured his position on the Eisenhower ticket; coverage of his confrontation of Nikita Khrushchev in the famous

10 Towle, Michael J. 1997. On Behalf of the President: Four Factors Affecting the Success of the Presidential Press Secretary. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27 (2): 297-319

11 Maltese, John. Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News. University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

12 H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

1959 ‘Kitchen Debate,’ which received a positive public response; or the ‘New Nixon,’ better able to control the press, that emerged during the 1968 presidential campaign.”¹³

Klein’s contention that the Nixon Administration was more preoccupied with public relations than it was developing relationships with the press was handled in Cathy Franklin Patrick’s dissertation, “Public Relations in the White House: News Management by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon,” which delves specifically into the management of the news through various administrations, providing a unique look at how the Nixon Administration was similar and different to those that preceded it.¹⁴ This examination is significant in that it provides a historical touchstone and footing for investigating an important shift in White House procedure, a shift toward a preoccupation with public relations. Again, even though this is a well-known contention of Klein’s, Klein is largely absent from the discussion. This dissertation examines the role of Klein within the Administration. However, implicit in that role are Klein’s actions and their effect on the media themselves. Franklin’s dissertation concerning the presidential influence on the media also mentions Klein. Although Klein is mentioned only briefly in the more than 300-page dissertation, his mentions are directly connected to news management strategy, a primary area of investigation for this research.¹⁵ Small’s journal

13 Hassencahl, Fran. 1985. Presidents and the Press: The Nixon Legacy. *Government Information Quarterly* 2 (3) (1985): 328-9

14 Franklin, Cathy Rogers. "Public Relations in the White House: News Management by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon." PhD diss., Ohio University, 1993.

15 Cheslik, F.E. (1977). *Presidential Influence On The Media: A Descriptive Study Of The Administrations Of Lyndon B. Johnson And Richard M. Nixon*

article, "Evaluating Nixon's Presidency – Without Watergate," provides relevant context, outside of the scandal narrative, though no in-depth discussion of media strategy, Klein or the struggle between truth and image.¹⁶

Outside of traditional mass communications and journalism journals, Herbert Klein is discussed in the context of communications directions in modern corporate management.¹⁷ The study notes that Klein created the position of Director of Communications and the corresponding office and that the position spilled over into the private sector from there. However, there is no further mention of Klein.

The only existing publication focused on Klein is his own book, published in 1980.¹⁸ Klein recounts his time with Nixon from his early days as a reporter and a young Nixon loyalist. As he describes his role in the Nixon White House, the creation of the Office of Communication and his relationship with Ron Ziegler, Klein reports that his use of television in the White House was pioneering and that he was initially successful in creating open communication with the media early in Nixon's first term. However, he also clearly states his regret for ever suggesting that the Nixon White House would be open and transparent.¹⁹ Even prior to his appointment as Director of Communications, he questioned Haldeman's hesitation to allow him direct access to Nixon, casting it as was

16 Small, Melvin. "Evaluating Nixon's Presidency - Without Watergate." *New England Journal of History* 1999-2000 56(2-3): 1-13.

17 Carl, Robert E. 1970. "Communications Direction in Modern Corporate Management." *Journal Of Business Communication* 8, no. 1: 5-12. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*.

18 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980.

19 *Ibid.*, 42.

one of many “bad omens.”²⁰ Of primary importance was Klein’s suggestion that had the President and those around him not rebuked the press representation of a “new Nixon” following Nixon’s first presidential press conference, they may have prevented Watergate. Klein contended that instead, the Nixon White House refused to accept the concept of openness, deciding instead on an “unproductive bully attitude” that resulted from an obsession with the media, not a lack of attention to it.²¹ Additionally, of his relationship with Ziegler, and between the press office and the Office of Communications, Klein wrote that had the team accepted the need for both offices fully, much of the tension might have been alleviated. Instead, following his resignation, his office was moved under the jurisdiction of Press Secretary Ziegler.²² Klein acknowledges the Nixon Administration fostered a new level of public relations and news management in the White House but insists that there would likely be an increase only in Nixon-like “gimmicks” to increase public favor of the President, regardless of press access. He exemplified this by suggesting that though President Jimmy Carter increased press access to the White House, the resulting increase in coverage showed little influence on political polls.²³

Klein represents a unique area of investigation in the complex historiography of Richard Nixon. His role in the Nixon Administration provides ample fodder for those who seek to better understand how Nixon used television to build his legacy, only to

20 Ibid., 37.

21 Ibid., 69.

22 Ibid., 205.

23 Ibid., 427.

irrevocably tarnish it, in part due to an animosity for those who dominated television. Klein sat at the crossroads of that precarious intersection with Nixon for decades prior to his inauguration and until his resignation just prior to the Watergate scandal that brought down the Nixon presidency. Unlike other prominent aides, Klein advocated both for the rights and privileges of the press, emboldening the President to combat feelings of attacks on his image through greater relationships with the press as opposed to tighter reins on public relations-style image-building. Unlike his counterpart, Press Secretary Ron Zeigler, Klein's position within the Administration afforded him the opportunity to pioneer image-building television press strategy, but perhaps more significantly, his journalistic conscience prevented him from deserting his obligation to those who sought truth. Despite Klein's considered and seemingly complete self-portrayal, his own account begs numerous questions that voluminous scholarly literature on Nixon fails to address.

Nixon's chief biographer, Stephen Ambrose, establishes Klein as an influential Nixon advisor up to the point of Klein's resignation. While Ambrose alludes to Klein's dismissal as a revealing stage that led to Nixon's own downfall, there is no elaboration. Ambrose provides perhaps the most comprehensive work on the Nixon presidency. In one volume of the three written, Ambrose postulates that Klein gave Nixon the best advice of anyone on his team on how to handle the press, but his close associations with the media and inclination to suggest the point of view of the press resulted in his isolation in the Nixon White House.²⁴ Though Ambrose mentioned Klein numerous times in his works, he does so in passing. However, in each instance Klein is connected to major

24 Ambrose, Stephen E. *Nixon: Volume 2: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, 297.

events in Nixon's historiography. He is mentioned in regard to the Cuban invasion proposal, Martin Luther King Jr.'s arrest, the Nixon-Kennedy debate, Nixon's Khrushchev meeting, Nixon's gubernatorial campaign and presidential campaigns. In fact, even after Klein resigned, he asked the President to appear on national television and "give a full exposition of Watergate to the public."²⁵ This, as did many of his efforts while part of the staff, fell on deaf ears. This dissertation investigates Klein's unique role, as mentioned throughout scholarship, and builds on the contention of Ambrose and others who studied Nixon and his team, that Klein who is often relegated to footnotes in history, was actually an influential figure in the turbulent political-press relationship of the time.

While delineating Klein's role within the Administration is the dissertation's primary aim, to be effective one must understand Nixon's relationship with the media, specifically television, and how the television press became a central focus to the Administration. Likewise, the investigation of the compounding conflict between truth and image provides important context to the greater understanding of Klein's position and eventual resignation. Had no such conflict existed, it is possible Klein would have played a minor role. In this regard, Small provides an important and comprehensive analysis of the milestones of the Nixon Administration and the long-lasting impact of media strategies on the future administrations. However, Small's 2003 account says almost nothing about Klein. In examining Klein, Small limits focus to short mentions of Klein's popularity over other staffers, among legislators, and his eventual alienation from

25 Klein, Herbert G. *Making It Perfectly Clear*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980, 395.

the inner circle due to his transparency with the press.²⁶ Similarly, the chief biographer of the pre-presidential Nixon, Gellman, does not even connect Klein and Nixon. At best, Gellman provides important anecdotes that add to the relevant historical context provided by Small.

Early in his career, Nixon developed another famous moniker, “Tricky Dick.” Where many scholars have used the nickname as a launching point for conceptualizing Nixon, Gellman provides an alternative theory. Where Klein is concerned, Gellman credits him for boosting Nixon’s “crusade” as a congressman through his favorable coverage and notes their budding friendship.²⁷ Overall, Gellman’s work refutes some of the most tightly held contentions about the Nixon presidency. However, his most significant theory, regarding the scope of this dissertation, is that Nixon was not uncommonly or intentionally manipulative or vindictive during his campaigns. Gellman paints a much different picture of Nixon than traditionally reported, one of a hardworking, man-against-the-odds who triumphed despite unwavering challenges. His careful dissection of the myths that created the more recognized image of Nixon is of tremendous significance. Considering the prevailing narratives that dominate Nixon’s historiography, Gellman’s work is vital. If Nixon’s tactics early in his career were not extremely dissimilar from his counterparts, yet his image was disproportionately tarnished, a preoccupation with image-building may be justifiable and a preoccupation may be read

26 Small, Melvin. *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003, 46, 232.

27 Gellman, Irwin F. *The Contender, Richard Nixon: The Congress years, 1946-1952*. New York: Free Press, 1999, 139.

as a necessity. Klein, who suggested this preoccupation, might then be better understood as an outsider later in Nixon's career.

Klein is dismissed by another well-known Nixon historian, Herbert Parmet. Parmet's dismissal of Klein's larger influence is notable for his *Richard Nixon and His America* is known for its sympathetic assessment. Still, according to Parmet, Klein was an "old loyalist" against Nixon's "newcomers" Haldeman and Ehrlichman.²⁸ He also proposes that Klein knew Nixon's personality perhaps better than others early in his career and understood that few would be able to persuade him to do other than that which he himself had decided. Additionally, Parmet positioned Klein as one of the few within Nixon's inner circle who was truly responsible for how Nixon's personality came across through the media, including Safire, Garment, Buchanan, Rice and Keogh, and excluding Ziegler.²⁹ Of significance is the way in which this work approaches the "Age of Nixon." Not only does Parmet provide historical and cultural context to the Nixon narrative, he also confronts the prevailing tendency in Nixon's historiography to focus on Nixon's personality over the strains of the time. For the purposes of this dissertation, Parmet's work is important as it provides insight into reasons why Nixon may have developed certain attitudes or tendencies other than a cursory distrust of media, allowing for a more three-dimensional examination.

Parmet's rudimentary inclusion of Klein is mimicked in Richard Reeves' provides perhaps one of the most intriguing views of Nixon's proclivity toward isolation. In the

28 Parmet, Herbert S. *Richard Nixon and His America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1990, 468.

29 *Ibid.*, 552.

case of Klein, Reeves mentions him in only a handful of occasions, but in most, hand-in-hand with Ziegler during important moments. Reeves also writes of the increasing alienation of Klein who was often characterized as too trusting. Additionally, Reeves suggests that Nixon's presidency was not doomed by his relationship with the media, as much of scholarship suggests, but that, from the start, it had little chance of surviving. Nixon's isolation, suggests Reeves, led him to suspicions about all of those around him, even his closest aides. In addition, he suggests that Nixon on several significant occasions operated opposite of his proposed aims, using his prolonging the conflict in Vietnam through systematic lying as a primary example. Reeves' construction of the entire White House staff as deeply engaged in a web of secrets and lies provides unique insight into the relationships among Nixon's aides.³⁰

Rick Perlstein builds on the paranoia that Reeves documents but also fails to mention Klein in any substantive way. This is particularly apparent because Perlstein discusses the creation of Nixon's enemies list, variations of which emerged through Klein's office. Perlstein theorizes that Nixon was masterful in harnessing the negative energy that existed following his failed presidential campaign and the surrounding struggles that marked the 1960s. He suggests that Nixon artfully utilized riots and anti-war protests as a pathway into the White House. Nixon's traditional rhetoric, Perlstein argues, ushered in a new era of politics and colored the way in which he oriented himself against his perceived "enemies."³¹ This layer in the historiography of Nixon provides an

30 Reeves, Richard. *President Nixon: Alone in the White House*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002, 15.

31 Perlstein, Rick. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. New York: Scribner, 2008.

absorbing assessment of the ways in which Nixon benefited from negative events, creating greater depth in the investigation of his response to negative press.

Of Klein's role while he was a reporter during Nixon's early political career, Morris focuses on how Klein's newspaper and reporting served as "the clearinghouse for the publicity and advertising of the first campaign."³² While Morris follows Nixon's story into his pre-presidential years in politics, his telling of the early years of Nixon the man, not the politician, provide necessary context when analyzing the relationships and decisions of Nixon the politician.

Matusow makes no mention of Klein. Still, his insight into Nixon's preoccupation with foreign policy that led to the neglect of his economic policies and subsequently inhibited his ability to create the new political majority he sought to establish, shed light on his fixation with the focus of the press.³³ Likewise, Willis makes only cursory mentions of Klein. Published in 1970, the work theorizes that Nixon was actually a liberal, something that longtime-friend Klein felt was an impossibility.³⁴

Scholarship focused on Nixon's final days in the White House are largely devoid of Klein. Due to the timing of Klein's resignation, this is not wholly surprising. However, in the assessment of the moments leading up to those final days, the premature resignation of a Director of Communications in a White House criticized for its increasingly closed off nature begs an investigation of Klein's role and why he left.

32 Morris, Roger. *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician*. New York: Holt, 1990, 297.

33 Matusow, Allen. *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars and Votes*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

34 Wills, Garry. *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

While White's, provides key insights into the reaction of the nation to a President who seemingly deemed himself above the law, he does so without great attention paid to key aides, like Klein.³⁵ White's work begins with the last of Nixon's days in the White House and then traces back the moments that led up to the resignation of a President. Ultimately, White theorizes that Nixon dealt with politics as a war and that desperate times allowed for a bending of the rules or a dismissal of them entirely. Similarly, famed journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein provided their own take on Nixon's last days in office in *The Final Days*. Woodward mentions Klein only regarding Nixon's growing disdain revealed in a stunning moment on the White House Tapes when he suggests Klein was the wrong man for the job, and always had been.³⁶ The omission of Klein by Woodward and Bernstein may be due to the timeframe in which their narrative covers. Still, their roles as journalists, and likely their interaction with Klein at least to some degree during Nixon's tenure, makes that omission even more striking.

Nixon himself references Klein throughout his narrative. Nixon mentions his longtime relationship with Klein on several occasions.³⁷ His references to Klein position him as a primary figure early in Nixon's career and omits him almost entirely in the telling of the later years of his presidency. Overall, he focuses less on relationships and staff than he does on political and social events of significance using them to explain, and sometimes justify, his more controversial choices. Uniquely, Nixon's memoirs allow for

35 White, Theodore H. *Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1975.

36 Woodward, Bob, and Carl Bernstein. *The Final Days*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976, 377.

37 Nixon, Richard M. *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978, 242-246

an unparalleled evaluation of how Nixon himself perceived the events that surrounded and involved his Administration. In this work, Nixon documents his time in office carefully, but also allocates a significant portion to his assessment of the events surrounding Watergate and the controversy that followed. Nixon lays out his take on his legacy and how he wants to be remembered through his telling. Nixon, in his own words, is a significant contribution to the existing literature of the popular press. While his work has been criticized as benign, it functions, to some degree, as a defense against the way his legacy has been handled by scholars.

Maltese provides perhaps the most complete assessment of the importance of Klein. Maltese conducted a series of original interviews with Nixon's close aides including H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman in the late 1980s, which allow for a unique assessment of Klein unavailable elsewhere. Of significance to note is that when scholarship focuses on television media strategy within the Nixon White House, Klein moves from secondary notation to a primary figure. In his work, Maltese posits that the Office of Communications was likely created, at least to a small extent, due to Nixon's need to create a post for his longtime press aide and friend Klein. Because of Nixon's growing "fear and distrust" of a liberal-controlled bureaucracy that might paint the White House and his policies in a negative light, he aimed to create something that could keep tabs on the potential threat.³⁸ Maltese documents the evolution of Klein's press responsibilities between Nixon's 1960 campaign and his 1968 campaign from traditional press secretary to "Manager of Communications," when Klein paid greater attention to

38 Maltese, John Anthony. *Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992, 17.

establishing relationships with local news establishments rather than the “establishment media” in Washington and New York.³⁹ This knowledge is significant in that it demonstrates the beginnings of Klein’s challenges as a newsman juxtaposed against Nixon’s mounting distaste for the fourth estate.

James Koegh, a former executive editor of *Time* magazine and part of the speechwriting team under Nixon, positioned Klein as the central figure in the White House communication strategy. In his book, published prior to the resignation of Nixon and before the papers of the Nixon aides were available, he said that Nixon’s preoccupation with negative press inherently elevated Klein’s role because a large portion of the staff was often involved in communication efforts, and ultimately working through or with Klein’s office.⁴⁰ The assessment of Klein by Nixon’s closest aides, as too collegial with the press and too difficult to control, suggests a deeper tension that did not simply manifest itself after Klein assumed the role but that was entrenched in the role from its inception. William Safire, former speechwriter for Nixon, wrote in his work on the Administration, *Before the Fall*, of a time when Nixon had asked Klein to go after two columnists who were critical of the Administration and “Be sure they are cut off.” Klein refused, to which Safire reflected, “His routine refusal to carry out these ukases was why Old Hand Klein was not in close, and why he emerged from the ruins with his reputation intact.”⁴¹

39 Ibid., 17-18.

40 Koegh, James. *President Nixon and the Press*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972, 39.

41 Safire, William. *Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975, 353.

Likewise, Porter's work suggests that while Klein was firmly in charge of the media in the beginning of the Nixon Administration, unblocked channels that Johnson had closed fostered the "idyllic" quality of newspaper articles in the first year of the Nixon Administration. However, as the lines of communication between President and press began to close, so too did a shift occur between the positions of Ziegler and Klein. As Klein began to be moved under the jurisdiction of Ziegler, he moved closer to his resignation.⁴²

Like Woodward and Bernstein's work, journalists Dan Rather and Gary Paul Gates' book on pre-Watergate operations, provides a natural opening for investigation into Klein.⁴³ However, its focus on the two more famous aides within the White House, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, proves limited in providing a formidable account of Klein and his team. Similarly, Spear's work, as well as Lashner's, provides information on press relations that is useful in understanding the Nixon White House but provides only basic information on Klein as part of the Nixon White House team.⁴⁴

Unlike Lashner's work, in the popular tome, *The Selling of the President*, Joe McGinniss summed up Nixon's relationship with television saying during his second presidential campaign, Klein was significantly involved. However, because it was published in 1969, and written soon following Nixon's campaign, it is a less

42 Porter, William Earl. *Assault on the media: the Nixon years*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976, 30-31.

43 Rather, Dan, and Gary Paul. Gates. *The Palace Guard*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

44 Lashner, Marilyn A. *The Chilling Effect in TV News: Intimidation by the Nixon White House*. New York: Praeger, 1984; Spear, Joseph C. *Presidents and the Press: The Nixon Legacy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984.

comprehensive work. Klein himself found McGinniss' work limited and suggested it did not present an accurate view of what occurred.⁴⁵ Still, McGinniss' assessment of Nixon is of multifaceted importance even though it should be handled with some pause. It does shed light on Nixon's early distrust of the media. It also highlights the significance of Nixon's upbringing on his developing adverse attitudes toward the "eastern establishment" and "elite media."

While numerous documentary and broadcast works on the Nixon White House have been produced for mainstream consumption, many revolve around Watergate and Nixon himself. Very little is available on the aides and none primarily on Klein. *Our Nixon* provides perhaps the most important and unique look at the attitudes of the Nixon Administration from a nontraditional perspective. This visual record, created by H.R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and Dwight Chapin, was discovered in the National Archives some 40 years after having been seized by the FBI during the investigation into Watergate.⁴⁶ Compiled into a documentary, the home movies span the period from 1969 to 1973 and include more than 500 reels of film found in the Nixon Presidential Library. Among the footage are home movies from everything surrounding the moon landing; anti-war protests to the intimate footage of aides on board Air Force One. The entirety of the footage is of the closest aides of Richard Nixon and offers a significant look at the attitudes, relationships and even the expectations of those individuals regarding their positions within the Nixon White House. Haldeman and Chapin worked closely with

45 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980, 19.

46 *Our Nixon*. Docurama, 2014. Film.

Klein during his time in the Nixon White House. This documentary is unprecedented in its contextual implications regarding the way those who advised Nixon acted individually and in conjunction.

Newspaper and magazine articles written on the Nixon Administration revolve around scandal events of the Administration and Nixon himself. Few significant pieces shed a comprehensive light on how the inner workings of the press office in the Administration functioned. The articles that are relevant to the scope of this study are few and include interviews with Klein during his time in the White House. These interviews, due to the time in which they were conducted, do not delve into the nuances this research seeks to investigate. However, they do provide insight into the balance Klein was attempting to strike between a president hostile to the press and a promise that president made at the start of his term to maintain an open White House for newsmen. In 1970, *The Washington Post* published a profile on Klein in a question and answer format, asking the Director of Communications various questions including his opinions on books, fishing, what he has read about the media and what newspapers he reads. Though the interview fails to delve into the deeper aspects of his role, it is a unique look into Klein.⁴⁷ Similarly, an exclusive interview with Klein headlined “Herb Klein: Nixon’s Proved Leadership,” explores policy and elections.⁴⁸

The Office of Communications was a new fixture and the dual roles of Klein and Ziegler were nontraditional. Largely, early assessments by the media placed Klein, not

47 Bandler, Michael J. "Portrait of a Man Reading." *The Washington Post* (Washington D.C.), July 19, 1970.

48 An Interview with Herbert G. Klein. (1972, Oct 28). *Human Events*, 32, 19.

Ziegler, at the forefront of White House press relations. A *Wall Street Journal* article, noted, "...Washington is wondering who really is the White House Press Secretary. The 29-year-old Mr. Ziegler, a former Los Angeles ad executive? Or the 50-year-old Mr. Klein, journalist and confidant of the President?"⁴⁹ Robert B. Semple Jr. of the *The New York Times* dissected the press office of Nixon in early 1969, suggesting that it was Klein who was truly in control. He wrote:

Ronald L. Ziegler, Mr. Nixon's press secretary, briefs the press every morning at 11 and afternoons at 4...but apart from news about the President's schedule, and other largely routine announcements, these sessions are rarely productive. This is no surprise, of course. As a rule, the last man to ask about the innermost deliberations of the government is the press secretary, who may be well informed but is also rigidly controlled.

Of Klein he wrote, "He advises Mr. Ziegler...he is perhaps the central cog in Mr. Nixon's effort to acquaint the country with his leading officials."⁵⁰

A review of the existing literature reveals two things. First, that Klein played a consistent and significant role in the Nixon Administration where the conflict between journalistic truth and presidential image were concerned. Numerous scholarly works as well as popular investigations into the Nixon Administration uncover Klein as a longtime Nixon supporter, friend and later, condemned outsider of a White House increasingly in conflict with the press. Second, despite Klein's position as one of Nixon's oldest and

49 Semple, Robert B., Jr. "Nixon and Press: A Good Start on His New Image." *The New York Times* (New York City), February 9, 1969.

50 Ibid

closest aides, and Klein's significant role as the first Director of Communications, a comprehensive study of his contributions to the Nixon White House is nonexistent. This dissertation fills this gap.

Statement of Problem

While research surrounding Richard Nixon and his relationship with the press are available, they largely revolve around the scandals that marred the Nixon presidency. Because focus is often placed on moments of scandal, such as the reaction to the printing of the Pentagon Papers and the investigation of Watergate, prevailing narratives focus on the Administration's relationship with print media and subsequently on the Press Secretary. Press Secretary Ron Ziegler was one of the most well-known of Nixon's aides. In many cases, he is painted as a subservient and inexperienced mouthpiece, leading researchers back to those who were considered his "handlers" H.R. Haldeman and J. Bruce Ehrlichman to better understand Nixon's relationship with the press. However, another significant character, and a former boss of Ziegler, played a major role in the press strategy of the Nixon White House, Herbert G. Klein. Klein managed the creation of television press strategy in the Nixon Administration. Even prior to his appointment as Director of the Office of Communications, Klein had a unique and long relationship with the President. He advocated for the success of Ziegler, despite his own expectation that he was to win Ziegler's coveted role of Press Secretary. He pioneered the creation of his own office and position.

Nixon initially admired Klein, a longtime newsman, during his campaign for presidency for his poise on television. He tasked Klein with handling television news

strategy and urged that he do so as part of the White House team. Nixon had, by this time, developed a keen interest in harnessing television despite feelings of hostility toward the television press. However, Nixon and some of his aides, primarily Haldeman, had little interest in following a traditional White House press model. It was clear that between Klein and Ziegler, both of whom worked on Nixon's campaign, that Klein had more experience and connections with the press. According to Klein's own telling of the events, the position of Press Secretary was given to Ziegler, instead of him, because Haldeman and Nixon felt Ziegler would be easier to control and wanted to minimize the role of Press Secretary within the Administration. As a result, Klein was tasked with creating his own position but was instructed by Nixon himself that he should focus on television as much as possible.

The press trusted Klein largely because they were familiar with him. Ziegler was a young advertising man and the press questioned his ability to handle the task of managing the press. In many ways, the press interacted with Klein as the White House press liaison, relieved that he might ensure the President kept his promise of an open administration and concerned that Ziegler, under the control of Haldeman, might simply be for show.

It is known that Nixon's difficulties with the media greatly contributed to his downfall. At first, Klein's efforts to establish and maintain an open White House were successful. However, over time the frustration of Nixon and his inner circle with the press hampered Klein's efforts. Throughout his time in the Administration, Klein pushed for more open relationships with the press but the divergence of his perspective with more powerful players in the White House eventually led to his falling out of favor and his

eventual resignation. His frustrations while serving in the office he designed coupled with his resignation provide an important area of study in the rise and fall of the Nixon Administration. The investigation of Klein adds to the existing narratives of how the Nixon White House handled the television press, and to the assessment of the attitudes and strategies with the television press from the late 1960s through the mid 1970s; attitudes that helped create and contributed to the demise of an American President.

The Presidential Library Papers of Klein reveal his relationships with other aides and how he diverged from the anti-press attitudes that emerged. They also reveal the distinct strategies that he employed, some that are still in practice today. Of significance to note is that Klein himself established the roles and activities of the Office of Communications, an office that is now considered a government standard.

An investigation into the papers of Klein, along with other figures in the Nixon White House including Dwight Chapin, Ziegler, H.R. Haldeman and Charles Colson, among others, provide insight into the management of the television press and where Klein differed from his colleagues. Klein's own documentation of his time in the White House, detailed in his book, provided the researcher a blueprint for key moments of frustration and challenge during his tenure. This dissertation explores, through a non-scandal focused lens, the ways in which Klein influenced and deviated from the increasingly hostile attitude toward the television press.

This dissertation provides a narrative history that reexamines Klein's role in the Nixon Administration and the six years prior as a period when political media tactics had continued to blossom. Alongside events and actions occurring during the years of the Nixon Administration up until Klein's resignation in July 1973 that make up the bulk of

this study, it provides background on Klein's involvement in Nixon's early years in politics, Nixon's campaigns against Jerry Voorhis in 1945 and Helen Douglas in 1950, where he was officially deemed with the now-famous moniker "Tricky Dick,"⁵¹ and his presidential campaign against John F. Kennedy in 1960, which several scholars suggest was the true beginning of Nixon's commitment to managing the television press.⁵² These early campaigns shed light on the emerging relationship between Nixon and the media and Klein's role in that relationship.

Methodology

Asa Briggs identifies the purpose of historical study in four ways. First, to obtain the knowledge of a people. Second, to compare social structures and populations. Third, to reconstruct the lives of families and ancestors, and fourth, "to provide evidence against which to judge the societal policies of the present day." It is Briggs' fourth assessment of the purpose of historical study that best resonates with the aim of this dissertation. The historical relevance of Klein within the Nixon White House is discussed within the context of contemporary press relations at the closing of this dissertation. Of the study of journalistic history, Sloan and Stratt, said that it was about "first, gaining an understanding from what others have said about the object of historical study, and from the materials available; second, locating the various sources that are applicable to the

51 Ambrose, Stephen E. "Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962–1972." New York: Simon & Schuster (1989).

52 Small, Melvin, ed. A Companion to Richard M. Nixon. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

inquiry.”⁵³ In order to ensure that historical research reaches the highest levels of credibility, original sources are a necessity. According to Lousie M. Benjamin, “Primary sources are the building blocks of historical research. They are contemporaneous records related to the subject under study and they come into being during the time period the historian is studying. They are remnants of the past.”⁵⁴ This dissertation utilizes the historical method to the subject of Klein’s role in the Nixon White House. It examines the work of Klein through an assessment of primary sources available through credible and reputable archives that meet high standards of document handling and preservation. This study is supported by sources found in the Presidential Library of Richard Nixon as well as the Herbert Klein Collection at the University of Southern California. The Richard Nixon Presidential Library is the most complete collection of documents related to the Nixon Administration. The Herbert Klein Collection at the University of Southern California is the only major collection of Klein’s papers and was donated to the University by the Klein family.

The private papers of Herbert Klein are housed at the University of Southern California, Klein’s alma mater, and contain a number of documents pertaining to Klein’s time as a journalist. The bulk of the material available pertains primarily to Nixon and are documents that went through Klein’s office, are similar to those available in the Presidential Library. The documents relating to Klein’s time with Nixon begin with the

53 Sloan, W. David, and James D. Startt. *The Media in America: A History*. Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2014.

54 Benjamin, Louis M. *Methods of historical analysis in electronic media*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006.

1956 Vice Presidential campaign. Other documents in the collection include his career following his time in the Administration as a media professional and author. Unlike the collection at the Presidential Library, the University of Southern California collection includes photographs of Klein in his personal life as well as some from his time with the Administration and articles, speeches and audio statements made by Klein during various portions of his life and career. This collection was gifted to USC in 2008.

These primary sources include original documents, memos, notes, diary entries, photographs as well as oral histories and exit interviews. The sources were studied critically and were analyzed while considering their original purpose. The researcher first identified the surface content of the material, its major points, what it said and did not say, and any surrounding context that would help provide a more comprehensive understanding of its purpose. Additionally, the researcher identified the audience of the document, its function at the time of its creation, its source (where it was originally found) and the type of source (i.e., private letter, memo, note). These factors allowed the researcher to better evaluate the content in the documents and place the content in the appropriate historical context. A basic understanding of potential bias, attitudes and interests was taken into consideration as well.

The Primary Evidence

In order to effectively establish the role of Klein within the Nixon White House, procuring original documentation of Klein's day-to-day operations within the Administration, as well as his conversations with White House staff, was critical. The most pertinent source material on Klein during his time in the Nixon Administration was

found in the Presidential Library of Richard Nixon. In addition to the documents available in the Nixon Library, exit interviews and oral histories of Klein, as well as those who worked with him are also housed in the archives and were used in the pursuit of this research.

The material of Klein is in the White House Special Files from the period of 1969 to 1973. However, there is little documentation available for the last six months in which Klein served in the White House. Of the documents, the majority are correspondence between H.R. Haldeman and Klein. Most of Klein's documents deal with presidential scheduling, press appointments, White House procedures, and media relations. In regard to Klein's correspondence with Nixon himself, those documents focus largely on press conferences, television appearances and interviews and were found in the White House Action Memoranda file. The White House Action Memoranda file consists of documents that outlined projects for Klein's office. Among the projects requiring action were countering critical press reactions, pushing forth the Administration's view on issues of the day, bolstering friendly press and analyzing and responding to polls.

The oral history of Herbert Klein was conducted as part of The Richard Nixon Oral History Project, an initiative of Timothy Naftali in 2006 during his tenure as director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library. Videotaped interviews of Nixon officials and others who were significant figures during the Nixon Administration were conducted to preserve the memories of those who lived during the era. One hundred-twenty interviews were conducted within the first few years of the project. The oral history of Herbert Klein was available to the public in July 2010.

The tumultuous tenure of Richard Nixon encouraged, yet also derailed, other oral history projects. The Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton, collected 200 interviews in the late 1960s and early 1970s and are available through the University. However, this project focused primarily on the personal life of Richard Nixon and not on his Presidency or the Nixon Administration. Klein was not among those interviewed. The Nixon Foundation itself conducted an oral history project of the President in the 1970s up to his entrance into the White House. However, the Watergate scandal derailed the project and the oral histories have not been released. They are presently housed at Whittier College. Other oral history projects were undertaken in the 1980s and the 2000s but not completed.

Herbert Klein's oral history was conducted on February 20th, 2007, two years prior to his death. The interview was conducted by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg in San Diego, CA. The transcript of the interview as well as the audio and video were accessed in their entirety through the Presidential Library. The duration of the oral history is 234 minutes. The oral history of Herbert Klein has not been used in a substantive way in existing literature.

The exit interview of Herbert Klein was conducted on July 13th, 1973 by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good in Room 160 of the Old Executive Office Building. The interview covers Klein's work and relationship with Richard Nixon from 1946 to 1969. This is perhaps one of the richest, and only, sources of information regarding the early relationship between the two. Of significance is Klein's description of his responsibilities as Director of Communications.

Summary

This dissertation utilizes the primary source information located in the Presidential Library of Richard Nixon as well as Klein's Collection housed at the University of Southern California. These sources are used to provide a substantive evaluation of Herbert Klein as a historical figure worthy of investigation and worthy of being elevated within the historiography of the Richard Nixon White House. Through the investigation of Herbert Klein's role in the development of media relations within the Administration, as well as his influence on the contemporary construction of press relations, this dissertation fills a gap in the existing literature that Klein played a significant yet understated role in the tension between hostility and transparency within Nixon's Administration.

CHAPTER 2

1946 – 1968: KLEIN AND THE CAMPAIGN YEARS

Klein and Nixon Cross Paths

Fresh out of the Navy, a young Herbert Klein worked as a reporter and editor at the *Alhambra Post-Advocate*, a small newspaper in Southern California, near where he had earned his journalism degree at the University of Southern California.⁵⁵ It was 1946. World War II had ended and the U.S. was on the verge of Cold War. President Harry S Truman signed the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, establishing the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. The United States was in recovery and the nation was looking forward. Klein was 28-years-old. As the norm at a small weekly outfit like the *Alhambra Post-Advocate*, Klein covered a multitude of beats and executed various tasks at the paper. He was assigned to covering politics, though his dream was to be a sports reporter.⁵⁶ At the time, Richard Nixon was a fledgling politician, but making a name for himself. He, like Klein, had completed his service with the Navy, something that Klein felt created an intangible bond between the two. Nixon was running in California's 12th congressional district. Klein was one of the many young journalists he would meet, but one of the few that would remain in close contact with Nixon for the next five decades.

A 33-year-old Nixon showed great interest in knowing members of the press. He visited Klein's paper regularly, meeting with the publisher, journalists and even the

55 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

56 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980.

printers.⁵⁷ Klein recalled how young Nixon looked. Nixon was struggling to appear older, perhaps to make him seem like a more seasoned candidate. One supporter had suggested he wear a hat to add some age.⁵⁸ Appearance was a focus early on. Despite Nixon's apparent youth and political inexperience, Klein was quickly impressed with him. Although Klein had no particular interest in politics and had even less experience covering it, Nixon drew him in. From then, a tumultuous bond began.

Klein's budding admiration of Nixon evolved into a friendship, albeit slowly. "I listened to him speak, and I listened to him debate, so I became casual friends, not close friends at all," Klein said.⁵⁹ As the years passed, their relationship took many forms. First as friend, then as foe and ending as weathered but loyal companions. Klein was in pursuit of a moral truth, and according to Nixon's biographer Stephen Ambrose, Nixon was in an almost constant struggle to protect his legacy from it.⁶⁰ The two, in their pursuits and their personalities, were never fully found themselves on the same page, despite a decades long relationship that took them from small-town coffee shop chats to Oval Office briefings.

The following overview of the campaign years (1947-1968) of Richard Nixon provides a description of at the emerging relationship between Klein and Nixon and how Klein straddled the fence between journalism and politics. The 1968 presidential election

57 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

58 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

59 Ibid.

60 Ambrose, Stephen E. Nixon: Ruin and recovery, 1973-1990. Simon & Schuster, 1992.

introduces Nixon's emerging television press strategies in greater specificity with less of a focus on Klein himself. Klein played a lesser role in this larger campaign but firmly situated himself within the growing circle of Nixon advisors, subsequently ensuring a position within Nixon's White House.

The 1946 and 1948 Congressional Elections

During his campaign for Congress in 1945, Nixon used the growing propaganda movement, and the subsequent mounting fear of communism, to his advantage against Jerry Voorhis, a five-term congressman.⁶¹ Part of Voorhis' platform, was a pledge to not accept money from communist supported organizations. This included the Congress of Industrial Organizations Political Action Committee (CIO-PAC) which was believed to have been infiltrated by communist supporters.⁶² During a campaign debate, Nixon suggested that Voorhis was in fact supported by communist-friendly groups. When Voorhis denied the allegation, and demanded Nixon produce evidence, Nixon dramatically and publicly produced documentation that showed that Voorhis was supported by the NCPAC, the National Citizens Political Action Committee.⁶³ While the

61 Jerry Voorhis was a Democrat from California who lost his Congressional seat to Nixon in 1946. Voorhis was elected to the House in 1936. He served five terms. While in office Voorhis was a loyal supporter of the New Deal. He also authored a book entitled "The Strange Case of Richard Milhous Nixon" in 1972.

62 Controversy erupted around the Congress of Industrial Organization's Political Action Committee (CIO-PAC) during the 1944 presidential election between Republican presidential candidate Thomas Dewey and sitting Democratic president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Commission infiltration of the CIO-PAC was suspected to have influenced the Democratic party as well as Roosevelt himself. (Rosswurm, Steve. "Communism and the CIO: Catholics and the 1944 Presidential Campaign." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 19, no. 4 (2001): 73-86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25154794>.)

63 The National Citizens PAC was an outgrowth of the CIO-PAC. It was formed seven months after the CIO-PAC and was a "product of demands by non-trade union progressives for an organization which could effectively express their views and collaborate with the progressive trade unions in a program of practical politics" (Foreman, Clark. "Statement of the National Citizens Political Action Committee." *The Antioch Review* 4, no. 3 (1944): 473-75. doi:10.2307/4609031.)

NCPAC did not have communist ties, Nixon had effectively planted the idea in the minds of the public that Voorhis was supported by “the PAC.” Although Voorhis pointed out that Nixon was holding a NCPAC document and not holding a document involving the controversial CIO PAC, scholars suggest that the false association was enough to plant the seed of doubt in the eyes of the public in the midst of the Red Scare. Nixon unseated five-term Voorhis and began his transformation into “Tricky Dick.”⁶⁴

Klein, who was closely following Nixon by this time, disagreed with the conventional interpretation of events when interviewed some 60 years later. “They say that was because of communism and this kind of thing, which wasn’t the case. Voorhis had not paid attention to this district. He was becoming a nationally famous congressman who took pride in what he was doing in Washington, not in [unintelligible] Valley, and so he was damaged, I think, when Nixon made it a local, personal campaign in that fashion,” he said.⁶⁵ In fact, Klein didn’t see communism as an issue at all. Debates were centered around post-war issues, including jobs and roads, and other less controversial issues. Klein had attended all of them and according to him, Voorhis lost not because Nixon was “tricky” but because Nixon was more astute with his constituency. Contrary to conventional historical narratives, Klein felt Nixon’s strength was his ability to connect with people on a personal level. Nixon’s comfort with reaching constituents by speaking directly to the people and building relationships with local media began early in his political career. Klein recalled, “...I thought Voorhis did not perform well, and I was

64 Small, Melvin. *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003.

65 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

impressed at how Nixon did perform. I obviously didn't know how good his ability as a debater or anything of this kind, but it was the first time I heard him debate, and I was very much impressed, and I voted for him.”⁶⁶ Others too posited that Voorhis' loss was not entirely a result of “Tricky Dick.” Voorhis emerging political celebrity distanced him from locals as much as it ingratiated him to the political elites.⁶⁷ Still, the prevailing narrative of a malicious Nixon remains, and remains a pivotal point in Nixon's historiography.

Nixon ran for reelection the following term. He wasn't a managed candidate, according to Klein, or at least he didn't appear as such. He had a campaign committee, including Harrison McCall, Frank Jorgensen and Arthur Kruse, but his biggest campaign support came from his wife, Thelma Catherine “Pat” Nixon, who was pregnant with Nixon's first daughter, Julie.⁶⁸ Pat rarely spoke for Nixon, but she traveled with him as much as possible. Klein's support of Nixon resulted in budding relationships with Nixon's family as well. Klein show spirited support on Nixon's campaign trail as well. Klein recalled that he “...went to his last campaign – or his last stand, which was in Whittier, and we all dressed up as Indians to come out and beat horns [sic] and beat two things to get attention. And Pat Nixon kidded me about that for years afterward.”⁶⁹ At

66 Ibid.

67 Gellman, Irwin F. *The Contender: Richard Nixon, The Congress Years, 1946-1952*. S.I.: Yale University Press, 2017, 169.

68 Ibid.; Gellman, Irwin F. *The Contender: Richard Nixon, The Congress Years, 1946-1952*. S.I.: Yale University Press, 2017, 169.

69 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

the time, it wasn't an issue for a young reporter to be involved in the politics in which he or she was covering, at least at a minimal level.⁷⁰ A connection to a candidate, like the one Klein was developing with Nixon, was far more advantageous for a small newspaper and any concern over potential bias and it would likely have been overlooked in favor of access. As a journalist, Klein was cultivating a source. As a supporter and friend, Klein was forging a path into American political history.

Klein used his personal resources to encourage the Pomona chapter of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce⁷¹ to turn out for some of Nixon's campaign.⁷² This was no small favor. Attention from the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce resulted in a significant publicity break for Nixon. On January 21, 1948, the Chamber selected him as one of the nation's Ten Outstanding Young Men of 1947. The Pomona chapter awarded him the Good Government Award in front of 500 guests at the end of that year as well. After that, the same chapter nominated him for national recognition, of which he was selected as the recipient.⁷³ Nixon continued to rise in the ranks, winning the nomination and then the election.

During Nixon's four years in Congress, he and Klein routinely meet during Nixon's returns to California. Nixon was friendly with the small newspapers in

70 Ibid.

71 The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce was founded on October 13th 1915 with the goal to "develop the skills and character of young men." ("United States Junior Chamber Foundation." The United States Jaycees Foundation. Accessed August 07, 2017. [http://www.usjayceefoundation.org/history/1920/.](http://www.usjayceefoundation.org/history/1920/))

72 Ibid.

73 Gellman, Irwin F. *The Contender: Richard Nixon, The Congress Years, 1946-1952*. S.I.: Yale University Press, 2017, 169-170.

California. When in California, he would hold breakfast meetings with the editors or publishers of small dailies and weeklies, according to Klein.⁷⁴ He would call various reporters as well. "I became more deeply interested because he would come by and we'd go out and have a cup of coffee..." said Klein.⁷⁵ Nixon would talk to him about everything from the "Alger Hiss matter" to his growing concerns about the "Washington press."⁷⁶ Nixon was a little-known politician and Hiss had clout. For someone in Nixon's position to lodge accusations against a figure like Hiss was considered a career risk. Klein said Nixon felt the media was establishing him as an exposé, not an investigator, attempting to reveal an unforgivable truth about a favorite public figure.⁷⁷ He was worried, Klein recalled, that the "Hiss business" was ruining him and that he would soon be forced to leave Congress as a result. The situation with Hiss grew Nixon's frustration with the media's portrayal of him. Klein sat at the precipice with him and Nixon continued to confide in Klein over cups of coffee in California.

In one of their later chats, Nixon shared his experiences while serving on the Herter Committee.⁷⁸ Congressman Nixon had been chosen to be part of a nineteen-

74 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

75 Ibid.

76 Alger Hiss was accused of operating as a Soviet spy while he served as an American government official in 1948. At the time Nixon was a member of the Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and took on the Hiss case. Former communist party member, Whittaker Chambers accused Hiss of having a membership in a communist espionage ring prior to the Second World War. Hiss was convicted of perjury in January 1950.

77 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

78 It is suggested that Nixon's trip as part of the committee influenced the development of his presidential geopolitical strategy as well as his position regarding Soviet Russia and Communism. (Barber, Chris. "The Herter Committee: Forging RN's Foreign Policy » Richard Nixon Foundation." Richard Nixon Foundation.

member committee to go to Europe, headed by Congressman Christian Herter. The goal of the committee was to report on the feasibility of Secretary of State, General George Marshall's post-war foreign aid plan.⁷⁹ It was a valuable opportunity for a young congressman looking to advance his career but Nixon had his reservations. Nixon told Klein how he preferred to roam the countryside on foreign travels rather than attend embassy parties. He preferred casually meeting with and talking to locals. He enjoyed chatting with the locals, hearing their thoughts and learning about their hopes. This divulgence stands in stark contrast to the prevailing narrative of a rigid and socially awkward Nixon. Where scholarship often suggests Nixon's personality was primarily reclusive, Klein's telling reveals a more nuanced character, one that felt at peace with people.

Nixon traveled for the Herter Committee but returned an internationalist.⁸⁰ Klein admired this. "...[Nixon] became a real great expert of the century." His revelation to Klein denoted something significant and Klein recognized it. Nixon was far better suited for relaxed and unrehearsed conversation with people than he was with stiff formality. Klein was privy to the relaxed and personable Nixon and it is this Nixon that drew him to, and kept him by, Nixon's side. Although Nixon's legacy was marred by perceptions of him as an awkward politician, Klein, understood this was a fallacy. According to

September 08, 2016. Accessed March 17, 2017. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/2014/04/herter-committee-forging-rns-foreign-policy/>.)

79 Barber, Chris. "The Herter Committee: Forging RN's Foreign Policy » Richard Nixon Foundation." Richard Nixon Foundation. September 08, 2016. Accessed March 17, 2017. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/2014/04/herter-committee-forging-rns-foreign-policy/>.

80 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

Klein, Nixon was never truly an introvert, or at least to the extent it has been suggested in scholarship. Instead, Nixon simply preferred to relate to individuals one-on-one.⁸¹ “My friendship developed because we’d have a lot of times together just one on one, and it was at ease...” said Klein.⁸² Klein was becoming a friend of sorts to Nixon, or at the very least, an acquaintance.

Nixon displayed less hesitation toward the press. Klein, of course, was a friendly reporter and that undoubtedly made a difference in demeanor, but even so, Nixon’s coffee breaks and breakfast meetings with local journalists suggested a politician not unfriendly to the press. Granted, the local reporters were far from those entrenched in the “Eastern establishment.” However, even as President, Nixon rarely spoke ill of local newspaper and media. A reevaluation of the somewhat reductive perception of Nixon as a long-time and aggressive opponent of all press is required following the evaluation of Klein’s unique relationship with Nixon over the entire span of his political career. Between the years of 1948 and 1950, Klein and Nixon met frequently. Klein recalled a moment in a small coffee shop when the two were simultaneously at crossroads in their careers. Nixon was considering leaving the House Un-American Activities Committee.⁸³

81 This one-on-one strategy used by Nixon parallels the personal influence model in public relations. This model refers to personal relationship networks as an essential part of an individual’s professional assets. (Falconi, Toni Muzi. "Personal Influence Model." Institute for Public Relations. March 30, 2015. Accessed August 07, 2017. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/personal-influence-model/>.)

82 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

83 The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was in effect from 1938 to 1975 as part of the U.S. House of Representatives. It was created to investigate subversive organizations and disloyalty. It was known for its anti-Communist investigations. ("House Committee on Un-American Activities." Dictionary of American History. Accessed August 04, 2017. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/house-un-american-activities-committee>.)

Klein wondered whether he should stay in the newspaper business at all. He had a few offers from other papers but he considered asking Nixon if he might secure a position as a Postmaster.⁸⁴ “I don’t think he was seriously thinking of leaving the Committee, and I wasn’t seriously thinking of being Postmaster...but we had just sort of an informal friendship during the time,” said Klein.⁸⁵ Klein and Nixon chatted about their future plans, unbeknownst to them that their paths would bring them closer together.

The 1950 Senate Election

In 1950, Nixon ran against Helen Douglas for a Senate seat. He made use of similar tactics as with Voorhis. Nixon compared Douglas’s voting record to Communist Party candidate Vito Marcantonio. He called this comparison the Douglas-Marcantonio axis.⁸⁶ Again, the connection of the two in the minds of the public did not sit well, regardless of the actual similarities. Nixon won that election, and with it, the moniker, “Tricky Dick.” Klein again denied that the issue with Douglas originated with Nixon and

84 Prior to the restructuring of the United States Postal Service (by President Nixon) the position of postmasters and the Postmaster General were well-respected and sought-after positions. Postmasters served as information centers for towns and cities, providing news to communities even before newspapers could report on events. Postmasters today oversee post offices or several offices, managing customer service, community relations, distribution of mail, and general operations. (Falconi, Toni Muzi. "Personal Influence Model." Institute for Public Relations. March 30, 2015. Accessed August 07, 2017. [http://www.instituteforpr.org/personal-influence-model/.](http://www.instituteforpr.org/personal-influence-model/))

85 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

86 While there was no true “axis,” after finding that the recorded votes between Marcantonio and Douglas were similar Nixon claimed that Douglas was a communist. believed there was. A “pink sheet” from Nixon found the recorded votes from Marcantonio and Douglas were alike. Nixon claimed that Helen Douglas was a Communist. Marcantonio was lawyer and politician as part of the American Labor Party. In the 1940s he was nationally known for his support of Communists. (Stephen E. Ambrose, Nixon: the education of a politician, 1913-1962 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

that it had anything to do with communism, “It was states issues and leadership, which [unintelligible] [Nixon’s] philosophy.”⁸⁷

During Nixon’s campaign against Douglas, Klein served as president of the Alhambra Chapter of the Junior Chamber. Although Klein served only as an unofficial advisor to Nixon during his campaign, he, again, used his position on the Junior Chamber to leverage support.⁸⁸ Nixon himself had been honored by the Junior Chamber earlier in his career. Klein used his connections to convince some friends in the Junior Chamber to become chairmen of the Nixon Senate Campaign in different cities. “Although I was not in the campaign myself, I had these people as key people on his behalf working for him...,” said Klein. He would later serve as Nixon’s press agent. Klein extended the resources that he had to aid Nixon. His personal support of the future President denoted an emerging loyalty that would continue even after Nixon’s resignation decades later.

Nixon was still relatively new in government. He had little political experience and was running for a big position in state Senate. Although Klein was aware of Nixon’s desire to run for Senate, his ambition surprised even Klein. Nixon confided in him when he was considering his run, revealing his plans during one of their one-on-one chats. Though surprised, Klein had confidence in Nixon, despite his scant two-terms in office. Still, Nixon’s previous win was decisive and the Hiss case provided name recognition. People knew who he was, and in a year when the incumbent was not running, this was as good of a time as any for Nixon to make his move. Klein didn’t discourage or encourage

87 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

88 Ibid.

him.⁸⁹ He just listened, as he had many times before, over coffee with a future president of the United States.

In September 1950, Klein was promoted to a position as a features and editorial writer for the *San Diego Evening Tribune*. He was asked to work from the paper's Washington Bureau for the two months that coincided with the end of Nixon's campaign. His first story was the attempted assassination of Harry S Truman.⁹⁰ Nixon took an interest in Klein's work as a journalist, asking him about his coverage of everything from his interview with Douglas MacArthur in Japan to coverage of the Bikini atomic tests.^{91,92} Over the course of those assignments, Klein sharpened his skills as a political reporter. As he was becoming more knowledgeable on big-time Washington government, Nixon was building relationships with weekly editors in his district, holding breakfast meetings well into his Senatorial term.⁹³ It would seem that the two were priming each other for future positions. Klein was learning more about the inner workings of politics from Nixon, and Nixon was picking Klein's journalistic brain about how politics was covered.

89 Ibid.

90 Two Puerto Rican nationalists, Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, attempted to kill Truman on November 1, 1950 in an effort to call attention to Puerto Rican independence. ("Harry S. Truman Library & Museum." Truman Library - Assassination Attempt. Accessed August 07, 2017. <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/trivia/assassin.htm>.)

91 General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Japan on August 30, 1945 to oversee the ceremony marking its surrender and to organize a postwar Japanese government. MacArthur "enacted widespread military, political, economic and social reforms." (U.S. Department of State. Accessed August 07, 2017. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/japan-reconstruction>.)

92 The 1946 Bikini Atomic nuclear tests were the first time that nuclear weapons had been deployed since the attack on Japan. They deployed them on ghost ships full of animals. More than 90 vessels, some with no cargo, were put in the target area. (Eschner, Kat. "The Crazy Story of the 1946 Bikini Atoll Nuclear Tests." Smithsonian Magazine, June 30, 2017. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/crazy-story-1946-bikini-atoll-nuclear-tests-180963833/>.)

93 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

The 1952 Vice Presidential Election

Klein went to work for Nixon in 1952, a little unexpectedly. While larger papers had sent reporters to cover the 1952 convention, Klein's employer couldn't afford it. In fact, he only learned of Nixon's nomination as Vice President while cutting his lawn at his new Pasadena home. The radio played loudly over the hum of his lawn mower. "I was surprised, but I thought I was pleased for him, but I didn't expect any more," Klein recalled.⁹⁴ Klein received a message days later from James Bassett, a temporarily-retired editor from the *Los Angeles Times* and Nixon's press secretary, asking that Klein run the press in California. Klein was unsure. He didn't know how it might work out with his boss, owner Jim Copley. He told Bassett that he must call Copley. Bassett didn't. Instead, Nixon reached out to Copley personally. Copley approved a leave of absence for Klein, and Klein began work on Nixon's campaign.⁹⁵

Klein worked from Los Angeles throughout the general election campaign, and the "fund crisis."⁹⁶ Nixon's spot on Eisenhower's ticket, as well as his political career, were in jeopardy when he was accused of operating an improper political fund.⁹⁷ In the midst of the emerging controversy, Nixon decided to travel the West Coast via train.

94 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

95 Ibid.

96 "Fund crisis" is the term Nixon used to refer to the six days following the New York Post's article on September 18, 1952 that charged Nixon with benefiting from a "Secret Rich Men's Trust Fund" that allowed him to live lavishly and well beyond his pay grade. The allegation was in direct conflict with Eisenhower's platform to rid Washington of similar corruption following controversy in the Truman Administration. Pressure for Nixon to resign mounted, even from inside Eisenhower's team. The "crisis" led to Nixon's famous "Checkers Speech." ("Secret Rich Men's Trust Fund Keeps Nixon in Style Far Beyond His Salary," New York Post, 18 September 1952, 1.)

97 Nixon, Richard Milhous. *Six Crisis*. London: W. H. Allen, 1962.

Klein and his California team were tasked with organizing a rally in Pomona, California where Nixon would board the train. The plan was simple. Each time the train would pull up to a station, reporters would have the opportunity to phone in their stories. However, as the plans were made and the accusations abounded, Nixon suddenly decided to fly back to California from Washington and make a speech. “What I remember about the speech was that he decided he only wanted to be in the studio with Pat Nixon, no one else in the studio, no one in the audience, so he could feel like he was directly talking to the people in their living room,” said Klein. This became a staple for Nixon. According to Klein, Nixon disliked speaking to large crowds and he much preferred instances where he could, at least feel, as though it was just him and the people, no cameras, no screens, no press.⁹⁸ Klein oversaw press relations at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, where Nixon was staying.⁹⁹

On September 23, 1952, Nixon spoke directly to the American people via television, carefully and meticulously documenting the allegations of misuse of campaign funds. He addressed each one in detail. Nixon disclosed his personal finances and spoke of his humble upbringings, closing the gap between him and the American people. He ended his speech by placing his political future in the hands of the Republican committee. He would support Dwight D. Eisenhower regardless of whether he would remain on the

98 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

99 The Ambassador Hotel has a long and storied past. It was opened in 1921 in Los Angeles and was a catalyst for the development of the famed Wilshire Boulevard. Every U.S. President from Herbert Hoover to Richard Nixon stayed at the Ambassador Hotel. It was also the site of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. The hotel was closed in 1989 and eventually demolished between 2005 and 2006. ("Los Angeles Conservancy." Ambassador Hotel (Demolished) | Los Angeles Conservancy. Accessed August 07, 2017. <https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/ambassador-hotel-demolished/>).

ticket in light of the allegations, and pled for the American people to do the same. The style of his speech, his candor and his one-on-one televised chat with the American people on television was unlike any tactic used by a politician before. Nixon had delivered what would become arguably, one of the most famous moments in presidential history, the Checkers Speech.¹⁰⁰ Scholars suggest the Checkers Speech marked the beginning of the television age in politics in addition to saving Nixon's career.¹⁰¹ Of primary significance, however, is the way in which the speech impacted Nixon's perception of the power and use of television. For the first time, Nixon understood television as a tool to circumnavigate traditional press and establishment media.

No one fully knew what to expect following Nixon's speech. There was no way to reliably gauge instant response. Klein, Nixon's secretary Rose Mary Woods and Jim Bassett were in Nixon's suite at the hotel when the phone rang. "I can't get through to Western Union, but I just wanted to tell you I really thought that was a great speech," said a voice, presumably from Miami. "...pretty soon we checked and found that Western Union was swamped, and it was probably the most powerful speech ever given in politics because of the reaction to it by the hundreds and the thousands," recalled Klein.¹⁰²

One response, or the lack thereof, was particularly noticeable to Nixon. Eisenhower was slower to respond to Nixon's appearance. In fact, Nixon and his team had been waiting

100 Richard Nixon: "Address of Senator Nixon to the American People: The "Checkers Speech"," September 23, 1952. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24485>

101 Malsberger, John W. "Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and the Fund Crisis of 1952." *The Historian* 73, no. 3 (2011): 526-47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24455303>.

102 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

in the suite to hear from Eisenhower's team. Murray Chotiner, a manager of Nixon's 1950 campaign and adviser, said to him, "To hell with them," and convinced Nixon to leave for his next stop. Klein felt there was little question that Nixon had done well. The consensus among the team, and in Nixon's own opinion, was that the speech was a success – a pat on the back from Eisenhower could wait. When Nixon arrived, Eisenhower greeted him with, "That's my boy."¹⁰³ Klein believed there had been debate on Eisenhower's train that caused the delay. Nixon was young and seemingly a bit of a troublemaker. Perhaps Eisenhower was debating whether he could be forced off the ticket. If he was considering it, qualms were silenced by the influx of telegrams praising Nixon's address.

According to Klein, the Checkers Speech had altered things for Nixon in two ways. One, Nixon had learned something important about television that night. Two, Nixon wasn't dependent on Eisenhower in ways he may have previously thought. He had the ability to establish his own clout, elicit his own response from the public. "He became more independent that night," recalled Klein.¹⁰⁴ Eisenhower won the election with Nixon on his ticket and Klein returned to his career in journalism.

The First Presidential Campaign

By 1954, Klein traveled on few stretches with Nixon, observing and consulting. However, the two remained in contact. Nixon would call Klein to ask him about his assignments and Klein, when he was in Washington, would sometimes work out of the

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

then Vice President's Office.¹⁰⁵ Their continued relationship outside of campaign work, uniquely situated Klein. He wasn't merely a staff member, he was a friend; a confidant. It also kept doors open for Klein to work on Nixon's first presidential campaign.

Klein was assigned to cover the 1956 Republican Convention in San Francisco, as head of a San Francisco news team. Soon after, Nixon asked Klein take another leave of absence to serve as assistant press secretary to Jim Bassett. Again, Nixon called Klein's publisher directly to ask permission. Again, Klein was granted the time to return to Nixon's side.¹⁰⁶

For Klein, the climax of the 1956 campaign was the nationally televised intercollegiate press conference that he planned. Klein and the team invited student editors from across the country to meet at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and cover either a real White House press conference or Vice-Presidential press conference. Television was handled very carefully and while it had worked to Nixon's advantage during the Checkers Speech, the situation was far more controlled. This would be a test for Nixon. Klein knew it was a risky position to put Nixon in, as Nixon was less likely to succeed in such a setting, but Klein was confident.¹⁰⁷ Klein felt Nixon performed well and that the one-hour television show reflected positively on him. The risk paid off and served as further proof that when meticulously managed, television could serve Nixon as a powerful tool.

105 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

In March 1959, just a few months after Klein became editor of the *San Diego Union*, Nixon requested he return to work on his presidential campaign. Klein felt it was important for him to stay at the *Union* in his new position for at least a few months before taking a leave of absence.¹⁰⁸ Again, Klein asked that his publisher be called for permission. Again, Nixon called his publisher and in June of 1959 Klein served as Nixon's press secretary and was considered the Assistant to the Vice President as well. He worked with Bob Finch and Leonard Hall on key strategy for Nixon. Jim Bassett, Nixon's previous press secretary, with whom Klein had worked functioned as an adviser. The small staff traveled the fifty states, campaigning with Nixon and organizing convention activities.¹⁰⁹

Klein's first assignment was to arrange a delegation to the Soviet Union. Klein was tasked with organizing press coverage and negotiating the treatment of reporters by the Soviets. This was a task that required careful navigation. Press freedoms were distinctly different in the Soviet Union than in the U.S.¹¹⁰ Klein met with individuals from the Soviet embassy in small cafés around Washington, D.C. He made a point not to be seen during the discussions. He negotiated terms that included an agreement that reporters would not be censored during the trip. What he hadn't considered was

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 "After Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech that denounced the Stalinist years for its excesses, the Party allowed criticism of Stalin and some of his policies. Again, this was a very limited form of expression and did not extend to the creation of any free press or ability to criticize core tenets of communism or Lenin. The press was still utilized as a tool by politicians." ("History of Russian Journalism." Havighurst Center Russian and Post Soviet Studies. <http://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/centers/havighurst/cultural-academic-resources/havighurst-special-programing/journalism-under-fire/journalism-history/index.html>.)

negotiating the same for Moscow reporters. This would create a problem for him in the future.¹¹¹ Klein also gained approval for 200 reporters to join the delegation, so long as he could find a way to get them there. And he did. Klein, for the first time ever, secured an intercontinental jet for the press.¹¹²

On the day of departure, Nixon left on Air Force One. Klein, in the first major trip for the Nixon team, boarded his press plane. He waved to his family, who had come to visit him in Washington, and in mid-wave, heard a familiar jingle. He was about to fly halfway across the country with his car keys in his pocket. Klein quickly stopped the plane and hurriedly stepped down the stairs to give his wife the car keys. He had accomplished two things that day, organizing a major international press event for the future president of the United States, and, as he put it, “saving his marriage.”¹¹³

The flight got off to a rocky start. A third backup system quit working when they reached the John F. Kennedy International airport. One plane switch later and they were back on track. Once they reached Soviet airspace, Soviet pilots took over. Despite the technical issues, the press plane landed before Nixon’s, as planned. The press plane landed and Nixon would be received by a second delegation. No top Soviet officials were present to meet Nixon. The muted opening of the trip failed to foreshadow its place in the annals of political history.

111 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

That same night, Nixon and his wife, Pat, took a stroll through the streets of Moscow. Ordinarily this would have been a high-security situation, but no one knew of their outing. Nixon enjoyed exploring the streets, outside the stuffy banquet halls and boardrooms. The people of Moscow had no idea the Vice President of the United States was taking in the fresh air. The press certainly hadn't been informed. Klein recalled that Pat drew attention on their outing that night, not as the wife of the Vice President of the United States, but for her shoes. Hers were pointy and the style in the Soviet Union was still blocky, square toed.¹¹⁴ Those little interactions were the type that Nixon appreciated. Nixon and Pat wandered Moscow, none the wiser. It was just the way Nixon liked it.

The next morning, on July 24th 1959, Nixon met with leaders Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and Anastas Mikoyan.¹¹⁵ Reporters weren't allowed inside the Kremlin. However, when Klein arrived at Khrushchev's office he found two Soviet reporters present. Klein insisted that in fairness two American reporters be allowed in as well. He sent a member of the KGB to bring two U.S. reporters into the Kremlin, Ernie Barcella from United Press International (UPI) and Jack Bell from the Associated Press (AP).¹¹⁶

114 Ibid.

115 Nikita Khrushchev led the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War and served as premier between 1958-1964. He was known for colorful speeches and approved the construction of the Berlin Wall. Leonid Brezhnev was a Soviet statesman and Communist Party official. Brezhnev served as leader of the Soviet Union for 18 years. Brezhnev is credited with expanding and modernizing the Soviet Union's military-industrial complex. Anastas Mikoyan was a Soviet statesman who held top positions for over 40 years. Mikoyan was awarded the star of "Hero of Socialist Labor" in 1943 and in 1959 was sent to Cuba to try and establish relations with Fidel Castro.

116 The KGB refers to the domestic security agency of the Soviet Union and foreign intelligence agency established in 1954. The authority of the KGB was undercut by the reform agenda of Mikhail Gorbachev between the mid 1980s and early 1990s.

Klein was present when Nixon met Khrushchev. Nixon and his team expected a short meeting. After some shaking of hands, patting of backs and photographs, of course, and it would be over. However, after the photographers left, Khrushchev delivered a speech about the Captive Nations Resolution, laden with expletives.¹¹⁷ The conversation that followed between Nixon and Khrushchev was friendly. In fact, although Klein had planned for Nixon and their team to explore the fairgrounds of the American Exhibition of 1959, on their own and meet with Khrushchev again later, as they were walking out, Khrushchev said, “I think I’ll go on too.”^{118, 119} Khrushchev, Nixon, some 200 reporters and Klein, along with a host of others left for the fairgrounds. NBC and Ampex had called on Klein to see if he could steer Nixon and Khrushchev toward them, so they could demonstrate a new-fangled technology - - videotape.¹²⁰ This, of course, had not been planned and Nixon – a man who preferred to meticulously script his words for appearances in front of the press and particularly for television – was spending far greater time with Khrushchev than he anticipated. Klein’s main objective was to keep things moving while Nixon and Khrushchev looked through the exhibits. Khrushchev dominated the conversation. The debate that is largely regarded as the

117 “Captive Nations” was a term used to describe undemocratic regimes. The term was largely used during the Cold War and particularly when concerning Communist nations. Captive Nations Week was established as an initiative to raise awareness of issues faced by nations under Communist rule.

118 The fairgrounds were home to a six-week exposition that took place during the height of the Cold War outside of Moscow. The exhibition featured American kitchens, cars, art and other innovations of American capitalism. The exhibition served as a cultural exchange as a way to ease tensions between the nations by putting on exhibitions that demonstrated how the other lived. The Soviets held a similar exhibition in New York in June of 1959.

119 Ibid.

120 Ampex Data Systems Corporation emerged as a leader in magnetic recording and data storage. The Nixon-Khrushchev Kitchen Debate was recorded on Ampex videotape.

“Kitchen Debates” began at the television exhibit and ended in the “kitchen.” The televised portion of it, Klein recalled, occurred because he had guided the two leaders toward the television exhibit.¹²¹ Khrushchev was unimpressed by Nixon’s promotion of color television and videotaping capability, noting that the Soviets had satellites and had already far surpassed the U.S. in technology. Nixon didn’t particularly push back, instead conceding that the Soviets had made significant advancements. This dynamic continued throughout their stroll through the fairgrounds. Klein advised Nixon, “If you’re going to get into any more debates, you’d better get tougher because he pushed you around.” Nixon simply responded, “Okay.”¹²² And what he did next remains one of the most remembered moments in Nixon’s political legacy.

Khrushchev and Nixon entered the “house exhibit” and started discussing the kitchen appliances. Klein, preoccupied with determining where he might lead the party next, left as Nixon said “I want to show you this kitchen. It is like those of our houses in California.,” to which Khrushchev responded, “We have such things.”¹²³ In the time that Klein ventured off to pick their next stop and returned, Nixon and Khrushchev were engaged in the “Kitchen Debate,” talking about foreign bases and atomic weapons, with cameras and crowds surrounding them.¹²⁴ The American media response was initially mixed with the *New York Times* suggesting it was little in the way of

121 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

122 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

123 Khrushchev, Nikita; Nixon, Richard M.: “Kitchen Debate, Video, from Britannica Online.

124 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

substance.¹²⁵ Time magazine, however, suggested it was "managed in a unique way to personify a national character proud of peaceful accomplishment, sure of its way of life, confident of its power under threat."¹²⁶ For Klein, this was somewhat of a personal victory. Nixon had gotten tougher, as he had suggested, and for the moment, the press response was positive. The moment would be remembered as one of Nixon's best.¹²⁷

Alongside the "Kitchen Debates," in perhaps the most widely discussed and best remembered moments in Nixon's political campaigning history, was his televised debate with John F. Kennedy in 1960. Nixon's run for president in 1960 seemed inevitable after his success as Vice President. Klein, was again by his side. However, Nixon structured his campaign in a somewhat unconventional way. Bob Finch, the former Lieutenant Governor of California, ran his campaign. Finch shared everything with Klein and the two functioned as a team, dealing with the press and structure of the campaign interchangeably. Others, including Leonard Hall, James Bassett and Bob Wilson were brought on to manage other aspects of the campaign.

Nixon was very much conscious of his "Tricky Dick" reputation and was now fostering a new image following a successful vice presidency. Moments like his Checkers Speech and the "Kitchen Debates" supported the idea that Nixon was a serious politician of substance. He was committed to projecting a man less likely to use gimmicks to win votes. Despite rumors and criticism regarding Kennedy's health and religion,

125 Moscow Debate Stirs U.S Public", The New York Times, July 27, 1959

126 "Better to See Once", Time, August 3, 1959

127 Paul Kengor. "The Vice President, Secretary of State, and Foreign Policy". Political Science Quarterly Vol. 115, No. 2 (Summer 2000) 174-199. p 184.

respectively, Nixon opted to avoid the use of either as a political tactic.¹²⁸ Klein acknowledged this but felt Nixon may have been overly conscious of the moniker, at times costing himself votes as a result. He recalled a defining moment when Martin Luther King Jr. was jailed just weeks before the Presidential election.¹²⁹ Klein recommended Nixon call and talk to him but Bill Rogers, U.S. Attorney General and close adviser to Nixon, thought it might impact the Southern vote if they did. Supposedly not wanting to seem as though he was campaigning for votes, and not wanting to lose his base either, Nixon opted not to make the call. Klein felt that cost him many potential African American votes, votes from which he felt Kennedy greatly benefited.^{130, 131} Nixon was not blind to the impact of ignoring Klein's recommendation to make the call.

128 Anti-Catholic prejudice was prevalent in the 1960s. Kennedy's religious affiliation drew criticism. Kennedy's speechwriter and adviser, Ted Sorenson said, "The single biggest obstacle to his election was his religion. You should have seen the hate mail that came in, both from rednecks and from liberal intellectuals who should have known better." (Casey, Shaun A. *The making of a Catholic president: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.)

129 On October 19th, 1960, Martin Luther King joined a student campaign to desegregate snack bars and restaurants in Atlanta's department stores. The group was refused service. No arrests were made for the request for service, however, the group then moved to a department stores upscale restaurant. After they refused to leave, they were arrested for trespassing. King was the opted to stay in jail rather than pay a \$500 bond pending trial. Thirty-five students followed his lead. (Kuhn, Clifford M. ""There's a Footnote to History!" Memory and the History of Martin Luther King's October 1960 Arrest and Its Aftermath." *The Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (1997): 583-95. doi:10.2307/2952574.)

130 John F. Kennedy was urged to call King's wife, Coretta, regarding King's condition in jail. After he did, news spread and the New York Times printed a small piece on Kennedy's call, also noting that Nixon had no comment on the King case. King's father said, at a mass meeting at Ebenezer Baptist Church, "I had expected to vote against Sen. Kennedy because of his religion...But now he can be my President, Catholic or whatever he is. It took courage to call my daughter-in-law at a time like this. He has the moral courage to stand up for what he knows is right. I've got all my votes and I've got a suitcase, and I'm going to take them up there and dump them in his lap." Scholars suggest this moment prompted large-scale support of Kennedy from the African-American community. (Sam Proctor, recorded interview by Anthony K. Shriver, n.d. [fall 1988],89, John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.)

131 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

In 1968, when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, Nixon made the call to his family.

As the campaign wore on, Nixon gave Klein strict instructions to avoid debates. Klein had been courted by numerous news organizations regarding the subject. He used his friendships with the press to downplay the issue. This made Nixon's announcement that he was going to debate, during his nomination press conference, an even bigger surprise. Though Klein never asked Nixon what changed his mind regarding the debates, Klein felt it was Nixon's concern that if he failed to debate, he would be pummeled by the press.¹³² At the time, Nixon's relationship with television was largely a good one. It had worked to his advantage thus far and so the idea of a televised debate was not particularly concerning despite a tense relationship with the press. Still, he preferred speaking directly to the public, uninhibited by the filter of the press. This more direct setup had worked for him in years prior. Nixon did not favor the optics of a televised speech on stage. He knew he would have to be well prepared.

John F. Kennedy named Leonard Reinsch as his advisor on television for the debates.¹³³ Reinsch, from Kennedy's camp and Klein, from Nixon's, were responsible for most of the negotiating regarding the debate format. Of the three debates, the consensus was that the last debate would be the most important. For Nixon's camp, their strengths would best show in this debate as the topics would be on international relations. The first

132 Ibid.

133 J. Leonard Reinsch worked in broadcasting early in his career before assisting with White House communications during the Roosevelt to Truman transition in 1946. Notably, he advised Winston Churchill on his "Iron Curtain" speech.

debate would focus on domestic policy, and the second and third would cover general questions. Klein realized the mistake when the first debate drew the largest crowd simply out of curiosity. Debates like this one were new and drew public interest for their novelty as much as for their substance. Nixon's weakness on the first debate compounded the already apparent issues with his make-up. Klein, however, attributed some of Nixon's failings at the debate to Nixon's propensity to be too polite.¹³⁴ Nixon seemed determined to not let "Tricky Dick" back in, but again, Klein, felt he overcompensated and ultimately let JFK into the White House instead. Throughout his time with Nixon, and made more evident by the debates, Klein began to surmise that Nixon's preoccupation with his personal image would backfire and ultimately hurt him in the end.

Although televised debate has become a staple in any discussion of Nixon and his animosity toward the media, the impact of the debate played less of a role in Nixon's media relationship than often suggested. A sweaty and unhealthy-looking Nixon juxtaposed against a young and energetic Kennedy arguably sparked both popular and scholarly conversation on presidential image and the power of television.¹³⁵ Popular narratives suggest that for those who could see Nixon, the consensus was that Kennedy had run away with the win. For those who had listened to the debates on the radio, the consensus was that Nixon had clearly won. This, however, has been widely debated and disputed. If the closeness of the popular vote was an indication (Kennedy beat Nixon by less than two two-tenth of a percent) the televised debates did not have as significant an

134 Ibid.

135 Dudley, Robert L.; Shiraev, Eric (2008). *Counting Every Vote: The Most Contentious Elections in American History*. Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books. p. 83. ISBN 978-1-59797-224-6.

influence as suggested.¹³⁶ Still, Nixon's historiography is laden with suggestions that Nixon's distrust and distaste for television were directly related to the televised debates.

Although Nixon's physical appearance during the debates may have had less of an effect on the popular vote, the subsequent coverage, the descriptions of Nixon in juxtaposition with Kennedy arguably had impact enough on Nixon and his evolving relationship with the news media. Perhaps of greatest significance in the conversations following the debates was Nixon's belief that he was somehow the victim of the Kennedy family and their use of money and influence on the media to work on their behalf, and subsequently against him. Nixon wrote in his memoirs that he vowed after that election to prevent anyone from having the upper hand in political tactics the next time he entered an election.¹³⁷ Historian and journalist Garry Wills posits that Nixon's attitude following the 1960 election suggests the inevitability of Watergate.^{138, 139} Nixon lost to Kennedy in one of the closest presidential elections in the United States.

Following Klein's reading of Nixon's concession, Bob Finch, Don Hughes, Rose Mary Woods and Klein flew to Key Biscayne after a short stop in Washington. Klein recalled never having seen Nixon so low.¹⁴⁰ One evening at the Key Biscayne Inn, where

136 Ibid.

137 Nixon, Richard M. RN, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Warner Books, 1979.

138 Wills, Garry. *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man*. Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

139 Wills suggested that after his loss to Kennedy, he became increasingly sensitive to the idea of having less access to information or resources that could help him gain and retain the "upper hand." According to Wills, this obsession fed into a paranoia that eventually led to the Watergate scandal.

140 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

Nixon and his campaign team were having dinner following his loss, the maître d informed them that there was a call for Mr. Nixon. Klein took the call. It was Herbert Hoover who had received a call from Joe Kennedy. The father of the newly elected President had asked if Nixon would meet with JFK. Nixon's spirits lifted, he called Eisenhower first, and then the maître d's phone rang again. Klein took the call again and this time it was Kennedy himself. After both conversations ended, the team decided Nixon should speak with Kennedy directly and so he did. In the little phone booth, on a pay phone at the Key Biscayne Inn, Nixon called Kennedy who was in Palm Beach at his family compound. Nixon offered to visit Kennedy but Kennedy replied, "No, I can get a helicopter. I'll come to Key Biscayne." The following Monday the two met in one of the Inn's suites. Nixon told him then that he would not contest the election, though there had been pressure for him to do so.¹⁴¹ Kennedy offered Nixon a position in his Cabinet to which Nixon replied, "No, I should be the loyal opposition." Klein felt that was one of the most important decisions of Nixon's political career.¹⁴²

Nixon's 1962 Run for Governor

After the 1960s elections and his 1961 writing of *Six Crises*, Nixon decided to run for governor of California. The night before Nixon made his decision, he had dinner with

141 The election results were so close between the two candidates that speculation of Nixon contesting the results were widespread. In a 1984 interview on CBS, when asked if he had been elected as the President in 1960, Nixon said of the election, "Well, many objective observers believe that I was. ... I will say this: there was no question, and these are facts, that there was immense fraud in Chicago, and it was all on that side, not on our side, and there was only 8,000 votes difference between us in Illinois." Nixon decided not to contest the election suggesting the country would be burdened a gap in leadership. ("CBS "60 Minutes" Interview." Interview by Frank Gannon. CBS "60 Minutes" Interview. Transcript. CBS. April 8, 1984.)

142 Ibid.

Klein and a few others at a seafood restaurant on a beach in Malibu to discuss what they already assumed he would - - to run.¹⁴³ Nixon set up a new team, many of whom would follow him into the White House years later. Bob Haldeman served as campaign manager. Haldeman had worked with Nixon as his advance man in 1956 and as his aide in 1960. Klein hadn't planned to join Nixon's campaign but when it became apparent that Nixon was falling behind, Nixon called on Klein to join the team.¹⁴⁴ Klein was forty-four at the time and served as Nixon's press secretary and special assistant. Ronald Ziegler, then only twenty-two years old, served as Nixon's press aide. Klein worked closely with Ziegler. Dwight Chapin, Bob Finch and John Ehrlichman also joined Nixon's team. Of them, only Klein knew Nixon from the start of Nixon's political career.^{145,146} Nixon's team was young and eager but they provided little guidance for Nixon. Nixon seemingly managed his own campaign. His commands were carried out by aides, instead of his actions evaluated by advisors.¹⁴⁷ This was a habit he would find difficult to shake. When plans were finalized with his team, Nixon saw fit to change them on a whim. This tendency would lead to one of the most infamous moments of his political career – one which many considered a career-ender, including Klein.

143 "Exit Interview with Herbert Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

144 Ibid.

145 Dwight Chapin served as an on-the-ground organizational leader for the campaign. He was still a student during Nixon's 1962 run. After the campaign Chapin was hired by Haldeman to work at the advertising firm J. Walter Thompson in Los Angeles. Bob Finch was a practicing lawyer before ending politics. He had served as Nixon's campaign manager in 1960. John Ehrlichman also worked on Nixon's 1960 campaign and later became White House Counsel before being replaced by John Dean.

146 Ambrose, Stephen. *Nixon: The Education of a Politician*. Simon & Schuster, 1987, p. 653.

147 Ibid., 1987, p. 653.

Nixon's campaign was tumultuous. A contentious battle between Nixon and Edmund Gerald "Pat" Brown Sr. led to allegations of "outside money" and a host of smears between the two candidates.¹⁴⁸ News coverage of the campaign was plentiful and Nixon felt he had been treated badly by the press. Nixon's biographer, Stephen Ambrose, contended, "In the judgment of this author, the reporters and their publishers were highly professional. The major newspapers in the state assigned their top political reporters to the campaign, gave equal space to the candidates...and recorded accurately what they said...Reading their stories twenty-five years later, one would be hard pressed to find any favoritism."¹⁴⁹ In fact, Klein himself suggested there was little reason to blame the press for Nixon's loss. Nixon's own press secretary wrote, "...the election was not decided by press coverage. The press mainly reported what was said by the two candidates – and, with exception, little more."¹⁵⁰ Nixon's perceptions of an unfair, accusatory and combative press were escalating.

The former Vice President of the United States and presidential candidate lost a much smaller election by a large, and unexpected, margin. Klein knew it would be best to keep Nixon away from the press when it came time to concede. On November 7 the morning after election day and his loss, Nixon said to Klein, "I don't want you to try to

148 Edmund Gerald "Pat" Brown Sr. served as California's 32nd governor from 1959 to 1967. Prior to entering politics, he worked as an attorney, becoming Attorney General of California in 1950. Brown ran for President twice; once in 1960 and again in 1964 but never became a serious contender.

149 Ibid., p. 664.

150 Klein, Herbert G. Making it Perfectly Clear. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980, p. 63.

talk me into going down to that goddamn press.”¹⁵¹ Klein told Nixon that having him speak to the press wasn’t part of the plan. Instead, Finch would write thank you notes to the campaign team and Klein would concede to the press. Things turned out differently. According to Klein, two of Nixon’s close friends spoke with Nixon prior to Klein’s speech and convinced him to confront the press. According to Nixon, he had seen on television as he was leaving the hotel a reporter ask, “Where’s Nixon” in an “insulting tone.” Nixon then said, “I’m going down there.”¹⁵² In either case, Klein was just as surprised as most when Nixon tapped him on his shoulder during his statement.¹⁵³ During a 15-minute prepared monologue, Nixon criticized the press coverage during the campaign, eventually famously and indignantly saying, “You don’t have Nixon to kick around anymore.”^{154,155}

The backlash from Nixon’s speech was swift, but in retrospect, the ramifications held even more weight. The press was bitter, particularly the local press that had supported Nixon in many of his political campaigns. Nixon said to Klein following the press conference, “Damn it, I know you didn’t want me to do that. But I had to say it. I

151 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

152 Nixon, Richard M. RN, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Warner Books, 1979, p. 244-245.

153 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

154 Hill, Gladwin. "Nixon Denounces Press as Biased." *The New York Times* (New York City), November 8, 1962.

155 This line in Nixon’s speech is often misquoted as “You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore.”

had to say it.”¹⁵⁶ The day following the press conference, Klein drafted an apology to the press on Nixon’s behalf:

On the morning after the election, I made a concluding statement which has been interpreted by some as a general attack on the press. This was not my intent. My irritation has been with some specific reporting but certainly not with the press as a whole. Obviously, in the stress of the hour, I did not make this as clear as I intended to. Over the years I have built many friendships with members of the press, and I treasure these greatly. I also would like to reiterate my comment that many of the newspapers have done an outstanding job of reporting. In any event, I have concluded after reflection that these remarks were inappropriate and ungraceful, and I desire to withdraw them. At some future time I may perhaps set forth with deliberate care my observations on the role of the press corps in political campaigns.¹⁵⁷

Klein was never sure if Nixon had read the statement and the statement was never issued by Nixon. Klein noted his own frustration with Nixon at the time, having felt personally wounded by Nixon’s attack on reporters during that press conference. “I thought ironically that this worst outburst was a show of human, spontaneous anger which was contrary to the image of him as a mechanical political figure. But in many ways, the public statement illustrates clearly the continued feeling of Nixon toward a critical press,” wrote Klein.¹⁵⁸ In his retrospective on his years in the Nixon White House, Klein brought back Nixon’s treatment of the press to that moment, “He could contain this feeling when he needed to, but later, after his first two years in the White House, he felt no great need to disguise his contempt for the working press, and thus he would issue a

156 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980, p. 57.

157 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980, p. 58.

158 *Ibid.*

variety of outlandish orders which further strained the relationship.”^{159,160} Klein and Nixon began to diverge at that moment. Ever a newsman, as loyal as Klein was to Nixon, his loyalty to the press was greater.

Howard K. Smith’s TV segment, the “Obituary of Richard Nixon” followed Nixon’s loss and increasingly criticized his concession press conference.¹⁶¹ Klein assumed the moment marked the end of Nixon. He would later suggest that, “. . .it’s another one of these classic moments of Nixon on television having this very important effect on his career.”¹⁶² Nixon pursued a career as a lawyer between 1963 and 1967, but he by no means, was done with politics.

Klein, Nixon, Television and the 1968 Presidential Election

The election of 1968 occurred during one of the most tumultuous times in the history of the nation. Political riots shook cities and college campuses and the emergence of a counter culture clashed with the buttoned up middle class of the 1950s and early 1960s. The United States was in the midst of a war that seemed to have no end; a war that was, for the first time, shown first hand to the American people through television. The nation was on the verge of economic decline.

159 Nixon would suggest that reporters and members of the press be surveilled and that attacks against them should be planted through letters and editorials.

160 Ibid.

161 Ambrose, Stephen. Nixon: The Education of a Politician. Simon & Schuster, 1987, p. 673.

162 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

While Nixon's 1962 campaign seemed to many as the nail in the coffin of his political career, time at a law firm proved fruitful. He met his future campaign manager John Mitchell and Leonard Garment, a future presidential advisor.¹⁶³ Due largely to the impact of the Vietnam War, the Republican Party was looking for a change. Nixon's political stance as a Republican moderate, his support and careful work for Barry Goldwater and the success of the Republican Party in 1966 (Nixon earned a great deal of credit within his party for his campaign in 35 states and surpassing 100 candidates) placed him in the ideal position.¹⁶⁴ A door was open for Nixon to reemerge as a formidable candidate in the upcoming presidential election with renewed party ties and support. During that time, Ronald Reagan emerged as a conservative darling, but his limited experience in a public office separated him from the more experienced Nixon. The man who years earlier had professed to have had his "last press conference" was proudly situated as the Republican frontrunner for the 1968 Republican presidential ticket. Known to be a constant campaigner, Nixon wasted no time in rolling out his old tactics to bolster his position.

By 1967, Nixon was ready for a comeback. On January 7 and 8 of that year, Nixon arranged a meeting at the Waldorf Astoria Towers in New York City.¹⁶⁵ "The

163 John Mitchell met Nixon after his loss in the gubernatorial election when Nixon joined the same law firm of which Mitchell was a part (Mudge, Rose, Gurthrie, Alexander & Frendon). Mitchell would later become Nixon's presidential campaign manager. He would then serve as the Attorney General of the United States under President Nixon. Leonard Garment also met Nixon, alongside Mitchell, at the law firm following Nixon's loss. He would later assist with Nixon's presidential campaign and then serve both Nixon and Gerald Ford in the White House.

164 Goldwater served in senate for the State of Arizona for 30 years and is often credited for the resurgence of American conservatism. He was the Republican Party's nominee for President for the 1964 election. He lost by a landslide.

165 Among the participants were financial adviser Perter Flanigan; Finch; Tom Evans; former Goldwater fundraiser and Wall Street man Jerry Milbank; chairman of Mississippi Republicans Fred LaRue; chairman

purpose of this group is to begin planning now to win the nomination... It is not the purpose of this group to help me on the issues,” said Nixon.¹⁶⁶ Nixon’s primary concern was not positioning himself firmly on political platforms as much as it was to effectively position himself as the opposite of sitting President Lyndon B. Johnson. Nixon was less concerned about his ability to beat his party opponents. He saw George Romney as his biggest rival. Then, Senator Charles Percy of Illinois and after him, Ronald Reagan. For Nixon, his biggest challenger was himself.

At this point in his career, Nixon had not won an election on his own in seventeen years. He’d won against Jerry Voorhis in 1949 and then against Helen Douglas for a Senate seat in 1950. He famously lost to John F. Kennedy in 1960 and then to Pat Brown in 1962. Even for those who liked and supported Nixon, he didn’t seem able to win. “There was no denying that the odds against [winning the nomination] were formidable. After 1960 and 1962, I had what every politician dreads most, a loser image. In fact, after the ‘last press conference,’ I had a *sore* loser image,” wrote Nixon in his memoirs.¹⁶⁷

Nixon’s men knew this. “If we could convince delegates that Dick could win, then he’s in,” said Finch.¹⁶⁸ Nixon would need to enter the primaries and prove he could win. The opportunity to face his opponents head-to-head was rapidly approaching. The

of Texas Republicans Peter O’Donnell and William Safire, who worked with Nixon on his previous presidential bid.

166 Safire, William. *Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005, p. 42-43.

167 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978.

168 Ambrose, Stephen E. *Nixon. Vol. 2: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

New Hampshire primary was just months away on March 12. Wisconsin (April 2), Nebraska (May 14) and Oregon (May 28) would follow. A sense of urgency filled the Waldorf suite. Nixon's men urged him to immediately begin making speeches, appearances and taking interviews. That would be the way to forge ahead and position him as a winner. Nixon refused.

Instead, Nixon opted to spend the next six months traveling abroad on "fact-finding" missions. Foreign policy was a primary issue in 1968 politics and of personal interest to Nixon. He would use the time to advance his expertise on international relations from first-hand experience. Romney could spend his time in the public eye. Nixon would happily stay out of it, for the time being. His men however, were tasked were making certain that when he was ready to remerge on the campaign trail, every state would have an organization with advance-men, fundraisers and campaign managers waiting to push him toward the win.

Nixon had his doubts about the campaign. Late on the night of December 22 in 1967 he wrote them down on paper. At the top of that list, on a fresh yellow pad, Nixon wrote "I have decided personally against becoming a candidate." Nixon would not campaign like he had in any previous election. He was tired of the "charade" of political campaigns. He surprised even himself, when at the bottom of his list he wrote, "I don't give a damn."¹⁶⁹ Richard Nixon wanted the presidency, but not as the Nixon of previous campaigns. His old tactics hadn't worked. He recognized this, but he still wasn't interested in playing the same campaign games as his opponents. This election, he'd do it

¹⁶⁹ Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978.

his way. He was a comeback kid with renewed patience and wisdom. He was a new Nixon.

1968 brought forth more than a nation divided. It brought forth a nation changed. Vietnam protesters were no longer relegated to long-haired, bell-bottomed youth. They were part of the educated elite. The counter-culture was bleeding into the traditional, and the federal reaction to the emerging changes were at full force. On January 5, Dr. Benjamin Spock; William Sloan Coffin, the chaplain of Yale University; novelist Mitchell Goodman; Michael Ferber, a graduate student at Harvard; and peace activist Marcus Raskin were all indicted on conspiracy charges for encouraging draft-dodging. All were convicted, except Raskin who was acquitted of the charges.

Just weeks later, the USS Pueblo, a Navy intelligence gathering ship, was captured at sea by North Korean patrol boats. All of its 83 crew members were charged with violating the country's twelve-mile territorial limit. It would take 11 months before the crew was free. Only a week later, just past midnight on Wednesday, January 31, 1968, North Vietnam launched the Tet Offensive at Nha Trang.¹⁷⁰ In what is largely considered a turning point in the nation's attitude toward the Vietnam War, approximately 70,000 North Vietnamese troops moved the battle from the country's jungles to its cities. That morning, the U.S. embassy in Saigon was invaded.

At home, Vietnam protestors and civil rights marches filled streets and campuses around the nation. While Americans fought and died on foreign soil, those at home faced

¹⁷⁰ The Tet Offensive was comprised of a series of surprise attacks on areas throughout South Vietnam. The Offensive was considered a turning point of the Vietnam War. The attacks, by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces, began on January 31st, 1968.

death and violence in their own cities, including two of the nation's prolific leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. A populous already on edge was quickly pushed over. The nation was searching for new leadership.

Nixon's campaign headquarters were situated at 521 Fifth Avenue in New York City. It was fitting that his headquarters was in the heart of an advertising mecca. 1968 marked a nation still tending to the fresh wounds of losing a president while losing its sons and daughters in a foreign war. The emergence of the counter-culture and fighting overseas separated mother and daughter and father and son. The nation was unraveling at the seams. Nixon and his aides sought to mend it by whatever means necessary.

With the Soviet Union now a nuclear equal to the United States and the Tet Offensive decisively changing the nation's involvement in an increasingly complicated war, the people were clamoring for "new leadership." This was no secret to Nixon and his campaign. They meticulously planned to sell him as the venerated leader the country so eagerly sought. Nixon had, to some extent, recreated himself. The Nixon of 1968 was calmer and more calculated than the one who faced Kennedy in 1960. As George Romney, Nixon's Republican Party competitor, campaigned in gyms and appeared in malls across the nation, Nixon decided to maintain much less exposure. He was already known and had little to risk, other than overexposure.¹⁷¹ Overexposure meant the public might retain or worse, solidify the image they already had of Nixon - - as an unpleasant character with little appeal and even less political potential. In the past, television was bad to Nixon and his aides knew it. His campaign would need to be disciplined. Nixon's

¹⁷¹ Ambrose, Stephen E. Nixon. Vol. 2: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

reemerging confidence in his chances helped ease the perceived unpleasantness of his character.

“Gentlemen, this is *not* my last press conference.”¹⁷² Nixon stood before the press on February 2 as he began his 1968 campaign for the presidency at a press conference in a Holiday Inn in New Hampshire. Gallup polls showed him with a 40 percent lead over Romney, and 14 percent over Rockefeller. His confidence was tempered by an awareness of the those he felt were waiting for him to make a mistake. “I knew that the media would analyze and examine everything I did and said, and I would have to be extraordinarily careful of the image and tone my campaign projected.”¹⁷³

After returning from a trip to Vietnam in mid-February of 1968, CBS anchor Walter Cronkite addressed the American people. He had traveled to the region to view the aftermath of the Tet Offensive. In a television special “Who, What, When, Where, Why?” Cronkite both criticized U.S. officials as well as contradicted official statements that were made regarding the war’s progress. Of the Offensive, as well as other military operations, Cronkite called for negotiation, “...not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could.”¹⁷⁴ This statement would resonate with the American people and create an even greater need for calculated rhetoric by Nixon’s men. A sense of deep national loss emerged from Cronkite’s broadcast. The next president of the United States would need to be able to

172 Nixon, Richard, “Press Conference at Holiday Inn at Manchester, New Hampshire. (1968)

173 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 297-298

174 *Reporting Vietnam: Part One: American Journalism 1959-1969* (1998), pp. 581-582.

promise more than the end of a war. He would need to promise a rebuilding of a nation's pride.

By mid-March, presidential campaigns were in full swing and Nixon felt safe as the preeminent choice for the party. Romney had dropped out of the race - - after a highly publicized comment he made regarding being "brainwashed" by American generals into supporting the Vietnam War - - much to the surprise and disappointment of Nixon.

"Personally, I was disappointed by Romney's withdrawal. Even though I had knocked him out of the ring, now I would win without having actually defeated an opponent in the election - - and the test of the election was, after all, the reason I had decided to enter the primaries in the first place," wrote Nixon.¹⁷⁵ Rockefeller withdrew on March 21. He announced that he had signed an affidavit removing his name from the Oregon primary. "Quite frankly," he said, "I find it clear at this time that a considerable majority of the party's leaders want the candidacy of former Vice President Richard Nixon, and it appears equally clear that they are keenly concerned and anxious to avoid any such divisive challenge within the party as marked the 1964 campaign."

It was shock and awe at the March 12 New Hampshire primary for the Democratic Party. Eugene McCarthy, bolstered by two thousand student volunteers who were dedicating full-time hours, and an estimated five thousand who would dedicate their weekends, was a mere two hundred and thirty votes of defeating Lyndon Johnson. Robert F. Kennedy, then senator and former Attorney General entered the Presidential race on March 16. That same day, U.S. ground troops from the Charlie Company rampaged

¹⁷⁵ Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 299

through My Lai, killing about five hundred Vietnamese civilians, including infants and the elderly. Three American fliers intervened to end the massacre, positioning a helicopter between the troops and the Vietnamese, as well as removing the wounded to a safe location. The soldiers involved were charged with criminal offenses. None, other than the platoon leader were convicted.

At home, violence followed civil rights protests. On March 28, Martin Luther King, Jr. marched in Memphis, Tennessee on behalf of the Memphis African American sanitation workers. Nearly six thousand marched with him, some breaking storefront windows. King was convinced to leave what turned out to be his last ever civil rights march. Soon after he left, violence erupted on the streets. One young man was killed, sixty were injured and one hundred fifty arrested.

Days later, President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the nation on March 31 and announced his intent to limit the war in Vietnam. He then shared his decision to not seek reelection. The Wisconsin primary on April 2 proved no challenge for Nixon. He won 79.4 percent of the Republican vote. McCarthy brought in 64 percent to now-withdrawn Johnson's 34 percent. Just two days after the primary, King was assassinated while spending the day at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Robert F. Kennedy, having been told of the murder of King just before making a speech in Indiana, amended his notes and called for his audience to "tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world," quoting Greek playwright Aeschylus.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Robert F. Kennedy, "Statement on Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr." (speech, Rally, 17th and Broadway, Indianapolis, April 4, 1968), <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/RFK-Speeches/Statement-on-the-Assassination-of-Martin-Luther-King.aspx>.

A gentle world would have to wait. Riots erupted across the nation following King's death. Forty-six deaths would result. In the midst of the pomp and circumstance of election season, the nation was wounded both at home and abroad. On Sunday, April 7, Nixon visited Mrs. King and the rest of the King family at their home in Atlanta. He attended Dr. King's funeral two days later. He canceled all political activity in the two weeks following. For Nixon, Johnson's decision against seeking reelection eased his journey to the White House, but the chaotic state of the nation perhaps posed his biggest opponent.

Affidavit aside, Rockefeller reentered the race on April 30th citing the events of the prior weeks as revelations as to the crises the American people faced. With Rockefeller back in, Ronald Reagan had an opening. A two-man contest against Nixon may have seemed insurmountable, but with the hope of Rockefeller denying votes to Nixon, Reagan placed his name on the ballot for the May 14 Nebraska primary. Nixon had little trouble surmounting the two. He garnered 70 percent of the votes. Reagan secured 22 percent and Rockefeller, five percent. The Oregon primary was on May 28, and for Nixon, it was his toughest battle yet. It was the last primary he would enter. He opted out of challenging Reagan in California, citing challenging Reagan's "favorite son status" as a risk of dividing the party. He'd continue his own unique strategy to secure his nomination. Unlike his opponents, Nixon campaigned on the ground in Oregon for the May 28 primary. He won 73 percent of the vote. Reagan trailed with 23 percent and

Rockefeller collected four percent. “It was far from over,” wrote Nixon, “but things were falling into place.”¹⁷⁷

Klein had been uncertain about joining the campaign but after Haldeman had asked him to meet for lunch at LAX in May of 1968, after the primaries were in full swing, he considered his options. Haldeman was worried about the direction press management and sought Klein’s help but Klein felt as though Haldeman would end up usurping the role anyway and that Nixon would certainly take a managerial role of his own, as he had done so many times in the past.¹⁷⁸ After Haldeman had spoken with Klein, so too did Nixon. At this point, Klein had taken many leaves of absence from his job in the newspaper business. This time, he decided, if he was going to do it, he’d need to resign. Ultimately, Klein decided he’d join the team, see if he liked the structure of the press operations and then make a final decision as to whether he would leave his position at the paper. Klein joined the Nixon presidential campaign on June 1 of 1968. Klein and Haldeman agreed that Ronald Ziegler, who had worked for Haldeman in the intervening years, and had stayed in contact with Klein since they had worked together in 1962, should join the press team as Klein’s assistant. Klein continued to train him on the newspaper business.

Klein immediately noticed the nonchalant nature of Nixon’s top campaign advisers toward the press when meeting with them at Key Biscayne, where Nixon was at the time. “To my dismay as the new campaign press manager, I discovered that neither

177 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 303

178 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. p 10.

[John] Mitchell nor Haldeman seemed worried about the fact that par to the press corps and staff had been marooned on an island offshore [in Key Biscayne], although I tried to explain the complications of separating the newsmen from the candidate,” he wrote.¹⁷⁹

Klein was acutely aware of the press’ apprehension with being separated from a candidate and understood the frustration they would be feeling. Despite his efforts to explain this to Mitchell and Haldeman, he noted that neither seemed particularly concerned, one sipping a beer and the other smoking a pipe discussing instead, the success of a meeting they had with Southern Republican leaders earlier in the week.

On June 4, primary election day in California, Klein agreed to provide commentary and engage in an interview on NBC. Klein was still new to the campaign. In fact, he’d only officially joined the team just three days prior to making his television appearance during the primary. Klein felt that both John Mitchell and Leonard Garment were unsure if Klein could handle television. Klein appeared on the show at midnight and then returned to his hotel. As he was watching television, he witnessed the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Robert Kennedy had taken the stage at a San Francisco Hotel. After addressing a large crowd, with a growing confidence that he would be able to bring calm to the nation, chaos erupted. At 12:13 A.M. on June 5, Kennedy was assassinated.

Instead of calling Nixon right away, Klein decided to call Haldeman first. Haldeman was asleep in the suite right below him. Haldeman and Klein watched the new coverage, trying to decide whether to wake Nixon and tell him the news or not. At that point, it was unclear if the shot was fatal. Ultimately, they decided to give Nixon a call,

¹⁷⁹ Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. p 13.

but they weren't the first to wake him. Nixon watched the California Primary on television from his New York apartment with his wife Pat, his daughters Tricia, Julie and his soon-to-be son-in-law David Eisenhower.

Nixon watched the June 4 California primary on television from his New York apartment with his wife Pat, his daughters Tricia and Julie and his future son-in-law David Eisenhower. Before he went to bed he said, "It sure looks like we'll be going against Bobby." Not long after, Eisenhower woke Nixon. "They shot Kennedy," he said.¹⁸⁰ The shooter, Sirhan Sirhan, was reportedly angered by Kennedy's pro-Israel rhetoric during his campaign.¹⁸¹ Kennedy's opponent for the Democratic party nomination, Hubert Humphrey would become the presumptive party candidate. The stage was set. Now, Nixon's team had to figure out how to leverage it.

Nixon's new strategy with the press had one significant difference over his last. He would simply avoid them. This wouldn't be a repeat of 1960. The constant campaigning was ultimately useless and arguably led to Nixon's exhaustion, illness and eventual loss. An individual campaigner had little reach in the grand scheme of things. Instead, the key was to utilize the reach of television as often as possible, while avoiding filtering his message via reporters and spending countless hours chasing opportunities to speak directly to voters. Minimal interaction with reporters to a minimum would be key.¹⁸²

180 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 305

181 Sirhan, a Palestinian with Jordanian citizenship, stated that he killed RFK because he supported Israel in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. He was sentenced to death after he assassinated Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. When California abolished the death penalty, his sentence was commuted to life in prison.

182 McGinniss, Joe. *The Selling of the President*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

Ray Price, a former editorial writer for the *New York Herald Tribune* and speech writer for Nixon during his campaign, recommended a careful strategy in late November of 1967.¹⁸³ He carefully and meticulously documented the ways in which Nixon and his team should create their image.

I know the whole business of contrived image-mongering is repugnant to RN, with its implication of slick gimmicks and phony merchandising...but it's simply not true that honesty is its own salesman; for example, it takes make-up to make a man look natural on TV. Similarly, it takes art to convey the truth from us to the viewer. And we have to bear constantly in mind that's not what we say that counts, but what the listener hears; not what we project, but how the viewer receives the impression.¹⁸⁴

By all historical accounts, Nixon was weary of television.¹⁸⁵ It was not something he knew or understood particularly well at the time. His experience with it had been poor and he viewed it as a gimmick. "He half suspected it was an Eastern liberal trick: one more way to make him look silly. It offended his sense of dignity, one of the truest senses he had," wrote McGinnis.¹⁸⁶ Although the decision to use television in his 1968 campaign was a difficult one for Nixon, Price knew that it would be their key to controlling an image he felt was often distorted or incomplete. The first task was to learn to control the medium, so to express to the public, what he desired.

Nixon's team would have to find a way to allow their candidate a degree of spontaneity while also protecting his image. Price wrote:

183 Price would later write most of Nixon's inaugural address.

184 Recommendations for General Strategy from Now through Wisconsin." Letter from Ray Price. November 28, 1967.

185 Minow, Newton N., John Bartlow Martin, and Lee M. Mitchell. Presidential television. Basic Books (AZ), 1973.

186 McGinnis, Joe. The Selling of the President. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

Our concentrated viewing of clips from the CBS library left a clear impression that RN comes across decidedly unevenly - sometimes rather badly, sometimes exceedingly well, and that the greater the element of informality and spontaneity the better he comes across. Spontaneity is difficult to convey in the formal setting of the standard press conference or a speech, when he's concentrating on the arrangement of words to convey a particular thought in a particular way.¹⁸⁷

Price suggested that the team orchestrate and then capture those moments of spontaneity, edit them and build a library of shots that would be available for various purposes. In essence, Nixon's campaign team was developing the first vestiges of the orchestrated packaging of his television image. This manufactured content could rival the material available through major broadcast networks. Distortion was inevitable through broadcast media but the act of distorting was necessary for the Nixon campaign as well. They were simply leveling the playing field - one negative distortion, countered by a positive message.¹⁸⁸ Nixon's team knew that Nixon didn't always come off favorably in front of the camera or in formal situations. That would have to be kept to a minimum. A new Nixon could come to life if taken out of the stodgy "two-dimensional, black-and-white image" that "adversary proceeding" style shows put him in. More casual show settings allowed Nixon to shine. "...this kind of show," wrote Price, "makes it possible to bring out a third dimension, and it's in this third dimension that the keys to victory lie."¹⁸⁹

187 Recommendations for General Strategy from Now through Wisconsin." Letter from Ray Price. November 28, 1967.

188 Media distortion is the act of using information in ways that intentionally misconstrue, mislead or establish false impressions regarding the subject in question. Distortion was considered unavoidable by Nixon's team as a result of commentary from members of the press that attempted to contextualize events and theorize outcomes as they unfolded, despite gaps in available information.

189 Recommendations for General Strategy from Now through Wisconsin." Letter from Ray Price. November 28, 1967.

Color too was vital. “I think that when watching black-and-white, we see a black-and-white world,” wrote William Gavin, a thirty-one-year-old English teacher from suburban Philadelphia who had written to Nixon in 1967, urging him to run and base his campaign on the use of television.¹⁹⁰ Gavin would later join Nixon in the White House as a speech writer. Gavin suggested that the use of color would encourage the audience to discover other details rather than fixate on one or two things within an image. Color would allow the public to see Nixon as he appeared in real life.

This notion was significant in the Nixon campaign. The aim was to move the public away from the preconceived Nixon narrative, which was generally unfavorable. Establishing a connection with Nixon as a person - - the capacity and potential to see Nixon as his aides saw him - - was far more critical.

I still remember,” wrote Gavin, “how stunned I was the first time I saw Kennedy in person, after his election - when he came striding into the State Department auditorium, and I saw that his hair was sandy-colored. I *knew* it was black, because that is what I saw in all those black-and-white images that filled my mind. And somehow this discovery threw my whole conception of the guy out of whack; since this thing I’d known wasn’t true, how much else that I knew might not be true? In this case, the truth somehow added a new dimension - and the same can happen if we can replace the black-and-white image of RN with a color image.¹⁹¹

Even the most basic aspects of the changing broadcast technology were analyzed for their role in creating a new Nixon, a new narrative that would supplant a tired and fatigued one. Nixon was vibrant and color television was going to accurately ensure that he was seen in true living color.

190 McGinniss, Joe. *The Selling of the President*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

191 McGinniss, Joe. *The Selling of the President*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

It was increasingly clear that Nixon's advisers felt that the way the *television* audience viewed Nixon was central to the success of the 1968 campaign. But it was also important that the audience was able to view themselves through Nixon's eyes. This had been accomplished by LBJ during one of his press conferences when a camera swung around and showed the audience, exposing other cameras in the process. This "behind-the-scenes" view allowed the television audience to see what LBJ was seeing, and essentially, to experience his point of view through his eyes.

It wasn't just about appearing on television or simply knowing how to use it. The strategy of the Nixon campaign was rooted in the idea that television provided an interactive platform unavailable in the past. There was a certain urgency in keeping Nixon moving, in a figurative sense. All Nixon's televised rhetoric was to be focused on the 1960s and 1970s rather than repeating the clichés of the 1950s.¹⁹²

After studying old television news clips from years past, Nixon's advisors showed him clips of both formal and informal settings and situations. According to Nixon:

The insight led to the decision that I would use the question-and answer technique extensively, not only in press conferences and public question sessions with student audiences but also in my paid political programming. In the campaign this evolved into the 'man in the arena' concept, in which I stood alone, with no podium, in the center of a stage, surrounded by an audience in bleacher-like tiers. In this setting I was asked questions by a panel of private citizens, sometimes joined by local reporters.¹⁹³

192 In the 1952 election, Eisenhower and Nixon campaigned on the platform of common and popular themes including the strengthening of democracy, reduction of taxes and spending, lowering debt and creating a more efficient and productive government. Nixon sought to focus on the issues of the day to differentiate the old from the new and to prove that he was a candidate of the times. (Vincent P. DeSantis, "The Presidential Election of 1952." *The Review of Politics* 15, no. 02 (1953): 148. JSTOR (1405219), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1405219.pdf>).

193 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 304

Klein had been advocating for this type of setting. It played to Nixon's strengths allowing him to bypass the stiff formality that came with the debate format and took advantage of Nixon's ability to connect with private citizens. Additionally, opting for the inclusion of local reporters was a more hospitable than settings open to 'Establishment' media.

Despite discussion of focusing on the future, the creation of 1968 version of Nixon would hinge significantly on his past. Though frustrated by what he saw as his own personal shortcomings, Nixon's team would leverage his time away from the political arena as a way to reconnect with the common man. It was a concept that Nixon had long attempted and would continue to use as a platform throughout his presidency. He was to be considered the epitome of the everyday man. He had emerged from humble surroundings and made his way to elite circles. He would be touted as a man of wisdom and experience. He was no stranger to the White House though he hadn't yet captured the Oval Office. But just as familiar as he was with Washington politics, he was equally familiar with the plight of the everyday man. His attempts, and failures to win political seats were blips as far as his campaign team was concerned.¹⁹⁴ The cultivation of Nixon's image as an outsider, after serving eight years as Vice President of the United States, would be a significant one. It would be a strategy that would follow him into the White House.

In an effort to align himself with younger demographic, and shake off a little of his perceived intensity, Nixon appeared on a September 16 episode of "Laugh-In" with

¹⁹⁴ Ambrose, Stephen E. *The triumph of a politician: 1962-1972*. London: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

the famous line “sock it to me.”¹⁹⁵ “Laugh-In” was a somewhat risqué sketch-comedy program for its time and clashed with Nixon’s usual buttoned-up image. Later, producer George Schlatter told the *Los Angeles Times*: ‘All of Nixon's advisors were saying, 'You can't do this, it will ruin you.’ Nixon, understanding of the power of television, decided to appear on the show anyway. Through appearances like these, a “hidden” side of Nixon provided the public with a much less rigid stereotype.

The world was changing and Nixon’s campaign team knew this. What they would continue to learn is how drastically the media landscape was changing the world. Print media was seemingly easier for Nixon’s team to manage. Print was an ancient medium, which made it infinitely easier to navigate. Broadcast media however, was creating a world that was far less regimented and clear. Print converted the chaotic abstract into a clear order, divided into clear categories. Broadcast media was muddling this all up, mixing categories and creating abstract information.¹⁹⁶

Someone needed to bring order to chaos. Harry Treleaven was tasked to do it. Treleaven, was hired as a creative director of advertising in 1967 and primarily focused on repairing negative perceptions of Nixon’s personality.¹⁹⁷ As an advertising executive at the Fifth Avenue office of Fuller, Smith and Ross in New York City, he knew the power of image. A memo from his advertising agency, documented the plan for a July 1st

195 Laugh-In was a variety show created by Digby Wolfe in 1967. It featured cultural icons of the time and went off air in 1973.; “Sock it to me” was a catchphrase used on Laugh-In. On an episode in 1968 Richard Nixon delivered the phrase usually said by the starlet Judy Carne.

196 Herbert G. Klein recorded interview by Timothy J. Naftali and David Greenberg, 20 February 2007, the Richard Nixon Oral History Project of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

197 Treleaven’s first political position was as a consultant for George Bush. He worked as an advertising executive and is credited with creating the “Nixon's the One!” slogan.

taped question-and-answer session for Nixon and an intimate group of Illinois and Michigan citizens. The tape was to air the following week by stations around Illinois.¹⁹⁸ Because Nixon was required to be in New York at the time of the taping, the citizens were flown to New York. Assistance in recruiting the group was needed, but very specific individuals were as to be selected:

“Six people, residents of Illinois, from as many different parts of the state as possible. Three could be from the Chicago area, but no more. The group should have a young look. Try to stick close to these ages: three 25-35; three 35-50, preferably around 40. Four men and two women, or three and three. They should be reasonably attractive, white-representative of the average middle-class voter. Most important, they should be intelligent, articulate, well informed, and interested in current affairs. With a few questions you should be able to establish their awareness of today’s issues; crime, race problems, inflation, taxes, Vietnam, rioting, etc. They don’t have to experts - just have a reasonable knowledge of what’s going on and a concern about the situation. They do not necessarily have to be Nixon supporters. In fact, it’s desirable that some of the participants be uncommitted - or leaning in another direction - just so they’re not actually hostile. They should not be directly associated with the Nixon campaign, or in politics as an office-holder or candidate. Find business and professional people, housewives, etc. Look for extroverts who will not be intimidated by a television studio environment. There will be no studio audience, nevertheless, we want to be careful not to recruit anybody who’ll freeze in front of camera.”¹⁹⁹

The participants would be offered a first-class round-trip plane ticket and two nights in a hotel with all meals and other expenses covered during their time in New York. The men were to dress in suits or sports coats and wear a tie and the women, a daytime dress or suit. They would be responsible for drafting with their own questions before arriving at the studio for taping. It was highly recommended that they make

198 "Notes Re Recruiting Panels for Question and Answer Tapings." Memorandum from Fuller and Smith and Ross Office. June 26, 1968.

199 "Notes Re Recruiting Panels for Question and Answer Tapings." Memorandum from Fuller and Smith and Ross Office. June 26, 1968.

themselves aware of the news of the day by a thorough reading of the *Sunday New York Times* and the most recent issues of *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time* and *Newsweek*.

The intentionality behind each visual choice for Nixon's campaign was apparent. Nothing was to be seen that wasn't intended to be seen. Yet, this intentionality was not to appear, well, too intentional. That was part of the art. Nixon employed Madison Avenue. His team was stacked with advertising men who carefully navigated his campaign and this bled into every aspect of his campaign's strategy. Treleven wrote in his notes "Cuteness, obliqueness, way-outness, slickness - any gimmicks that proclaim 'Madison Avenue at work here' should be avoided. Imaginative approaches, contemporary techniques - yes. But beware of 'over-creativity.' The basic seriousness of our purpose, our candor, must show plainly in everything we do."²⁰⁰

Reagan, who until this point had skirted around his official announcement as a candidate for president, announced his intentions just before the Republican Party convention in Miami Beach on August 5, 1968. Nixon landed in Miami the same day of Reagan's announcement. Upon arriving at his Hilton Plaza Hotel, he called John Mitchell. He asked him the count. With a chuckle, Mitchell replied, "I told you that you didn't need to worry, Dick. We've got everything under control." As the nominations began, Nixon asked a handful of individuals to join him and his family in their hotel suite. Among them were members of Nixon's future White House team, including Bob Haldeman and Dwight Chapin. With a final count of 692 votes, 25 more than required, Nixon was officially nominated as the party's presidential candidate, beating out Nelson

²⁰⁰"Notes Re Recruiting Panels for Question and Answer Tapings." Memorandum from Fuller and Smith and Ross Office. June 26, 1968.

Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan. Nixon's acceptance speech amplified his desire to reintroduce himself to the nation:

I see another child tonight.
He hears a train go by at night and he dreams of far away places where he'd like to go.
It seems like an impossible dream.
But he is helped on his journey through life.
A father who had to go to work before he finished the sixth grade, sacrificed everything he had so that his sons could go to college.
A gentle, Quaker mother, with a passionate concern for peace, quietly wept when he went to war but she understood why he had to go.
A great teacher, a remarkable football coach, an inspirational minister encouraged him on his way.
A courageous wife and loyal children stood by him in victory and also defeat.
And in his chosen profession of politics, first there were scores, then hundreds, then thousands, and finally millions who worked for his success.
And tonight he stands before you - nominated for President of the United States of America.²⁰¹

Just one day later, he would appoint Spiro Agnew to be his running mate.²⁰²

Nixon was committed to continue his campaign as the official presidential nominee with just as much control over his image. The first Gallup poll after the convention showed Nixon ahead of Democratic nominee Humphrey 45 to 29 percent.

Increasingly volatile moments for the Democratic Party only helped Nixon's efforts. The Democratic National Convention in Chicago began somewhat peacefully as the police worked to enforce an 11 o'clock curfew. Demonstrations abounded in the days following the August 26 opening of the convention and took a violent turn. Most

201 Richard Nixon: "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," August 8, 1968. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

202 Before becoming Nixon's running mate, Agnew graduated with a law degree from the University of Baltimore School of Law. He had earned a bronze star for his service in the second World War. He would later be known for his aggressive tactics and rhetoric against the press.

accounts of the convention report that the police beat protestors and marchers, some until they were unconscious. At least 100 people were sent to the emergency room and nearly 200 were arrested. Undeterred by the negative attention at the Convention, Humphrey launched his campaign as the Democratic nominee at the New York City Labor Day parade.

The advertising of Nixon between Labor Day and the election was broken down into two clear objectives. One was to present “Nixon the Man.” This was a direct effort to dispel the negative feelings about Nixon’s personality that plagued his campaign. The second was to show exactly where Nixon stood on the issues that plagued the nation. The first would be accomplished through a series of one-hour television rallies. Perfectly curated and orchestrated by Treleven and his team, the rallies would include planned partisan cheering and a panel stacked with well-educated and well-appointed editors, professors, business executives and articulate and well-informed experts. These would then be carefully edited into five-minute segments for local stations to play in the weeks following the original telecast. A permanent team of producers, writers and editors would need to oversee the project and of course, a PR component would be necessary to ensure that the imaging was just right and to ensure that the pre-promotion and post-publicity activities surround the telecast were effectively utilized. Nixon should also participate in a series of five-minute dialogues with nationally known leaders, suggested Treleven. These would take place in an informal setting, an apartment or a carefully appointed set. Eight to ten of these in a day would do.

Nixon’s strategically automated and carefully navigated campaign hinged not on a traditional platform of issues, but on ensuring that he stayed in line with the reboot of his

image. At the time, Nixon was largely viewed as grumpy and aloof. He had privately expressed that he lost elections because he had treated an adolescent American voter as an adult. As Treleaven noted, "It's is very difficult to get a man's opinions considered or even listened to if he is not liked."²⁰³ Throughout the 1968 campaign Nixon was careful to avoid any position that could be used to damage him later on. In fact, "...at the age of 54, after twenty years in public life, Richard Nixon still needed time to work out his vision for the nation's future. Without a clear vision of his own, and with an image that was in great need of reform, Nixon's team focused not on his positions, but on his non-positions. They knew the climate of the nation and the desire for a change. By carefully manipulating broadcast media, they used symbols, images and rhetoric to construct Nixon's image in a way that would personify that desired change."²⁰⁴

Nixon may have disliked television, but it offered him something print simply could not. "Television is particularly useful to the politician who can be charming but lack ideas. Print is for ideas," wrote McGinnis on the marketing of Nixon during the 1968 campaign. "Newspapermen write not about people but policies; the paragraphs can be slid around like blocks. Everyone is colored gray. Columnists - and commentators in the more polysyllabic magazines - concentrate on ideology. They do not care what a man sounds like; only what he thinks. For the candidate who does not, such exposure can be embarrassing. He needs another way to reach the people."²⁰⁵ Television was focused on

203 "Notes Re Recruiting Panels for Question and Answer Tapings." Memorandum from Fuller and Smith and Ross Office. June 26, 1968.

204 McGinnis, Joe. *The Selling of the President*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

205 McGinnis, Joe. *The Selling of the President*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1969.

personality, not on ideas. To be successful on television one simply had to be invited back. “The TV candidate, then, is measured not against his predecessors - not against a standard of performance established by two centuries of democracy...How well does he handle himself? Does he mumble, does he twitch, does he make me laugh? Do I feel warm inside? Style becomes substance. The medium is the massage and the masseur gets the votes,” wrote McGinnis.

George Wallace, a Democrat governor of Alabama, entered the presidential race in February under the American Independent Party, a group he had formed. His platform was largely based on his pro-segregation policies that were soundly rejected by the mainstream Democratic Party.²⁰⁶ At the time, however, his views were abhorrent among a large portion of voters. Wallace commanded the Deep South. Nixon knew he had little chance to beat Wallace in states like Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, without changing his views on civil rights. Wallace also pitted the white, working class against intellectuals, establishment elites and bureaucrats. It was his way to chip at the possible support of Nixon and Humphrey. “Yes, they've looked down their nose at you and me a long time. They've called us rednecks, the Republicans and the Democrats,” he said at a rally, “Well, we're going to show Mr. Nixon and Mr. Humphrey that there sure are a lot of rednecks in this country.” Wallace tapped into a fear and anger and successfully convinced many Democrats to support a candidate outside the party. By late September, Wallace claimed 21 percent of the vote. He was by far, one of election

206 Carter, Dan T. *The politics of rage: George Wallace, the origins of the new conservatism, and the transformation of American politics.* LSU Press, 2000.

history's most successful losers. His campaign had substantial funds and his sometimes outrageous rhetoric bought him a significant publicity.²⁰⁷

With Wallace's success in the race, Nixon's margin of victory was potentially very slim. Despite a 12 percent margin over Humphrey after the Democratic National Convention, Nixon was far from victory. In the weeks prior to the election, Nixon directed all of his energy on Humphrey. He attacked Humphrey on all fronts, from his alleged riot-inciting rhetoric to his exaggeration of poverty as a cause of crime. It may have seemed as though the "old Nixon" had returned for a final run as an aggressive campaigner. Aggressiveness would be required in the coming weeks, as President Johnson placed a call to all three candidates with news that could potentially put Humphrey over the top.

On October 26, after numerous White House calls, discussions with advisers and a reassessment of campaign strategy, Nixon released the following statement:

In the last thirty-six hours, I have been advised of a flurry of meetings in the White House and elsewhere on Vietnam. I am told that top officials in the administration have been driving very hard for an agreement on a bombing halt, accompanied possibly by a cease-fire, in the immediate future. I have since learned these reports are true. I am...told that this spurt of activity is a cynical, last-minute attempt by President Johnson to salvage the candidacy of Mr. Humphrey. This I do not believe. At no time in the campaign have I found the President nothing but impartial and candid in his dealings with the major presidential contenders about Vietnam...In every conversation I have had with him he has made it clear that he will not play politics with this war.²⁰⁸

207 Carter, Dan T. *The politics of rage: George Wallace, the origins of the new conservatism, and the transformation of American politics.* LSU Press, 2000.

208 Richard Nixon, October 25, 1968

Although Nixon suggested publicly that he was in full support of Johnson's choices, documents suggest that he used other channels to attempt to convince South Vietnamese allies to hold out for peace until after the election. He promised that he would get them a better deal than Johnson. While underhanded, Nixon believed that Johnson had initiated the bombing cessation to shift favor to Humphrey and give him the election win.

Johnson announced a complete halt of bombing in Vietnam the night before Nixon took the stage at his Madison Square Garden rally on October 31. The announcement resulted in a surge of support for Humphrey. It would seem as though the Democrats were able to put an end to the war after all. That outlook was short lived as South Vietnamese President Thieu announced that he would not participate in Johnson's negotiations. Peace was not at hand as suggested, and Nixon and his team capitalized on making that known in the days just prior to the election.

"I scheduled a four-hour long telethon - two hours for the eastern United States and two for the West - the day before the election...some of my advisors had thought that such a costly and tiring effort was not needed, but I overruled them. I remembered 1960 and felt I should do everything possible that might make the difference in a close election. It was my best campaign decision. Had we not had that last telethon, I believe Humphrey would have squeaked through with a close win on Election Day," wrote Nixon.²⁰⁹ Election Day was a grueling back-and-forth between Humphrey and Nixon. It wasn't until the next day, November 6th that the major networks would declare Nixon the

209 Nixon, Richard. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. pp. 329

winner. As he stood before hundreds of supporters at the Waldorf-Astoria he said, “Having lost a close one eight years ago and having won a close one this year, I can say this - - winning’s a lot more fun.”²¹⁰

Although Klein served as Manager of Communications in Nixon’s presidential campaign, his role was somewhat limited. By his own admission, he knew before taking on the role that Haldeman would likely retain a great deal of power of the direction of the communications strategy. His own telling of his years with Nixon reveal much more detail regarding Nixon’s previous campaigns than his 1968 presidential campaign. Of significance, however is what Klein considered to be a failing of the news media. “The basic principle, however, was that the former Vice President could come across on television far better than most newsmen realized. They remembered only the first debate with Kennedy and the 1962 ‘last press conference,’” he wrote. “They had forgotten that the 1952 ‘Checkers Speech’ drew more response than any political statement in history.”²¹¹ As a result of this oversight, Klein argued, that newsmen were surprised by Nixon’s ability to command a television appearance, and the surprise lead to more favorable coverage, aiding in Nixon’s win.

Throughout the campaign, Klein noticed the naivety of the young Nixon press team. Though enthusiastic and loyal, few had real experience dealing with the press. Klein would recall one instance where a young staffer felt the best way for the press team to appear sharp and astute was to deliver press releases to papers and wire services in

210 Richard Nixon, November 6th, 1968

211 Klein, Herbert G. Making it Perfectly Clear. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. p 20.

Cadillac-chauffeured limousines. Klein was relieved to have stopped him before he could carry out his plans.²¹² While that particular innovation for press strategy was quickly ended, Klein described a different innovation that remains a staple in modern campaigns. Klein and his team organized for Republican leaders, recruited by the campaign committee, to speak nationally on “party line” issues. He would select news themes that spoke to the citizens of each area the Republican leaders would be speaking and worked with speech writers to create a unified message. Klein understood the power of local media in responding to events like these. “Several regional stories in a day can have the impact of a national news story,” he wrote.²¹³

Ultimately, Klein spent the 1968 campaign reconfiguring Nixon’s press team and training Ziegler in the process. Though he knowingly had to relinquish some of his control to Haldeman and Nixon himself, his independent tasks ultimately produced significant gains in that he had prepared and positioned others on his team for the path to the White House by keeping the press unencumbered and maintaining their confidence in a new Nixon.

The year 1968 may have been a combative year for the nation, but it was Richard Nixon’s most triumphant year as a politician. While the world witnessed a string of tragedies, on American soil and overseas, it also saw the beginning of a new America. Nixon had emerged victorious in a close election. His team had helped carry him through a repositioning of his “loser” image and elevate him to the highest office in the land.

212 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. p 21.

213 Klein, Herbert G. *Making it Perfectly Clear*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. p 21.

Nixon would be the first President elected without party majority in either the House or the Senate since the 1800s. The legislative divisions in the already divisive climate of 1968 America, would prove an insurmountable challenge in many regards. Nixon's image-building strategy was certainly secure, but his political confidence would be increasingly tested throughout his presidency.

Regardless of the nuances of how television was to be used during the 1968 campaign, one thing was certain. Nixon's team was making broadcast media a priority. It wasn't about winning debates, it was about winning audiences. 1968 had ushered in a new Nixon, and with it, a new way to package a president. While the strategists who defined his campaign would largely remain with him, outsiders would emerge as key players throughout his presidency. If the 1968 election was the beginnings of a presidency focused on image-building, his tenure at the White House would trigger a quest to perfect it.

CHAPTER 3

LAUNCHING THE WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

When Nixon began building his Administration, the first person he hired was his personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods. Woods had been part of Nixon's political trajectory since 1951 and Nixon saw her commitment as an unwavering dedication and faith in him. He then asked H.R. Haldeman to serve as his Chief of Staff. Nixon envisioned Haldeman's role, at the time, as mostly administrative. Nixon noted Haldeman's ego and felt it was an asset. As a gatekeeper, he would have to turn people away from meetings with the President and Nixon felt Haldeman could handle the unpopularity a role like that might take.²¹⁴

Nixon was extremely aware of the role that the media had played in his previous campaigns and the role it would inevitably play throughout his presidency.

Since the advent of television as our primary means of communication and source of information, modern Presidents must have specialized talents at once more superficial and more complicated than those of their predecessors. They must try to master the art of manipulating the media not only to win in politics but in order to further the programs and causes they believe in; at the same time they must avoid at all costs the charges of trying to manipulate the media. In the modern presidency, concerns for image must rank with concern for substance... today it is a fact of life, and anyone who seeks a position of influence in politics must cope with it; anyone who seeks a position of leadership must master it.²¹⁵

Nixon's relationship with the news media, particularly following the 1960 campaign, was different. Now the President of the United States, Nixon did not overestimate his own power over the media. "The media are far more powerful than the

214 Nixon, Richard M. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

215 Nixon, Richard M. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

President in creating public awareness and shaping public opinion, for the simple reason that the media always have the last word,” he wrote. Nixon knew one man who firmly grasped this fact. He created the position of Director of Communication for Herbert Klein.

Klein had been with Nixon since his early forays into politics. He worked on Nixon’s campaign against Voorhis in 1946 and had cultivated a relationship with Haldeman, solidifying his place as a member of Nixon’s inner circle during the 1968 campaign. Over the course of working on Nixon’s campaigns, he came to know Ron Ziegler in 1962. Years later, with Nixon as President, the two met on a Saturday afternoon at the Pierre Hotel. “[We] decided that it would be good to follow the kind of thing which we had evolved as a novel thing in the campaign of having a two-part press structure. I felt that Ron would be a very good Press Secretary. The President also felt comfortable with Ron; it was kind of a mutual decision... I felt there ought to be an outside thing with the press across the country, and so we came up, mutually agreed on how this office would function in a very basic way and [on] its goals,” said Klein in a 1973 interview:

It gave me a lot more freedom and a chance to create this job. I didn't have to move each moment with the candidate which I had done [for] a lot of years. You know, it was sort of a mutually agreed-upon thing, but we couldn't figure out exactly how to work it out except that Ron would be the Press Secretary. We finally came up with the way that we could do the things that he [Nixon] wanted, which was to have a close liaison with the [Republican] National Committee and use my political things that way, as well as working with the Departments.²¹⁶

216 Klein, Herb. Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. Exit Interview. Room 160 of the Old Executive Office Building, July 13, 1973.

The two ended their meeting for a very important event, according to Klein. Both die-hard sports fans, and Californians they broke to prepare for the SC-UCLA [University of Southern California vs. University of California at Los Angeles] football game that was on the same day. It was being televised and Klein had invited some of the to-be infamous Nixon aides. “My wife hosted a little party with Bob Haldeman and Bob Finch and myself and Ron Ziegler and two or three others, with some UCLA, maybe John Ehrlichman, and some SC [University of Southern California] people. And he [Nixon] went back to his apartment, and he would call us occasionally on a play or something. So, that was the day of my decision to come into the Administration.”²¹⁷

Klein worked closely with Ziegler but had distinctly different tasks. He dealt with coordinating information and improving the Administration’s system of dealing with disseminated media. “I felt that there was a great need to relay what happened in the government to the editors and broadcasters across the country and so [I] set out to find a way do to do that best...” said Klein. Klein directed the Administration’s relationship with the broadcast media. While Ziegler played an important role as Press Secretary, his involvement in developing new television strategy was limited.

Planting the Seeds of a Press Strategy

The Nixon White House saw the careful construction of a purposeful media strategy. In one of the most politically and culturally significant times in the nation’s history, President Nixon and his aides would begin the establishment of one of the most

²¹⁷ Klein, Herb. Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. Exit Interview. Room 160 of the Old Executive Office Building, July 13, 1973.

lasting and influential contributions of the entire presidency. While public memory seemingly assumes President Nixon as the culprit behind an inaccessible White House, investigation into the conversations between his closest aides establishes a much more substantial dialogue.

There is little question that Nixon had what might best be described as an obsession with his image, but that obsession was hardly unique. Johnson before him held a similar concern with the emergence of television and equipped the White House with an array of television sets and recording devices that would allow for tabs to be kept on the media milieu.²¹⁸ Nixon White House created official channels through which to “handle” the press, the attempt to do so was calculated and organized.

Fresh off a campaign that effectively kept the press at arm’s length, the media relations team of the Nixon White House wasted little time ensuring that their strategy was implemented and improved upon, particularly in regard to network news. The nation witnessed numerous protests as the emergence of a counter-culture became more defined.²¹⁹ So too was the nation searching for the stars and fulfilling JFK’s dream.²²⁰ The media extensively covered Nixon’s long-distance call to the Apollo 11 astronauts on

218 Nixon, Richard M. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

219 The counter-culture brought forth themes incapsulated in phrases like “Make love, not war,” and “Don’t trust anyone over 30.” Widespread demonstrations against war and “the establishment” broke out across the nation. Riots on university campuses accompanied an emerging drug culture, changes in sexual attitudes and a push for the rejection of capitalist systems. Cities like San Francisco became havens for anti-establishment communities and the nation saw a spike in alternative lifestyles that, unabashed, broke free of the social constructs of the previous generation.

220 During his presidency, John F. Kennedy announced a dramatic goal of sending an American to the moon before the end of the decade. Motivated to “catch up and overtake” the Soviet Union in the “space race,” Kennedy shared this dream during a special joint session of Congress on May 25th 1961. (National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA History Office (29 Oct 2013) Retrieved from <https://history.nasa.gov/moondec.html>).

the moon, his trip to Hawaii to visit them in quarantine upon their return and his subsequent visit with them after their quarantine was completed.²²¹ A nation looking to the stars was also faced with disturbing images of an increasingly bloody war. As soldiers trudged through trenches, and men of science traversed worlds untouched, there emerged another significant legacy that was perhaps far less publicly pervasive but equally transcendent. The Nixon press strategy was planting its roots.

The News Summary

Richard Nixon was sworn into office as the 37th President of the United States on January 20, 1969. From the first day of his presidency, Nixon required a daily “News Summary.” To create a more direct relationship with media beyond the three broadcast networks and the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, Nixon’s staff produced and utilized a News Summary system which catalogued media content each day. These summaries included articles, editorials, columns and reports from fifty newspapers, thirty magazines and two major wire services. The Summary covered everything said about Nixon, the Administration and world events in the past 24 hours. They were sometimes as long as fifty pages and often no less than twenty. The News Summary staff would comb through dozens of dailies and study bylines, getting to know each reporter or

221 “The primary objective of Apollo 11 was to complete a national goal set by President John F. Kennedy on May 25, 1961: perform a crewed lunar landing and return to Earth. Objectives also included scientific exploration, deployment of a tv camera and a solar wind composition experiment. Also deployment of a seismic experiment package and laser ranging retroreflector.” (Loff, Sarah. "Apollo 11 Mission Overview." NASA. April 17, 2015. Accessed August 06, 2017. https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/missions/apollo11.html.)

columnist and analyzing their slant. The staff set up shop in the Old Executive Building just west of the White House in rooms 125,127 and 129.²²²

While the News Summary was a favorite for Nixon, it was separate from his communications department run by Klein. Klein seemed to have preferred it that way. He had made attempts to explain to Nixon that news media was not collectively conspiring against him, but the summaries tended to emphasize news critical of the President. While the Summaries were meant to aggregate and inform, they also served a role in reinforcing Nixon's paranoia and tumultuous relationship with the press. The summaries often blurred the line between summarization and biased annotation. Because Nixon himself didn't consume the news first-hand, he relied on these filtered reports. He used them to assess his progress and subsequently to create tasks for his aides, some of whom expressed concern over his reliance on them.

Advertising Men Turned Advisors

Nixon was careful to utilize his advertising experts turned advisers when there was potential to establish a positive public image, but that practice sometimes straddled the line between piety and publicity.²²³ The first Sunday following the inauguration already set an unprecedented tone. Sunday worship, led by preacher Billy Graham was held in the East Room of the White House. This was uncommon, as services prior to this had been held at a local Washington Church. Nixon suggested the White House service

222 On November 9, 1999, President Bill Clinton approved legislation that would change the name from the Old Executive Office Building to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

223 Ambrose, Stephen E. Nixon: Volume 2: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

was an attempt to limit publicity and keep society reporters away. Often comparing them to the Kennedy's, the Nixon's fell short in their ability to host parties or demonstrate a particular degree of class and sophistication. Nixon was having none of it. "I would just as soon keep the society reporters away altogether (if we could get away with it)."²²⁴

Nixon's working office was set up in the Old Executive Office building just west of the White House. "P [President] had decided he wanted to have a separate office in that building as a hideaway working office where he would not be interrupted by the constant activity in and around the West Wing and Oval Office...the one he picked was right at the top of the entry stairs and easily accessible," wrote Haldeman in his daily diary entry.²²⁵ The Oval Office would be reserved for formal occasions. Haldeman would set up shop near there, in a small space next to the Oval Office. A short corridor connected the two. In the evenings Nixon would use the Lincoln Sitting Room on the second floor of the White House to continue his work. Mrs. Nixon had added the President's favorite brown easy chair and footstool from their New York apartment.

"Disaster of the day," wrote Haldeman in his diary on January 29, "...was a leak by the Communications Director Herb Klein about the European trip, made the headlines in the *Star* tonight." Haldeman noted that surprisingly Nixon wasn't too upset by the leak and that Klein, "of course," denied it.²²⁶ Nixon embarked on his first presidential trip

224 Ronald L. Ziegler Papers, 1 May 1969, News Summaries, White House Special Files, 1969-1974. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

225 Haldeman, H. R. *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House*. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1994.

226 From the time Klein joined Nixon's team for the 1968 campaign, he understood that Haldeman would function more-so as a gatekeeper than a team member. Often requiring that Klein report to him and cutting him off from the President, Klein's relationship with Haldeman grew increasingly tense. Klein advocated for

abroad on February 23. Over the next eight days, he would visit various cities in Europe in hopes of establishing a principle. He wanted the people to know that he was a President who would first consult with allies before negotiating with adversaries.²²⁷ “The Alliance, held together in its first two decades by a common fear, needs now the sense of cohesiveness supplied by common purpose. I am eager for an early exchange of views on all the important issues that concern us. I favor intimate and frank consultations, and I am delighted that it has proved possible to make this journey so early in my administration. I am going to discuss, not to propose; for work, not for ceremony,” said Nixon in his February 6 announcement of the trip.²²⁸ He attended the meeting of the North Atlantic Council and met with King Baudoin I in Brussels, delivered several public addresses in London, attended the Bundestag in West Berlin, met with the president and prime minister in Rome and then with French President Charles De Gaulle in Paris, ending it all with an audience with Pope Paul VI.

But even across the pond, he couldn’t escape from some of his press adversaries. While in London, Nixon attended a small dinner party on 10 Downing Street. Among the guests was John Freeman, the editor of the British magazine, *New Statesman*.²²⁹ Freeman was the newly appointed British ambassador in Washington. In 1962, the magazine

an open relationship with the press whereas Haldeman supported the idea of a tight inner circle that shared little with outsiders in an attempt to prevent leaks.

227 On February 23, 1968 Nixon departed on an eight day trip to capitol cities in Western Europe including Brussels, London, Bonn, Berlin, Rome, and Paris.

228 Richard Nixon: "Statement on the Forthcoming Visit to Western Europe.," February 6, 1969.

229 The New Statement, a cultural and political magazine based in the United Kingdom, was founded in 1913. It would become one of the most influential and respected magazines in the country. Notably, the magazine reviews politics and politicians.

described Pat Brown's win over Nixon as a victory for decency in public life. "I decided to relieve the tension by addressing it directly. In my toast after dinner I said that American journalists had written far worse things about me than had appeared in Freeman's magazine. It was now a part of the past and best forgotten," Nixon recalled. "After all," he said, "he is the new diplomat and I am the new statesman."²³⁰ The trip was an important one for the Administration. Not only was it Nixon's first foreign trip as President of the United States, it was also the first time the press teams would have to handle a large-scale press event.

The Nixon Administration's handling of the media was both meticulous and mangled. While the Administration seemed to have a significant grip on strategies surrounding the written press, they were much less capable when it came to the still-new technology of broadcast news. Early on, the President himself was starting to feel the necessity to get ahead of TV. Haldeman wrote to Alexander Butterfield, deputy assistant to Nixon, on March 20, 1969, "In developing the weekly game plan for the President, it is extremely important that major emphasis be given to TV coverage as well as general news releases. In other words, the game plan should look specifically at satires that are slanted to TV and that will be given major television play."²³¹ The Administration quickly recognized that despite its handle on the written press, the seeming dominance of broadcast television, friend or foe, was of primary concern. Where the press was

230 Nixon, Richard, "The Memoirs of Richard Nixon, pp. 371

231 H.R. Haldeman to Alexander Butterfield; 20 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klien, March, 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

concerned, newspapers and presidents had an already long and vibrant history. TV broadcasters were still relatively new in the Nixon era, and the Administration saw the budding relationship as both an opportunity to infiltrate and to instigate. The potential power of broadcast media was not lost on Klein. He understood quickly that the President would not only benefit from utilizing broadcasting techniques as he had done in his campaigns, but in nurturing an emerging industry in hopes of placing the Administration in the right position with its leaders, a position that would prove to be both lucrative and sometimes ludicrous in the coming years.

Attempts to create relationships came in many forms. The President himself delivered speeches at broadcasters' events. Following one such gathering, Klein wrote to Haldeman on March 25, "Please tell the President that I believe his remarks for the Broadcasters could not have been more appropriate. They were well received and I will have a more detailed report on this later. The comments were such that the Broadcasters felt he had taken them into his confidence, and I believe this will be most helpful in the days ahead. I noticed in the audience most of the power structure of the broadcasting industry."²³² Klein's attention to the power core was significant in that it showed the beginnings of more tactful and deliberate analysis not only of news coverage but of the composition of the industry itself.

232 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman; 25 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, March, 1969; Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

The American People vs. The American Audience

The difference between the news-consuming American public and the American public in general would prove significant for the Administration. To television broadcasters they may have been one-in-the-same, but to the Nixon Administration, powerful distinctions would emerge. The President's rhetoric toward the broadcast news industry was no accident. To Nixon, there were those who knew him through his policies and those who knew him through their television set. Haldeman and Klein often exchanged notes carefully documenting the desire of the President to be completely aware, not only of the media response in regard to his image, but in analyzing that response to determine whether his efforts and those of the Administration were fruitful.²³³ In some cases, the mere coverage of a statement, event or initiative was a determination of its worthwhileness. How the President appeared to be doing was just as important, if not more important, than what he was actually doing.²³⁴

The week following Klein's compliments of the President's interaction with broadcasters, Haldeman described the emergence of what would become one of the most formidable media strategies established up to that time. The President, he told Klein, would like a process that tracked all stories. In addition, the careful planning of White House events would encourage daily news coverage. The audit process of television and print coverage on the President and the Administration on a daily basis and the

233 Klein, Herb. Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. Exit Interview. Room 160 of the Old Executive Office Building, July 13, 1973.

234 Here, the Nixon Administration was beginning to focus on the concept of "perception versus reality." Though it was not formally identified as this at the time, the acknowledgement of the importance of appearance over fact shaped what would become their public relations apparatus.

documentation of reactions by White House aides. The results would could suggest the encouragement or strategic discouragement of those in the industry.²³⁵ In a memo to Klein Haldeman wrote, “The point here is that, as you well know, he is always pushing to be sure that we are adequately registering our reactions, both positive and negative, to the commentators and newscasters and networks when they do a particularly good or particularly unfair job of reporting and coverage. He wants to be sure, first of all, that we are auditing the television news and, secondly, that we are getting **our word** in when we should.”²³⁶

Klein adhered to the request with a distinct two-point plan and responded just days later:

1. We will push additionally the daily TV aspect with the Cabinet members. We have been doing this considerably, particularly in connection with special trips or speeches by the members, but we will see to it that it increases. Incidentally, what we monitor is the network news programs at 6:30 p.m., and that is what is contained in the news report. One other feature which is not generally considered: Each network sends and this is used heavily on the local shows at 6:30 p.m. and 11 p.m.; and frequently is a larger audience than the Cronkite’s, etc. Much of the President’s and Cabinets* TV material is being carried on this. It is difficult to monitor this because it is different in each market, but we do well on it.²³⁷

Klein’s assessment of local television and its potential to grow larger audiences would see a great deal of traction later in the Nixon Administration. As Nixon’s aides continued to develop and refine their media strategy for television news, they would

235 This initiative, outlined by Klein ushered in a systematic and routine monitoring of media analytics, a concept that is widely used and relied on in modern media systems.

236 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 27 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, March, 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

237 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 29 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, March, 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

begin to see the value of local markets and create additional methods to explore how to capitalize on them. For now, the major three networks would remain of primary importance and the political shows they carried would be carefully leveraged. Klein continued to push his own ideas forward but was often weighed down by the tasks placed on him by Haldeman. While serving as director of his own office, it was becoming evident that his role may be more reactive, than proactive.

Vietnam, Eisenhower and Foreign Affairs

Tensions surrounding the war in Vietnam were intensifying. Nixon's trip to Europe provided ample opportunity to discuss the situation with other world leaders. However, Nixon had little interest in delaying action. Even prior to his inauguration, Nixon had asked Henry Kissinger, his National Security Advisor, to prepare a report on enemy activity in Cambodia. He had plans for an offensive on the Ho Chi Minh trail in that region that would cut supply lines and cripple enemy forces in South and North Vietnam. Not only did he hope this would make it possible to withdraw American troops, he also sought to prove that he was someone who would do anything. On February 18, Kissinger informed Nixon that Communist forces were utilizing the Ho Chi Minh trail and that they were headquartered there. On February 22, the day before Nixon left for his European tour, the Communists launched an offensive. It was an action that seemingly violated Johnson's agreement with Hanoi when he had canceled the bombings. Four

hundred fifty-three American casualties were reported the first week of the offensive; 336 the second week.²³⁸

Nixon took immediate action. While en route to Europe, he ordered the bombing of Cambodian sanctuaries. But before the order could be carried out, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird reached out to Nixon, concerned that the press and Congress would lash out if not consulted. In response, an angry Nixon canceled the order. Nixon had wanted to flex his power but resolved to tout the recension as an act of patience rather than a sign of weakness. Nixon held two press conferences, on March 4 and on March 14, to discuss his decisions and the continued enemy offensive. “It will be my policy as President to issue a warning only once, and I will not repeat it now. Anything in the future that is done will be done. There will be no additional warning,” said Nixon.²³⁹ The next day, Nixon ordered a non-appealable immediate B-52 attack on Cambodian sanctuaries. The bombing was executed on March 17 in what was named Operation Breakfast. Not only was Operation Breakfast kept a secret from the enemy, but the American people and the United States Congress as well.

Anti-war demonstrations were a major concern for the Administration. College campuses were breeding grounds for widespread movements and the White House was growing concerned over the number and of massive rallies that were rapidly disrupting

238 The Ho Chi Minh trail was comprised of a system of jungle paths and mountains in Vietnam. During the Vietnam War it was used by North Vietnam transport troops and supplies into South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

239 PP (1969), 208-212

universities.²⁴⁰ Nixon noted that the trend was not unique to the United States. Similar student and youth protests were occurring across the globe, even in places largely unaffected by the Vietnam War. The January 24 News Summary that came across his desk documented ABC-TV's reports on student uprisings from Pakistan to Paris. Just prior to this, Nixon had ordered a study on worldwide student revolt.²⁴¹ The news intensified his interest on the matter - - particularly as to how communist factors might be influencing youth disturbance. Ultimately, Nixon judged that the anti-war movement was largely propelled by males who desired to avoid the draft. The key to ending the anti-war movement may not be ending the war, but rather ending the draft. Nixon would take steps to do just that. On May 19, Nixon sent a message to Congress on changes in the Selective Service System.²⁴²

Amid an already defining time for Nixon, on Friday, March 28, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower died. He had been in the hospital since April of the previous year. Nixon, who served as Eisenhower's Vice President, was personally very close to Eisenhower and had sought his counsel throughout his campaign for the presidency. For

240 Universities were often ground zero for anti-war, anti-establishment protests and demonstrations. Students staged large scale walk-outs, protests, demonstrations and rallies to draw attention to their causes, sometimes ending in violence between protestors and police officers.

241 News Summaries, 1/24/69

242 Nixon sought to end the draft largely because of the significant impact it had the perceptions of the nation's youth. After strategically removing General Lewis Blaine Hershey who had run the Selective Service System for three decades, Congress approved Nixon's bill, H.R. 14001, An Act To Amend The Military Selective Service Act of 1967 on November 29th, 1969, in a press release, Nixon stated that "...while this measure will remove a great number of inequities and...remove [any] uncertainty to which I refer...we shall not be satisfied until we can finally have the system which I advocated during the campaign of a completely volunteer armed forces".

Nixon, Eisenhower's death early in his first term, cast a long shadow. Nixon retreated to Camp David to write Eisenhower's eulogy.²⁴³

April 1969 proved a trying month for Nixon's patience with foreign forces. On April 15, North Korea shot down a U.S Navy EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft on a routine mission. Nixon's inclination was to return force with force but ultimately refrained from military action after the American ambassador to South Korea warned that excessive American reaction might encourage South Korea to stage an invasion of North Korea.²⁴⁴ Nixon turned his sights back to Cambodia, ordering a second secret bombing mission.²⁴⁵

At the end of June, Nixon and South Vietnamese President Thieu met at Midway Island to discuss Nixon's plans for "Vietnamization," a program that would slowly withdraw Americans from Vietnam. It would occur in stages resulting in a continued war and an increasingly agitated American public. While it would potentially become one of Nixon's greatest political failures, at the time he considered it one of his biggest triumphs.²⁴⁶

An Administration in the Shadows

While the President was interested in the opinions of his aides when it came to their assessment of the position of the press and its major players, he was far less

243 For a transcript of Nixon's eulogy for Eisenhower, see Richard Nixon: "Eulogy Delivered at the Capitol During the State Funeral of General Eisenhower," March 30, 1969. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=1987>.

244 The American Ambassador to South Korea was Ellsworth Bunker. Bunker was held the position between April 5, 1967 and May 11, 1973.

245 Ambrose, Stephen. Nixon: the Triumph of a Politician 1962-1972. Simon & Schuster, 1989.

246 Ibid.

interested in putting others in the spotlight. For Nixon, image was primary and the strength of that image rested on his ability to appear, completely independently, as the voice of the Administration. This would change as individuals within the Nixon White House gained notoriety for their own ventures and would evolve later as the Administration hit obstacles that fostered a need to establish the image of an administration that operated as a full-functioning and supportive team. The President was strongly against the perception of any White House staff member as a spokesman for the Administration.

Haldeman alerted Klein to Nixon's order only after Klein suggested that Kissinger appear on shows like "Meet the Press." "The President does not want Kissinger to make public television appearances of this sort. He is perfectly willing to have Henry meet with commentators, editors, etc. on a background basis in private sessions but does not want him - or any other White House Staff members - to appear as Administration spokesmen in public."²⁴⁷ Nixon's concern was also partly due to leaks to the press that had been occurring in the previous months. This drove his limiting of aides to speak about what was happening in the White House. The policy would extend the notion that the Administration was closed off and intimidated by Nixon's distrust of the media.²⁴⁸

247 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 24 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, March, 1969; Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

248 Nixon's hesitancy to allow members of his staff to speak with reporters was a response to concerns over a growing "credibility gap" in the Administration. Not unlike contemporary President's, leaks from White House staff to the press was of particular concern.

Reassigning the Triumph of Space Travel, Internal Affairs and Embracing New Tech

Apollo 10 was the dress rehearsal for the most famous space mission to date, the moon landing. Every test was run on that May 18 mission to ensure that the astronauts on board Apollo 11 could land on the moon. The success of Apollo 10 made it possible for Apollo 11 to take flight. In light of the importance of the Apollo 10 mission, news coverage was extensive. The space program brought something unique to the country at a time that was often violent. Space missions brought Americans together even if only for a moment. There was a sense of boundless potential that accompanied each launch. Astronauts became heroes. The young dreamed of following in their footsteps when many young dreams and young dreamers were often lost on the battlefield.

Coverage of the space program was a welcome relief from the coverage the Nixon White House often documented in their news summaries. It was no surprise then that Nixon and his team eyed capitalizing on it. On May 20, 1969, Haldeman wrote Klein, “The President would like a report immediately on the question of how former Vice President Humphrey happened to be interviewed on the television coverage of the APOLLO 10 Sunday and how Vice President Agnew happened to have been ignored.”²⁴⁹

Paul W. Costello, who served as the deputy director of communication, explained to Haldeman, “In response to your query on how former Vice President Humphrey happened to be interviewed on television Sunday during coverage of Apollo 10, the

249 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 20 May 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, May, 1969; Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

following explanation is provided by NASA officials: “Humphrey accompanied by his press representative Norman Sherman, asked to be taken to the NBC studios immediately on arrival at the launch area. His request was granted. Ordinarily, NASA authorities say, the networks are too busy to engage in this type of an interview at launch time.”

Haldeman scribbled on the same memo a note to Klein in blue ink, “Maybe we have to be faster on our feet + get our VP to the studios too.”²⁵⁰ He signed it, “H.” Nixon would often compare his Administration to others, using the comparisons as “evidence” that he was unfairly treated by the media. His aides however, were beginning to realize that Nixon’s concern, though sometimes valid, was often due to inaction by the Administration, not an overtly malicious press culture. If something was going to be done, they would need to be ahead of it - no one would reach out to them. Klein knew more attention had to be paid to the creation of a proactive plan where television was concerned.

Incidents like this were occurring too often in Nixon’s opinion. He delivered a significant speech on Vietnam on May 14, and was concerned that the coverage was insufficient. “He’d been doing a lot of thinking about feeling we don’t do an adequate job of selling our story,” wrote Haldeman.²⁵¹ Sometimes though, Nixon’s aides knew, he’d just have to deal with the fact that he was going to be treated differently than previous presidents. This would be a hard pill to swallow for Nixon, and an even harder task to

250 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 18 May 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, May, 1969; Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

251 Diary Entry: May, 18 1969, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

manage for his aides. “Feels Ziegler is a superb mechanic, but not a designer. He had read all the Sunday papers pretty thoroughly and found just what he had expected and had predicted to K[issinger], all comments about his speech were either neutral, or negative. Not one line about the fact that 98 percent of the foreign press had claimed the speech, or the strong positive reaction in Congress. Makes point that if JFK had made the speech they would have all been ecstatic. (Afraid a good part of this is a fact of life, but I’m sure we could do a lot better.)” wrote Haldeman in a May 18 diary entry.²⁵²

The Apollo 10 incident was a crucial moment in the team’s strategy development. It would only take a matter of days before Haldeman wrote to Klein about the need to create an official unit within the White House to handle TV news, “At our recent meeting to discuss Bud Wilkinson’s memorandum concerning the exploitation of the potential of TV, it was decided that there should be a Special TV News section within your office. Would you please submit your recommendations on those individuals who you feel are qualified to head this section.”²⁵³ Klein’s office would begin to primarily focus on television news, further diverging his role from Press Secretary Ziegler and solidifying the two-part press structure of the Nixon White House. Klein was still in the process of determining just what his office would be doing and thus far it was to help to outline the needs of the Administration.

252 Diary Entry: May, 18 1969, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

253 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 26 May 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, May, 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

As the Administration worked to find ways to take advantage of television news, Klein found himself immersed in an effort to temper the increasingly tense protests that were occurring outside the White House walls.²⁵⁴ He had hoped that part of his job would be to take advantage of other avenues that would draw positive media attention to the President, particularly when those opportunities would play well on television.²⁵⁵ The prioritization of building up Nixon's image was no secret and those within the government who were looking to advance their clout, or help push forward their departments agenda.

One such memorandum from Carol V. Harford, Assistant of Cultural Affairs, was addressed to "The Honorable" Herbert Klein. Harford was making her case for the benefit of the Administration to focus on the arts. Just months earlier, she sent Klein a memo that alluded to the serious nature of the issues the Administration faced. Klein's TV news initiatives could benefit from a little creativity to ensure the creation of a Presidential image cleared of the smoke of gunpowder and heard over increasingly deafening protests. Harford wrote:

There are indeed major matters demanding Administration attention, many of which were inherited so are probably additionally complex. They are so major it sounds gratuitous to even make such a statement. Because of the scope and dimension involved it is understandable that cultural concerns may be low on the totem pole of decision making. I recognize and respect these conditions. However, the arts do offer an opportunity to take a quiet, sure step in a significant

254 Klein felt as though creating opportunities for Nixon to appear among the people rather than in formal settings, and gain news coverage of him in those moments, would provide the public with much needed visuals of a President of the people, not a politician. Internal White House television operations were creating opportunities for Nixon to appear as an astute and capable leader to a mass population, but the manufacturing of those productions did little to take advantage of Nixon's ability to connect with individuals.

255 Klein, Herb. Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. Exit Interview. Room 160 of the Old Executive Office Building, July 13, 1973.

area. If done soon, this could ensure productive preventative maintenance, thereby forestalling additional undesirable incidents, and assuring the cultural community that there is also national leadership in this facet of communication and ideas. Individually, the incidents are not major crises, but they show no signs of decreasing and the culminating effect could result in unwanted publicity — written and verbal — and create serious problems for the Nixon Administration.²⁵⁶

On June 4, Nixon gave the commencement speech at the Air Force Academy. In it, he defended the military. Following the address, the State Department published a four-page analysis of the press reaction. The summary, for internal government use only, outlined the “Fundamental Truths,” “Blasts at Critics Ignored Issues,” “Result: Hardening of Positions,” and “Congressional Reaction.” Each topic was followed by the quotes and commentary from large circulation newspapers and national broadcast stations. The introduction to the document said, “Few quarreled with his basic premise that this country should remain strong and committed. But a number of editors and commentators held that he failed to indicate how strong and to what degree we will remain committed throughout the world; also, that he tended to dismiss responsible critics of America’s foreign and defense policies along with a relatively small group of extremists,”²⁵⁷

Haldeman was not pleased. The summary read far too negative in his opinion. He reached out to Klein. “Confidential,” was scrawled across the top of the memo. He attached the summary with his own assessment:

...I think in reading it you will share some serious reservations that I have in looking at it. The analysis includes a brief one-page summary of favorable press

256 Carol V. Harford to Herbert Klein, 14 March 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, March, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

257 American Open Summary, 4 June 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, June, 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

reactions and then three pages of criticism...It is equally disturbing that the State selected this topic for their weekly Opinion Summary, especially if they felt obliged to concentrate on derogatory opinions,” he wrote. “It is hard to believe this comes from our Administration’s State Department rather than the Democratic National Committee. I think this is the kind of department disloyalty that we can readily do without and that we should take some steps in discreet fashion to see that this kind of thing does not continue. As a matter of fact, perhaps the steps should be taken in not such a discreet fashion since this is a pretty blatant incident.²⁵⁸

Klein followed Haldeman’s request. He reached out to Acting Assistant Secretary of State Bureau of Public Affairs, Richard Phillips. “Looking at the three pages, I find an overwhelming amount of criticism and no noticeable balance. I recognize the need for objectivity but this does not achieve this, and I fail to see how a summary like this serves any national purpose,” he wrote.²⁵⁹ Phillips replied, “We do strive for objectivity in these reports. This has been discussed with the people concerned; and, in view of this lapse, our future reports will be carefully reviewed to maintain both balance and objectivity.” The significance of this interaction wasn’t merely in the strong reaction by Haldeman to “discreetly” handle what was construed as disloyalty. Klein establishes that he is not only dealing with the press’s influence on public opinion, but how the press is influencing other departments in the creation of their perspectives and opinions. Nixon’s aides are troubled by the potential of the press as a threat not only to public opinion, but to internal government support of Nixon.²⁶⁰

258 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 8 July 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, July, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

259 Herbert Klein to Richard Phillips, 18 July 1969; folder Letters of Herbert Klein, July, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

260 Democrats held both the Senate and House majority during the first two years of Nixon’s presidency.

Later on, the day of the Air Force Academy address, Nixon contacted Haldeman. “By evening [Nixon] was really mad,” Haldeman wrote. There had been a leak to the newspapers about troop withdrawal. The Administration had been dealing with plugging similar leaks but this one was particularly troubling for Nixon. *The Washington Star* reported that Nixon had decided to begin troop withdrawal even though Nixon promised Thieu that the decision would be announced jointly. “[He] kept calling me from San Clemente house with new orders to investigate. K (Klein) advised me not to go too far. Would be counterproductive, so I ignored some of the orders,” wrote Haldeman.²⁶¹ This was not uncommon. Nixon sometimes angrily ordered his aides to act against those he felt wronged him, often journalists. Haldeman remarked about this in an annotation of his diaries. “A couple of examples in this day illustrate a challenge I faced frequently - which was to decide whether or not to follow a specific Presidential order. I sometimes decided not to, on the basis that it was not an order that was really intended to be carried out, but rather a letting out of steam, or that it was clearly not in the P’s interest that it be carried out. Usually I later informed P that the order had not been followed, and usually he agreed that was the right decision. There were times, however, when he intentionally would end-run me with an order to someone else who he felt would do his bidding when I wouldn’t.”²⁶²

The world was changing, that much was clear. Just nine days before man would journey to walk on the moon, Klein was trying to update the White House with cutting-

261 Diary Entry: June 4 1969, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

262 Haldeman, H. R. *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House*. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1994.

edge technology. The Administration, grappling with new broadcast tools was considering the integration of new technology in the White House. A memo to Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Moynihan, Wilkonson, Keogh, Ziegler, Chapin, Butterfield, and Cole from Klein, read:

Tomorrow, Friday, July 11, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., the telephone company will demonstrate its PICTUREPHONE in Room 91 of the EOB...PICTUREPHONE is designed to be an integral part of future telephone service. It consists of a very small "Sony-size" television set connected to a regular desk phone. The video signal travels through ordinary telephone wires. The telephone company has proposed that PICTUREPHONES be installed in the offices of the Cabinet Secretaries and key White House staff. Approximately 20 sets could be made available for this purpose. If you or anyone on your staff would like to see a demonstration of PICTUREPHONE tomorrow, please notify Rob Odle of my staff a time which would be convenient for you.²⁶³

New technology was rapidly emerging in the years that marked the Nixon White House, in efforts to stay in touch with the world evolving outside its walls. Juxtaposed to the common perception that the Administration was stuck in another time and bitter to the changes befalling them, Nixon's aides were often at the forefront of utilize emerging media tools.

There was perhaps no greater feat of technology at the time than that which put man on the moon. On July 20, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first people to walk on the moon. The historic moment lent an optimal opportunity to divert attention from the Vietnam narrative and place Nixon squarely in the middle of one of the most celebrated moments in history. The Nixon Administration had a tremendous amount to gain from the positive publicity a successful moon landing

263 Herbert Klein, 10, July 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, July, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

would provide. Nixon's team would need to orchestrate it flawlessly and meticulously to ensure that his involvement sparked no accusations that he was politicizing the event. What Nixon would say to the astronauts, guaranteed global coverage. Nixon's aides began work scripting possible statements.

“Neil and Buzz, I am talking to you by telephone from the Oval Room at the White House. This certainly has to be the most historic telephone call ever made from the White House,” said the President. He continued:

I just can't tell you how proud we all are of what you have done. For every American this has to be the proudest day of our lives. For people all over the world I am sure that they, too, join with Americans in recognizing what an immense feat this is. Because of what you have done the heavens have become a part of man's world. As you talk to us from the Sea of Tranquility, it inspires us to redouble our efforts to bring peace and tranquility to earth. For one priceless moment in the whole history of man all of the people on this Earth are truly one — one in their pride in what you have done and one in our prayers that you will return safely to earth.

Armstrong responded, “Thank you, Mr. President. It is a great honor and privilege for us to be here representing not only the United States, but men of peaceable nations with an interest and curiosity and a vision for the future. It is an honor for us to be able to participate here today.”²⁶⁴ To which the President replied, “Thank you very much and I look forward, all of us look forward to seeing you on the HORNET on Thursday.”²⁶⁵

Initial drafts of Nixon's statement to the astronauts revealed a more overstated, and at times, overtly political or religious tone. Speechwriter Ray Price suggested

264 Textual Records by Raymond Price, 19 July 1969, folder Conversation with astronauts (after moon landing), White House Staff Member and Office Files, President's Personal File, Box 50, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

265 White House Press Release, 21 July 1969, folder White House Staff Member and Office Files: White House Press Office Files, Box 3, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

wording like, “But already, we see that man’s destiny is defined not by the bounds of Earth, but by the sweep of God’s creation,” and “As one people, we ask the blessing of the Almighty on your mission...”²⁶⁶ Another speechwriter, Bill Safire, took a more stringently political approach, “The flag you have implanted is the symbol of men who brought the spirit of freedom to a New World; let it symbolize now the spirit of humanity bringing peace and wonderment to new worlds beyond our own. Let those stars and stripes stand for a turning of the tide in the affairs of men — away from the dark side of our nature, and toward a bright new dawn of understanding and peace.” In a note at the bottom of Safire’s version he wrote: “Eclipse,” “turning tide” and “dark side” offer consistent moon metaphor for use here or elsewhere.”²⁶⁷

The President’s final statement would merge ideas found in both Price and Safire’s drafts, but decidedly without the more overt religious or political tonality. The President’s statement, one to be heard, quite literally, throughout the universe would be more politically vague out of an abundance of caution that his gesture might be regarded as politicizing one of history’s most groundbreaking moments. Still, the potential for the President to use the historic opportunity as a platform to bolster his Administration’s aims was not lost on the press, and the Administration was quick to respond.

Dear Scotty” Klein wrote to James “Scotty” Reston of the *New York Times*:

“...I must say that in the midst of the tremendous Times coverage of the moon shot, there was one major dismaying note. I refer to the Johnny Oakes editorial of

266 Textual Records by Raymond Price, 19 July 1969, folder Conversation with astronauts (after moon landing), White House Staff Member and Office Files, President’s Personal File, Box 50, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

267 Textual Records by William Safire, 17 July 1969, folder Conversation with astronauts (after moon landing) White House Staff Member and Office Files, President’s Personal File, Box 50, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

July 19 which implied that the President has schemed for a piece of the glory by speaking to our men on the moon. This editorial simply ignored the facts and, I feel, was in bad taste. The facts are that the proposal for this call came from the astronauts and NASA, not the President. Colonel Frank Borman, who delivered the plan personally, convinced the President to accept the idea as one which would be helpful and encouraging. The television coverage came from network requests. Phone calls of Presidents to astronauts have regularly been filmed and heard. My observation during the entire moon program was that the President made every effort to encourage the astronauts and that he shied away from anything to be construed as stealing the limelight. As to the point of disturbing the work of the astronauts on the moon, that was clearly debunked before the millions who saw them pause briefly on television to hear from the Commander-in-Chief. It is hard for me to believe that it is a sin for the “boss” to say “well done” at such moment. I think the public would agree that the call to the moon and the visit to the splashdown were expected and in good taste. . . I know and appreciate the separation of the editorial page from your news department but, because of our long friendship and candidness, I wanted to convey to you these feelings.”²⁶⁸ On August 1st, he would receive this response, “I’m not going to defend that editorial. I thought it was unfair and in bad taste. As a matter of fact, the day before your letter arrived Frank Borman, who was in to lunch at *the Times*, told us the story of his part in the President’s phone call, and was quite sharply critical of the editorial. Please drop in next time you are up this way. Best regards, Scotty.”²⁶⁹ If the Nixon Administration was to take advantage of the magnitude of the moon

landing, it would not be through the phone call. Instead, it would be through the promotion of the astronauts and the firm positioning of the President as a champion of leadership that put the nation on the moon. “As you know, the space effort has covered four administrations with each having a major part. In the post-Sputnik era of 1957, it was then Vice President Nixon who first spoke out for an increased American effort. General Eisenhower launched the effort, John Kennedy had the vision of the moon shot, Lyndon Johnson carried through, and Richard Nixon helped bring this to a culmination

268 Herbert Klein to James Reston, 22 July 1969; folder Letters of Herbert Klein, July, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

269 James Reston to Herbert Klein, 1 August 1969; folder Letters of Herbert Klein, August, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

and will continue to do so. As to sharing whatever glory, if this can be done, President Johnson was invited personally by the President to attend the moon launch and his personal arrangements were made by the White House,” wrote Klein to Reston.²⁷⁰

On July 23, the astronauts splashed down in the South Pacific. Nixon was on the flight deck of the Hornet, the carrier that retrieved the astronauts. A five-member press pool joined Nixon, Haldeman, Ziegler, Secretary of State Bill Rogers, Herb Klein, Hughes and Apollo 8 astronaut Frank Borman. Haldeman recalled Nixon’s jubilation as the capsule broke through the atmosphere. “P was exuberant, really cranked up, like a little kid. Watched everything, soaked it all up. Showed everyone his fancy binoculars.”²⁷¹ The President ordered that the band play “Columbia the Gem of the Ocean.” It was necessary for the astronauts to be quarantined upon arrival. “Neil, Buzz, and Mike. I’d like you to know that I think I’m the luckiest man in the world,” he said, kneeling forward slightly to see the three men now encased in a converted Airstream trailer that served as their quarantine chamber. He continued:

I can tell you about all the messages we have received in Washington. Over 100 foreign governments, emperors, presidents, prime ministers, and kings, have sent the most warm messages that we have ever received. They represent over 2 billion people on this earth, all of them who have had the opportunity, through television, to see what you have done...I am going to find on this trip around the world, and as Secretary Rogers will find as he covers the other countries in Asia, as a result of what you have done, the world has never been closer together before. We just

270 Herbert Klein to James Reston, 22 July 1969; folder Letters of Herbert Klein, July, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

271 Diary Entry: July 24-25 1969, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

thank you for that. I only hope that all of us in Government, all of us in America, that as a result of what you have done, can do our job a little better.²⁷²

Nixon knew the nation, and the world, would be watching. The moment was a perfect opportunity to redirect the nation toward a moment that was triumphantly unifying.

Nixon's conversation with the astronauts was somewhat candid and off script. While he had been given suggested notes, he spent much of the time speaking informally, asking if the astronauts had been able to keep up with sporting events while in space. His notes, scribbled on the helicopter on July 23, hit on several points he felt were of particular importance. In shaky cursive script, he wrote:

1) This has to be greatest homecoming. 2) Bring you greetings from Washington, from heads of [illegible] the world, messages poured in - 3) Bring you greetings from 3 great ladies - Jan - Armstrong, Pat - Collins, Joan- Aldrin 4) The nation will welcome you when you come out of quarantine August 13." Under a long line that separated the page he continued, "All the superlatives - You had the biggest rooting section in history of world - You have inspired us all to reach for the stars - what we can do if we put our mind - hearts to it."²⁷³

Nixon's handwritten notes and the subsequent typed full statement suggestion by Price, presented the following day on the Hornet, made no mention of Nixon's upcoming foreign travels.²⁷⁴ Instead, both focused entirely on the moon landing and the uplifting nature of its success for the nation and the world. Nixon had decided, at that historic and

272 Richard Nixon: "Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts Aboard the U.S.S. Hornet Following Completion of Their Lunar Mission.," July 24, 1969.

273 Textual Records by Richard Nixon, 23 July 1969, Folder Remarks to Astronauts Aboard the Hornet, July 23-24, 1969, President's Personal File: President's Speech File, 1969-74; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

274 Textual Records by Richard Nixon, 23 July 1969, Folder Remarks to Astronauts Aboard the Hornet, July 23-24, 1969, President's Personal File: President's Speech File, 1969-74; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

highly publicized moment not to politicize the event and promote his upcoming presidential agenda.

Discussion surrounding the Apollo mission and the President's handling of the astronauts within the White House exemplified a distinct awareness of the potential for the media and the public to see the President's actions as pandering. In fact, discussions in the White House prior to the phone call suggested that there was a need to avoid what could be seen as a "gimmick." However, following the return of the astronauts, the Administration would too carefully strategize the use of media to firmly situate the legacy of the President. The President initially planned for a low-key reception at the White House for the Astronauts, one limited to the space-men and their wives, "This will be a Black Tie dinner, with wives and as of now will be a small dinner," wrote Haldeman to Chapin.²⁷⁵ However, on the U.S.S. Hornet, Nixon would announce to the nation a much larger affair.

The Administration took each opportunity to connect the Nixon White House with the success of the space program, however indirectly, to engage the public in positive perceptions of American life in a time when American values were greatly in question and contested among generations of Americans. "The President's News Summary of October 8 reported on the reception received by the astronauts during their visit to Spain. It was reported as the biggest reception accorded a foreigner in that country since former President Eisenhower visited there in 1959. The President wants you to take

²⁷⁵ H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 16 September 1969; Memoranda from H.R. Haldeman, September 1969: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight L. Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

the necessary steps to get this story the widest distribution possible,” wrote Ken Cole to Klein.²⁷⁶ Just the day before, Klein wrote:

I’ve discussed with the astronauts’ traveling party what additional things we can do to gain more attention for their trip. They have widely hailed and even outdrew the Pope in one place in Latin America. Each of the networks have been called. CBS has been running something every night, NBC — much of the time. With the trip to Europe, coverage will increase. I also have newspapers asking for wrap-up stories, which will point out glowing receptions; for example yesterday in Madrid and today in Paris.²⁷⁷

Klein Defines His Role

As the astronauts found their footing back on Earth to increased fame and notoriety, Klein was at work outlining his role and goals in the new position he had created for himself. It wasn’t until October 9 that he sent a formal memo to the President detailing his office’s goals and objectives.²⁷⁸ In the nine months in took Klein to present his outline, he had been working on situating himself in his new position. After all, Director of Communication and the Office of Communications were entirely new and no one fully understood where that situated Klein in relation to the Office of the Press Secretary. For much of the start of the Nixon Administration, Klein navigated the careful distinction between his position and Ziegler, worked on individual tasks assigned to him

276 Ken Cole to Herb Klein, 9 October 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 5; White House Special Files: Presidential Action Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

277 Ken Cole to Herb Klein, 8 October 1969; folder Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 5; White House Special Files: Presidential Action Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

278 For more information on Klein’s complete outline for the Office of Communications, see Herb Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 October 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

by Haldeman, and spent much of his time meeting with reporters in an effort to keep his promise of an open White House. The nine months prior to Klein's outline was utilized to understand the needs of the new Administration. Tactics were tested and analytics were collected to identify what worked and what didn't. Klein used this information to establish the various goals of his office. He would use his experience to separate his goals into various areas and meticulously describe gaps that his Office could fill. If Klein was to gain autonomy in the new Administration, he would have to make himself indispensable.

Of primary importance to Klein was creating a system that allowed him to maintain open communication with the press. Klein described the general goal of the office as a promoter of public understanding and public confidence in the Administration and those who worked within it. The means to do so would be through broadcast media. "We are pioneering in a technical-idea age," he wrote. "...during the next six months, it will be important to develop the means of depicting pictorially, in a better way, the programs of the Administration as seen on television. We are working on film technique."²⁷⁹

There was little question that the Administration was orienting itself toward an image-centric objective. "...it will be important to develop the means of depicting pictorially, in a better way, the programs of the Administration as seen on television," wrote Klein. "In television our goals are to get fair representation on the major news

279 Herb Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 October 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

shows and gain wider coverage for the Administration. Beyond the obvious news show, we have the variety shows, ranging from MEET THE PRESS to JOHNNY CARSON, to TODAY. We have had, however, someone on a Sunday show virtually every Sunday for nine months.”²⁸⁰

While television strategy was a key component of Klein’s plan for his office, so too was the need to manage “prejudiced” reporters. To do so, he would need to build a more effective briefing system within the Administration. “We intend to improve the quality of the briefing done by those in the Administration because this is a technique of getting at even the more prejudiced reporters. We need help here in foreign areas, but are gradually getting it,” Klein continued. The Administration however, would not simply rely on those within its ranks to ensure that the plan was followed, but would continue to establish relationships with movers and shakers within the broadcast industry. Klein wrote to the President, “We have a strong working program with the top people in the radio and television industry. And I think we can increase pressure here when necessary through Dean Burch (chairman of the Federal Communications Commission), based on management assent.”²⁸¹

The coming years would establish a clear effort by Klein and Haldeman to keep up with the up-and-comers within the broadcast industry and pay close attention to leadership changes that would either work in the favor of the Administration or against it.

280 Herb Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 October 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

281 Herb Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 October 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, October, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

In some cases, troublesome reporters would be “dealt with.” Others would be courted to work for the Administration, some after leaving their respective careers and others, more unsettlingly, without. However, those within the broadcast industry were sometimes equally as eager to enter the Administration without provocation from its aides.

A letter from the American Broadcasting Company arrived at the White House a month earlier, on September 10, 1969, addressed to Bryce H. Harlow, Assistant to the President. Robert B. Amdur an employee of ABC, expressed his disappointment that Alvin Snyder (CBS Executive News Producer) was appointed Broadcast Deputy to Herb Klein. “It was particularly disturbing since on 9 June I had written a note to Herb Klein requesting the opportunity to discuss just such a position as Mr. Snyder has apparently secured. Also, I had suggested my self for such a position to Paul Costello and Ginger Savell several times. However, they stated that it was impossible to increase the staff due to budget restrictions.”²⁸²

Harlow wrote to Klein on September 20, referencing the letter, “On musings over the enclosure, I can’t help wishing mightily that we could find a suitable spot for Bob Amdur. After all, he is among the faithful — he did give us his “all” in the campaign — he did do a good job at the Convention — and I think he is professionally competent in the broadcasting business. Is it hopeless? If it is, I suppose we ought to tell Bob so, so the poor guy will stop believing that there is some chance.”²⁸³ Klein was confident they had

282 Robert B. Amdur to Bryce H. Harlow, 10 September 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, September, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

283 Bryce H. Harlow to Herb Klein, 20 September 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, September, 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

their man in Snyder. Haldeman and Klein had exchanged memos on potentially bringing in reporters to join the team. Haldeman would request background checks, without the knowledge of the reporter, and that a careful assessment of their political leanings be performed. Like the Nixon campaign relied on advertising men to package the President as a commodity for the public to buy, Klein was carefully adding newsmen to his team.

Pressure was on Klein. The President, by way of Haldeman, complained often where broadcast media was concerned. On September 24 of 1969, Klein would receive a note from Haldeman requesting he handle what appeared to be an issue the two had discussed more than once before. “Here are two prime examples of what we discussed this morning. You can see the degree of concern that has developed here - and I think it is essential to get this going + to make sure he honors it,” wrote Haldeman.²⁸⁴ His note referenced a memo Haldeman had received the previous day from Ken Cole, who served as Deputy to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, John Ehrlichman. Cole wrote, “The President’s television report on Saturday, September 20, mentions NBC’s TV coverage as being clearly unbalanced of the President’s draft decision. They were played in great disproportion to the support for the President which exists in the country, even among youth. The President feels, as the report points out, that he deserved more than 1/15 of the time devoted to the subject. The President addressed the following comment to you, “See that NBC gets a hard kick from Klein on this. And, again, when

284 H.R. Haldeman to Herb Klein, 24 September 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, September 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

are we going to have a system where this is automatically done and reported to me?”²⁸⁵

The emergence of a defined strategy to handle the broadcast media within the Nixon White House was exiting its wide-eyed wonderment of infancy and entering its moody adolescence.

The “hard kick” wasn’t always directly from Klein. He had devised a system that could be implemented any time a network said or did something that was perceived as unfair or biased toward the Administration. Across the country, in major cities, Klein had situated groups that would “automatically function in such a way as to ensure that editors and broadcasters will hear complaints from readers and viewers across the country.”²⁸⁶ Klein knew this pressure had the potential to influence executives to change their tune. The news, particularly the broadcast media, operated on ratings and revenue and a dissatisfied public could eat into both.

The captivity of the Hanoi pilots had long kindled the fires of unrest over the war in Vietnam. While the Nixon White House continued to ride the waves of the moon landing with the public, they struggled with the continuing upheaval that accompanied the increasingly tumultuous war in Vietnam. The prisoners of war would fuel Klein’s meticulous study of the complexity of the broadcast media’s potential to elicit and electrify emotional response from the American public, and the complications that might bring for the government in regard to sensitive topics. On September 26, regarding the

285 Ken Cole to H.R. Haldeman, 20 September 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, September 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

286 Herb Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 2 October 1969; Memoranda to H.R. Haldeman, October 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

capture of the Hanoi pilots, he wrote to Haldeman, “The trip of the four wives of captive pilots was organized by Murphy Martin of Dallas, Texas (of the Murphy Martin TV show), after a plea from the wives in Dallas. He called me to gain our feelings regarding this. I approved it and then checked with the White House for verification and found a lukewarm feeling. I went to Defense and found it in agreement with the program and suggested the steps which were taken. It is not possible to order a plan of action with things of this nature, which involve individual human emotions.”²⁸⁷ If Klein could devise a plan for how to do this, the potential to shift attention from the negative reportage on Vietnam to a unifying hero narrative would be immense. Meanwhile, the public sentiment toward progress in ending the war needed attention.

By mid-September, Nixon was holding top secret meetings to discuss the next troop withdrawal from Vietnam, slated for December 15. There had also been a 36-hour halt to B-52 raids in South Vietnam. Tensions continued to rise as those against the war felt Nixon’s slow withdrawal was doing little in making progress toward its end. With college campuses filling up with students for the new academic year, unrest was rising to all-out disruption. There were talks of a nationwide day of protest on October 15. This moratorium was of great concern to Nixon. It would potentially disrupt his November 1st deadline for a “solution” with the Vietnamese, fearing that if Vietnam saw the nation as one so greatly divided, its leverage in negotiation would be irrevocably damaged. With protests continuing to erupt across the nation, the President’s message on Vietnam

²⁸⁷ Herb Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 26 September 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, September 1969: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

required clarity. The team turned to television to ensure the it was *their* message that was getting through.

Dwight Chapin, who had served as the President's personal aide in 1967-1968 joined the Administration as Special Assistant to the President. He had known Haldeman for years before the campaign. After Nixon's 1962 campaign for governor, Haldeman hired Chapin to work at the J. Walter Thompson Company advertising agency in California. Now, sitting in his office as part of the Nixon White House, he was sifting through memos. Chapin too was receiving advice from many regarding the President's public reach over the small screen. In mid-September, a memo from Gregg Petersmeyer, an intern, crossed his desk. In it, Petersmeyer made his case for a series of informal televised presidential addresses "for the purpose of meeting the country's crisis of spirit." He wrote to Chapin, "I would suggest that the President hold several televised informal "talks" with the American people spaced over the next twelve months. He would tell the American people what is right with America, her people, her principles and her institutions. The talks would not be "polyannish" for they would include a candid evaluation of America's weaknesses as well. But the expressed purpose would be to allow the American people to regain a balanced perspective of this country."

Petersmeyer suggested that there were four categories of individuals who had the opportunity to speak to the masses, including political figures, clergyman, academics and the broadcast and printed press. The press he said, "in both words and pictures portrays the negative aspects of American life and seemingly endless series of violent confrontations between individuals, groups, institutions, and the nations." But, they weren't the only of the four that were failing the American public in talking about what

was “right” with the nation. “Actually no one from these groups is talking about what is “right” with America. If the President of the United States does not, who will?” Unlike some of the other memos Chapin had received, this one featured, on page three, one section that held particular significance.

The Silent Majority

On October 15, an estimated two million people joined the Vietnam Moratorium, making it the largest demonstration in U.S. history. While centralized in Washington, D.C with 250,000 protestors in force, across the United States, students, workers, women and children were taking part in church services, rallies and meetings. Black armbands were worn by supporters as a tribute to those who had died in the War thus far - the number was nearing 45,000. The protests remained largely peaceful. Nixon stayed at the White House during the protests and decided no action was the best course. He had held a press conference earlier stating that his decisions would not be swayed by the demonstrations. “On the night of October 15 I thought about the irony of this protest for peace. It had, I believed, destroyed whatever small possibility may still have existed of ending the war in 1969. But there was nothing I could do about that now. I would have to adjust my plans accordingly and carry on as best I could. At the top of the page of preliminary notes I was making for my November 3 speech, I wrote: ‘Don’t get rattled - don’t waver - don’t react.’”²⁸⁸

Two days prior to the moratorium, Nixon asked his staff to pick one letter from the many he had received from those who were critical of his press conference stance.

288 Nixon, Richard M. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

They selected a letter from a Georgetown University college student. The student had asked the President to “reconsider his pre-judgement,” and that he felt it was not unwise for the President to take note of the will of the people. Nixon responded, “Whatever the issue, to allow government policy to be made in the streets would destroy the democratic process. It would give the decision, not to the majority, and not to those with the strongest arguments, but to those with the loudest voices...It would allow every group to rest its strength not at the ballot box but through confrontation in streets,” responded Nixon.²⁸⁹

On page three of the memo Petersmeyer wrote to Chapin just two months earlier, under the all caps section heading, THE SILENT MAJORITY:

The vast majority of Americans have deep-rooted and sound moral values. They need reassuring that they are not alone and want leaders who also share such values. Of late the emphasis has been so repeatedly placed on other areas that people are questioning the present strength, if not the very existence, of this majority.” The President’s famous “silent majority” speech, delivered in an informal televised address was one of the most remembered moments of the Nixon Administration. In concluding his recommendations to Chapin, Petersmeyer called on the example of President Franklin Roosevelt. “My understanding is that much President Franklin Roosevelt’s political success was derived from his ability and willingness to talk directly to his ‘fellow Americans.’ In my opinion, Americans today, no less than Americans in the 30’s, will respond affirmatively to a series of informal addresses by the President. The people in today’s ‘spiritual depression’ should be reminded of the greatness of this country. It would seem appropriate for the President to be the one to remind them of it.”²⁹⁰

289 Richard Nixon: "Letter to University Student Randy J. Dicks on the "Vietnam Moratorium.", " October 13, 1969.

290 Gregg Petersmeyer to Dwight Chapin, 15 September 1969; Subject File: Petersmeyer, C. Gregg; Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight L. Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

On November 3, the President stood before the public and delivered his “Silent Majority” speech.²⁹¹

In speaking of the consequences of a precipitate withdrawal, I mentioned that our allies would lose confidence in America. Far more dangerous, we would lose confidence in ourselves. Oh, the immediate reaction would be a sense of relief that our men were coming home. But as we saw the consequences of what we had done, inevitable remorse and divisive recrimination would scar our spirit as a people,” said Nixon. “Well, one of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and to advocate that point of view. But as President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this Nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that point of view and who try to impose it on the Nation by mounting demonstrations in the street...If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this Nation has no future as a free society.”²⁹²

The response to the speech was overwhelming. The White House received over 50,000 telegrams and 30,000 letters in response. A Gallup poll conducted immediately following the speech showed Nixon at a 77 percent approval rating. However, the Nixon White House felt the press did a poor job in providing an unbiased view of his speech. Instant news analysis, commentators and pundits filled network news stations with their take on the address. Nixon and his aides decided something would need to be done. For Nixon, the decision to go after the networks was an “unexpected success” of his speech.²⁹³ Between 10:15 PM and 1:15 AM that night, Nixon called Haldeman, by his account, between 15 and 20 times, wanting to know what the plans were for counterattacking the press on their response to the speech. “Then pressure about what is Klein doing to get reaction. Reports on editors around the country...then hit network

291 In his book, Klein credits Nixon with having authored the “Silent Majority Speech.”

292 Richard Nixon: "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam," November 3, 1969.

293 Nixon, Richard M. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

management for biased reports,” wrote Haldeman in his diary entry that day. Nixon was pushing every angle - those only a few of many. However, there was one ultimate plea. If only one thing were to be done by his aides, “get 100 vicious dirty calls to *New York Times* and *Washington Post* about their editorials (even though no idea what they’ll be).”²⁹⁴ Haldeman described the process of immediately following up after major TV addresses as what would become an established routine. The President needed to know the impact of a speech on the public and in the media. “The pleas for ‘vicious dirty calls’ to the papers was to keep pressure on them from the public in the hope that they would consider the other viewpoint occasionally,” noted Haldeman on his diary entry.²⁹⁵

Working with Broadcasters

By November, the Nixon Administration had worked to open the doors for broadcasters. “The President wants to get some local TV commentators that have big followings invited to White House functions from time to time. He has in mind specifically such people as George Putnam in Los Angeles, and some of the good ones in Chicago and other cities. Klein should give you a list of these,” Haldeman wrote to Nixon’s secretary Rose Mary Woods.²⁹⁶ The new Administration was still working to develop relationships with broadcast media. While there was a clear aggression toward negative reporting, 1969 still saw a distinct effort from an Administration that

294 Diary Entry: November 3 1969, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

295 Haldeman, H. R. *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House*. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1994.

296 H.R. Haldeman to Woods, 20 November 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, November 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

understood, or at least accepted, the potential power of broadcasters in the emerging decade.

Following Nixon's "Silent Majority" speech, the Administration kept even closer tabs on the press. Each major publication was checked and their response was reported. Klein led the efforts and discussed coverage with the biggest men in broadcasting. A November 14, 1969 memo to Haldeman outlined his conversation with Julian Goodman, then President of NBC, that had occurred that same morning. Klein reported, "I told him that if he looked at the spontaneous reaction we have received from the great silent majority after the November 3 speech, he would see that a majority percentage of these people added critical comments of the networks for their handling of the commentary following the speech...I suggested that the point is well taken that it would be a very good time for the networks to re-examine their policies of interpretation since obviously interpretation is becoming a growing part of news coverage."²⁹⁷

This was an argument that Klein had made before in the weeks prior during interviews with both CBS and ABC. Broadcast news was becoming far more interpretive than it had been in previous years. This was something with which the Administration would find themselves continuing to struggle. A shift in news culture created a parallel shift in the television press dealings within the Administration. Klein recognized that a new strategy must emerge. News commentary was becoming more powerful than the news itself. Process and procedure were no longer primary concerns. The "gimmicks" of

²⁹⁷ Herb Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 14 November 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, November 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

television were becoming secondary to the newsmen who were now licensed to offer their opinion.²⁹⁸ News commentary would become an increasing obstacle for Nixon's aides.

Days later, Haldeman would receive a memo from Chapin regarding the upcoming Gallup poll and its questions on network news. The Nixon Administration was no stranger to the importance of Gallup poll results, not only on what that meant in terms of analyzing public perception but the power of those results to influence public opinion itself. "Will you look over the following questions which I am going to submit to Gallup?" said Chapin. Haldeman marked up the list of questions he had received from Chapin, eliminating some he disliked and editing others for word choice. Number eight read, "There has been considerable discussion surrounding President Nixon's speech on Vietnam Monday night. Criticisms have been made by some commentators who disagree with the President in his views. How about yourself - do you agree with the President in his views on Vietnam or do you agree with the commentators?" Chapin underlined "you agree with the President in his views on Vietnam" and "agree with the commentators," in red pen. Next to it he scribbled, "H-I don't think we should even ask Gallup to use this. We will lose points if we ask them - they aren't that stupid."²⁹⁹

The relationship between Nixon's aides and John Davis, the Editor of Gallup Polls, was unique, one that would evolve in the coming years and one that was

298 Nixon felt that the attention paid to makeup, overly elaborate sets and lights were used just often to make individuals look bad as it was used to make them look good. Additionally, the tactics used by those on television struck Nixon as too manufactured to be an honest assessment of situations and events.

299 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 18 November 1969; Subject File: Poles [1969-1972]: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight L. Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

particularly intriguing in 1969. Just one month prior to Chapin and Haldeman's discussion on potential questions to send to Gallup, Chapin wrote to Haldeman about an unexpected call. "John Davis, Editor of Gallup Polls, called this afternoon. This is unusual since I am usually calling him," Chapin wrote. "According to Mr. Davis, they have some summary data on a Vietnam questionnaire which has been in the field. He said he did not want to expand on this over the telephone but that it looks like there might be some important information here which will help the Administration 'get off the hook' in regard to Vietnam. He said that in a meeting with George Gallup, Sr., yesterday that Mr. Gallup said this poll could do a great service to the Government. He asked Mr. Davis to contact me to arrange an appointment." Chapin went on to say that Gallup was willing to give the poll to the Administration for its use, and not publish it. If they decided not to use it, the poll would be published. Haldeman scribbled in black pen, a line leading from "publish it" to a note on the bottom of the page, "might [sic] be we should take it just to keep it from publishing." Chapin noted that Harry Dent (special counsel and political strategist) and himself were planning to meet with the Gallup people that Friday and suggested that perhaps someone from Kissinger's office might attend. On the upper left Haldeman wrote "C - 1) Have your mtg-without K or anyone from his office + do not discuss with him. 2) Take the poll 3) Report to me. H."³⁰⁰ This would not be the last time Nixon's aides rubbed elbows with Gallup. The polls would play a major role in their

300 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 8 October 1969; Subject File: Poles [1969-1972]: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight L. Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

evaluation of their broadcast press strategy and the relationship between the Administration and the Gallup organization would prove to be a significant one.

Klein's Growing Concerns

As the year wore on, Klein became increasingly aware that appearance of over aggression toward the press could prove to be disastrous. In a November 21, 1969 memo, Haldeman made that point clear. After a particularly disturbing event and perhaps one of the most overlooked cover-up attempts by the Nixon Administration, the "Army massacre," now better known as the My Lai massacre. There were 504 unarmed Vietnamese civilians killed by U.S. soldiers in March 1968. Klein wrote:

I presume you or the appropriate people are looking carefully at the handling of the Army massacre case which seems to be gaining speed. I mention this only so that we are coordinated. Pictures of this are being sold by the former Sergeant who took them and may be appearing in the London Daily Mail, Der Stern and Life. Some already have appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and were shown on the air by Walter Cronkite, who held up a copy of the paper. This case could develop into a major trial almost of the Nuremberg scope and could have a major effect on public opinion. I have talked to Dan Henkin (chief spokesman for the Defense Department) about it, both in regard to the merit of having the Army release pictures and getting it over with, and in keeping me informed. . . I called John Mitchell this morning and suggested that special care be taken that the Justice Department does not move in any actions which might be regarded as intimidation of the media during this particular period of time. He assured me he was aware of the problem and on top of it.³⁰¹

Strategy, Klein recognized, meant knowing when to lay low just as much as it meant knowing when to fight back. Response to the My Lai massacre would draw far

301 H.R. Haldeman to Herb Klein, 21 November 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, November 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

more attention to it than the Administration wanted, and in any case, there was far more benefit in deflecting attention than defending actions.

Instead, Klein drew attention to another aspect of his office, a mailing system put in place to share news with individuals in the press, outside of the usual press conference or press release. Just weeks earlier, Klein made it clear to Haldeman that he had handled the coverage of the Nixon's speech on Latin America and the general activities that followed it with extreme care.³⁰² Providing an overview of the major newspapers and their coverage and headlines about the speech, he noted that, "Our mailing, which went out Air Mail Special Delivery last night to 1500 television news directors and editors and commentators, included the text, background fact sheets and background summary sheets."³⁰³ It would seem the Administration was developing a secure handle on a method by which to ensure that their information was reaching a wide range of television newsmen.

Equally important to getting their story out was letting the public and those in the media know that the Nixon White House was not stuck in a bygone era, as often suggested. Positioning Nixon in the role of embracer of technology added to the narrative that he was friendly toward new media and happily engaged it. "I have planted a story in

302 Nixon spoke about U.S. support for Latin American initiatives achieved through a multilateral basis within the inter-American system. He also spoke about world trade forums, imports and the elimination of discrimination against Latin America. Ultimately, he declared that Latin America must be responsible for its own social and economic progress.

303 Herb Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 1 November 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, November 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

Broadcasting Magazine about the President's idea of using the Satellite to get the message directly to Latin American as evidence of use of modern tools,"³⁰⁴ he ended.

The year of 1969 was a formative time for the nation and for the Administration. Americans saw a man walk on the moon and voters positioned Nixon in the White House. Klein and Ziegler had agreed upon a two-pronged system for dealing with the press and diverged on their own independent paths. Klein began to outline and identify how his new position would operate in a new technologically driven age. Haldeman, pressured by the President, applied equal, if not greater pressure on Klein to quickly and effectively put his goals and objectives into practice. Along the way, he added newsmen like Snyder and utilized men other aides, including Chapin to manage the system. With major events like the moon landing and the President's televised addresses on Vietnam, Klein sought not only to perfect the Administration's development of Nixon's image, but the response to the creation of that image by the press. The end of the first year of the Nixon Administration would see a well-formulated broadcast news strategy but one that retained its blunt edges. Over the years, a sharper, more cutting-edge strategy would emerge. Nixon's team of advertisers and newsmen would begin to formulate a public relations apparatus absent of public relations experts. 1970 would bring new challenges for the Administration as tensions over the war in Vietnam continued to grow and the Administration's relationship with broadcast media evolved into a war of its very own.

304 Herb Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 1 November 1969; Memoranda to Herbert Klein, November 1969: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California.

CHAPTER 4

MEDIA AND THE VIETNAM QUAGMIRE

While the Vietnam War protests galvanized Nixon's antagonism toward the press, 1970 was filled with speeches, televised addresses on issues from wage and price restraint to Nixon's approval of a plan for the Interagency Committee on Intelligence allowing for the conducting of operations against domestic targets. In October of that year, Nixon proposed a five-point plan for peace in Indochina during a televised address. The plan included the negotiated withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. Soon after, during a campaign rally in California, demonstrators attempted to pelt him with objects while shouting taunts. The tumultuous atmosphere of the previous year had spilled into 1970 manifested in the Kent State deaths and the rampant violence on college campuses across the country resulting in large scale closures of academic institutions.

Off the success of the Silent Majority Speech, Nixon approached 1970 with a particular goal in mind. Television had served him well and he was eager to make it work for him on a regular basis. A December 1969 memo to Haldeman, Nixon floated the idea of a part-time or full-time television professional on staff who could coordinate all his television appearances. "When I think of the millions of dollars that go into one lousy 30-second television spot advertising a deodorant, it seems to me unbelievable that we don't do a better job in seeing that Presidential appearances always have the very best professional advice whenever they are to be covered by TV." While this wouldn't formally materialize until 1971, Nixon and his aides would spend 1970 leading up to its eventual creation.

While the events of 1970 were politically and publicly corrosive, inside the Nixon White House, calm reigned. Prevailing narratives suggest that the Nixon White House was quickly becoming closed off, however discussions between Nixon's aides suggest otherwise. A distinct attitude of disdain was emerging, but more significantly, a well-articulated and power media strategy was in its formative stages. The Administration's evolving contentious relationship with the press was only part of a much larger narrative – one that included everything from biting internal squabbles about missed media opportunities to the investigation of how the Administration might purchase the American Broadcasting Corporation.

The early days of 1969 saw far more open press relations, at least where Klein was concerned, and this was becoming a point of stress. Klein, a former newsman, enjoyed the company of journalists and saw value in keeping channels open.³⁰⁵ Nixon and Haldeman were less enthused by the idea. In fact, Nixon's antagonism toward the media was becoming a central focus in 1970. Nixon speechwriter, William Safire, wrote of Nixon's positioning the press as the enemy, "He was saying exactly what he meant: 'The press is the enemy,' to be hated and beaten, and in that vein of vengeance that ran through his relationship with another power center, in his indulgence of his most combative and abrasive instincts against what he saw to be unelected and unrepresentative elite, lay Nixon's greatest personal and political weakness."³⁰⁶

While Klein's interaction with the press was largely successful and applauded by

305 Exit Interview with Herbert G. Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

306 Safire, William. *Before the Fall: An inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

those in the media for its success in allowing more unfettered access to the Nixon White House. However, the White House was becoming weary of the “hostile” media and Haldeman was gearing up to exert more authority over Klein’s evolving Office of Communication. The President, often through Haldeman, would lay out specific directions regarding how to respond to the press. Even in matters outside of traditional political discourse, Nixon was increasingly sensitive to the reaction of the press. No squabble was too small to engage in. The year of 1970 started out with one such event.

At the end of January, White House police officers publically debuted a new uniform designed by Nixon and Ehrlichman. The uniforms were influenced by the uniforms worn by guards at Buckingham Palace – overstated and ceremonial. The media had a field day and ridiculed their design. Nixon was outraged. “H – I want our staff to take RN’s position on this regardless of their own views... a W.H. staffer does not have independent views on W.H. matter. Have Klein take the offensive on the slovenly W.H. police we found,” he wrote on the News Summary that contained media criticisms on the matter.³⁰⁷ The new uniforms lasted for two weeks.

Nixon clearly demonstrated his disdain for criticism. He required the unwavering support of those around him. His attempts to silence his own staff had worked where opinions were involved, but his efforts to silence members of the press met with failure. While his powers were limited in that regard, he did his best, through Haldeman and Klein to ensure that those who crossed him were punished in some way. When John Gardener criticized Nixon’s budget, Nixon lashed out, “H&E – He is to be completely cut

307 News Summary, 2/5/70

off from now on. This is an *order*.”³⁰⁸ When news anchor Walter Cronkite’s name appeared in a News Summary one morning in early 1970, Nixon circled it and wrote next to it, “A *Nothing!*” David Brinkley faced Nixon’s wrath as well. Nixon went as far as to have his friend Don Kendall of Pepsi complain to NBC about Brinkley. Nixon’s anger wasn’t only a result of criticisms toward his policies or his actions as president. When Hugh Sidey wrote a column that mentioned Nixon’s luxurious private homes and his wealthy friends, Nixon wrote, “Freeze him completely for 60 days.”³⁰⁹

The image of the President was of primary importance – perhaps more so to him than anyone else in the Administration - - but the staff was made aware that any push against the idealized Nixon image generated a response of utmost force and immediacy. Numerous meetings between Haldeman and the President resulted in pressure on the staff to focus on ways to ensure the President was portrayed a very particular way. This, of course, wasn’t a new concept in 1970. However, what was significant was the Administration’s recognition that it. As Haldeman put it, “actually gets down to what is the best television.”³¹⁰

Nixon had been successfully using television to reach the American public directly. It was his preferred method since the early days of his campaign for the presidency. However, just as Nixon’s team began to take advantage of the behaviors of the television press, the rules would change. A proactive attempt at television strategy became reactive

308 News Summary/2/5/70

309 New Summary 4/1/70

310 H.R. Haldeman, 27 February 1970; folder Memoranda, February, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

and changes to the system were often perceived as personal attacks by Nixon, motivated by an inherent bias. At first, when the President delivered speeches from the Oval Office, all three major networks would cover the speech in primetime. When the networks decided to take turns broadcasting Nixon's speeches, leaving the other two free to air regular programming, Nixon reduced his use of television.

This by no means suggests that Nixon was turning his back on the medium. On the contrary, he began 1970 with a historic use of television on January 26. Nixon explained to the nation why he objected to a \$19.7 billion appropriation bill. After detailed explanation, in front of the cameras, he signed his veto. This was a first on television. His appearance was a success. It provided Nixon with just the platform and opportunity he needed to present his policies. According to Nixon's team, the Democrats insisted that the networks give them equal time to reply.³¹¹ When the networks provided the time, Nixon immediately asked for an inquiry into how many times the Fairness Doctrine had been applied while Kennedy and Johnson were in office. "My recollection is that we got 'equal time' only 3 times in 8 years," he wrote.³¹² Nixon always wanted to know if the networks were treating him differently from his predecessors.

As Nixon's aides tightened the reins on press relations, the White House itself was more open than ever. Musical performances livened up the Pennsylvania Avenue residence. Mrs. Nixon gave special tours and hosted large parties. On March 2, she

311 Egil Krogh to Ehrlichman, With RN Notation; 24 January 1970; Memoranda, January, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Egil Krogh; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

312 Egil Krogh to Ehrlichman, With RN Notation; 24 January 1970; Memoranda, January, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Egil Krogh; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

launched a weeklong tour of colleges visiting their volunteer programs. She traveled to Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, Colorado and Missouri. The press criticized her avoidance of major universities where anti-war protests were taking place. This however, was dismissed more as a matter of safety than an avoidance of a political posture.

The President started the year in San Clemente. On January 7, Nixon and Charles “Bebe” Rebozo, his friend and confidant, spent part of the day taking a drive and walking along the California beaches. The day ended with an angry phone call to Haldeman. Nixon read a story by *LA Times* Stuart Loory who questioned the cost of the “Western White House,” Nixon’s home base in California.³¹³ Nixon was greatly offended by implications that he was wasting time or money. He ordered Haldeman to respond to the allegations. Haldeman, who had been with the President in San Clemente, returned to Washington D.C. the next day and began working to find year-round use for the Western White House, to stave off criticism of its cost.

College campuses in the early 1970s were in a state of crisis. Student protests often escalated to much larger events and violent riots than had been seen before. Even though anti-war rallies were less frequent since Nixon’s Silent Majority speech the previous year, civil rights protests and political movements against “the capitalist system” were regular features of life on college campuses. One example of this was on the University of Colorado campus in Denver. In the four days prior to the arrival of Mrs. Nixon at the University, five bombings had taken place on the campus. The University had collected \$5 fee from each student in 1969, intended for the establishment of a scholarship for

313 Diary Entry: January 7th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

African American students. The Administration then refused to distribute the money on the grounds that it was illegal because disadvantaged white students were not eligible. In response, students began blowing up buildings.³¹⁴ From one social battle to the next, America's youth were rising up and Nixon, a man of stark formality with a demeanor of a time past, was to answer their call.

Nixon had yet to see a year in office where the country, and the world for that matter, was not embattled in seemingly unwinnable conflict. It was clear 1970 wouldn't be that year. The President felt as though 1970 was going to be the worst year for him and his Administration. Concerns about inflation, the recession, crime and election attacks at the top of the agenda. The focus of 1970 wasn't on 1970. It was a way to improve 1971 and build up to 1972.³¹⁵ In the midst of a country in peril, Klein prepared for a perilous journey of his own. Each decision made in an effort to open the White House to the press would close Klein out of Nixon's inner circle.

The Build Up

On January 1, 1970, Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act, which would later include significant environmental initiatives including the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, Mammal Marine Protection Act, as well as the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Vietnam was, as it had been, a central focus for the Administration, and an increasingly sensitive pressure point for the nation. This

314 WP 3/4/70

315 Diary Entry: January 8th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

manifested itself in continued campus unrest. Student protests would gain greater attention in 1970 than perhaps every before. The killing of student protestors at Kent State University by the National Guard deepened an already cavernous wound.

The African American community continued to fight for the full realization of their civil rights through the desegregation of public schools. In 1968, around 68 percent of African American students in the South were still attending all-black schools. That number was down to eight percent by 1974. Counsel to the President, Daniel Moynihan suggested that, “There has been more change in the structure of American public school education in the last year than in the past 100 years.”³¹⁶ While Nixon is not conventionally known as a fighter for civil rights, he was, perhaps not without coercion, a significant part of the process.

Concerns over the impact of interviews with other government officials on Nixon’s image were significant. After Ralph Bunche, who served as Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs since 1957, conducted a press conference that was reported by the *The New York Times*, as suggesting that his critical comments were censored by the Nixon Administration, presidential counsel Leonard Garment was instructed by Haldeman to handle the situation.

As you suggested, I talked to Ralph Bunche- - in fact I went to see him when I was in New York the other day – and told him our reaction to his press conference statements. He insisted that the NEW YORK TIMES misquoted him and that he made no reference to the President or the Administration as such, confining his critical comments to the Attorney General and Vice President. He indicated that he was sorry he even got into this passage, saying that he was caught off guard by a question that came right after a commercial break. I told him how difficult it was to make sustained progress in this area without some active support from

316 Daniel Patrick Moynihan Memo 1970

leaders like himself. He is sending me a transcript of his press conference and the follow-up comments in the NEW YORK TIMES, which he said are in the very back of the paper.³¹⁷

Scribbled on the top right corner of the memo was a note to Klein, who had received a copy of the message. “Klein – Another case of our “friends” at the NY Times – H.”³¹⁸ Every potential misstep was considered a slight at the least or an outright attack at the most, never a simple mistake.

Nixon was making efforts to appear a little more relatable through the press but this was a tall task. On January 9, the staff presented the President with a card for his birthday. Grudgingly he agreed to a press photo with the card being presented to him. “Worked fine, but P his usual awkwardness, just can’t cope with personal-type situations. Explained the whole card (Washington Star front page) in minute detail. But the photographers couldn’t have cared less,” wrote Haldeman.³¹⁹ Nixon did well with personal interactions with the people, but the press were not ordinary people and Nixon struggled. Still, Nixon’s awkwardness didn’t do any serious damage to the efforts of Haldeman, Klein, Ziegler and Chapin. Perhaps he wasn’t relatable, but at the moment, he was reachable – and that was more than most had expected.

In a January 11 *Washington Post Parade* magazine, stated:

PRESS RELATIONS – President Nixon has never felt comfortable with the press.

317 Leonard Garment to H.R. Haldeman, 8 January 1970; folder Memoranda, January, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Leonard Garment; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

318 Leonard Garment to H.R. Haldeman, 8 January 1970; folder Memoranda, January, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Leonard Garment; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

319 Diary Entry: January 9th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

Even during the honeymoon period, he held few press conferences. He has been sensitive, however to press criticism, as indicated by Vice President Agnew's attack on the media. Nevertheless, the President has instructed his subordinates to run an open Administration, and they have been generally candid in talking to reporters. Result: The credibility gap of the Johnson years has largely disappeared. Rating: B minus.³²⁰

This analysis was favorable, but it wouldn't change the closing of a somewhat previously open Administration.

The first few weeks of January were primarily dedicated to the construction of Nixon's State of the Union address. Speechwriter Ray Price had produced a draft but Nixon found it lacking in substance and organization and decided to write on his own. Haldeman wasn't convinced that the President was truly working on it. "Another day supposedly cleared for work on the State of the Union, but no work done...I think this is a classic example of forced procrastination. The draft he has is totally unsatisfactory, and he dreads getting started to work on it, so he keeps inventing excuses," wrote Haldeman.³²¹

As Nixon attempted to get his speech written, eventually passing the task to Safire, Buchanan and Price, he was also pushing Haldeman to find a solution to Kissinger's hobnobbing with the press. Haldeman noted that Nixon, "Wants me to take over K's schedule guidance for public and PR things, get him to see the right press people and not waste time with the unwinnables."³²² Nixon had been concerned about Kissinger's

320 "Parade." The Washington Post (Washington D.C.), January 11, 1970.

321 Diary Entry: January 13th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

322 Diary Entry: January 14th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

growing popularity in the press. He felt his accent was a bit too “war-like” and at one point, had asked Klein to keep him off television for that reason.³²³

Television appearances were routinely utilized across the government by late 1969 and they took a much more significant hold in 1970. The State Department had implemented a program that sent senior officers to their home states to deliver speeches and for radio and television interviews and appearances. Between November 3, 1969 and January 1970, nine senior State Department officers and ambassadors appeared on 102 television stations and 15 radio stations. The appearances were spread across 35 cities in 20 different states. Between January 19, 1970 and March 11, 14 speakers were scheduled to appear on 269 TV stations and 35 radio stations across 40 cities in 24 different states. Due to the success and size of the program, it was given permanent program status and assigned a staff officer to ensure its success. The program was anticipated to grow in the early months of 1970, especially where broadcast time was concerned. The result of the strategy thus far had been staggering. There had been a 70 percent increase in media appearances during the last three months of 1969.³²⁴

An increased use of television by government officials laid the foundation for the Administration’s future television press strategy. It put pressure on those on Nixon’s team, like Klein, to organize a way to gather analytics on those appearances. Nixon wasn’t only concerned with what his appointees said on screen, but what any government official said. For Nixon’s inner circle, what politicians said outside government walls

323 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

324 Klein to Haldeman Memo Jan 24th 1970

were indicative of their loyalty to office of the presidency. Klein was tasked with handling the television press and by extension, those who behaved badly when on it.

A Growing Preoccupation with Image

Of primary concern to Nixon, as demonstrated throughout his political career, was a focus on building image. This did not change in 1970. To Nixon, it wasn't simply about what he had accomplished. In fact, he felt as though his accomplishments while in the White House would pale in comparison to how he was perceived by the public as a result of press coverage. This was made evident by Haldeman on February 2, when he wrote of a conversation he had with Nixon that day, "A lot more on need for better press on P's image and leadership. Says trouble with all our backgrounders was that they were all on *what* we accomplished, nothing about personality of the man. Point of JFK did nothing but appeared great; LBJ did everything and appeared terrible. Taft infinitely more effective than Teddy Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt had personality. Taft just *did* well."³²⁵

According to Haldeman, the task of making the President *look* good just wasn't getting done, and the increasing hostility of the press accelerated the situation. On February 4, he wrote to Klein. "The story we were to get out and run somewhere about how the President has overcome the great handicaps under which he came into office – specifically, the hostile press epitomized by NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, TIME, NEWSWEEK, etc.; the hostile network commentators, the generally hostile White House press corps, the hostile Congress, etc. This is the whole pitch that we

325 Diary Entry: February 2nd 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

talked about some time ago. The story has not been gotten through.”

Haldeman suggested that if the task could not be accomplished, perhaps it was time to exert pressure on media insiders with influence. To be exact, Ralph deToledano, a friend of Nixon’s and editor at Newsweek. deToledano had reportedly been jockeying for a White House position, making him the perfect candidate of which to take advantage. “If we can’t get someone to take this and write the story along the lines we’ve been talking about, let’s at least get Ralph deToledano in, put the thing squarely to him, and get him to write it. Do it on the basis that it’s a test case, or something, so that there’s some heat on it; but some way or other, let’s get it out. Everybody’s failed so far,” Haldeman wrote to Klein. In a handwritten addition, he tacked on, “the heat is building.”³²⁶

Indeed. The strategy for 1970 was becoming increasingly clear. Nixon may not have been able to solve the volatile foreign and domestic issues, but his team would make every effort to appear as though he had. Nixon’s team knew that television had not simply changed the way in which the press operated; it changed the way in which the President did. To maintain control of the Presidency, the team would wrestle control away from the television press.

Internal television strategy in the White House was carefully monitored and analyzed. What couldn’t be controlled on the outside would be mitigated by what could be controlled on the inside. Every opportunity was taken to dissect and learn from a television event. Nixon’s aides had been tasked with creating viable, internally produced

326 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 4 February 1970; folder Memoranda, February, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

television events and guiding the coverage of externally produced events through careful staging. While productions done inside the White House were managed independently of those by the press, the integration of the strategies and understanding of how both systems operated was important. The way the Administration produced material would need to be done so in a very particular fashion, with the understanding that that production would be contorted to fit within the broadcast template. For example, television commercial breaks required stations to both prioritize and compartmentalize news coverage. Klein and his team understood that presidential events would need to be evaluated in terms of television news clips. Not unlike truncated quotes in newspapers, events covered by the television press would appear in “bites” and training Nixon to present himself in a way that fit within that format became a priority.

After a five-minute film on the environment by the President, the team and the President weighed the benefits. Nixon’s aide James Keogh, former editor of *Time* magazine, wrote to Haldeman, “We probably should not have done a full five-minute filming since none of the networks use more than about one and one-half minutes...the President should have simply referred to the fact that he had sent the Bill or the Message up and then go into the inspiration part and the reason why, very briefly, running for one to two minutes.” Keogh understood that the substantive content would have to be included in the report of the newscaster so, the President’s time need not be spent on doing so. “We gain more from his general statement than we do from his simply listing

the contents,” he continued.³²⁷ From here on out, the President expected that this be used as an example of how to construct future promotions of messages and bills. Klein and Nixon’s inner circle were carefully navigating both the internal production of broadcast content and the continuously emerging methods of news reporters and broadcast schedules. There was a sustained and deliberate method of trial, error and analysis.

Tensions Rise on World Stage

Official peace talks in Paris remained in a deadlock by early 1970 but behind-the-scenes, Henry Kissinger was holding secret talks with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam. On February 2, there was a strike on the Ho Chi Minh trail by 52 bombers in retaliation for Viet Cong raids. Just over a month later, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia aligned himself with Cambodian Communists, the Khmer Rouge, after being deposed by General Lon Nol. The Khmer Rouge were attempting to overthrow Lon Nol’s regime.

Prince Sihanouk brought a great deal of attention to the efforts of the Khmer Rouge, and the Rouge’s leader, Pol Pot, tried to capitalize on that notoriety. Later, Pol Pot would oust Lon Nol and his leadership would result in the death of nearly 25 percent of the population due to starvation, exhaustion and execution. In March, General Lon Nol led Cambodian troops in an attack on the Khmer Rouge as well as the North Vietnamese troops inside of Cambodia.

In the United States, Nixon and his team discussed ways in which they might assist Lon Nol, who was pro-America. Two weeks later, on March 31, Captain Ernest L.

327 Egil Krogh to H.R. Haldeman; 11 February 1970; Memoranda, February, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Egil Krogh; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Medina was charged by the U.S. Army for the massacre of Vietnamese civilians in My Lai that had occurred two years earlier. Less than a month later, Nixon announced the withdrawal of 150,000 American troops from Vietnam within a year. The stunning turnaround was a precursor to Nixon's announcement on April 30.

The situation in Vietnam required continuous monitoring of coverage by the Administration – this had been done in the previous years as well. However, the approach in 1970 was different. What was being reported itself was dissected less than were the reporters covering the war. It wasn't unusual for Nixon's aides denigrate reporters for even the most minor criticism of the President, but reporters in Vietnam drew particular scrutiny. A February 21 memo exemplifies the interest in those with journalistic influence on public opinion. "You asked for a run-down on Richard Threlkeld," wrote Klein to Haldeman.

He has been in Vietnam for CBS for about a year. He went there as a 'reporter' and recently was promoted to the rank of 'correspondent.' He is one of about half a dozen CBS men who have been up-graded to that rank while serving in Vietnam. Prior to going there, he was in the network's southern bureau in New Orleans, and before that, he was in the CBS pool as a junior correspondent. He has worked at WCCO in Minneapolis and is a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern. He is about 30 and is not considered to be among the heavyweights of the CBS correspondents. He is one who is likely to sensationalize.³²⁸

The Administration kept careful notes on each major reporter, and some local reporters. Throughout 1970 the list would continue to grow, culminating into a master list

328 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 21 February 1970; folder Memoranda, February, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

by the end of the year.³²⁹

The President himself was watching carefully. Though it's often suggested that Nixon fervently avoided watching the news, those who worked with him suggest otherwise. While he disliked it, he indulged in it from time to time.³³⁰ His frustration mounted whenever he felt that his Administration was criticized more than previous administrations. Having had held the office of Vice President, he had a unique perspective in this regard – and he took it personally. In a Friday evening report, an ABC reporter, about happenings in Laos, suggested that the Nixon Administration felt as though keeping the public uninformed was in the public interest. Under the orders of the President, Haldeman encouraged Klein and Magruder, the Deputy Director of White House Communications, to follow up on instances like this by reaching out to the reporter and driving home prepared points, oftentimes pushing the idea that previous administrations were not criticized similarly. In this case, the reporter was to be quizzed about what newsmen said when Kennedy began the war and continued it for the three years he was in office.³³¹ The point of the questioning wasn't necessarily to address "incorrect" coverage, but to begin a case against the news media as a whole. They were biased, and the Administration was going to make sure they knew they couldn't get away with it.

329 Nixon's "enemies list" is largely considered to be a final list of 20 individuals. However, earlier versions of the list include hundreds of individuals broken into categories including celebrities, congressman, businessmen and media.

330 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

331 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 2 March 1970; folder Memoranda, March, 1970; Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Not only was it important to the Administration that the public was aware, but the media held accountable for perceived bias. It was equally important that Nixon's staff believed it as well. When articles would align with Nixon's perception of a hostile media, the priority was to ensure that everyone was aware. Lawrence Higby, Haldeman's assistant, disseminated such information on March 4, 1970. "The President has requested that the article that appeared in TV Guide by Howard K. Smith on the bias of networks be sent with a covering memorandum by Herb Klein to all PIOS," Higby wrote to Magruder. "For your information, John Brown is making sure that article is circulated to all staff members."³³² It is not unlikely that the President wanted to ensure that Klein saw this type of commentary. After all, Klein was the most likely to protect the press. It was a practice Nixon had become less inclined to let continue.

The Most Completely Informed Individual

No matter concerning the image of the President was too small for the Administration to take seriously. One particular concern was the perception that Nixon was unaware or uninformed about the daily happenings in the country. This was often rebutted; noting that the President had a substantial News Summary provided to him each day. In fact, his aides suggested that Nixon was perhaps one of the best-informed presidents to date.³³³ Nevertheless, regardless of the continued tensions surrounding the war and civil unrest that followed the Administration into 1970, Nixon's aides never

332 Larry Higby to Magruder, 4 March 1970; folder Memoranda, March, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Larry Higby; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

333 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

relented in their pursuit to topple that perception.

Pat Buchanan, adviser to Nixon, had given television interview where he talked about the daily News Summary provided to Nixon. “As a result of Buchanan’s interview, he exploded the myth that the President has isolated himself from the daily facts of life in the country. To the contrary, he had the point that the News Summary project which the President initiated, brings to his desk every morning, the most comprehensive report ever assembled anywhere on what the American people are reading, hearing, and talking about,” wrote Higby to Klein and Ziegler. One of Klein’s tasks was to ensure that anyone who appeared on TV was prepared and trained to do so and this point was to be made clear in all future opportunities: “...Richard Nixon has been, for more than a year, not only the most fully informed President in our history, but the most completely informed individual.”³³⁴

An uninformed Nixon wasn’t the only myth the White House staff was combatting on a regular basis. Reports regarding Nixon’s sleeping schedule were circulating in the early months of 1970 and Nixon, a man who regarded his hardworking image as the epitome of his legacy, saw it as an attack on his very character. He made this clear to Haldeman, who turned to Klein to ensure that the press would be made aware. “In some article that Vermont Royster wrote recently, he said that we run the show on the basis of early to bed and early in the office. Somehow we need to kill the early to bed idea,” wrote Haldeman. “As a matter of fact, the President almost never is in bed before 11:30 P.M. or

334 Larry Higby to Herbert Klein, 9 March 1970; folder Memoranda, March, 1970: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Larry Higby; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

midnight and he very frequently works well past midnight, either in his office or in the Lincoln sitting room.” Haldeman noted that the President also wakes up multiple times during the night - sometimes at 2 or 3 a.m. - and works for an hour or two. Nixon was also known to call staff member in the middle of the night when he had specific things to discuss. “All of these points ought to be got across so that we don’t let any early to bed myth set in as a result of Royster’s article.”³³⁵

Nixon’s interest in the polls mirrored his interest in following his press coverage. It was a way to successfully gauge his efforts to cultivate his image and his legacy. He also looked to them to boost his confidence and to justify his distrust of the media. If the people felt he was doing well, and the media didn’t reflect that, Nixon had the “proof” he needed to suggest media bias. On April 7, H.R. Haldeman turned his attention to the polls. In a highly confidential project, Haldeman requested that Klein put Earl Mazo on assignment. After the 1960 election, Mazo, a journalist for the *Herald Tribune*, felt the election had been stolen and started writing an investigative series. "There was a cemetery where the names on the tombstones were registered and voted...I remember a house. It was completely gutted. There was nobody there. But there were 56 votes for Kennedy in that house."³³⁶ Mazo envisioned winning a Pulitzer for his work, but was pulled off the story without being told why. As it turned out, Nixon had reached out to his Mazo’s superiors. Nixon had asked Mazo himself to stop writing the piece because he

335 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 23 March 1970; folder Memoranda, March, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

336 Patricia Sullivan - Washington Post Staff Writer. "Earl Mazo, 87; Richard Nixon Biographer." *The Washington Post*, February 18, 2007

felt the country couldn't handle a constitutional crisis during the Cold War.

Mazo was just the man Haldeman and Klein needed for this job. What we need is a thorough analysis of the Gallup and Harris staffs - particularly Gallup. We should try to find out who their people are - the principal people in the organization - what their backgrounds are - their leanings and orientation, etc.," wrote Haldeman to Klein.

Haldeman also expressed the need to find out who influenced both the organizations and the individuals. "The whole poll business has become even more suspect than it has been in the past as you will see by looking at the pattern of Gallup, for example, and for that matter the lack of Harris releases. We need to know what it is that we're dealing with especially as we come into an election period."³³⁷

As it turned out, Mazo's report theorized a relationship between Lou Harris of the Harris Polls and pollster Oliver Quayle.

Harris and his firm have no direct or visible association with the Oliver Quayle organization, which, as you know, is the leading confidential pollster apparatus for Democratic candidates and the Democratic party and its adjuncts. However, Harris and Quayle are intimate, professionally. [Privately they] regularly swap information, experiences, interpretations, findings and so forth. [Naturally, therefore, the published Harris Poll and the confidential Quayle Polls invariably confirm each other, quite unlike the situation between Harris and Gallup.

Not only had Harris conducted nine major surveys for Time and Life, during a non-election year, but the Harris organization was also in the process of finalizing a deal with a major network to produce television "specials" in preparation for 1972.

The agreement between the Quayle and Harris polls was a significant finding. A *New York Times* article backed Mazo's report saying, "Quayle's current unpublished

nationwide poll agreeing substantially with public surveys by Louis Harris, shows Mr. Nixon running markedly better today than he did against Humphrey...” From the Ashoka Hotel in New Dehli, he wrote to Klein, “This thing of Quayle ‘agreeing substantially’ with Lou Harris is really hot stuff — and as newsworthy as Ron Zeigler agreeing with Herb Klein!!!” poking fun at the at times-tense relationship between the two aides.³³⁸

Focus on the polls was an important part of the Administration’s strategy. The year was a dry run for 1971 and 1972. There was no misconception that 1970 would be an easy year or even a routine one. The country was in too much turmoil to expect it would be. As such, it was immensely important to stay on top of the polls and know exactly where Nixon would land in public opinion. This first term was just a prolonged campaign for Nixon’s second.

A Growing Credibility Gap

Talk of the Vietnam War was forbidden among the White House staff. The President was clear that no one could talk about the war publicly. He was determined to stay in control of the information. The strategy didn’t always work. In regard to the number of soldiers killed over the years, Kissinger had provided the press more information than he should have, and as it turned out, the information was wrong. The fact that the information was incorrect wasn’t necessarily the problem. It was that now the press could promote the notion of a “credibility gap” in the Nixon White House. On March 9, while Kissinger was away, Ziegler had the responsibility of explaining the misstatement to the President over two long briefings. According to Haldeman, the

³³⁸ Earl Mazo to Herbert Klein.

outcome of the briefings was positive, but the entire event “shows more clearly than anything yet how the White House press is totally dedicated to screwing us rather than getting the facts and reporting them. They bent every effort to tangle it up and prove a credibility gap instead of trying to get it straight,” he wrote.³³⁹ For now it seemed as though the war discussion would take the backburner. Things were heating up at home and Nixon was busy addressing them. Segregation and race were everyday conversations in the White House, as was the handling of emerging labor disputes.

On March 17, 1970 United States postal workers in New York City went on strike due to poor working conditions and low pay. With no legal rights to bargaining, the postal workers went on strike. Postal offices in New York City, where the first strike originated, were described as “dungeons,” citing a lack of appropriate heating and cooling and unsafe working conditions.³⁴⁰ In large part, the postal system was made up of African American workers. The civil rights movement, and the growing tensions surrounding the full desegregation of schools bolstered the strike efforts.³⁴¹ It also amplified the cause of New York City postal workers. Eventually, more than 210,000 Postal Department workers took up the cause across the United States and began strikes of their own.

Nixon was prepared to take a firm stand. The simple fact that Federal employees were on strike was unacceptable. If he could fire them, he would fire them. At the very

339 Diary Entry: March 9th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

340 Rubio, Philip F. *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality*. University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

341 *Ibid.*

least, those involved would be suspended. For Nixon, the concern wasn't about the responsibility of the postal system to deliver the mail, it was a matter of principle. The postal strike, for Nixon, was a reflection of his lack of control and the subsequent appearance of a lack of leadership. He demanded that the workers return to work but his announcement merely solidified the strike resolve and even motivated other government agency workers to threaten a strike if Nixon were to pursue legal action against the postal workers.³⁴²

Nixon's legacy was at stake, but more importantly, so too was his image. His decisions here would greatly impact how the public viewed him. Nixon was dedicated to his image as a "man of the people" and a push against postal workers placed that image in a precarious position. He was at an impasse. Action against the postal workers might create sympathy and support for the postal workers, but the strike was having a debilitating impact on the postal system, even causing the stock market to fall. The stock market relied, in part, on the postal system for trading. A long strike raised fears that the stock market might have to close entirely.³⁴³

On March 23, in a historic move, President Nixon called for the National Guard in New York to take over mailing services. He made his announcement on television that day. In a seven-minute statement he declared a national emergency, called for workers to return to their jobs and announced the deployment of the National Guard. Eight days after the strike began, it was over and no postal worker had been fired. On April 2, a settlement

342 Ibid.

343 "Wildcat Postal Strike Worsens; 3 States Hit." St. Petersburg Times (St. Petersburg), March 20, 1970.

was reached. One of Nixon's most significant contributions during his presidency was born out of the postal strike. The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 was made effective on July 1 of 1971.

In defiance of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, seven states – Alabama, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana – continued to enforce segregated school systems in 1970. In 1969 another court decision had ordered an end to delaying the integration of schools. Tension regarding desegregation continued to mount and it became increasingly clear to Nixon and his Administration that steps were needed to calm another domestic crisis. In March, a cabinet committee was created to transition segregated systems. Biracial committees were formed in each of the states with still segregated school systems. The committee members themselves had reservations. There were concerns by individuals of both races that involvement in the committee would either reflect badly on them or that the committee itself was merely a publicity stunt.

Tension in southern schools was a regular conversation in the White House and Nixon's position wasn't always popular. Nixon felt that the "liberal establishment" was pushing too hard for total integration rather than desegregation. In his opinion, the process needed to be a slow one and moving too quickly could result in more confrontation and violence. While Nixon's March 24 statement on the full desegregation of schools affirmed his resolve in upholding the law as it stood, he still promoted his own preference in moving forward.

I am dedicated to continued progress toward a truly desegregated public school system. But, considering the always heavy demands for more school operating funds, I believe it is preferable, when we have to make the choice, to use limited

financial resources for the improvement of education--for better teaching facilities, better methods, and advanced educational materials--and for the upgrading of the disadvantaged areas in the community rather than buying buses, tires, and gasoline to transport young children miles away from their neighborhood schools.³⁴⁴

The push for desegregation by Nixon was seemingly more for the appearance of control and leadership than it was for any moral reason. The law dictated something, and it was to be upheld. He had, after all, much to lose from this push. He wasn't courting the African American vote and he was risking those votes he sought - the "Silent Majority." The Nixon Administration wasn't attempting to cultivate the "ethnic block" vote but rather those who were "resentful in the inner cities."³⁴⁵

Houston, We've Got a Problem; Washington, We Have a Distraction

April 13, 1970 began quietly. Haldeman was concerned about the broadcast networks' agenda. "It's obvious that the networks are running about twice a week a five-minute series of interviews of unemployed people – the purpose apparently being to try and establish a recession psychology," he wrote to Klein. "Is there anything we can do to combat this effort?"³⁴⁶ The strategy of Nixon's aides was evolving and the complexity of their investigation into the media was beyond the basics of media influence, approaching the potential psychology behind it all. Nixon's aides were beginning to focus not only on content and rhetoric, but also on potential, deeper impacts of sustained reporting. It was

344 Richard Nixon: "Statement About Desegregation of Elementary and Secondary Schools," March 24, 1970

345 "Oral History with Charles W. Colson." Interview by Frederick J. Graboske and Paul A. Schmidt. Transcript. September 21, 1988.

346 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 13 April 1970; folder Memoranda, April, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

one thing to go after one report, or one reporter, but the aides felt that a series of reports over time could establish a more pervasive mindset among the American people. However, that examination would have to wait. An emergency of epic proportions was about to captivate the country.

“Houston, we’ve got a problem here,” astronaut James R. Lovell reported to NASA Command, while nearly 200,000 miles from Earth. At about midnight on April 13th, Kissinger called Haldeman. There had been a problem aboard Apollo 13. The spacecraft, launched on April 11th with the mission to land in the Fra Mauro area of Moon. An explosion on board the craft prevented landing. The damage from the explosion resulted in power failure, shortage of potable water, loss of cabin heat and malfunctioning of the carbon dioxide removal system on the Command Module. At the time, the chances of a safe return for the astronauts seemed slim.

The following day was dedicated to conversation about the Apollo module. The President had scheduled a speech regarding Vietnam but decided to postpone it considering the circumstances. While Ehrlicman urged a trip to Houston, a trip to the Goddard Space Center in Maryland for a briefing was made instead. Meanwhile, Nixon’s aides were planning their own response.³⁴⁷

After a dramatic feat of engineering, on Friday, April 17th the astronauts made their safe return to Earth in the south Pacific Ocean. Nixon was elated. In celebration, he “Ordered cigars for all on success when learned that was (NASA Engineer) Chris Kraft’s

347 Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

tradition at NASA.” The President called the astronauts and the press and then ended the day with the “Evening at the White House” event with special guest Johnny Cash. “Lots of people, enthusiasm. It was a great day,” wrote Haldeman.³⁴⁸ The next day Nixon and his aides flew to Houston to thank the ground teams that brought the astronauts home safely, and award them the Medal of Freedom.

Apollo 13 had gripped the nation. It captivated the country’s attention and with Nixon’s aides, it had truly become a television event of its own. With the astronauts returned home, Nixon and his team prepared to bring Vietnam back into the picture. They had delayed their initial address regarding troop withdraw when the Apollo module was in danger. Now that the astronauts were safe, the medals presented and the pomp and circumstance were over, Nixon prepared for his TV appearance on April 20. Nixon gave his address at 6:15 from San Clemente. Strategically, Nixon asked for the information leak to the press. The press was to be informed that the President was to announce a 40,000 troop withdrawal during his address. Instead, he would actually announce the withdrawal of 150,000 troops.

The tactic would accomplish two things. One, it would discredit the media. Something that Nixon and his aides often sought. Harming the credibility of the press, and revealing their use of leaked material that was unsubstantiated would build the perception that the press was neither responsible nor fair. This, ultimately would work in Nixon’s favor. Criticism from the press regarding him and his Administration would potentially seem less believable. Second, the expectation of a smaller number of troops

348 Diary Entry: April 17th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

withdrawal and then the revelation of a much larger troop withdrawal would increase the likelihood of a positive response from the public. If the people thought fewer troops were going to be coming home and then were told by the President that he would bring home 100,000 more, would again place him in a positive light. Both of these outcomes would enhance Nixon's image. One was a long game and the other, a short. This is how the Administration would play ball – chip at the credibility of the press by leaking inaccurate information and then use television to speak to the nation directly, with the accurate information. Nixon would appear honest and the press would appear sloppy – at least that was the plan.

By late April, Communists had gained control of one-fourth of what was considered “neutral” Cambodia. In response, plans were considered to have South Vietnamese move in on one side and a joint American/South Vietnamese push in another territory. The escalation moved Nixon back where he liked to be, absorbed in foreign affairs and away from domestic issues. This, of course, had its consequences.

Polls were becoming a central focus. They had always been, but with the new Administration, new relationships were forged and the impact and position of those polls was increasingly important to the Nixon White House and its mission to maintain a certain image of their President. Klein had been instructed by Haldeman to gather additional information on the Gallup and Harris polls as part of their continuing project. In doing so, he spoke with Earl Mazo, supporter of Nixon and the editor of Readers Digest, who was willing to do a little digging and provide his own insight to Nixon's aides. “Mazo believes no major purpose will be served researching the Gallup staff or clients. He says the situation is basically unchanged over the years, and his studies show

no indication of a sellout. The only change is one I noticed during the campaign and that is that George Gallup, Jr., is weaker and less perceptive than his father,” wrote Klein.

The Harris poll presented a more complex picture. In fact, ties to the Department of Transportation were of particular interest to Klein. “...the poll has been sold to a Wall Street firm called Donaldson Lufkin. I am getting a rundown of the firm. Harris was in Newsweek but was bounced out and now is in Time. The poll stories are written by Harris personally. You know Harris’ background and ties which are certainly anti-Nixon...I have just found out that a major new client of Harris is DOT. I have been trying to reach Volpe on this... Earl Mazo has been delayed in further investigation because of a story he is writing for Reader’s Digest on the President. He promises to get more information immediately.³⁴⁹

Concerns of a Cheapened Image

The morning staff meeting of Friday April 24 elicited more concerns about the public’s perception of the President. The continued national unrest and what seemed to be endless and increasing conflicts in Vietnam and Cambodia had spurred a sense a loss of momentum and leadership. Nixon’s aides were lobbying for the President to be more available to the press and the people, but Nixon was even less receptive to the idea as 1970 wore on. If nothing else, the team simply needed the President to make an *appearance*. Haldeman wrote:

349 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 21 April 1970; folder Memoranda, April, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

E and Harlow and Zeigler and Klein all feel there is a substantial problem and that P's theories of isolation and remoteness are badly aggravating it. Hard to get them to come up with positive ideas to counterbalance this, but they do feel strongly. They argue for more public Presidential presentations, press conferences, speeches, review trips, etc. Not so much to sell programs, but to demonstrate P cares and is interested and will try to do something. Whole thrust is on need for appearance, not substance.³⁵⁰

A dichotomy emerged. As the year progressed, so did concern regarding the accessibility of the White House to the press. In the same regard, some on Nixon's team were concerned that increased openness would lessen the effectiveness of the President's appearances. The general consensus had become this: The success of manufacturing a positive image of President Nixon was reliant on the continued control over his appearances. Absolute control over his appearances was only possible if they were few, and heavily prepared. Too many appearances and Nixon's impact diminished. Openness potentially cheapened the value of the President, his aides and his family. There was to be some degree of privilege that accompanied the ability to reach the Nixon Administration, a formality that many of Nixon's aides felt should stay intact.³⁵¹

On April 30, Haldeman wrote to Klein, Ziegler, and Constance Stuart, staff director and press secretary for the First Lady, "We've got to establish a very clear policy of not selling the White House too cheaply. When we make arrangements for the President's family or for that matter, key staff people, to do feature stories or feature filming for television, we should not just jump at the first offer, but rather be hard to get and play for the best kinds of things we can possibly get." A previous tour of the White House with

350 Diary Entry: April 24th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

351 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

Nixon's daughter, Tricia, brought this concern to light. A 20-minute segment was agreed upon but the team thought it potentially possible to have pushed for a full-hour special. Haldeman expressed that had the team bargained more strongly, the Administration may have had the opportunity for more television time. "Sometimes we'd be better off not to give anything than to give too much for too low a price," Haldeman wrote.

Cambodia and the Leadership Crisis

That same day, Nixon addressed the nation through a televised speech from the Oval Office. Nixon asked the American people to support his decision to send troops into Cambodia in response to North Vietnam's incursion into the country. The use of the word "incursion" was deliberate and calculated, and like many other items of discussion in the Nixon White House, hotly debated. In fact, before the speech, the President called a few of his aides into the Roosevelt Room to discuss how to get the word out about the speech and bolster support. A discussion about the difference between the use of the word "incursion" instead of "invasion" emerged. "Incursion" was temporary and this plan was not. This led to Donald Rumsfeld questioning how the plan flew "in the face of the Nixon Doctrine." To that, Kissinger replied, "We wrote the goddamned doctrine, we can change it." That instantly ended the discussion. Nixon used the term "incursion."³⁵²

"I realize that in this war there are honest and deep differences in this country about whether we should have become involved, that there are differences as to how the war should have been conducted. But the decision I announce tonight transcends those

³⁵² "Oral History with William Safire." Interview by Timothy Naftali. Transcript. March 27, 2008.

differences. For the lives of American men are involved. The opportunity for Americans to come home in the next 12 months is involved. The future of 18 million people in South Vietnam and 7 million people in Cambodia is involved. The possibility of winning a just peace in Vietnam and in the Pacific is at stake,” he said to the nation. This was the first time a President used a map in the way Nixon did, during a televised address. If openness was a concern for the press, Nixon’s team orchestrated this televised appearance to obliterate that notion. Not only was Nixon speaking candidly, straight to the American people about a very contested issue, he was essentially providing a full visual lesson. He had been accused of intentionally keeping the public uninformed and this appearance was designed to counter that. Perhaps, it would suggest, that the press was at fault for a lack of information, not the Administration.³⁵³

Tactics like this one served Klein and his team well. They allowed for a more intelligent conversation with the media and gave Klein the leverage he needed to suggest that the Administration was making some attempt at being open, regardless of how that information may have been skewed by those in the White House. At least information was available, and for appearance sake, it was being presented in a clear and television-friendly way. To the Administration, there would be little need for a station to create its own graphics if the White House had already done and to show the public something other than what the President had shown the people would almost certainly open the networks up to criticism from Nixon’s team.

353 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

Nixon ended his address; “It is customary to conclude a speech from the White House by asking support for the President of the United States. Tonight, I depart from that precedent. What I ask is far more important. I ask for your support for our brave men fighting tonight halfway around the world--not for territory--not for glory--but so that their younger brothers and their sons and your sons can have a chance to grow up in a world of peace and freedom and justice. Thank you and good night.”³⁵⁴ Following the speech, Nixon took a walk around the Rose Garden on his way back to the White House. As after each televised address, Nixon’s aides prepared for a night of careful management of phone calls and reactions regarding the President’s address.

Just days after his televised address, on May 4, and as Nixon and his aides gauged national reaction, tragedy struck on the campus of Kent State University. Haldemen went to the Executive Office Building, where the President was spending part of his day, to tell him that four students had been killed. Disturbed by the prospect of an unwarranted and overzealous attack on students by the National Guard, the President hoped that perhaps the rioters had provoked the shooting, but little evidence suggested that. Other than throwing rocks at the National Guard, the students hadn’t instigated any violent action. Nixon felt, to some degree, that he might be responsible – that his speech may have motivated unrest.

Haldeman and Nixon talked about how the Administration could get through to students. The disconnect seemed no closer to being resolved than when Nixon entered office. Rumors abound of protests, marches and strikes. While this had been discussed as

354 Richard Nixon: "Address to the Nation on the Situation in Southeast Asia.," April 30, 1970.

a possibility following Nixon's address on Cambodia, the news held a unique weight. Nixon's foreign decisions were seemingly having an almost instant impact on domestic affairs and his much-desired image as a peacemaker was tangled in the trappings of a prolonged war and a country divided. There seemed little to do other than wait and see how Cambodia turned out. "If it can be proclaimed a success and we can get out in six weeks, it will set him up pretty well for a while. If not, we're in for a bundle of trouble," wrote Haldeman.³⁵⁵

A "bundle of trouble" was, a serious understatement. The Kent State deaths and the subsequent violence on college campuses amplified the fragility of the nation's condition. Media attention was non-stop. Schools had closed and threats of violence were at a high. Nixon tightened reins on Vice President Spiro Agnew in light of his forceful rhetoric that was credited as trigger in an already volatile situation. On May 8, Nixon held a press conference addressing the student demonstrators, as well as Cambodia and Vietnam. Herbert Kaplow of NBC News asked Nixon what he thought the students were trying to say through their demonstrations. Nixon replied:

They are trying to say that they want peace. They are trying to say that they want to stop the killing. They are trying to say they want to end the draft. They are trying to say that we ought to get out of Vietnam. I agree with everything that they are trying to accomplish. I believe, however, that the decisions that I have made, and particularly this last terribly difficult decision of going into Cambodia sanctuaries which are completely occupied by the enemy – I believe that that decision will serve that purpose, because you can be sure that everything that I stand for is what they want.³⁵⁶

355 Diary Entry: May 5th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

356 Richard Nixon: "The President's News Conference," May 8, 1970.

Nixon was trying to align himself more closely to the plight of the America's youth. 1970 wasn't about trying to explain or defend his actions. In many cases, it was a departure from the maligning of the "others." Instead, 1970 was grasping at opportunities that allowed Nixon to appear in alliance with the ideological underpinnings of a nation at a tipping point. Nixon was, in many ways, still campaigning.

The press conference was considered a success but the year was taking its toll on Nixon. The next day, Haldeman expressed his growing concern. "I am concerned about this condition," he wrote.

The decision, the speech, the aftermath killings, riots, press, etc.; the press conference, the student confrontation have all taken their toll, and he has had very little sleep for a long time and his judgment, temper, and mood suffer badly as a result. On the other hand he has gone into a monumental crisis, fully recognized as such by the outside, and so far has come through extremely well. But there's a long way to go and he's in no condition to weather it. He's still riding on the crisis wave, but the letdown is near at hand and will be huge.³⁵⁷

Nixon had many tests ahead and his staff was starting to worry that in a time where appearance of strong leadership was most needed, Nixon might stumble under fatigue. "If we make it, it will be a great proof of leadership at a time that was badly needed. If we don't, we'll have a rough couple years of rebuilding," Haldeman wrote, finishing his diary entry for the night.³⁵⁸ This, perhaps, was another stunning understatement by another Nixon man.

The Cambodia situation was precarious. A Senate strategy had emerged that would

357 Diary Entry: May 9th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

358 Diary Entry: May 9th 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

require the President remove all American troops from Cambodia by July 1, 1970. This worried Nixon. A move like that might be interpreted as defeat, and there seemed to be enough votes to carry it. Still, Nixon's aides were hopeful. An amendment on the basis of troop safety would likely be possible. While the Senate was a concern for the Administration, press coverage of Cambodia was a major concern for the presidential aides. Compounded by the student unrest, press strategy in the White House was all-hands-on-deck and Haldeman turned to Klein to do the heavy lifting. Politics aside, the answer, as it so often was in the Nixon White House, was television.

“The work load in your office should be shifted so that all odds and ends and busy work is handled by one person and the rest of your staff can concentrate on the Cambodia situation, as well as the student situation,” Haldeman wrote Klein in a memo:

Herb, it is felt you should get on television as much as possible. There have been several positive comments about your appearance on the Cavett show. In addition, it is vital we get the Cabinet Members who are good on television should be programmed accordingly. The orchestration of the Cambodian public information effort between now and June 20, and then the follow-up to the withdrawal of American troops as primary in the President's mind. We must continue to plug away on this effort.³⁵⁹

The situation in Cambodia had the potential of creating even more evidence for growing accusations of a “leadership crisis.” Wherever the perception arose that Nixon was losing control of his country, Nixon's aides were ready to respond. This wasn't simply an unspoken code of honor. Their response was methodical. James Keogh, special assistant to Nixon in 1969 and then head speechwriter, had earlier made note of an

359 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 12 May 1970; folder Memoranda, May, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

“attack” by the media in their suggestion that there was a “leadership crisis.” Haldeman ordered him, Klein, Safire, Buchanan and Lyn Nofziger, a deputy assistant to the President, into action. “Of course, the opposite is true,” he wrote of there being a concern over the President’s leadership abilities. “It is felt that some very positive speeches tackling these problem should be developed for use by others, such as the Vice President, Chairman Morton, Senator Scott, Congressman Ford, and others. In addition to the speeches, it would be well to have a fact sheet. It could list “what some say” – (this would be the negative comments) and “the truth” – (our side of the story.) Will you please put your team to work on this matter?”³⁶⁰ Orders like this were not new to Klein and the others. Klein and his staff mailed out fact sheets and background material to news directors, writers and editors.

These formal strategies were juxtaposed by the more underhanded approaches that were becoming commonplace in the Nixon White House. It seemed, for every action “by the book” there was another “underneath the table.” While speeches and a list of talking points were commonplace and open for general discussion amongst the team, Klein himself was to take a different focus. The Nixon White House was no stranger to putting political pressure on the press but the tactic of financial pressure was emerging as a formative strategy. The President’s image was at stake and in such cases, traditional methods weren’t always enough. Haldeman, in a private memo to Klein suggested the following the next day, “P.S. Perhaps another gateway to get this out would be to have

360 H.R. Haldeman to James Keogh; 13 May 1970; Memoranda, May, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: James Keogh; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

some very important person – maybe a major advertiser – write a letter to the news media, the Times, the Post, and Time and Newsweek, simply laying it on the line like this and asking them some searching questions. The letter should be written, in each instance, to the publisher.”³⁶¹ Nixon’s aides weren’t simply going after reporters, or demanding corrections from editors anymore, they were strategically going after the institution itself. Pressmen were small pickings. The establishment was the real problem and Nixon’s aides, men from media and marketing, knew that money was a very powerful influencer.

There was a clear sense in the Nixon White House that between the situation in Cambodia and the unrest across the nation’s college campuses, the “establishment press” was latching on and using the opportunity to inflict the greatest damage possible on the Administration and the image of Richard Nixon. Efforts to make it into columns in national newspapers was failing and Nixon’s aides were becoming more diligent in their efforts to hold the media responsible for their words and actions.

That same day, Haldeman, in what some suggest was a memo written by Nixon himself³⁶², laid out the groundwork:

...to the extent the President has any support whatever on Cambodia this is a devastating indication of the lack of credibility of the national media, particularly the two news magazines, the Washington Post, the New York Times, and three networks. You should point out that all of them have opposed the President violently on this issue. Also we should point that this is nothing new. Richard Nixon is the first president this century who came to the Presidency with the opposition of all these major communication powers and, since he has been in the Presidency, he has been heavily opposed with only a few exceptions. He has been opposed not

361 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 13 May 1970; folder Memoranda, May, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

362 John Anthony Maltese, *Spin control: The White House Office of Communications and the management of presidential news* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1998), 22.

just editorially but primarily by the slant of the news coverage due to the attitudes of reporters. The fact that he now survives all of this with even 57% approval by the people indicates not so much something about Richard Nixon as it does something about the news media. Point out that this 57% figure incidentally is a rather remarkably one in view of the fact that it is the period of economic slowdown, and that Eisenhower in the whole year of 1958, when he had Lebanon and other foreign policy successes had a Gallup rating which dropped into the 50s. You might say that this is really a time for soul-searching on the part of the press as to whether it is they who are out of tune with the people rather than the President. The point could also be made that the President has taken all of this with good grace. *He has never during this period of office called a publisher, commentator, editor, etc for purposes of criticizing him* and that the real meaning of it is that the President, himself, has finally reached the conclusion which would be one that should cause the media some concern. He realizes that he does not have to have their support.³⁶³

A line had been officially drawn and the veiled threat toward the media was worthy of note.

Tightening Reins

In late May Klein was preparing for an air inspection trip of Vietnam and Cambodia. The plan was to invite the press but Klein had his reservations and was hesitant to move forward, instead offering an alternative plan. "I talked to Felix McKnight [of the *Times Herald*] several times during the weekend and he was willing to send a wire suggesting such a trip. He said that to be credible, we would have to be certain to include some people who are known opponents, such as Punch Sulzburger and a representative from the *Washington Post*," he wrote to Haldeman.

My alternative suggestion would be that we arrange for perhaps two or three groups of editors and broadcasters to come in the invitation of the President for a briefing of the situation. This could include lunch and discussion with either Laird or Rogers and an afternoon briefing by one of the two. Defense and State would then be followed by a meeting with the President or perhaps cocktails with him at

363 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein and Ron Ziegler, 13 May 1970; folder Memoranda, May, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

5:00 pm or 6:00 pm for an hour.³⁶⁴

Reins on the press were tightening, but these reservations weren't entirely based on a perception of negative coverage. Previously, Johnson had planned a similar trip when he checked on the election in South Vietnam. Apparently, the trip started well, but the reporters were unable to see all they had wanted to see. Klein expressed concern that dwindling supplies and resources, and the prediction of an increase in fighting could put them in the same position. Chapin seemed to agree. At the bottom of the memo Klein scribbled, "H- C recommends (1) drop trip idea (2) try and set Klein out there with some group (3) drop idea of bringing editors or broadcasters for briefing – all the arguments against the plans."³⁶⁵ The idea was dropped but perhaps of greater significance was that the concept was discussed at all. Klein had always been more open to engaging the press, even as Nixon's other aides pushed for a more closed environment. Contrary to the suggestion that Nixon was dedicated to keeping information from the public, his aides had fully planned though eventually abandoned, a trip to do the opposite. The logistics rather than the politics, at least in this instance, seemed to tip the balance.

When Klein returned from Vietnam he was appraised of a conversation that had occurred between the President and Buchanan. Buchanan had sent the President a memo informing him of the following: "In two weeks' time CBS-TV has shown only three short film segments on troops uncovering enemy caches of arms and food. That is, CBS is not

364 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 20 May 1970; folder Memoranda, May, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

365 Ibid.

screening much footage that would tend to demonstrate the truth in the President's stated reasons for moving into the sanctuaries."³⁶⁶ Haldeman wanted Klein to waste no time complaining to CBS about their coverage. "I wonder if now isn't the time for you to personally move firmly in talking with top-level management at CBS and asking them what is happening here. As you know, we keep all the news broadcasts so that you can have a case built sky-high before you go in to see them. The only way this thing is going to change is if we get some top-level action and you now are in the unique position to do so," he wrote.³⁶⁷

Klein routinely spoke to the movers and shakers in the press. There was some kindred spirit between those in the news business and Klein. Haldeman understood the value of Klein's relationships but seemed to lack an understanding that certain tactics could bring irreparable damage to those valuable relationships. Still, Klein made an effort to bridge the gap between White House and press managers but often attempted to shift attention to other ways that the President could establish a positive relationships of his own.

While Nixon's aides were looking to aggressively hit the top executives at major networks, Klein was focused on taking apart the smaller appearances of the President, making note of even the slightest missteps by correspondents and reporters. If something was said, even in passing, that the Nixon White House didn't agree with or felt reflected

366 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 11 June 1970; folder Memoranda, June, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

367 Ibid

badly on the President, network executives would know about it. On June 17, Klein sent a memo to Haldeman about Nixon's address in Knoxville.³⁶⁸ ABC had, even by the Administration's standards, done a good job in their coverage. That is, until a correspondent in a final comment noted his surprise about the number of dissidents who had shown up. Klein immediately called Jim Hagerty, press secretary under Eisenhower and now Vice President of ABC and John Lynch. Hagerty brought the complaint up and what followed was a letter written to Klein from Lynch himself. It read, "Dear Herb: I have checked the script of our report from Knoxville on the President's appearance there. I would agree with you that the correspondent stretched the point in this particular case. It is very uncharacteristic of him. Best, John."³⁶⁹

The daily News Summary that was implemented when Nixon first took office were getting continued use. On July 10, Larry Higby, assistant to Haldeman, wrote to Klein about the need to get comparisons of the total amounts of time Kennedy, Johnson, Eisenhower and the President had on television over the course of their terms in office. This was information that the Nixon Administration had wanted for some time, but didn't think was possible to acquire without going to the networks. The July 10 News Summary included something that suggested otherwise. "After reviewing Frank Stanton's (President of CBS) response that played on CBS last evening, and which appears on page 9 of this morning's Television Report in the News Summary, it is obvious that Mr.

368 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 17 June 1970; folder Memoranda, June, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

369 John Lynch to Herbert Klein. June 2, 1970. Washington D.C.

Stanton had this information. Bob has now requested that you phone Mr. Stanton and ask him for this information and that you have available for Mr. Haldeman by noon today the information supplied by Mr. Stanton. Thank you,” wrote Higby.³⁷⁰

Nixon’s aides were eager to find or create opportunities to get the President in front of the camera. They knew that a good appearance on television, with the President talking directly to the American people, had more of an impact than speeches and press conferences. In the vein of Franklin Roosevelt, Haldeman pushed for Fireside Chats for television. The President would need some convincing and Haldeman knew this. He reached out to Chapin:

We’ve done a lot of talking about the idea of the President doing a series of Fireside Chats from the Lincoln Sitting room for national television on Sunday evenings. We need to work up a specific plan on this and the way to sell it to the President would be to develop the complete plan on one subject, right down to having a basic text written, staging worked out and everything else. We would also have a plan for how this works into a series of broadcasts, but we should start it by selling one specific program to the President.³⁷¹

Television strategy to this point had been somewhat reactionary. Major events, national tragedies, war and presidential events necessitated a need for quick response. Nixon’s aides were pioneering new ways of utilizing a new medium and despite the challenges of doing so, they were relatively successful in their endeavors. They forged relationships with press executives and investigated reporters. They documented each individual in the media they suspected to be “against Nixon” and watched them carefully

370 Herbert Klein to Larry Higby, 10 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

371 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 20 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

while striking alliances with those who exhibited more moderate or favorable leanings. But one thing was emerging in the 1970s that was unique. Nixon's aides were engaging in deep research. Perhaps a product of paranoia, Nixon was constantly comparing the behavior of the press with him to how the press behaved with his predecessors.³⁷² The infancy of television made this a new area of research. Likewise, Nixon's aides were looking to previous presidential successes with emerging media technology, such as radio, and investigating ways to modify those successes for television. Television strategy in the Nixon White House wasn't just emerging, it was pioneering.

Building a Case Against the Press

Nixon spent a generous amount of time at his Western White House in San Clemente, and as a result, garnered jeers from the press. The potential damage to the President's image if the press continued to perpetuate a narrative that Nixon was vacationing often was not lost on Nixon's aides, and certainly not on Nixon himself. Chapin, in response, was asked to do a spot analysis of the coverage of the activities that occurred at the Western White House in the *LA Times* in comparison to the coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Coverage had been better in the Eastern papers the previous year, and if the *LA Times* was going to risk less favorable coverage this summer, the Administration was going to be prepared to confront them about it. Coverage analysis on topics like this was important for the Administration. This was just further evidence that Nixon's Administration wasn't simply blacklisting press and chastising them for perceived transgressions, they were simultaneously meticulously

³⁷² "Oral History with William Safire." Interview by Timothy Naftali. Transcript. March 27, 2008.

researching major press players. In 1969, the focus would have been the origination of suggestions like that of the President “vacationing.” In 1970 the focus was more sophisticated. It was becoming clearer. The Nixon Administration wasn’t gearing up for press avoidance, it was mounting its case against the press through careful research and press manipulation.

The way the press interpreted Nixon’s travel had been a particular point of analysis for Nixon’s aides. Ever vigilant in the formation and verification of Nixon as a constant worker, no stone would go unturned when it came to the Nixon’s time spent outside Pennsylvania Avenue. Nixon would regularly visit Walker Cay, the northernmost island in the Bahamas. At the time, the land was leased by American businessman Robert Abplanalp. Abplanalp built a small Presidential office in a building there complete with Presidential flags and other accoutrements fit for the Commander in Chief. “It would be a good idea for you to make this known the next time we are in Florida and the President goes to Walker’s so that there will be no question in the minds of the press as to whether the President is able to work and communicate while he is out there. You should make it clear that he does both,” Haldeman informed Ziegler and Chapin. “Along the same line, the next trip to Los Angeles should not be announced as a working vacation. The President doesn’t want to see that term used anymore. These trips are not working vacations, they are a move of the White House from Washington to San Clemente.”³⁷³

To construct this idea more clearly for the press, the President requested that a

373 H.R. Haldeman to Ronald Ziegler, 4 August 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Ronald Ziegler; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

working schedule be established and announced each day that he spent at the Western White House. Two briefings would be held each day – one at 10 a.m. and the other at 2 p.m. In addition to informing the press, they were also to be specifically informed that the President works the full day, contrary to some reports that suggested he rested in the afternoon. “It will be essential for you to develop something to cover at each of these briefings each day. He wants to be sure we keep the press working, not give them a day off.”³⁷⁴

Of course, the relentless pursuit to protect Nixon’s legacy continued. It had been made clear among the aides that there was little sense for Nixon to bother to do certain things if there was no resulting news coverage that came out of it. Appearance was paramount. Haldeman made this clear once again to Chapin, "As you may recognize, it’s important that we do some evaluation of the coverage of the things we do for the purpose of getting coverage, instead of just blissfully wandering along doing all the things and getting no mileage out of them.”³⁷⁵

Increasing Tension Among Aides

There was always a bit of tension between Haldeman and other aides in the Nixon White House, but nothing unusual in a high stress, high stakes Administration.³⁷⁶ Chapin was on the receiving end of Haldeman’s frustration when it came to matters directly concerning the President, and particularly those that involved his schedule with the

374 Ibid

375 H. R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin. July 9, 1970. Washington D.C.

376 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

internal television team and broadcast press. “As mentioned frequently before – it would be helpful to me to have the same daily schedule as the P. has. Maybe (and apparently) that’s asking too much,”³⁷⁷ Haldeman scribbled on a note to Chapin. Notes like this, between the two were common. Contrary to prevailing narratives, Nixon’s aides seemed to get along well for the most part and weren’t stifled under the oppressive thumb of Nixon himself. According to Chapin, when the aides would meet, and Nixon would happen to wander in, he would joke with the group casually before walking out. It was Haldeman’s presence that would quickly turn a relaxed gathering into a tense situation.³⁷⁸

July 1970 is filled with discussion of a solid “scientific” plan for how the President spent time with key members of the press and television people. Despite the fact that this had become an important aspect of the Nixon Administration, Nixon’s aides were still learning when and where to embrace the press and when to shun them entirely in terms of television. A balance had yet to be achieved and Haldeman had it high on his agenda to find it.³⁷⁹

Interestingly enough, just two days after Haldeman wrote a memo to Chapin regarding that very balance and the importance of creating a scientific plan, he made clear that no one was to give the impression that the President would be attending any events with the press. “Will you please be absolutely sure that it is completely clear to all possible concerned parties – inside and outside the staff – that the President will not do

377 H. R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin. July 9, 1970. Washington D.C.

378 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

379 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 17 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the Gridiron, the Radio-TV Correspondents – the White House Correspondents – the Women’s Press Club – The White House Photographers – or any similar group who is having a dinner next year or at any time in the future,” he wrote.³⁸⁰

There was little advantage, according to Haldeman, for the President attending events as these. Instead, particular members of the press friendly to the Administration would be selected, invited and entertained at the White House. Maintaining control over the environment, and the press that the President approved were critical. Much to his dismay, Ziegler had recently failed to inform the President that an event in which he attended was hosted by *The New York Times*. Had he known, Haldeman wrote, the President would have never attended.

Haldeman was becoming frustrated by these missteps from fellow aides when it came to press management. An event for General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been committed, set up, staged and executed without the approval of Haldeman. He had approved setting a date, but had been unaware of all the other details, and that they had been finalized. The fact that the event included press coverage, and subsequently, the President was slated to appear on television, made this an issue of significance. The handling of the event left Nixon with no prior notice of his television appearance. To Haldeman’s relief, the President had ended the breakfast 30 minutes early, giving them time to prep him. Of course, it was of the utmost importance for the President to be prepared and the oversight put additional pressure on the internal

380 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 9 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

television team to work in conjunction with Klein and Ziegler to formulate a distinct plan.

To do this we need to get back to the key list that Buchanan is developing of the good press people and then work out a program for maintaining contact with them. Another facet of this plan would be a program for continuous contact with the key network guys assigned to the White House and the key network anchor men so that each of them gets a communication by phone or in person with several of our key people listed above each week. Please get to work on this quickly and let me have a plan within the next few days of this overall thing.³⁸¹

Klein and Ziegler were at work creating a rating of editors, publishers, reporters and other potential influencers within the media. Nixon wanted this done. Not only was it important to be aware of the coverage and the non-coverage, it was equally, if not more important to be aware of where each editor, publisher and reporter stood when it came to their potential leanings and the flavor of their overall reporting. The list gave the Administration the opportunity to easily distinguish the “good guys” from the “bad guys” and more importantly, who to watch and who to pressure when necessary. On July 15, the beginnings of the list were given to Chapin from Higby. At the time, it still wasn’t known exactly what the list would accomplish and when it would be used, but it was prioritized nonetheless. “Here are the Ziegler and Klein ratings of editors, publishers, reporters, etc. It is my understanding that Buchanan’s office will now put together a master list to use as appropriate – what – ever that means,” wrote Higby.³⁸²

There are few other moments during the presidency of Richard Nixon that truly

381 Ibid.

382 Larry Higby to Dwight Chapin, 15 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

exemplify how meticulous his aides were in protecting his image than the reaction to coverage of Nixon's attendance at a baseball game. Richard Nixon was a lover of sports. On July 14, he attended the All-Star game in Louisville, Kentucky and threw out the first pitch. Nixon had been received in Louisville to a largely enthusiastic and supportive crowd. However, a delay at the start of the game was interpreted by *The Washington Post* to have been caused by the President. It was a lesson, according to Haldeman. It exemplified the type of work that was not being done by Nixon's aides in managing the press, and he meticulously documented it:

The sports page of the Washington Post, both page D-1 and page D-2, give us some lessons to be learned from yesterday's activity. The President has already talked with you about the problem of the staff writer story datelined Cincinnati, claiming that the President delayed the game seven minutes and that he arrived thirteen minutes late. The point here is first of all we should have moved instantly to correct the story after we saw it, which of course no one did until the President raised Cain about it.

Secondly, you and I should have perceived when we were standing down there worrying about the delay in getting things under way that the crowd was going to interpret this as a delay caused by the President and we should have demanded that the stadium announcer explain that the game would be starting according to a schedule that was determined by the television coverage, so that we make it clear that there was no delay caused by the President. The assumption of the crowd was, of course, that everybody was being held up waiting for the President to come in, and that was the assumption of that writer.

Now Ron has got to follow up on this and get the story corrected. But your problem is to avoid letting a story like that get started to begin with.

I have discussed with Ron several ways of getting it corrected. I think it is imperative that first he work on finding out who that staff writer was and getting him to run a correction and insisting that be on the front page of the sports section. Secondly, I think he has got to get to Bob Addie and get a good, human-interest story run in his column correcting it. Third, he has got to get Bowie Kuhn and get him to put out a thing from his office, saying that not only was the President not late but he was early and that he and the President both had to wait in a hot room under the stands for a considerable length of time before the President was brought out in the field and taken to his seat, and that the delay was due to the television schedule, not anything involving the President.

The next problem is the Bob Addie column itself. I hope you will read it carefully and see what happens in the way of things getting out.

The information about the Secret Service, however, is not only not inevitable, but is unforgivable. How in the world did we end up with 75 agents at the game, plus 50 in the President's official party, plus newsmen and photographers? This is the kind of stuff that does us grave disservice to get out and we've got to figure out a way to keep that from happening.

Then we get to the incorrect information regarding the elevator, and I think Bob Addie ought to be asked to correct that – make the point that the elevator was not reserved for the President and his party, but that the President walked in from under the stands along the track and into his box and that the elevator was fully available to the press. Unfortunately it broke down, which is certainly not the President's fault.

I don't know what the facts are on the problem of meeting the Cincinnati ballplayer, but it doesn't do much harm or good.

Then we get to the picture on D-2 where your ever-present advance man, plus Hughes' ever-present Military Aide managed to do a great job getting on camera. There is probably not much way that Brennan could have avoided it, but your guy could sure as hell have been out of the way. It is absolutely unforgivable that an advancement man has to be told six times to move out of the place he insists upon putting himself. You told him over and over and he kept moving back in. Now that guy has got to be called in and chewed out, or else dumped, one or the other, and it has got to be done fast, firmly and clearly.³⁸³

The entirety of this memo is perhaps one of the best examples of how specific Nixon's aides were in their preparation and response to press that may diminish the image of the President. While much literature on the Nixon White House media strategy is entrenched in the more highly publicized moments of political history, an event Nixon was happy to attend provides understanding of the depth of analysis with which the aides engaged moment by moment.

Chapin took Haldeman's specifics in stride. It was well known amongst aides that Haldeman's personality did not allow much room for discussion. It was easier to chat with

383 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 15 July 1970; folder Memoranda, July, 1970: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the President himself than it was with Haldeman.³⁸⁴ Nixon's aides, when one-on-one with the President, felt a sense of kinship.³⁸⁵ A year into the presidency, the formality was warring down. That didn't mean that Chapin didn't have his own quirks. "H. Please indicate sources on this type of thing," wrote Haldeman on a small yellow notepaper. Haldeman, however, was not easily persuaded to follow Chapin's direction. In blue pen, he wrote "Why? Facts don't require sources – only opinions do."³⁸⁶ It was just the type of response Chapin and his team had come to expect from Haldeman.³⁸⁷

There was no shortage of banter between Nixon's aides. What may have been construed as tension and animosity was often muted sarcasm wrapped in a dry wit – something those in the Nixon White House took a little smug pride in.³⁸⁸ Still, in true Nixon style, there was an expectation of formality in the White House that denoted a sort of rigged environment. On December 17, a peculiar memo crossed Chapin's desk. Stamped "High Priority" four times, and "Confidential" twice, its contents suggested something of significance. It was from Haldeman.

Those who are privileged to work on the First Floor of the West Wing of the White House, in the immediate vicinity of the Office of the President of the United States, will be expected from here on to respond to that privilege by wearing jackets or coats at all times. They are not to move through the West Wing

384 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

385 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

386 Dwight Chapin to H. R. Haldeman. August 3, 1970. Washington D.C.

387 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

388 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

of the White House in shirt sleeves, vests, etc.³⁸⁹

Chapin responded:

I consider it a privilege to work on the first floor of the West Wing of the White House, in the immediate vicinity of the office of the President of the United States, and will abide by your orders that we respond to this privilege by wearing jackets or coats at all times.

Unless otherwise instructed by you, I will assume that spats, top hats, carnations and other such items are not the order of the day.

By the way, whatever happened to the hard-working shirt-sleeve days of the early sixties? Somehow I seem to recall some fascinating pictures not only a President but an Attorney General at their White House Staff coatless, with shirt sleeves rolled up tackling the problems that lay ahead of them. You will add, I am sure, that they probably did not waste time writing memos like this. But, I bet they did, for they were also known for their wit.

Food for thought only.³⁹⁰

Relationships with Local Press

Building a relationship with the local press was increasingly important as well. In response to the continued unrest across the nation, the President was making his rounds. The national press had their angles, and the aides were well acquainted with them, at this point in Nixon's term there was already a deepening sense of a complete disconnect with national media. Increasingly clear was the power of the local press. The sentiment toward local news people was far different than it was toward the national press. The President had always been less suspicious of the local media.³⁹¹ Nixon requested that receptions

389 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 17 December 1970; folder Memoranda, December, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

390 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 18 December 1970; folder Memoranda, December, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

391 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

and meetings take place between him and local newsmen when the opportunity arose – upset when opportunities were missed.³⁹²

By the end of August, opportunities to take advantage of local press opportunities were still missed – and there were many. “Once again we’ve blown the opportunity for the President to meet and shake hands with the local press,” Haldeman wrote to Ziegler. Regarding an event at the Music Center, Haldeman berated Ziegler for an important opportunity missed. Intermission presented the perfect moment. The President had wandered out of the venue’s Founders Room and into the hall so that he could greet the public. He happened to meet a drama critic from the *Herald Examiner*, one from the *Citizen News* and an AP reporter who had covered the death of his father. The President expressed that he would have preferred those individuals to have been brought up to meet him, instead of having met them by happenstance. Haldeman told Ziegler that these were opportunities he should have been looking for and taking advantage of. “Apparently you were nowhere to be seen when all of this took place, which very much distressed him,” wrote Haldeman. “The point here is that when we are in the field on a trip like this, the President wants you to take the responsibility for making sure that little opportunities are created for him to meet the local press people. He wants you to do this at your initiative and to be looking for it as a higher priority item than that of taking care of the national press.”³⁹³ This was one of the moments that exemplified the difference between Ziegler’s

392 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 4 August 1970; folder Memoranda, August, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

393 H.R. Haldeman to Ronald Ziegler, 28 August 1970; folder Memoranda, August, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

handling of the press and Klein's relationship with them as a former newsman. Ziegler was less comfortable in dealings with the press outside of his traditional role, whereas Klein often spent his free time sharing meals with members of the press, and forging relationships.³⁹⁴

Events such as this one spurred the movement toward a more defined relationship with local press. Klein and Ziegler worked on connecting with both the print media and broadcast media in local departments. In 1969 there had been a clear discussion regarding the power of local newsmen to influence their respective publics and the greater ability to connect with them than there was when dealing with Eastern establishment media.

Shifting Strategy Begins Press Alienation

The unrelenting pressure of the continued campus unrest consumed much of the Administration's focus in 1970. Nixon's team recognized it as a principle campaign issue. As such, plans to handle demonstrators had to be made any time the President traveled around country. In the past, discussions revolved around diffusing situations involving demonstrators. Now, more experienced and calm than in 1969, the team devised a way to physically position Nixon between the demonstrators and the press so that the visuals told a powerful story of their own. Words weren't necessary. With the television team at the White House carefully studying, analyzing and pioneering strategy, a greater understanding of broadcast media's powerful visual storytelling served as an important tool in manipulating television news media.

³⁹⁴ "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

Talking to the press wasn't a priority. Now, the team would focus on staging the visuals, the photos, and the TV images themselves. This hadn't been a major concern for previous administrations – it certainly hadn't been a priority. Haldeman provided the directive:

...we should attempt to have the demonstrators concentrated in one area where they are highly visible and it may be that the President will move in front of that area in order to let the cameras get a picture of the ratty looking people that are out demonstrating and/or the profane and obscene signs they carry. In other words, let's contain them where we can control them but make sure that we don't infiltrate them so completely that you can't tell the good guys from the bad guys.³⁹⁵

This was new – as was much of what Nixon's team was doing – by virtue of television media's lesser dominance during previous administrations.³⁹⁶ Nixon's aides were now carefully and strategically creating visual news narratives of their own. Of course, they had always been concerned with Nixon's appearance on television – particularly physically, but this was a different area of manipulation. They had spent the better part of the year studying the tendencies of the news media and now, they would force the television media's hand. They had control of Nixon and wherever Nixon was, the camera would follow. They just needed to make sure that Nixon wasn't the only layer on their visual storyboard. Nixon's aides wanted more than just a change in how the news covered Nixon, they wanted a change in how the press, covered the news – another indication that 1970's media strategy was becoming less about the newsmen and more

395 H.R. Haldeman to Steve Bull, Dwight Chapin, and Ron Walker, 11 September 1970; folder Memoranda, September, 1970; Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

396 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

about the news industry.

By the end of September, word spread, among Nixon's aides, that purchasing a television station might be possible. A September 21 memo from Haldeman to Charles Colson, Special Counsel to the President, displayed words in blue handwriting scribbled across the top, "Eyes Only." "As you know a number of people have been dabbling around the idea of trying either to purchase one of the television networks or to set up another network – Billy Graham, Tom Dewey, etc., have been talking about this," wrote Haldeman.³⁹⁷ "Would you please run a hard check on this and see if there is any possibility of pulling this off. I would like your analysis and recommendation in this regard."

Four days later, Colson responded. Colson committed to finding out the ownership situations at each of the major networks. "CBS and NBC are subsidiaries of larger companies and, therefore, could only be purchased from the parents, a very unlikely prospect. ABC has been for sale from time to time...but I don't know its current status. It wouldn't do us much good to buy ABC since their coverage has been reasonably fair. Although, of course, I would to have one of the networks in very friendly hands and ABC is probably the only possible target."³⁹⁸ Colson professed to know nothing about the process of starting a new network. This would be something that Roger Ailes, a Nixon friend and adviser, and future CEO of Fox News, develop.

397 H.R. Haldeman to Charles Colson, 21 September 1970; folder Memoranda, September, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

398 H.R. Haldeman to Charles Colson, 25 September 1970; folder Memoranda, September, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

This exemplified the level of dedication that the Nixon Administration had to solving the “news problem.” What it also did was make very clear the Administration’s view of an overwhelmingly powerful media. Not only was the Nixon Administration looking to manipulate the media, they were looking to become it. The discussion among Nixon’s aides, at least up to this point, showed little evidence of a consuming hatred of a medium and a closing of all doors to those who operated it. Certainly, attitudes were formed and strategies in place that would eventually move the Administration in that direction, but the endgame was far larger than the often-amplified petty squabbles between Nixon and broadcasters.

Nixon’s team had a significant amount of faith in his ability to come off favorably during spontaneous events.³⁹⁹ Planned press events seemed to agitate him, but when he didn’t feel the lens and the lights, he often came off as much more agreeable. While most of the year had been focused on content management and produce successful internally produced television events, Nixon’s inner circle were also figuring out just how much they cared to include the press to any degree. There had been an understanding that the press should be dealt with, but Haldeman himself was beginning to express doubt as to whether they should be invited at all. “Probably one of our keys here is to forget about our great feelings of responsibility to the press – informing them of all our movements in advance and not catch them off guard,” he wrote to Robert C. Odle Jr, a staff assistant to the President. “Some of the most effective things that we have done in this field have been the ones where we haven’t told the press in advance and have allowed them to

399 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

discover what we are doing. This ties into the fact that we probably are pulling simply too much gimmickry with the press and the public, and we should try to reach for more spontaneity.”⁴⁰⁰

As the end of the year approached, attention turned to the creation of a list of personalities in television and radio that were “absolutely in support” of the President. Chapin and his team were waiting for a tightening up list to take into the strategy for the New Year.⁴⁰¹ Likewise, Haldeman, Ziegler, Klein and Chapin were reviewing Haldeman’s “Approach to the Media,” a proposal for how the interaction between the press and the President should move forward. Despite a year of careful investigation into reporters, discussions around purchasing one of the Big Three networks, as well as removing the President from any social event with members of the press, the team seemed open to the President interacting with the press – so long as the press members had been carefully vetted as his supporters. In-depth discussions between the President and friendly members of the press were to be integrated into the emerging strategy. “While this is something that we don’t want to do during the next week or two, because of the TV interview, it is a long-range program that we should try to develop and, when the time seems right, work in a group of press people,” he informed the team. “Please put this in your planning apparatus and, at the next opportunity that seems appropriate, let’s

400 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 27 November 1970; folder Memoranda, November, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

401 Robert C. Odle to Dwight Chapin, 1 December 1970; folder Memoranda, December, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

raise this as a possible scheduling activity.”⁴⁰²

Haldemen reached out to Klein the next day regarding their plans for the media. In it, Haldeman went through each aspect of the approach and noted his thoughts on what should be done. From dealing with the “hostile press” to pushing for greater relationships with local television newsmen and managing calculated leaks of information, he carefully outlined what should be done. However, the last line of his response was perhaps the most telling. It reflected the building tension between Klein’s press strategy and Ziegler’s position as press secretary. “NOTE TO ZIEGLER: In light of the fact that I have received no response from you on these matters – I assume that you are not interested or have no ideas. I will therefore deal exclusively with Klein unless I hear otherwise from you.”⁴⁰³

1971 would see a greater split between the two managers of the press.

402 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 30 December 1970; folder Memoranda, December, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

403 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin and Ronald Ziegler, 31 December 1970; folder Memoranda, December, 1970: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

CHAPTER 5

MEDIA AND THE PRELUDE OF WATERGATE

The years of 1971 and 1972 were turning points in the Nixon presidency. Nixon announced the opening of China, and there is little doubt that media relations were central in the cultivation of the President's daily decisions at the time. Nixon had sent Kissinger to China secretly and then informed the nation of his own visit, an electrifying moment in U.S. history. Also on network television, Nixon would inform the nation that he had ordered the mining of North Vietnamese ports and the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. There is no shortage of analysis of the events as they occurred but little that addresses just how these moments were orchestrated.

As Nixon opened up the world, the Administration contended with the end of theirs. While it is known that the Pentagon Papers seeded the Watergate horrors, more than this occurred. Taping systems were activated in the White House and Camp David. June of 1971 would include the birth of the "Plumbers," created to stop media leaks. Most notably, on June 17, the arrests of James McCord, Frank Sturgis, and others inside the Democratic Headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. would reveal one of the largest scandals in U.S. political history. Just days after, Nixon would order Haldeman to tell the Federal Bureau of Investigation to stop investigations into Watergate and later in a news conference, say that no White House staff were involved. In November 1972, Nixon won the election with over 97 percent of the electoral vote. The following day, ask for the resignation of all agency directors, department heads and appointees. Conventional telling's of these events leave major gaps in the backstory,

focusing more on the scandal and its mismanagement and less on the documented attitudes of those in the White House at the time.

The Nixon Administration attempted to argue that the release of the Pentagon Papers would do harm to the nation's involvement in the Vietnam War. The tactic of prior restraint under the illusion of national security is not a new notion, nor was during Nixon's terms. James Madison, following the Sedition Act of 1798 suggested that such a tactic may forever be used in times of war. President Nixon himself was particularly distrusting of the press and dissenters. However, the groundwork that allowed him to operate off this attitude was laid by his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson created a distinct narrative within the "with us or against us" model that has long been part of the American military lexicon. Johnson argued that even well-meaning protesters could be influenced by Communists. This movement from straight affiliation with communist organizations to susceptibility to being influenced by communist mentality fed into a fear narrative that would become part of the support for suppression of expression in times of war. Like a type of socio-political osmosis, one might go from God-fearing American to a *comme virtuoso*. Nixon's presidency was marred by protest and scandal, largely in part due to his attitude toward the former that planted the seeds for the latter. Nixon's open distaste for dissent and increasing propensity for secrecy within his Administration in light of an already unpopular war deeply affected public trust of his Administration. Even when the Administration was telling the truth, the public no longer believed.

In 1971, Nixon would create the "Plumbers," a program whose purpose was to root out and seal media leaks. The Nixon Administration was so adamant about controlling the media that they would attempt to meet with national press and

preemptively control stories. It is of significance to note that the media coverage of the Vietnam War was far different than the media coverage of more contemporary conflicts. The coverage depicted distinct brutality and terrors of war that had never before been seen by the American public and arguably, may never be seen in quite the same way again.

Nixon's use of secrecy and other tactics were not necessarily unique. As seen through the myriad of cases, the norm for the United States has always been to limit speech. In fact, the Nixon Administration was the first to see a significant move by the courts to secure the First Amendment rights as seen through the *New York Times* case. The case established an important moment for the American public in its perception of the First Amendment and placed emphasis on the responsibility of the Supreme Court to uphold it. The contents of the Pentagon Papers played a significant role in the outcome of this case and the attitude of the Nixon Administration toward the press and the people certainly added to the perception that First Amendment rights were perhaps most important to support in times of war.

A Year of Building

By the Administration's own admission, 1971 was going to be a year of rebuilding. Building the President's image was at the forefront of discussion as it had been from the start. So much of media discussion from the White House revolved around how Nixon appeared, not necessarily the fair coverage of policies or Presidential events.

This year, the idea that Nixon was the hardest working president was an important notion to be conveyed. Haldeman tasked this to Chapin's team again.⁴⁰⁴

In early January, Nixon conveyed to Haldeman that he saw benefit in coverage for "quickie events" and meetings that could draw some positive reporting in regard to Nixon's human-interest side. Haldeman felt that there should be an effort to get more mileage out of routine activities. In order to do this, he proposed to Ziegler that one reporter from each wire service would sit in on the meeting. The President was open to a third, but would certainly not go beyond that. The right atmosphere would be crucial and even with three, there were concerned as to whether not more reporters would disrupt the intent.⁴⁰⁵

On January 7, 1971, The *Washington Evening Star* ran a piece on the performance of the President. It was in reference to the "fireside" press conferences for which the team had pushed. The review was somewhat favorable, pointing out how well the President had performed in this one particular instance. However, it turned to an overall criticism of the method by which the President was performing. "The ambience of polite informality is the proper vehicle for Mr. Nixon, better than the prepared text and infinitely better than the press conference, in which the President generally appears to be as relaxed as a fox at a convention of hounds. The formula is, in fact, ideal – except for one flaw that

404 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 4 January 1971; folder Memoranda, January, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

405 H.R. Haldeman to Ronald Ziegler, 6 January 1971; folder Memoranda, January, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

transforms the admirable showcase into a needlessly dangerous game.”⁴⁰⁶ The flaw that the *Star* was suggesting was the fact that the address was a live broadcast instead of a taped event. There was simply too much risk in doing so, and it put the President in a dangerous position. One slip of tongue could potentially derail the entire event and tarnish the President’s image. Regarding the review, Charles Colson wrote to Haldeman, “Save us from our friends.”⁴⁰⁷ This was simply another example the Administration would use to illustrate their larger point: the media would take any instance to criticize Nixon. “I knew that sooner or later some wisecrack would turn what should be a very positive story into a negative – I have just been waiting for the attached [article]. I figures (sic) for sure it would come from the *New Republic* or the *Washington Post*. Unhappily, it was in the first edition of the *Star* that has come out since their strike. The way things are going with the *Star* we would really be better off if they had remained on strike. Ouch!” wrote Colson.⁴⁰⁸ The Administration knew which media outlets were generally kind, but, they also knew that there would be those that would tow the line. Loyalty was rewarded for those who reported positively on Nixon consistently but the Administration was not necessarily loyal in the same way.

By mid-January Chapin was working on drafting internal television production details, including a preliminary assessment of the resources available through the United

406 "Presidential Performance." *Washington Evening Star* (District of Columbia), January 7, 1971.

407 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 7 January 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [II] 1971, January, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

408 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 8 January 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [II] 1971, January, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

States Information Agency (USIA). The USIA was established in 1953 by Dwight D. Eisenhower. Its mission was "to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad." The USIA had been used to create and establish an image of the United States, largely for foreign audience, but also to bolster the American image. What better a vehicle than that to promote the image of the President himself. The USIA produced material to be distributed through the Motion Picture and Television Service Division, employing 279 people in the Old Post Office Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. The building housed two television studios. Bruce Herschensohn was director at the time. Special programs, generally those with longer lead time, were commercially contracted but a USIA project supervisor would oversee the project to ensure the USIA maintained control. Scribbles on the margins of Chapin's memo regarding the production suggested that acting experience was something to discuss, and small notation on the upper right-hand corner suggested a theoretical budget of \$12,000.⁴⁰⁹

As Chapin started the year evaluating the internal options for media production, Klein started out by complimenting the President on his remarks at the dedication of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Center National Republican Center on. Nixon had said, "...ours should be the party of the open door, open to all people, all parties, all faiths, all races."⁴¹⁰

409 Gordon Strachan to Dwight Chapin, 15 January 1971; folder Subject File Phil Bonnell 1971, January 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

410 Richard Nixon: "Remarks at the Dedication of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Republican Center.," January 15, 1971

Klein was often looking for moments and sound bites that could be used to create a thematic narrative for Nixon and the Administration. This one was right on target. “I thought your remarks at the dedication of the Eisenhower Center regarding an ‘open door’ set a long-range theme for the Republican Party, a theme we must carry forth on an immediate basis,” Klein wrote to the President. One of the ways to push forth that narrative was to ensure that nothing else coming out of the White House would overshadow it. “We kept all news down today so that television and others would center on this theme.”⁴¹¹

Chapin was also busy demonstrating how presidential popularity was influenced by TV appearances. He provided data on previous presidents. On December 17, 1962, after two years in office, John F. Kennedy was interviewed by Bill Lawrence of ABC, George Herman of CBS, and Sander Vanocur of NBC. The three networks aired “After Two Years – a Conversation with the President.” The Gallup Poll found that before the television appearance, on December 5, 1962, the approval rating of JFK was at 74 percent, 15 percent “disapproved” of the President and 11 percent had “no opinion.” After the appearance, in January of 1963, JFKs approval rating jumped to 76 percent. There was no change in the “no opinion” percentage. Lyndon B. Johnson saw a similar bump in his approval rating after he was interviewed by Bill Lawrence of ABC, Eric Sevareid of CBS and David Brinkley of NBC on March 14, 1964. Prior to the appearance, on March 11, 1964 LBJ’s approval rating was 73 percent, disapproval rate of

411 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 15 January 1971; folder Memoranda, January, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

9 percent and 18 percent had no opinion. Following the appearance, LBJs approval rating increased to 77 percent, disapproval rating stayed the same and those with no opinion dropped to 14 percent.⁴¹² The same day that Chapin provided this information, Haldeman reached out to him regarding a conversation that Nixon had with Colson. Nixon wanted to move forward and set up meetings with three network executives from each network, CBS first, followed by ABC and then finally NBC following his State of the Union address.⁴¹³

Klein's Growing Concerns

Klein and his team were on a constant look out for “little lies” that appeared in daily news reports. It wasn't the big things that always concerned the team. Often times, it was the little things that, when repeated, created a prevailing narrative that was harder to shake than to dispute major discrepancies. For this reason, the daily News Summary that Nixon had been given each day from the start of his presidency was regarded as a significant tool. Mort Allin would add notations to the summaries of news coverage, identifying untruths that needed correcting and reporters that needed a little or sometimes lots of pressure to make those corrections. Klein felt the news summary system was enough to identify and work toward correcting the little slips. Perhaps in the past it had been underdone, but now, Klein suggested, it was overdone. He expressed this

412 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 18 January 1971; folder Subject Polls 1971, January, 1971: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

413 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 18 January 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, January, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Haldeman. “1) This should not be worrying you – let McGruder [and] staff handle it. It’s exactly the wrong use of your time – and mine. 2) The P. wants the Monday report – so we’ll need to do it – but you should forget it,” Haldeman noted on the side of Klein’s memo.⁴¹⁴ Klein’s position in the Administration was shaping up a little more clearly. The News Summary, a significant part of the Administration’s strategy at the start of Nixon’s presidency was now more of a secondary element of news management. It served as a signal to those in the President’s inner circle to begin to distance themselves from Klein.

Nixon was still willing to give the press play, but on his conditions. On January 19th, in reference to a visit at a San Clemente school, Nixon made it clear that in regard to the media, trips like this one would have to be done his way. Ziegler had recommended that the press pool come along on the visit but that they would need to stay outside of the room itself. Nixon agreed. The press following him into the room with the children would ruin the feel of it. The press could however be allowed in the room after the President’s departure, to speak with the children and teachers about the visit. Someone from the Administration would join him for the purposes of getting the story out. Nixon felt that Moore, Klein, Rumsfeld or Finch might do a good job. On the other hand, never would Safire, Price or Buchanan be allowed. This was an important distinction, as the latter three were more involved in building the rhetoric of the President and the former group dealt more with managing the press. Regardless, someone, for this purpose exactly, should remain with the President whenever an “off-beat” trip like this one was scheduled.

414 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 18 January 1971; folder Memoranda, January, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

For all intents and purposes, this “anecdotalist” would require some degree of skill and would need to be promoted himself.⁴¹⁵

Nixon began 1971 at Camp David with advisors Ehrlichman and Haldeman. Something was troubling him. “The P was very upset by a report in the sports section today that the Stanford football team was running around their hotel in sandals and shorts and that their quarterback had enjoyed posing for pictures with topless dancers from San Francisco. The story was trying to make them out as being good guys because of this, and sneering at Ohio State as squares because they were wearing neckties and blazers. The P said for the first time he was going to root for the Midwest team in the Rose Bowl,” wrote Haldeman in the January 1 entry of his diaries.⁴¹⁶

Of course, this wasn’t all that was concerning Nixon. There had been stories in the press about the Administration’s decision to not invite the Edmund Muskie to the Clean-Air-Bill signing that had taken place the previous day. The President wanted Ziegler to respond immediately and note that Nixon was the most “gracious, nonpolitical P in history in terms of treatment of his present, future and past opponents.”⁴¹⁷ Haldeman wrote in his diary entry for the day that this was true. According to his notes, Eisenhower never invited Truman and Johnson and Kennedy never hosted Nixon at the White House. Nixon, on the other hand, extended invitations to Truman, Johnson, Muskie, Teddy

415 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 19 January 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, January, 1971; Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

416 Diary Entry: Jan 1st 1971, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

417 Diary Entry: Jan 1st 1971, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

Kennedy at the White House. “Then we get one little incident like this,” Haldeman wrote, “and we’re stabbed unfairly.”⁴¹⁸ Nixon wanted to make clear that 1971 would be no different than the previous year – the press would not be accorded leeway. Nixon wanted his team to work hard to position the President as *the* world leader. Former French President Charles De Gaulle had died in April of 1969 so the stage was set for Nixon to take the spotlight, he just needed to ensure that his image was secure and that his Administration was doing everything it could to push against media activity that worked contrary to the image he wanted to sell.

Haldeman called John Connally on January 11, 1971 to speak with him about Presidential PR. Connally spoke highly of the President, according to Haldeman. Nixon knew people’s strengths and weakness, both of his own and those of his adversaries. “He also made a fascinating political point, which is that there is nothing wrong with having certain elements against us,” Haldeman wrote. “He said this in the context of the press conference and its adversary nature, which he thinks is good. His point is that the basic political rule is to pick your enemies carefully and then hang on to them, but be sure they’re always the same ones. This is something we haven’t conscious or adequately done.”⁴¹⁹ Connally’s advice would be taken to heart by the Nixon Administration. Klein and others would later compile Nixon’s famed “Enemies List.”

Fine Tuning the Tactic

418 Diary Entry: Jan 1st 1971, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

419 Diary Entry: Jan 11th 1971, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

The morning of Nixon's State of the Union address Nixon called Haldeman. "What in the name of good God hell is going on!" he asked.⁴²⁰ *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* had leaked details about the reorganization plan regarding the formation of the Department of Natural Resources as well as the organization of economic and social programs. Nixon felt this was one secret that had been really well kept. The President decided he didn't want to give the text of the speech to the press before he delivered it. Despite eventually agreeing to release it, Nixon felt a great deal of apprehension where the leak was concerned. He called Haldeman several times before the address, at one point expressing his distaste for wearing make-up. Despite many conversations with the President regarding his physical appearance on television, make up seemed a continuing struggle for him. Haldeman turned to Carruthers to push the issue further. Finally, Nixon conceded.

Coverage following the State of the Union address on January 22, 1971 spurred an initiative to get Administration spokesmen on major television programs. Klein would be tasked with ensuring that everyone was well prepared and properly selected to create the optimal impact and best appearance for the Administration and the President. In moments like these, when the Administration was available to press interviews, Klein was often pulling the strings. The result would be 34 appearances by spokesmen between

⁴²⁰ Diary Entry: Jan 22nd 1971, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

the address and the end of January. Of 16 available spots on the *Today Show*, the Nixon Administration filled ten.⁴²¹

At the end of January, Klein was asked by NBC to make a five-minute televised statement on the President and the press and on public information. He felt as though a statement would be more challenging than a standard question and answer session. The situation triggered an increasingly uncomfortable dynamic within the White House. As television became a more prominent, and it became clear that press dealings with broadcast and traditional print press was split within the White House, between Ziegler and Klein. "I am willing to do it and it will give me an opportunity among other things to praise Ron," Klein wrote to Haldeman. "I also don't want to offend Ron, but I suspect I can handle the television better."⁴²²

There was a culture of cultivation in the Nixon White House. Newsmen and industry leaders weren't simply researched, vetted and manipulated. Those within the industry were carefully monitored. Those who were in positions that could potentially help or harm the desired legacy of the Nixon presidency were kept track of. At the start of February one of those individuals was Sheldon Fisher, President of McGraw-Hill. Colson pushed for him to be invited to a State Dinner. Not only was Fisher, a major publisher,

421 Al Snyder to Charles Colson, 12 March 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [III] 1971, March, 1971: Box 5; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

422 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 29 January 1971; folder Memoranda, January, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

but there was talk about him moving into the broadcasting business. Colson felt that it would be a good opportunity to begin to cultivate Fisher.⁴²³

While the President was making attempts to become more comfortable with television, or at the very least, more prepared to appear comfortable on television, his team was continuing to focus on radio as well. Haldeman expressed to Chapin another area for consideration, including placing microphones in the Cabinet Room during the times when the President meet with various groups, allowing for radio coverage. “The point being that radio microphones would create less self-consciousness than the presence of television cameras but would still give us a way of getting the content and flavor of those meetings out. After all – there was little chance that Nixon would allow for television cameras to be around all the time. The Administration was very particular about that type of exposure, largely because Nixon had a well-documented discomfort in front of the camera. Radio offered a useful alternative – exposure of the issues without exposing Nixon’s weaknesses.”⁴²⁴

Nixon sought advice from his team on his television appearance. He asked to be told everything that needed to be done, from getting off the Air Force One to walking across the garden. Anywhere there was television coverage, Nixon wanted direct and specific instructions from either Carruthers or Goode, who worked alongside Klein on

423 Charles Colson to Bell, 2 February 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [III] 1971, February, 1971: Box 5; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

424 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 9 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

press-related tasks.⁴²⁵ “The President would like you to give some careful thought to the question of colors and styles of suits, shirts, ties, etc. that would be best for his appearances on television,” Haldeman wrote to Carruthers. Nixon wanted information on everything from color, style, and patterns to textures and fabrics. “He will then follow that very specifically and literally, so be sure you are coming up with what you really want. You may want to have some test runs on various things to develop your case. In any event, be sure when you come through with it, you come through as authoritatively as possible.”⁴²⁶ Nixon took this seriously and Haldeman was determined to ensure that the staff took it seriously as well.

Carruthers took responsibility of even the slightest analysis. Even a 40-second piece in which the President appeared on February 8 on revenue sharing was scrutinized. “[Nixon] would like your reading on how it went with the technical aspects or were there any other things we should have done differently,” Higby wrote to Carruthers. Klein and Chapin would take care of the larger external and internal television strategies respectively while the rest of the team, including Carruthers, would look at the specifics of the technical aspects of television.⁴²⁷ The nuts and bolts of how things appeared and what looked best were crucial pieces of the puzzle.

425 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 9 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

426 H.R. Haldeman to William Carruthers, 9 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

427 Hibgy to William Carruthers, 9 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Both internal and external forces were contributing to the careful cultivation of Nixon's press image. Billy Graham, a well-known Christian evangelist, was an informal advisor to Nixon and a close friend. In early February, Nixon had a conversation with him about television production. Graham had a connection in North Carolina to a television man who strongly felt as though the President should use a teleprompter. Graham himself told the President that he always used a teleprompter whenever he was filmed. The President was happy to entertain the suggestion. If the teleprompter would improve his performance, he was willing to use it. There was a deliberate attempt from the President's Administration and from his external, informal advisors, to clean up his television delivery. 1971 was shaping up to be a year of details and fine-tuning.

Preparing for the Next Four Years

Early February, Nixon's Administration was preparing for the 1972 Republican National convention. Bill Gavin, a speechwriter for Nixon, made clear the need to prepare for two different Republican Conventions. "There will be, of course, two Republican conventions: the one in some city and the same one as it appears on television," he wrote to Frank Shakespeare, a former CBS Television president and then-director of the USIA.⁴²⁸ Gavin believed that the convention needed to be built around the use of television. In the past, he felt as though television served the convention, not the other way around. In doing so, the RNC could potentially prevent the commentators from

428 Gavin to Shakespeare, 10 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

utilizing stale moments to cut in and provide commentary.⁴²⁹ “The American people are bored to death every four years with party platforms – or else the networks simply switch back to Dave and Chet or Walter or somebody who usually then starts some interpretive mischief because there is nothing else to do.”⁴³⁰

As campaign fever was overtaking the White House, Klein was consistently working to keep the White House open when there were clear indications that it was becoming a closed shop so to speak. The President had declined an invitation to the National Newspaper Association early in 1971. Klein reached out to Haldeman. “The President in his inaugural address expressed his belief in the importance of the small city dailies and suburban and country weekly publications, and we have received a flood of letters in support of this statement... This is why I am asking for a reconsideration,” wrote Klein.⁴³¹ The event would include small newspaper leaders from 48 states across the nation and Klein knew that small newspaper editorials had a greater impact per reader than the larger publications. He felt that an opportunity was being neglected. But focus, as it often did with Nixon, turned to national press. It had been Nixon’s experience that smaller publications treated him well but it was the “Eastern Establishment” press that could make or break his image. His legacy might live in the pages of small-town weeklies but his image would be dictated by national press.

429 "Dwight Chapin Interview." Telephone Interview by Author. July 20, 2016.

430 Gavin to Shakespeare, 10 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

431 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 18 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

The Nixon Administration's television strategy was developed through more than mimicry and manipulation. Nixon's aides carefully monitored new methods by which television technology was measuring and increasing efficiency of messaging. One way that was done in 1971 was through a survey technique called "matching samples." For example, panels of, 200 homes a piece would be selected. These groups would be demographically similar. One of the groups would be polled before a broadcast and the other would be polled a day or two after the broadcast. The technique was said to have produced fairly informative and accurate information on whether the viewers were positively or negatively influenced by the broadcast. Higby suggested that this system might be good to implement with White House broadcasts. "If it works it could perhaps give us some important guidance for television during 1971 and 1972," he wrote to Dr. David Derge, a leading Republican pollster.⁴³²

On February 18, Joe Garagiola of the *Today Show* mentioned that he would like the President to talk about sports for 20 minutes. Nixon was a huge sports fan and this was an excellent opportunity to promote the more "human interest" side of the President. With so many issues exploiting opportunities to make the President more likeable and accessible, Chapin and Haldeman considered the idea seriously, though the aides hesitated when it came to the length.⁴³³ After all, Nixon could handle instances like this one in relatively small doses and though this was something the team had been trying for

432 Higby to David Derge, 19 February 1971; folder Subject Polls 1971, February, 1971: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

433 H.R. Haldeman to Dwight Chapin, 19 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

years to teach Nixon to manage, they were still apprehensive when opportunities arose. Even with topics like this, preparation was not to be overlooked and often debated. There may not have been a great deal of danger in terms of presidential politics, but there was always a great deal of danger in terms of presidential image.

The image of the press team was of concern as well. By the end of February, Ziegler was at work on creating a foreign policy message to the Congress. The message was undoubtedly going to gain press attention, but Ziegler supported the strategy that would not reorient attention to the message itself. He felt the message was not a hard news issue, and that if it was presented as hard news by the White House and its media team, the press would see this as self-serving. The message essentially was a document that articulated the philosophy of the Administration regarding foreign policy and how that philosophy was formulated in the first year of office. Naturally, Nixon and his aides would be looking at a way to capitalize on this and great press opportunities to promote the work done by the Administration. Ziegler had his concerns and expressed them to Haldeman in a lengthy three-page memo:

It is my view that it is too obviously self-serving for the President to go on television to restate his philosophy and to state, with the Foreign Policy Message as the vehicle, what he has done in this area. I feel this would have the opposite effect of building the President as a world statesman. Indeed I think it would tend to erode this because we would be putting the President forth to great numbers of people in a way that would tend to, I feel, suggest that he was simply saying, "look at me and look at what I have done."

Haldeman returned the memo to Ziegler with his signature notes on the upper right-hand corner, “You could have won this on one page w/o all the BS.”⁴³⁴

Ziegler was generally perceived as creating less pushback, but when he did offer his suggestions, they were met with little enthusiasm. It was becoming clear that tensions were rising and Klein was pushing Haldeman in another area. Vice President Agnew had turned down a dinner with the Radio-TV Correspondents Association, a group of broadcast journalists from around the world. Klein had been pushing the Vice President to attend and felt it was “an absolute essential.”⁴³⁵ He asked Haldeman to use his influence to get the Vice President to agree. Klein was quickly falling out of favor. Though he was pushing forward with encouraging a greater openness and better relationships with the press, he was also more closely watched and criticized by Nixon’s inner circle.

Colson was attempting to gauge the Administration’s success with television. Colson approached Howard K. Smith, an ABC news reporter, as a friend, not as a newsman. He wanted his advice as to how well the Administration was doing on getting their information to TV commentators, particularly in comparison with other administrations. Smith said that the Nixon Administration was actually doing poorly compared to others. Colson documented the outcome of the conversation. Apparently, Smith had only two calls from Klein in the past two years and said that Colson had

434 Ronald Ziegler to H.R. Haldeman, 22 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 19; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

435 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 24 February 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, February, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

actually reached out to him more in the past few weeks than anyone had in the first two years of the Nixon Administration. “He was quick to point out that he was not sure, except in his case, how much good it does since most TV journalists are dead against us,” wrote Colson.⁴³⁶ The bottom line was that Smith, from his perspective as a newsman, felt that the Nixon Administration fell short when it came to outreach but emphasized that he wasn’t sure if there was a way for anyone to “do a good job” in the current media climate.

Colson sought ways to rectify what Smith felt was a significant oversight. As the Administration had done routinely when it came to dealings with the press, he compared their activities with the actions of President’s who came before, and who Nixon felt were better received. Johnson, according to Smith, cultivated the press personally and he would welcome them regularly, “talk to them, plead with them, cajole them, befriend the, and then when Johnson realized that this wasn’t turning them around his sense of frustration grew so great that he simply decided to quit the Presidency.”⁴³⁷ Smith suggested that the Nixon Administration had, at least thus far, taken a more balanced view and that Nixon had avoided falling into the Johnson trap. Smith debunked the major concern of the Nixon Administration that they were somehow a target for the press that had not targeted other administrations. Still, he confirmed another, that the press itself was inherently at fault. Smith suggested that the Administration “...should not despair

436 Charles Colson Memoranda for File, 2 March 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [III] 1971, March, 1971: Box 5; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

437 Charles Colson Memoranda for File, 2 March 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [III] 1971, March, 1971: Box 5; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

over the fact that we have been treated so badly by the press and the media. He believes other presidents were treated just as badly, including JFK. He believes, as Moynihan argues, that this is something endemic to the entire profession.”⁴³⁸

The Office of Communications Searches for its Footing on Unstable Ground

Klein’s position as the Director of Communications was finally beginning to take shape. It was the first time an Administration had a position like this one and because of that, there was a significant learning curve. Everything that was being done by Klein’s office, was in some way “a first” – even if just for the fact that the Office was new. At the beginning of March, Klein wrote a detailed memo to the President to appraise him of the work that had been done and started by simply stating that his office was both innovative and ultimately helpful to the “Presidency, the Government and the Citizenry.”⁴³⁹ Klein documented the ways in which his office operated -- as a media liaison, a cabinet department liaison, a planner and project developer, in the area of correspondence, as a speakers’ bureau, a mailing and distributor coordinator, as a research arm as well as in various other areas of media and public relations.

The biggest area of concern for Klein was perhaps the Office’s role as “media liaison.” In his memorandum, he informed Nixon that as director he had led the “Use of all media to present the Administration’s case and to avoid domination by the

438 Charles Colson Memoranda for File, 2 March 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [III] 1971, March, 1971: Box 5; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

439 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Washington press, which is essentially negative at the reportorial level.”⁴⁴⁰ Klein documented that his office was the first “fully-coordinated use by an Administration of all aspects of national TV and the first development of broad use of regional TV.” Where his personal activities were concerned, Klein informed the President that he had worked through intense activities to reach the public as a spokesman through TV and print media. It was also important for Klein to position himself carefully in relation to Ron Ziegler and his role. “This has allowed us to go beyond the activities of the press secretary, who, in my opinion, does an outstanding full-time job under tough pressure in fulfilling all his duties with the White House Press Corps. We supplement and assist.”⁴⁴¹

Klein’s office had four primary functions. It was designed for briefing and planning with newsmen in Washington. It also functioned to handle departmental stories. Klein sought, in many cases personally, to develop relationships with broadcasters and newsmen across the country and to focus on both national and regional television. By this time in the Presidential term, the new Office, handled up to 100 calls a day from newsmen. Klein held regular meetings with columnists and bureau chiefs – on average seven to 10 per day. Calls were made from the Office of the Communications to suggest favorable stories. This type of outreach had never been done before. “The whole area relating to the White House and other Departments to decision-making news executives across the country is new to government and was originated by this office, which you

440 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

441 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

created.”⁴⁴² Klein felt as though he had more contact with more newsmen across the country than anyone else – in or outside of the government and that as a result, the Nixon Administration could count more people on network specials and talk shows than any previous Administration.

Where previous administrations may have been wise to the coverage of major news outlets, Klein was focused on his office as fully able to establish trends in the editorial opinions of news outlets and of those who ran them. This, was a first. Of greatest importance however, was that the Office was by the press as a primary tool and a representation of the Administration as one that was open. “Newsmen have come to regard this office as a key tool in carrying out your policy of an open Administration,” wrote Klein to Nixon.⁴⁴³

Klein took credit personally for ensuring that the Administration appeared on air. He documented his early morning and late-night television appearances from the *Tonight Show* to *Meet the Press*. “...I have appeared on national television more than any other figure in the Administration other than the President and probably more than almost anyone other than the actual performers.” Klein counted 27 major-length prime-time

442 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

443 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

appearances and various appearances on special commentary and news shows. He also appeared on 152 regional TV programs and eight foreign TV programs.⁴⁴⁴

He would also spend ample time meeting with executives and assessing their concerns. One such meeting was with CBS on March 9, 1971. Klein and CBS executives discussed four things including the Fairness Doctrine, the role of the networks, legislative and political broadcasting and domestic satellites. A major concern of the network executives was the Fairness Doctrine as it applied to television commercials. The commercial aspects of the interpretation were deeply concerning for the TV executives. “If the courts were to rule in a way which would require free answers to ads, this might well require the Congress to pass legislation to counter such a ruling which would almost certainly be fatal to broadcasting. I think we should side with the networks against such an anti-commercial ruling which would damage all of business,” Klein concluded.⁴⁴⁵

The entire Nixon White House was still gaining its footing in a tumultuous time, even nearing the end of their first term. However, Klein’s office was unique in its position. It was the first time an Office of Communications had existed in the White House and Klein was its founding director. Among the internal television team, the Press Secretary and his team, and Klein’s operation, there was much to navigate and roles to be carefully defined. Klein’s report to Nixon served two purposes. First, to carefully document the tasks and role of the new office, and second, to continue to advance the

444 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

445 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

idea that Klein's efforts to communicate with the press were serving a positive and important purpose. Still, the reality was that Nixon's other teams seemed to fall more in line with the emerging way of thinking in the White House, and garnered far less pushback than Klein. Klein was much more inclined to advise than to execute orders. Unfortunately, advice was not necessarily what Nixon wanted in the coming years.

Radio, Perhaps

In early March, Nixon's aides discussed harnessing the impact of radio through regular talks by the President. It had been a discussion point for months, but there was a clear push to develop a strategy around the use of radio. The advantage – namely, the medium allowed the President to avoid the sometimes-debilitating awkwardness that followed him in the presence of a camera – had another less obvious impact. By utilizing radio, the aides could produce material that television stations would be inclined to pick up. Fridays and Saturdays addresses would provide stories for generally light news weekends. But none of the aides felt it particularly beneficial to engage in regular addresses via radio. It was assumed too lessen the value of each address.⁴⁴⁶

Exclusive Presidential broadcasts on radio allowed for a tactical advantage. “When a Presidential speech is carried on radio (but not on television) I note that the radio stations tend to give it much more attention in terms of announcements before the

⁴⁴⁶ Mark Goode via Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 3 March 1971; folder Subject File Radio Talks 1971, March, 1971: Box 24; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

broadcast and news excerpts afterward,” wrote Moore to Chapin.⁴⁴⁷ Haldeman was on board with trying the President out on radio as a well-developed strategy. While this was something organized and researched by Chapin and his team focused on the internal production of television and radio productions, it aligned closely with Klein’s operation. Klein offered his advice. He felt that Nixon would do best on radio in short spurts only and on an irregular basis. He pushed for two-way communication through a chat format, with farmers, consumers and youth, rather than one-way speeches.⁴⁴⁸ The informality of it would allow Nixon to “appear” authentic on radio.⁴⁴⁹ Klein, as always, was particularly cognizant of the impact of the audience. As a former newsman, he understood that this type of communication would be well received by a particular group of listeners and that taking that into account was paramount. Perhaps, Klein thought, this *could* be Nixon’s “Fireside Chat.”⁴⁵⁰ There was a distinct understanding that while these productions would be in-house, how and when they were used would directly affect the way in which they were covered. This fact would be of great concern to Klein and the rest of the

447 Moore to Dwight Chapin, 5 March 1971; folder Subject File Radio Talks 1971, March, 1971: Box 24; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

448 Klein’s push for two-way communication is in line with contemporary public relation best practice. Communications theorists suggest that communication managers must supplement one-way communication (such as press releases and news conferences) with “competencies that permit them to enact two-way communication.” See: Grunig, James E., and David M. Dozier. *Excellent Public Relations and Effective Organizations: A Study of Communication Management in Three Countries*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

449 According to recent public relations research “followers” respond better to “authentic connections to a cause” and personal stories drive engagement. Even before this concept existed within modern public relations practice, Klein advocated for its use. See: Allison Partners. *Powerful Connections 2017 Report*. Allison Partners, 2017.

450 Herbert Klein to Dwight Chapin, 5 March 1971; folder Subject File Radio Talks 1971, March, 1971: Box 24; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Administration. In this way, the teams worked together, without directly working together. There was an understanding that anything and everything would eventually intersect where press attention was concerned.

Aides Enter Spotlight

Earlier in Nixon's first term there was an effort to keep his staff away from the press. The President wasn't interested in creating a multitude of Administration spokesmen and increasingly concerned about potential information leaks. In 1971, this began to change. There were discussions early in the year about the promotion of the men around the President.⁴⁵¹ By creating more attention around others in the Administration, there was hope that the Administration itself would seem more transparent.⁴⁵² Increased concerns of secrecy were playing poorly in the press. Haldeman reached out to Ziegler in early March to push for meetings of staff with the press, but only reporters and editors vetted as objective or favorable in their coverage. "You should begin to work more of the White House press corps in to meet with members of the White House staff. The reporters that you bring in should be ones that rank in the 'objective to fair' classification. In other words, let's not start running our arch rivals."⁴⁵³ Haldeman wanted members of the staff to drop by the Press Center on an informal basis simply to share a cup of coffee

451 H.R. Haldeman to Charles Colson, 9 March 1971; folder Subject File Charles Colson 1971, March, 1971: Box 21; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

452 Research on contemporary communications best practice suggests that transparency within an organization effectively reduces credibility gaps. See: Allison Partners. Powerful Connections 2017 Report. Allison Partners, 2017.

453 H.R. Haldeman to Ronald Ziegler, 9 March 1971; folder Subject File Charles Colson 1971, March, 1971: Box 21; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

or whatever other opportunity would allow for a casual chat. Haldeman made a point to Zielger to push this type of co-mingling. This was the type of co-mingling Klein had been doing, and advocating since the beginning but the pursuit now was motivated not by Klein's steady advice, but Haldeman's self-preservation.

By mid-March of 1971, the President's popularity dropped significantly according to polls.⁴⁵⁴ Determined to put a spin on the coverage, Safire reached out to Haldeman to discuss the emerging narrative. "Now and then a reporter puts a couple of facts together and reports a trend; the rest of the wolf pack sniffs this and goes bounding off in the same direction. It then becomes Established Truth," wrote Safire.⁴⁵⁵ The two facts to which Safire was referring were a dip in the Gallup Poll along with demonstrations that were occurring by laborers and "hippies" against Nixon. Safire concluded that two newsmen who had approached him were developing a clear narrative that would be reported as a trend. "This will be a vague, mood thing – a basis for stringing together worry about Laos, the two facts mentioned above, fear of demonstrations in the spring, the seeming bogging down of the revenue sharing and reorganization of initiatives. Taken together, it makes a story, and we can expect plenty of it because it will be 'trendy,'" wrote Safire.⁴⁵⁶

454 Naughton, James M. "Gallup Poll Finds Support for Nixon At 50%, Lowest Yet." *The New York Times* (New York City), April 1, 1971.

455 William Safire to H.R. Haldeman, 11 March 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, March, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

456 William Safire to H.R. Haldeman, 11 March 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, March, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

The Administration was becoming better versed in utilizing their conversations with members of the press to gauge emerging trends in coverage. The analysis of the types of questions that were asked allowed them to more quickly respond to narratives they wished to stifle. Before coverage was even broadcast or printed, the team had prepared responses and put systems in place to ensure that the journalists and their organizations heard from them immediately. Safire used this opportunity to develop a counter – a psychological play that he felt would do well in undermining the ego of the press. “Let’s point to the ‘here we go again’ trend of reporting – show how everybody is enticed by an angle and proceed to exaggerate it,” he suggested to Haldeman. Safire felt this would make reporters self-conscious about jumping onboard the narrative and would ultimately offer them a perfect peg to go “against the grain.” He also suggested what he referred to as the “Ides of March Syndrome,” suggesting that it might be best to float the idea to the public that Washington reporters who are tired of long, gray winters transfer their own gloomy ethos to the national “mood.” However, one concern remained. It was important to the Administration that Nixon’s increased openness to the press was not interpreted as a reaction to the reports of lessening popularity. The openness of the Administration needed to exist independent of the swaying of the press.⁴⁵⁷ To appear as though there was a direct relationship between negative coverage and access to the White House would fundamentally undermine the system. Haldeman scribbled on the top right-hand corner of the memo, “Absolutely right.”

457 William Safire to H.R. Haldeman, 11 March 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, March, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Those at the center of this system were showing signs of stress. Colson reported to Haldeman regarding his personnel report on March 11. After spending a significant time with Ziegler, he came to the conclusion that though the two of them had different ideas at the beginning of their meeting, they found significant common ground by the end of it. The opposite seemed true with Klein. There was increasing evidence that a divergence between the two began to take a more obvious turn in 1971. Colson's relationship with Ziegler was a positive one. He felt as though Ziegler could productively handle his responsibilities. However, Klein was a different story. Of Klein he said, "There is no change in the Klein situation. He shows signs of being very unhappy. I am being untypically diplomatic and accommodating but must hold my ground – and will."⁴⁵⁸

1971 revealed a much more proactive stance by Nixon's aides. Part of this strategy were steps to permanently establish a role for themselves in proposing special TV pieces directly to the networks. Networks would reach out to the Administration and the Administration wanted to create a two-way street. In mid-March, there were specific stories that the Administration felt they could exploit by creating appealing stories for the press. One was the anniversary of Cambodia. However, the team felt it important to keep a close eye on Laos before suggesting it. Another idea was a story about reactions at college campuses one year following the Kent State shooting. However, there was concern that the risks might outweigh the possible benefits. "There is no telling what kind

⁴⁵⁸ Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 11 March 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, March, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

of reception our people would get at the universities, or how the networks would elect to edit the material. Usually, as you know, they go for the action... I think we should be shoving forth our own ideas for TV stories, and our TV planning group out to have this on the agenda on a regular basis,”⁴⁵⁹ Snyder wrote to Magruder.

While there were undoubtedly instances where Nixon’s aides were working toward creating an open environment for those who had a good relationship with the Administration, for those out of favor, the response was harsh and divisive. At the end of 1970, Nixon’s aides were compiling a list of individuals who qualified as the latter. By the middle of March 1971, the rhetoric had become more direct. Haldeman began a memo to Colson, with “Now that we have the list of our natural enemies and opponents, what do you plan to do with it?... We should have a plan in this area to make sure that we do nothing whatsoever to build them up and that we take them on whenever it is in our interest to do so.” Haldeman believed the list should be used to develop a coordinated program of monitoring the actions of the individuals and groups on the list, hitting them whenever an opening presented itself. Too often, the Administration had been reactive and this list would allow them to be proactive. “Let’s come up with an approach that systematically excludes these groups from White House events, monitors their activities (placing someone on the inside if possible), and identifies possible points of weaknesses that we can attack.”⁴⁶⁰ Conversations like this between Haldeman and Colson became

459 Alvin Snyder to Magruder, 12 March 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, March, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

460 H.R. Haldeman to Charles Colson, 16 March 1971; folder Subject File Charles Colson 1971, March, 1971: Box 21; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

commonplace. Conversations between Klein and Haldeman were rare. With diametrically opposing perspectives on dealing with the press, Colson seemed to align more closely with Haldeman than had Klein. He was more willing to take the hardline approach to strong-arming the press while Klein continued to advocate for an open relationship. It seemed as though the more involved Colson became; the further Klein was pushed away.

The list to which Haldeman referred included academics, businessmen, celebrities, labor leaders, media, organizations and politicians. Each category had a list of people of one page or less with the exception of politicians (two pages) and media, which was the longest at three pages. Television news executives, Julian Goodman of NBC and John Macy of the Public Broadcasting Corporation were on the list including Marvin Kalb and Daniel Schoor of CBS, Lem Tucker and Sander Vanocur of NBC.⁴⁶¹ On March 19, Ziegler sent a memo to Haldeman that included a list of columnists and commentators in which he said, "It is very difficult to list the powerful national TV commentators who are for us. It is much easier to approach this list, and I think it would be more meaningful for us to ask, 'Who are the five most powerful TV commentators who aren't necessarily against us?'"⁴⁶² The list included Howard K. Smith, Walter Cronkite (except for on IndoChina), Dan Rather, Harry Reasoner and John Scali (who had limited impact, but more than most, he noted).

461 Ibid.

462 Ronald Ziegler to H.R. Haldeman, 19 March 1971; folder Memoranda, March, 1971: Box 3; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Ronald Ziegler; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Concern was brewing over the coverage of Laos. Nixon's aides felt as though they were getting clobbered. The issue was that coverage like this played on one of Nixon's biggest concerns, the credibility gap. His aides were concerned because the instability of the situation didn't allow for a definitive strategy to be created. Where the tendency generally was to react swiftly, Nixon's aides chose to handle Laos differently. Their response was that the conflict required a long-range strategy and those results would be demonstrated in time.⁴⁶³

Meanwhile, Magruder had taken the media to task on his own. He had been pushing for Congress to approve a Super Sonic Travel program since 1970 and had done so unsuccessfully. In late March, he appeared on the *Dick Cavett Show*, after he had filed a complaint with the FCC saying that the program only showed the negative side of the initiative. This was just another example to which the lengths that Nixon's aides would go when they felt their views were personally attacked by the media. Magruder, who was becoming a more significant part of Nixon's team, had his own experience with fighting back when necessary, and using the FCC as a way to do it. This would be a significant tactic that would reemerge on a much larger stage, much to Klein's dismay.

Learning from the "Enemy"

On April 7, the President gave an address on Vietnam from the Oval Office. The set up was to be done in a very particular way and Mark Goode was responsible for what would appear flawless on television. However, concerns arose and so did tensions.

⁴⁶³ Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 25 March 1971; folder Memoranda HRH III 1971, March, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Goode made choices that went against the system that Chapin and his team had in place for internal television productions. Instead of using a blue curtain behind the President, Goode opted for gold with the intention to signal that the President was in the Oval Office. Chapin reprimanded him after the broadcast in a memo saying, “You should know and would have known from talking to anyone here that the last time the gold curtains were used as a backdrop, we received numerous complaints, we had a lousy picture and the President came off poorly.”⁴⁶⁴ Goode was relatively new to the process but Chapin was swift in pointing out that previous advisers to the President on television matters handled things far better. “The most distressing problem last night was the attempt by Steve Bull, Ron Ziegler and me to try and find you once the President had arrived in Alex Butterfield’s office. You were nowhere to be found. I cannot remember one episode of us trying to track down Roger Ailes,” wrote Chapin. When it came to the crucial minutes before the President was to appear on television, it was vital that Goode be there to provide explicit direction and to answer any of his questions. Goode had failed to do this. Carruthers, Nixon’s television adviser, was alerted. He had been away for a TV taping in Hollywood and left Goode in the position he would otherwise have overseen. “It’s Bob’s feeling that whenever an event such as this is scheduled, we must have you on the spot,” Chapin wrote to Carruthers.⁴⁶⁵

464 Dwight Chapin to Mark Goode, 8 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

465 Dwight Chapin to Carruthers, 8 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

The charts that were prepared for the President's address were satisfactory at best, at least according to Goode, but subpar according to Chapin. The type was too small to have been legible to viewers. The press had done a better job in creating charts for the public and Chapin made note of this. He suggested that Goode look at the post-coverage by CBS to see what had been done and what the team could learn from the clarity and simplicity of the charts they used. Goode suggested that future addresses utilize professional television graphic artists to ensure that what the internal team was using was equivalent, if not superior to, what the press was able to produce themselves.⁴⁶⁶ Any time there was an opportunity to mimic the success of television networks, Nixon's team took full advantage. The better produced a Nixon White House program, the less opportunity or need there would be for the networks to add their own material or provide additional commentary and that was of utmost importance to the Administration.

Chapin and his internal team took the aesthetic preparation for these types of addresses very seriously. In early April, a lighting training program was conducted for members of the White House Communications Agency. Upon completion of the three-week program, Goode felt the results well-prepared the trainees. "...the men who were enrolled in it are now qualified to light the President in any type of location situation we may encounter. He fully covered the best types of lighting equipment which can be

466 Mark Goode to Dwight Chapin, 8 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

employed for our particular purposes and using this equipment to its best advantage,” wrote Goode to Chapin.⁴⁶⁷

Humanizing the President

Efforts to get the men around the President to share their perception, thus allowing the public to see a different side of the President, was increasingly more organized. On April 9, Haldeman sent a memo to 23 members of Nixon’s Administration, including Chapin, Klein and Ziegler. “Effective immediately, we are starting a new program designed to tell the story of Richard Nixon through the eyes of his staff. It will be a dramatic story – and certainly one that will interest the American people,” wrote Haldeman. Haldeman called for all staff members to come up with a story they’d like to share about the President. The general narrative had been decided and the importance of those around the President was due to their unique ability to speak to the qualifications of the President as a leader of the nation. Through interviews with the press, Haldeman called for the staff to tell stories about the “decisiveness” of the President and his ability to “take a situation in hand and furnish the spark needed to get the job done.” The President’s programs were also to be touted. “Some interviews should be pointed in that specific direction. Humanize them,” wrote Haldeman. Haldeman noted that the American

467 Mark Goode to Dwight Chapin, 9 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

people wanted to know the story of how the President interacted with his staff, and this project was to make sure that the public was privy to those relationships.⁴⁶⁸

Somewhat uncharacteristically, in an April 9 memo from Haldeman, he pushed the staff to talk to the press about their relationship with the President. He wrote, “We have no desire to deny newsmen access to WH officials. To the contrary, we want to expand access. We want to get the story of our Administration across.”⁴⁶⁹ This message went out to 11 of Nixon’s core staff, including Chapin, Colson, Ehrlichman, Kissinger, Klein and Ziegler.

In the vein of trying to get the President’s narrative out through his close staff, Haldeman himself was considering going on the *Today Show* and sharing home movies of the President as well as being interviewed by Barbara Walters.⁴⁷⁰ Colson encouraged the idea, suggesting that it might help with the effort to get more people from the Nixon Administration on television.⁴⁷¹

468 H.R. Haldeman to Staff, 9 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

469 H.R. Haldeman to Brown, Chapin, Colson, Ehrlichman, Finch, Kissinger, Klein, Rumsfeld, Shultz, Wood, Ziegler, 9 April 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

470 Richard Howard to Larry Higby, 19 April 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

471 Ibid.

Equal Time and the FCC

Meanwhile, Klein was expressing concern to the President over the challenges facing his “friends in the broadcast industry.” First, there was concern over the role of community access television (CATV) in regard to the major networks. CATV had provided local stations with the opportunity to reach their audiences in cases where receiving a clear signal was a challenge. With FCC leanings toward the expansion of cable, local stations were concerned that the big networks would invade their market areas. This would ultimately lead to the death of the local stations or so they believed. Nixon and his aides found great significance in local broadcast networks and in many ways considered them to be a better way to reach their public than the major networks. A threat to local networks meant an additional obstacle in Nixon’s leveraging of broadcast media and a danger in the expanded power of his opponents at the Big Three networks. Klein understood this, and suggested that Nixon make an effort to challenge some of these FCC moves in order to preserve the helpful influence of local news.⁴⁷²

While prevailing narratives suggest that Nixon’s aides were rash in their decision to go after networks, there is evidence to suggest that they were far more calculated, though they did seem to play defense. It was suggested at times that if one network set an example of how to “attack” the Administration, it was likely that the others would follow. At the end of April, the Nixon Administration was facing an “equal time” issue with ABC. ABC had allowed Democrats equal time following a Presidential address, despite

472 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 6 April 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, April, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the fact that the Presidential address was in response to the time given to the Democrats regarding an issue they had lodged. The dilemma they faced was simple. If they challenged ABC with the FCC and lost, they would hurt themselves by disturbing a satisfactory state of laws. However, they could gain thirty minutes of time by going after the FCC. They felt as though they could win, but remained uncertain – too uncertain for the decision to be an easy one. Their relationship with ABC could be damaged, resulting in disruption of any good relationship that had developed. If they didn't challenge ABC, they worried that NBC and CBS would feel as though they could do the same thing. "They can, of course, take the same clever approach; that is, they recognize the law, agree with it, but feel for whatever reason they would just like to slip in one program here or there. There would, in effect, be a de facto deterioration of the legal principle we care about," Colson wrote to Haldeman. "Everyone will be watching this one because of the very novel and clever approach ABC has taken in responding to us."⁴⁷³

On the flipside, Klein had approached the President about the Fairness Doctrine as it applied to TV commercials. He was concerned that if the courts ruled in support of free advertisements, Congress might be required to pass legislation to counter the ruling, which he felt would be fatal to broadcasting. While a blow to broadcasting may not have been seen as a problem to Nixon himself or some of his aides, Klein advised Nixon side with the networks against the anti-commercial ruling suggesting that it would damage all

473 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 22 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

business.⁴⁷⁴ In Klein's eyes, a fatal blow to broadcasting would be a travesty for the image of the Administration. In Colson's, it was a favorable byproduct.

On April 26, Nixon's aides received a detailed description of a study they had commissioned to evaluate the methods of utilizing television by President Nixon. The goal was to determine which method was most successful in projecting Nixon's "ideas, policies, personality and 'image'" for the voting population. "It is concerned, not with Mr. Nixon's personal style or the content of this announcements, but rather with 'formats' which can best be used to maximize his credibility and impact and to convey the most positive impression of the man..." according to the study outline.⁴⁷⁵ The extensive study was designed to ensure that for 1971 and the years that followed, the Administration would be best prepared to use television in the most effective and efficient way to reach voters. The budget was between \$16,000 and \$19,000 for the first phase of research. The first phase was designed to "examine in depth – with small groups of respondents – alternative TV formats which could be utilized by Mr. Nixon and to evaluate various strengths and weaknesses of each format."⁴⁷⁶

Chapin felt that the study could illuminate the way in which the team could generate the best effect on the television audience. There were two ways to go, the "hard,

474 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 9 March 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, March, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

475 Pierre Marquis to William Carruthers, 26 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

476 Pierre Marquis to William Carruthers, 26 April 1971; folder Subject File William Carruthers 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

fast, antagonistic approach” or the “low-key, calm, approach.” Depending on the results of the study, the team could adjust press conference formats, making them more conversational. They could also work in humor, and personal items if that proved to appear more authentic to the television audience. The ultimate question for Chapin was “Is the President too quick on answering questions and how does the public react to quick answers.”⁴⁷⁷

Again, the push for the image of the President took priority over the content of the President’s messages.⁴⁷⁸ While on the surface, the beginning of 1971 showed evidence that Nixon’s aides were neither pushing away the press nor shunning television as a medium, a deeper investigation into the intentions reveal their strategies to be both meticulously formulated and self-serving.⁴⁷⁹ Additionally, the development of those strategies reveals a growing shift in the position of Klein and emerging tensions among Nixon’s inner circle.

Fighting Protesters through Television

The end of April 1971 was rather tumultuous for the Administration. Protests by veterans were winning full coverage from major networks, drawing unwanted attention

477 Dwight Chapin to Dr. David Degre. May 3, 1971.

478 This effort directly aligns with communication ethics scholar John Merrill’s definition of propaganda. Merrill suggests that while propaganda may have a negative connotation in the “news” aspect of journalism, other areas of the media output require propagandistic techniques. Merrill calls out columnists and commentators as dependent on propaganda. In Merrill’s definition, the core ideas of propaganda are: “manipulation, purposeful management, preconceived plan, creation of desires, reinforcement of biases, arousal of pre-existing attitudes, irrational appeal, specific objective, arousal of action, pre-determined end, suggestion, and creation of dispositions.” See: John Calhoun Merrill, *Journalism Ethics: Philosophical Foundations for News Media* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997), 17-20.

479 Maltese, John Anthony. *Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1998.

on the choices of the President to maintain troops and continue fighting in foreign engagements. Mort Allin reached out to Colson describing in great detail what he termed the “9 days of conscious or unconscious erosion of national policy and spirit” by network news. He chastised networks for the dramatization of the protests and questioned the “propagandistic” use of marketing ploys by network news. “Advertisers use its every advantage to utilize their dollars most effectively. Camera work and narration or dialogue are brilliantly used for dramatic thrills on shows like *Mission Impossible*. Should the assets which TV possesses as a medium be used by the TV news shows? As propaganda – i.e. to push one controversial point – it would seem journalistically irresponsible,” wrote Allin.

The Administration was becoming privy to the increasing changes in the production of broadcast news. While they continued to contend with the emerging commentary culture, they were now facing a different beast entirely – new graphics and great emphasis on the visual production of news programming injected in a new degree of concern for Nixon’s aides. News programming was now able to go beyond creating a simple story into providing an entertaining narrative that had a great influence on attracting viewers and swaying their opinions. “No American, outside of the unreconstructed hawk, could not have come away from last week’s TV news without deep doubts as to the wisdom of the President’s policy of gradual withdrawal and questions of the value of the immense effort in lives, money and material we have expended in VN,” continued Allin.

There were a few ways that the Administration could address the onslaught they felt from the networks at the time. Allin suggested that they incite insurrection among the

affiliates and even pressure the networks, perhaps through internal means – “FCC and Justice are in our control,” he wrote.⁴⁸⁰ He suggested that aides might quietly go to advertisers who bought time on news shows and have them turn the heat on networks.

Colson’s frustration with the news media was clear. When the 1971 Pulitzer Prize was announced, he wrote to Ehrlichman, “This is probably the first time in history that the award hasn’t been given for excellence in journalism, but rather for skill in grand larceny. The two top winners were those who demonstrated that they were more adept at theft than at original writing or reporting.” Colson suggested to Ehrlichman that the line of “award for grand larceny” would do well to promote the idea that journalism standards of the day had hit an all-time low.⁴⁸¹ Colson’s intention behind writing to Ehrlichman was not to vent his frustration, but to establish a theme or sound bite that could be best proliferated through Nixon supporters. Nixon’s team, was stacked with former admen and communications experts and the vernacular provided by the inside was important in establishing the attitudes of those on the outside. However, this frustration was increasingly apparent, but the Administration or at least the entire team, had not yet decided that the entirety of the press was a problem.

Still, Colson was agitated by how the press were portraying the policies of the Nixon Administration. On May 13, he expressed that frustration to Haldeman. “We got killed on the networks last night on the economy...” he wrote, “...a plan we have had in

480 Mort Allin to Charles Colson, 28 April 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, April, 1971: Box 20; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

481 Charles Colson to John Ehrlichman, 2 May 1971; folder Memoranda Ehrlichman 1971, May, 1971: Box 7; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the works for a couple of days now will probably help counter this.”⁴⁸² Nixon’s aides got to work. Immediately following the negative coverage, assignments went out to provide internal briefings on the Gross National Product (GNP) figures and to identify all the erroneous areas of interpretation by the networks. A talking paper was produced to be distributed to the staff and a press conference to address the economy was planned. This immediate process was a something that Colson hoped would become regular practice. “Last night’s network treatment is precisely the kind of problem we have to avoid or be in a position to correct immediately,” he wrote.⁴⁸³

Introducing Richard, Again

Protests, credibility questions, secrecy and a host of other political concerns were putting significant strain on Nixon’s press teams. They needed a way to create significant content and news around “Nixon the man” while “Nixon the President” navigated murky political waters. When it came to planning Nixon’s TV and radio specials, it was important that they were well-thought out and done with the right people involved. Additionally, they had to cumulatively promote or enhance the preferred image of the President. By May 4, there were 17 additional specials laid out for consideration for the remainder of the year. A Mother’s Day radio message could be delivered and released to all networks on May 9. On the President and Mrs. Nixon’s anniversary, an interview with David Frost would give the public insight into the Nixon’s marriage, family, and careers.

482 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 13 May 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, May, 1971: Box 7; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

483 Ibid.

Frost was chosen for the interview because Goode and Snyder felt as though “the three network talk show hosts [were] primarily comedians, and the danger of ill-timed or disrespectful quips could be a problem.”⁴⁸⁴ Nixon wasn’t particularly gifted in unpredictable situations and the team avoided moments where his awkward demeanor might be exploited.

The Fourth of July was another prime opportunity for a television appearance. The idea was to place Nixon in a small town, celebrating with regular folks, riding rides, judging contests and talking to children. It was designed to show the President in a more personable light, outside the Washington pomp and circumstance. Goode and Snyder also felt as though a tour of the Western White House in San Clemente would be a good opportunity. This was particularly significant in light of previous years’ criticism of Nixon’s use of the space when he wasn’t in Washington. The press had suggested that it was too costly and the team worried that the perception that Nixon was not working as hard there as he could at the White House was a narrative they hoped to squash.

Proposed Labor Day radio spots would be done as two-or three-minute traffic safety messages that would be prerecorded by the President and then played throughout Labor Day. The reconvening of Congress on September 8 provided another chance to get the President on TV. A television press conference that was restricted to reporters who regularly covered Capitol Hill might provide a good way for the President to talk policy to a crowd with whom he felt accustomed. The President’s family was also tapped for

484 Mark Goode to Al Snyder to Charles Colson, 4 May 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, May, 1971: Box 7; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

opportunities as well. Doing so provided a great interest and insight into Nixon as a family man and aided in the development of a different type of relationship between the people and the Office of President. Julie Eisenhower appearing on several episodes of *Sesame Street* was suggested.

Because the President was a sports fan, discussions with the press about sports were not uncommon. In hopes of taking a step away from political discussions in the press, it was suggested that the President give an interview to a well-known sportscaster, perhaps Joe Garagiola, at the opening of football season. The team also sought a Presidential appearance on *The American Sportsman* on ABC Sports. The show aired for a period of three to four months each year, featuring celebrities who hunted and fished. The President could talk about fishing, perhaps just appear as a visitor. The hope was that the backdrop of that particular show could be done in a wilderness area, providing an opening for discussions on the environment.

Efforts to show a personal side of the President would continue throughout the year, but those efforts would sometimes be made by those who surrounded him. His team had consistently tried to move Nixon's aides into the forefront. However, a segment on NBC's *First Tuesday* was crafted to show the personal side of the President by individuals like his tailor, valet, housekeeper, chef and photographer. Those who knew him, outside of political relationships, would be encouraged to discuss his "taste in clothing, food, furnishings, gardens," and other similar subjects.⁴⁸⁵ Another suggested special would be the appearance of Nixon's secretary Rose Mary Woods on *This Is Your*

485 Ibid

Life. This would provide insight into Nixon himself, who would make a special appearance on the episode.

A televised press conference with the Fellows of the Washington Journalism Center would provide Nixon a forum to talk to young people, a connection he was eager to pursue following continued unrest on university campuses across the nation. Every year, the Center would provide fellowships for 16 working journalists as well as a number of accomplished African American students who were interested in becoming journalists. The Fellows were assigned a “program of observation” at government agencies as well as an internship at Washington new bureaus.

Finally, a segment for the *Today Show* or *Sixty Minutes* on the President’s daily schedule could provide a look into the “average” working day of the nation’s highest office. The segment would begin with a Cabinet meeting and then a series of appointments with Congressional leaders of both parties, representatives and minority groups. The segment wasn’t meant to show an extremely demanding day, instead it would be designed to show the diversity of the President’s activities and feature the people responsible for his schedule.

The suggestions for the year weren’t meant to replace any of the team’s regular plans. They were additions. The plan would proceed to push for the President and his team to remain visible throughout and reactive to the day’s events. However, specials provided prime opportunities for the team to control the Presidential image in ways that daily events didn’t always allow. In that way, they were extremely important.

The Administration’s relationship with the press was complicated. While there were efforts to cultivate the relationship, the appearance of a pandering Administration

raised its own concerns. June 7 was the “Freedom of the Press Day.” Nixon’s aides discussed whether something should be done on that day to show support from the Nixon White House. The day had nothing to do with a Presidential Proclamation and it hadn’t been formally acknowledged by presidents in the past. Price found the idea of making any sort of statement on the day a mistake. “I vote strongly no. Against the background of our attacks on the press, it would sound phony and be smeared [illegible]. I’m in favor of saying good things about the media but NOT on Freedom of the Press day,” he scribbled at the bottom of the memo from Colson.⁴⁸⁶ Safire had a similar opinion and felt as though no comment should be made. It would feel too much like pandering, he suggested. Dick Moore thought the timing was wrong and that recent statements by Cronkite and other network newsmen suggesting that the Administration was “plotting to intimidate the networks and the press” would make it appear as though the President was making a statement in response to that very criticism. Instead, a statement on July 4 on the freedom of the press would be more appropriate for the Administration.⁴⁸⁷

In fact, of the five individuals Colson had asked for their opinion, only one said that it might be a good idea. Klein felt as though it might be a good opportunity to make a positive statement. However, the fact that the day was sponsored by the Inter American Press Association created some concerns. “The IAPA has many leading U.S. publishers and probably has been most effective for freedom of the press in Latin America. It has

486 Ray Price to Charles Colson, 20 May 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

487 Richard Moore to Charles Colson, 25 May 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

been a participant in many of the battles concerning Latin American dictatorships. If such a statement is issued, the above fact should be kept in mind, so as not to project the President into a hemisphere debate,” he wrote. Klein’s differing opinion from the others was not unusual. In fact, it was more common as the years progressed. However, of significance to note is the concern of Klein not in the appearance of pandering or defense, but rather in the political ramifications of the particular press organization.⁴⁸⁸

Colson’s Reprimand

Equal time on the networks was an ongoing battle in 1971. Colson was keeping careful track of TV appearances by opponents and making sure that there was someone from “Nixon’s side” ready to counter opposing spokesmen at each occasion. This would become the reigning strategy for the Administration. Not an uncommon tactic, but as were most actions by Nixon’s team, a very deliberate and intentional one. Not only was each situation countered, but each individual selected to represent the Administration was scrupulously chosen to “answer the charges” that were laid out against the policies of the Nixon Administration.⁴⁸⁹

On May 28, Colson discussed the Administration’s troubles with Common Cause. Common Cause was attempting to use the major networks to promote their “End of War Amendment.” Common Cause sought half-hour segments for a show but were turned

488 Herbert Klein to Charles Colson, 26 May 1971; folder Action Memos Richard Howard 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

489 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 20 May 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

down by all three. Colson suggested that the reason was because action taken by the Administration the previous summer in regard to buying time. The networks, supposedly, would no longer sell controversial topics. Rebuked by the networks, Common Cause would instead record the programs and take them to local networks. They bought time in approximately 100 markets. In response, Nixon's aides contacted each of the stations and asked for free time to respond. Colson received approval from a couple right away, and expected more to fall in line. "This is one of those happy times when we suck the enemy into spending a lot of money and then getting coverage ourselves with what I think will be a better product," Colson wrote to Haldeman.⁴⁹⁰

Colson was working fervently to take advantage of every opportunity, but the structuring of Nixon's aides in the area of television management was becoming a little crowded. Haldeman discussed with him a re-organization of the team. He wanted Colson to get take on the role of "quiet insider" and perhaps felt that he was "out front" too much. "...it is obvious to me that I have failed to convey to you the degree to which I have retreated into my shell since the so-called reorganization," Colson wrote Haldeman.⁴⁹¹ Colson expressed his frustration, noting that he was only speaking to the press in instances where "no one else could do it." Haldeman circled the statement and chided Colson through a scribbled note on the side of the paper. "This is not really even

490 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 28 May 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

491 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 28 May 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the case,” he wrote. Colson ended his case by saying, “...I understand the inside role and I think am more conscious of it than you realize that I am.”⁴⁹²

Klein Further Alienated

The beginning of June isolated Klein even further from his peers in some ways. He was always more accessible to the press and in return, they came to him for help when it was needed. The situation with the FCC had been creating major concerns. Local newspapers were pushed, by FCC efforts, to sell their TV properties or radio and TV properties operating within the same city. Klein wrote directly to the President on the matter. “You expressed yourself as strongly opposed to actions which would cause newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* to divest TV,” he wrote. “On May 18, the anti-trust division of the Justice Department acted exactly contrary to your position and what I believe is the position of the Attorney General.”⁴⁹³

The FCC issue was this: the combination of a TV stations and a daily newspaper in the same local market presented a serious issue in competition. This presented an issue of advertising dollars. It also presented an issue in diversity of information sources and thus, competition in advertising. Without economically effective choices for advertisers seeking to reach their particular markets due to lack of competition, problems emerged.

492 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 28 May 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, May, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

493 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 2 June 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, June, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Klein sought the President's response on the position of the Justice Department and if the Administration would "consider espousing a case by case position concerning newspaper ownership to the FCC by another agency such as the Department of Commerce." Klein suggested that if the ultimate solution to the problem was legislation, it may be possible, should the Administration choose, to support a request to Congress that the TV-newspaper relationship be considered on the merits, so that there was not a broad prohibition against newspaper TV ownership.⁴⁹⁴ Klein's suggestion was not taken.

Everything is a Press Opportunity

Troop withdrawal coverage played a central role in news reports. Colson and Scali were working toward the promotion of more media covering the withdrawal of men and equipment from Vietnam. There was little division over whether this was necessary, but it was clear that the Administration would have to do more to prevent it from appearing as though it was simply another ploy to promote its accomplishments.

Achieving this would take a little work. For one, the individual who would promote the withdrawal could not be based in the Pentagon. Instead, it would need to be someone who was based in the field, preferably attached to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) headquarters⁴⁹⁵ in Saigon. The assignment would be kept secret so as not to reveal the Administration's efforts to disguise its self-promotion in the press. However, it was imperative that a few key people knew of the plan to ensure that

494 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 June 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, June, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

495 The MACV Headquarters was created in 1962 as a response to the increase in United States military assistance to South Vietnam.

there would be a constant flow of ideas as to how to expand coverage. The goal would be made clear to Abrams, MACV and a few other key individuals. The person in the field reported to Dan Henkin⁴⁹⁶ and Henkin was to be in direct contact with Scali at all times. Simultaneously, Henkin could advise, albeit quietly, the members of his Southeast Asia unit at the Pentagon. They would craft additional ideas to move the story forward. This would be conducted completely by phone and without any memoranda exchanged. Scali understood that exploiting the withdrawal rate in a believable way would be a challenge but felt it possible despite the fact that between then and September the withdrawal rate would drop from an average of 14,300 men a month to approximately 10,000. Why? There was a need to keep men in place before the elections in October. In mid-September, Scali noted that the rate was to go up sharply before the end of October balloting. Between June and September, the main focus was on shipping equipment back to the United States – providing ample opportunity for coverage and the promotion of evidence that there was a continuing withdrawal.⁴⁹⁷

By June, increased attention was paid to the perception that the broadcast news media was giving undue attention to unemployment, something that the Administration was quick to attempt to dismiss. Mort Allin, who put together the President's News Summaries, responded to a memo on the subject distributed by Colson. His response reflected the perhaps jovial, yet tense atmosphere, permeating the White House. "It might

496 Daniel Henkin served as a chief spokesman for the Department of Defense during the Vietnam War.

497 Scali to Charles Colson, 4 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

lessen the increasing paranoia in our resident asylum here,” he wrote, “if it is noted that in February the lead story was the astronauts landing on the moon. You may pass this on as you desire.”⁴⁹⁸

The President’s list of individuals he felt were against him was growing. Perhaps one of the more interesting individuals on the list was Jane Fonda. Fonda was investigated for smuggling pep pills into the United States. As it turned out, ABC and CBS had briefly noted that she had been cleared of her drug charges and that the pep pills were actually vitamins. Jon Huntsman⁴⁹⁹ informed Colson, on June 5. Underneath he wrote, “It was suggested that you note the above as obviously a fix to cover up.” Colson scribbled at the bottom of the memo a note to John Dean⁵⁰⁰, “Can you chew this out with customs – was she cleared?”⁵⁰¹ Dean had sent some information to Colson regarding it on June 10. To that, Colson replied, “We might be able to have some real fun with this in the press if we can use it.” Colson also noted that the original document from Dean had no “Confidential” markings. Dean scribbled on the memo he received from Colson and sent it back. “Naturally is confidential,” he wrote.⁵⁰² Colson had actually reached out to

498 Allin to Charles Colson, 9 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

499 Jon Huntsman served as Special Assistant and Staff Secretary to President Nixon.

500 John Dean served as White House Counsel from 1970-1973.

501 Jon Huntsman to Charles Colson, 5 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

502 Charles Colson to John Dean, 10 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

Huntsman the same day. He let him know that the Justice Department had dropped its charges against Fonda because it felt there wasn't good cause and did not want to provide a forum for Fonda within the Federal Court system. However, Colson surmised there may be information in Fonda's file that could be "leaked out to friendly reporters."⁵⁰³ Nixon's aides were not just working on a compilation of individuals who they felt damaged the image of the President; they were also working on ways to use the media to damage those individuals.

Programming the Media

It was not unusual for the President to meet with network executives and in those meetings, suggest individuals who would make good interviews. Understandably, this was done with a particular purpose. Nixon's aides would be prepared to contact those individuals, if they hadn't already done so, and program them to speak in ways that would favor the President and the aims of the Administration. On June 11, Nixon suggested to NBC executives that they should consider interviewing Norman Borlaug. Borlaug was the inventor of "miracle wheat," and a 1970 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. The President, who had an extensive environmental platform which he was attempting to promote, suggested that Borlaug had, in effect, saved millions of lives from starvation through his invention. Nixon felt as though he had strong ideas about the environment and eliminated pesticides. Julian Goodman of NBC seemed receptive to the idea and Colson suggested that Snyder follow up on it. "Borlaug, if he goes on, should be

503 Charles Colson to Jon Huntsman, 10 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971: Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

thoroughly programmed to talk in a very positive and complimentary way about his meetings with the President, what the President is doing and be very sure he gives us some strong plusses,” Colson wrote.⁵⁰⁴

The Pentagon Papers

While Klein had been pushed from conversations on some of the efforts to alienate and attack the press, Klein *was* heavily involved in the fallout after the printing of the Pentagon Papers. Klein held meetings with other aides, including John Mitchell, Melvin Laird, Ron Ziegler among others to develop a strategy. At the time, Klein was most concerned about keeping the American public’s support of the Administration’s stand on the Vietnam War. Mitchell advocated the attempt to prevent publication. Klein felt that publication of the papers was “right” had the newspaper cleared it – because they were aware of a rule to clear classified documents – but they hadn’t done that.⁵⁰⁵ The Administration went with Mitchell’s position despite Klein’s objection. The President himself would ask Klein why he wouldn’t just stop talking to the press but Klein ignored comments. “I never stopped talking to any reporter because I was ordered to,” he said. “And I always found that with the President that sometimes he would say things to me which might have been harsh and if I just ignored him a couple of days, he would say, ‘I

504 Charles Colson to Al Snyder, 11 June 1971; folder Action Memoranda 1971-1973, June, 1971; Box 1; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Richard Howard; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

505 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

see that you didn't really do that,' and I would say 'No I didn't,' and he said, 'That's fine.'"⁵⁰⁶

Klein's refusal to respond to Nixon's outcries helped him manage the emerging stressors in the Nixon White House. After all, he had spent many years with Nixon and knew how to cope with Nixon's mercurial nature. He attributed issues of the staff to their inability to take Nixon's harshness with a grain of salt. Colson, he said, would take a harsh statement and make it worse. Colson's attitude was a serious point of contention for Klein. Klein believed that Colson was a problem and objected to many of things that he did. In fact, Klein speculated that the pressure Colson put on Jeb Magruder led Magruder to "some of the things he did on the getting okay on the break-in," that became the Watergate scandal.⁵⁰⁷ Klein felt that Colson knew Magruder was not strong enough to resist the pressure to take "cutting edge" action in regard to election intelligence gathering. Klein believed Colson manipulated Magruder and took advantage of him.

Chapin was keeping an eye on the polls. The "freedom of press issue" was a major factor. The Gallup Poll figures from June 5 and 6 showed a 49 percent approval rating for the President with 37 percent disapproving of the President's performance and another 14 percent offered "no opinion." The next poll was scheduled for June 22, six days after Chapin reached out to Haldeman regarding the fact that it would include a question regarding the *New York Times*' publication of the Pentagon Papers. Gallup had

506 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

507 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

said that it would run a freedom of press question. Chapin had objected, concerned that it would come out in favor of the press, something that wouldn't surprise him. Chapin was adamant that the question be reworded on the poll.⁵⁰⁸

"I'm convinced beyond doubt that my programmed visits with media leaders across the counter is working quite well," Klein wrote to Nixon in a June 24th memo. Klein laid out the considerable pressure he felt to provide information where others wouldn't. "This is difficult at best without backup, but I think I am succeeding, judging from coverage," he continued. Klein felt as though leaders in media were always eager to see him and that the idea of a two-way conversation between the President (through Klein) and media leaders was something they found particularly flattering and should continue. Since the start of the year, Klein visited 19 states, making three to six visits per state according to his count. He would address editors and publishers at broadcast meetings and hold both private and public meetings. In his time with the press he felt two major issues were troubling. "One is the *New York Times* case. The second is perhaps of more long-range importance: the proposed FCC action separating newspapers from TV ownership within their cities. Both are looked at by many as a breach of faith by us."⁵⁰⁹ Klein had spent the last three days doing a series of public appearances in Chicago, St. Louis and then Washington and reported that the *Times* and the Pentagon Papers case was stressed most in his conversations. People wanted to know the Administration's side of

508 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 17 June 1971; folder Subject Polls 1971, June, 1971: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

509 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 24 June 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, June, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the case. Klein had echoed the standard response, that it wasn't about freedom of information but that the government was "executing its duty to protect national security," that it wasn't "secrecy for secrecy's sake."⁵¹⁰

Haldeman responded to Klein's overview of meeting with media leadership in major cities days later. "...you should concentrate more on the secondary markets," Dayton, Memphis, Tallahassee, and others required attention. Nixon was going to be in those areas over the summer. Haldeman wasn't suggesting Klein stay away from major markets altogether, but he encouraged him to shift his emphasis to secondary markets "for the next couple of months."⁵¹¹ This would be one of the many shifts of Klein away from major interactions with the press. Regardless, Klein pushed ahead on the *New York Times* case issue. He believed that it was now time for a brief Presidential comment on why the Administration was pursuing the case. "I would not suggest an attack on newspapers, even the *New York Times*, but I think that at this moment, some Presidential clarification would be helpful with both editors and the public in general."⁵¹² Klein was acutely aware of the potential for the Pentagon Papers case to create a problem for the Administration and he was vigilant in his commitment to encourage Nixon to remain open to the press.

510 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 24 June 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, June, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

511 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 1 July 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, July, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

512 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 3 July 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, July, 1971: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

The Administration wasn't overly concerned with the long-term optics of Nixon's relationship with the press, but more so with the general optics of his appearance in the polls, something that had become a bit of an obsession. Chapin had spoken to George Gallup Jr. about the latest poll and determined that Nixon's approval and disapproval ratings seemed fairly unchanged by the "Pentagon Papers" case. Though he did voice concern over Gallup's intention to compare the approval ratings between Nixon and the four previous presidents. Nixon's approval rating at 48 percent was far lower than LBJ's 67 percent, JFK's 61 percent, Eisenhower's 69 percent and Truman's 55 percent. "The way the story's headed, it will not be positive for us," Chapin wrote.⁵¹³

As the Pentagon Papers case was a continuing thorn in the Administration's side, reporter Jerry terHorst (who would later become Ford's Press Secretary and then resign due to Ford's pardon of Nixon) contacted Charles Colson to ask about setting up an interview with the President on the occasion of the third anniversary of his nomination to office. This would serve as a reprieve from the influx of questions regarding the Administration's position on the *New York Times* case. Ordinarily, Colson felt something like this would not be worthy of a response, but the Administration liked terHorst. He was friendly and non-threatening and this could be a welcome distraction. "terHorst is not the best journalist," he wrote to Ziegler, "but he is a friend. I will leave this with you, however, I have promised I would get back to terHorst with an answer." At this point, dealings with the press were going through several people and Colson was taking on an

513 Dwight Chapin to H.R. Haldeman, 7 July 1971; folder Subject Polls 1971, July, 1971: Box 23; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Dwight Chapin; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

increased role. Dwight Chapin and Herb Klein were copied on the memo but a handwritten note on the document from Haldeman reaffirms his growing confusion over responsibility. Haldeman circled the word “I” in “I would get back...” and scribbled underneath, “Not you – Z – This should have been referred directly to Ron.”⁵¹⁴

Colson was becoming more aggressive toward the people in the media, at one point even suggesting that television personality Dick Cavett was a “dedicated enemy of the President and the Administration,” and that the Nixon White House would do well by continuing to “neutralize him.” Throughout his time working alongside Ziegler, he was frustrated with press coverage and was vocal about it. When he criticized the press, it was biting and his expectations were low even after positive gains were made in bolstering Nixon’s image following meetings with journalists. “I don’t expect great things,” he wrote to Haldeman. “This is typical of the pattern...we got a rash of very good coverage for a few weeks thereafter before they fell back into their old ways.”⁵¹⁵

Colson’s problem with Klein was becoming bigger when it came to press responsibilities. “I really think the level of backbiting in the White House staff has reached new highs,” he wrote to Haldeman on August 5. “I have the Klein problem, as you know; Buchanan’s morale is bad, highly critical of everyone around the place; Safire has been grumbling; there’s a real bitter feeling between Connally and Shultz which has surfaced a couple of time in sessions I have been in. There is really not an upbeat team

514 Charles Colson to Ronald Ziegler, 7 July 1971; folder Memoranda Ronald Ziegler 1971, July, 1971: Box 13; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

515 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 20 July 1971; folder Memoranda Ronald Ziegler 1971, July, 1971: Box 13; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

kind of spirit,” he continued.⁵¹⁶ Colson asked Haldeman to solve the problem. He urged him to get the team dealing with the press and media together and to “read them the riot act” to “fight back positively and not take our petty bitches out on each other in the newspapers.”⁵¹⁷ Colson made a list of everyone he thought should be required to attend the meeting including Klein.

Haldeman too was growing frustrated with the tension within the team, and with the way the situations were handled. “Even a quick glance at the News Planning Calendar” would indicate there isn’t any news planning...” he wrote to Colson just days later.⁵¹⁸ The note was not well received. The next day he sent a message to Ziegler, Safire, Howard, Moore, Desmond Barker⁵¹⁹, and Scali. He attached Haldeman’s memo. Haldeman was holding Colson accountable. “We’ve got to do a better job of developing good stories for those days when there are no known events,” he wrote to the team.⁵²⁰ The next day, he addressed Haldeman directly. “...it is not correct to say that there ‘isn’t any news planning.’ ...If I have erred, it has been on the side of giving you less

516 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 5 August 1971; folder Memoranda Ronald Ziegler 1971, August, 1971: Box 13; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

517 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 5 August 1971; folder Memoranda Ronald Ziegler 1971, August, 1971: Box 13; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

518 H.R. Haldeman to Charles Colson, 11 August 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [II] 1971, August, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

519 Desmond Barker was Special Assistant to President Nixon for Domestic Communications from 1971-1972. He was primarily responsible for the supervision of the White House news planning calendar and scheduling of the Administration's news activities.

520 Charles Colson to Ziegler, Safire, Howard, Moore, Des Barker and Scali, 12 August 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [II] 1971, August, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

information in terms of ‘game plan.’” Colson went on to document, in three densely packed pages, how the news planning meetings functioned and that the news plans were streamlined to only included things important enough to make legitimate news. “We could always pump a lot more ‘junk’ into the news plan which would give it the appearance of more substance, but we would then only be kidding ourselves, which is silly...I was well aware that the current news planning calendar...contained some very large holes, therefore, I was not too surprised to receive a ‘Haldeman needle.’ I hope this memo is not an overreaction...” wrote Colson.⁵²¹

Careful consideration was now placed on the roles and responsibility of the teams dealing with the press. 1971 had already been filled with political landmines where the press was concerned and the “credibility gap” was becoming a greater consideration. Klein was trying to negotiate his way to China. He asked Haldeman if he could join the team that was going but was careful to position himself as an asset but also out of the way of Ziegler. He noted that he was the only one with experience in negotiating with a Communist country, citing his time with Nixon during the then Vice President’s trip to the Soviet Union. He knew, however, that he would need to assure Haldeman he wouldn’t interfere with Ziegler’s role. “I am not, in any way, suggesting interfering with Ron’s role, which would be the key one, but I do feel that behind the scenes, in all aspects, I could be particularly helpful...to both Ron and the President. Ron would, of

521 Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman, 13 August 1971; folder Memoranda HRH [II] 1971, August, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

course, be in charge of the press,” he wrote.⁵²² Klein made repeatedly clear that he had no intention of interfering. Klein was allowed to travel to China as part of Nixon’s team, but not before he advocated for his own usefulness. The carefully worded memo serves as another indication of the tension that existed within the Administration, particularly where his role was concerned and how adamantly he was attempting to retain some relevance in a tightening circle.

Still, he persisted. On October 5, Klein reached out to one of Nixon’s other “palace guards,” Ehrlichman. He had been trying to advise the President on dealing with the decision on anti-trust and the networks to no avail. He spoke directly with the Attorney General and found that despite his advice the Attorney General felt it necessary to move ahead with it. Klein was to meet with network presidents in New York later in the week. He shared his concerns with Ehrlichman. First, he was concerned that the networks would use the decision as proof that the Administration was attacking all of broadcasting by hitting a vital economic vein at a time when network income was down following the loss of cigarette advertising. He noted that this could be politically damaging to the Administration.

Second, the reduction of prime time from three and a half hours to three hours had occurred too recently to measure if it was actually beneficial in the creation of more original programming, as intended. Klein argued that this indicated that the public had not yet benefited from “prying time lose” from the networks. Klein felt a decision like

522 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 23 September 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, October, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

this one, already delayed for over a decade, could be put off further, until 1973. “I do not see how we will gain politically, and I do see how we can be seriously hurt with our friends in the media at the local level. It could be a public issue where we are accused of seeking to suppress a free press. Having made the argument here, and seemingly lost, I obviously will carry out the approved decision in my dealing with the networks. (As you can see, I am not arguing the law, but the politics). This, as you know, is my normal policy,” he concluded.⁵²³

At the same time, Klein reached out to Haldeman to request a meeting with the President. He had been asked by Nixon to speak with the network presidents and let them know that the decision was not an attempt to “injure them on a personal basis.” Klein made it clear to Haldeman that he had no intention to argue his view point in front of the President after already having done so to Ehrlichman and the Attorney General. But he wanted to know exactly what the President wanted said so that he could interpret it to the network heads precisely.⁵²⁴ His reluctance clear, Klein followed through on something he clearly felt could be intensely harmful to the Administration.

The clashes between Klein and Colson became even more pronounced. The two offices were not working together well and Klein felt he needed ground rules. “Recently, there has been a steady deterioration of relations between your office and mine which has not been in the President’s best interests. Basically, the problem is a lack of coordination

523 Herbert Klein to John Ehrlichman, 5 October 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, October, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

524 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 5 October 1971; folder Memoranda 1971, October, 1971: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

and, I believe, your unwillingness to cooperate,” he wrote. He noted that Colson would boycott meetings that Klein had invited him to and that he was excluded from meetings that Colson would lead. Klein could feel that Colson was impinging on his territory. “As you are aware, most of the techniques we use – mailings, briefings, calls, TV placement, etc; were originated by me and my staff before you were at the White House,” he continued. Colson had overstepped boundaries and Klein was making it known. Colson had given orders to Klein’s staff to call hostile newspapers following a Presidential announcement using Klein’s name. “I deal with these news people day in and day out. I can’t do this well if you are moving behind my back in each crucial moment... This is injurious to the President,” he scolded. “You know such procedures are not good for effectiveness or morale.” Haldeman received a copy of the memo and wrote his own note to Colson in the margins. “Colson – There is considerable merit in Klein’s case. Please be sure to get together with him promptly to work this out.” He continued his remark on the bottom of the page, “It is very much in your interest to do so.”⁵²⁵

Colson responded. He felt blindsided by Klein’s remarks, though his earlier correspondence with Haldeman would indicate that he was aware of Klein’s concern over his actions. He contended that he knew nothing about meetings that he had apparently “boycotted” and that he thought that whatever issues the two had were in the past. He alluded to a particular project with George Bush that Klein had felt Colson had fumbled. “If there was a communication problem here,” he wrote, “it rests with you and not with

525 Herbert Klein to Charles Colson, 5 November 1971; folder Memoranda Herb Klein, November, 1971: Box 10; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

me.” Colson felt Klein was too possessive of his staff and that he wasn’t willing to work with other offices in the way that he should. “I don’t seem to have this problem with any other office in the White House,” he wrote. “On the few occasions when I have talked to people from the press and they have asked ‘are you taking over Herb Klein’s operation?’ I always say no, downplay my own role and build yours up...By the way, I am not sending a copy of this to Haldeman so he has read your charges but not my answer. I don’t follow that procedure.”⁵²⁶

Colson was injured by Haldeman’s suggestion that there had been considerable merit to Klein’s remarks. “I don’t know whether the state of my morale is of any great concern to anyone, but I have to say that one of the most disheartening things to me is when people get one side of a story and make an instant judgement from it,” the memo began. He assured Haldeman that he would go the extra mile to keep Klein happy but felt that Klein was unhappy, and had been for some time, due to frustrations that had little to do with him. “If I didn’t want badly to keep the peace, I’d let him have it but good,” he wrote. He suggested he had wanted to keep Haldeman out of the bickering between the two. “I, therefore, would never think of presenting to you all the little idiocies that occasionally crop up with Klein, nor would I send you a copy of the kind of memo Herb sent to me. My restraint, however, in doing this prevents you from getting ‘my side of the

⁵²⁶ Charles Colson to Herbert Klein, 8 November 1971; folder Memoranda Herb Klein, November, 1971: Box 10; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

case' on something like this latest Klein memo...I'm not going to waste your time perpetuating the back-biting."⁵²⁷

As 1971 was ending Klein made a concerted effort to reach the President regarding a possible deterioration in the Administration's relationship with the press on the local level. Local news organizations had been friends of the Administration and Nixon had long been more interested in working with local entities. However, issues with decisions that affected the economic lifeblood of those organizations was creating a rift Klein was concerned would be unable to fix. Klein wrote directly to the President on November 8, "I think you should know that because of various general departmental actions in the Government in recent months, there is confusion, and there probably will be injury to our friends at the local level in the broadcast and newspaper industries. This is damaging our relationships. Many or most of these things are contrary to your own philosophy, I believe."

Klein outlined the fallout he was witnessing. First, the FCC gave strong indications of ruling that newspapers may not own TV stations in their cities. Second, newspapers and magazines were hit by increase in postal rates. Third, recent court action upgraded the challenge procedure against local stations and license renewals became instable with the FCC, creating a multitude of other issues. Fourth, the Federal Trade Commission was making moves against advertising, a major source of revenue. Fifth, the antitrust Department of Justice was sending questionnaires to newspapers exempted by

⁵²⁷ Charles Colson to Herbert Klein, 9 November 1971; folder Memoranda Herb Klein, November, 1971: Box 10; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

the Failing Newspaper Act and putting forth a new set of regulations for applicants of the exemption. Finally, Klein was asked, after 11 years of delay, to announce to network presidents that the Justice Department was to take antitrust action against their program production procedures.⁵²⁸ To Klein, it seemed like a perfect storm leading to failed relationships he had worked years to cultivate. Nothing seemed to favor his promise to maintain an open White House. If anything, it was the opposite.

By 1972, Klein's involvement seemingly dwindled significantly as Colson, and Klein's Deputy Director from February 1972 through January 1974, Ken Clawson took on greater roles. Colson advocated for Clawson to take over Klein's responsibilities:

Ken Clawson very much wants to succeed Herb Klein if Klein leaves. Since you are shuffling the bodies around, I simply want to strongly urge that Clawson be put into this spot. Clearly he is the best man we have for it on the White House staff. He is totally loyal and given the right kind of staff, could handle it with great skill. Since you and I are the ones responsible for bringing Ken in, I hope we can follow this through, unless the Klein situation is unsurmountable.⁵²⁹

While Clawson's role began to dwarf Klein's earlier, he would officially assume his title of "director of communications on January 30, 1974. "By 1972, Haldeman was trying to be more dominant," said Klein. An already tense relationship between the two resulted in a significant curtailing of Klein's duties. In fact, when Klein would be asked to do things with which he didn't agree, he would admittedly follow through with the necessary paperwork but then not follow through on the tasks.⁵³⁰

528 Charles Colson to Herbert Klein, 8 November 1971; folder Memoranda Herb Klein, November, 1971: Box 10; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Charles Colson; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

529 Memo, Colson to Malek, 9 November 1972, "Fred Malek/Dan Kingsley," Box 10, CCF, NPMP

530 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

Still, he continued to alert Haldeman to the deteriorating relationship between the Administration and the press. Several situations had occurred that involved newspapers that he felt played very badly, and he had not been consulted. He had been receiving calls from the press who were voicing their deep concern over the way the Administration was handling things and noted considerable resentment was building. On June 14, 1972, he sent a message to Haldeman. “When you and I discussed similar problems some time ago, it was determined that actions dealing with newspapers would be cleared here with me or with Ken Clawson so that we would have all factors of news judgement involved,” he wrote.⁵³¹

In some cases, Haldeman was keeping Klein in the loop, but on an extremely short leash. On October 29, Haldeman sent a memo to Klein ordering him to contact newspaperman John Knight.⁵³² Haldeman wanted Klein to tell Knight how disappointed he was in an editorial he had written. Additionally, Haldeman stated that Nixon felt Klein should make calls to major editors across the country making a point that “we’ve had enough of this kind of thing now, that this Administration has been maligned...”⁵³³ The memo included pages of “Allegations” against the press, followed by exact “Responses.” No longer was Klein in the position of advising the Administration on how to reply to

531 Herbert Klein to H.R. Haldeman, 14 June 1972; folder Memoranda 1972, June, 1972: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

532 John Knight was a newspaper man, publisher and editor. By 1973, Knight’s newspaper chain, Knight Newspapers, included fifteen newspapers. He later co-founded the Knight Foundation with his brother James L. Knight.

533 H.R. Haldeman to Herbert Klein, 29 October 1972; folder Memoranda 1972, October, 1972: Box 2; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

issues with the press, he was now used to push the exact agenda he had worked to change throughout his time in the White House.

After the second term campaign for Nixon's presidency, Haldeman called the meeting right before Klein was set to take a week's vacation with his wife. By this time, there had been a significant rift between Haldeman and Klein. Klein received a call that he should go to Camp David a few days later for a chat. Klein said:

“...I got there and Haldeman met me and said he thought I ought to resign and that, did I want to become the ambassador to Mexico or did I want to head the USIA, but they wanted to have more control over what was happening in the press office. And I said, ‘Well, I don’t feel that way, and I want to hear it from the President if that’s the case.’ And so I talked to the President, and the President was surprised, and he didn’t really ask me one thing or the other. He just talked to me. But I knew then that I was on my way out.”

Klein had planned to leave at that point, but as the Watergate scandal became a larger issue, Haldeman, and others on the staff encouraged him to stay for a bit longer. Klein agreed to stay until perhaps October but he ended up leaving in July. He knew he would leave government, so he made his intentions to resign known early in order to encourage job offers. He received at least 32 upon announcing his intention. In his initial November 10, 1972 letter of resignation, requested by Haldeman to the entire staff, Klein wrote to the President: “I am among the more fortunate, having had a chance to play at least a small part in your plans for 26 years from your earliest days as a Congressman...I submit my resignation at the pleasure of the President.”⁵³⁴

534 Herbert Klein to Richard Nixon, 10 November 1972; folder Memoranda 1972, November, 1972: Box 4; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Herbert Klein; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California

At the start of the new term, Klein discussed a reorganization of his office. He wanted to take what he had learned over the previous four years to bolster the impact that his team could have on press relations. His plans retained the current layout, two offices (his and Ziegler's) both reporting to the President. However, when he was discussing the plan with Ziegler, he noticed Ziegler's discomfort. "I'm not sure what is going to happen, Herb," Ziegler said, "but I want you to know I have nothing to do with it. You may not like the meeting or the President's ideas today, but whatever, I want you to know I am not part of the plan."⁵³⁵ When Klein began to speak to the President himself about the plan, the subject was changed, and Nixon began to speak about cutting staff and reorganizing departments. Haldeman broke the news that the cuts would mean Klein's staff would be smaller and the new plan required he report to Ziegler, not directly to the President. "That meant I had lost the power struggle in which I wanted to strengthen the scope of my office. I was out," Klein wrote. "I considered such a blow a possibility as Haldeman moved, impersonally, to consolidate his power as chief of staff by eliminating some of us he could not control completely."⁵³⁶

Klein would continue to work for the Administration, despite the blow to his plans, but documents provide little on the depth to which he was involved. He traveled, at the request of Nixon, to China and Vietnam with Henry Kissinger, though he was uncertain of whether he truly wanted to with Watergate and his departure looming. Still, he did. He had anticipated, following his return, that his last few months at the White

⁵³⁵ Klein, Herbert G. *Making it perfectly clear*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 380-381

⁵³⁶ Klein, Herbert G. *Making it perfectly clear*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 381

House would stay calm. He again was mistaken. Watergate was now a daily concern and in all headlines. Magruder was questioned by a federal grand jury, John Dean was talking to prosecutors and Haldeman and Ehrlichman were asked to resign. At the behest of Ziegler, Klein decided to stay a little longer. He also aided Alexander Haig, the President, Ziegler and others in an attempt to contain an extremely volatile situation. He advised the President that the best way to regain trust was to fire those on the staff who might have been related to the cover-up in the slightest and to “start a new campaign of openness with the public and the press.”⁵³⁷ According to Klein, the President created a plan with Haig to do just that but that he never executed. Klein and Ziegler then came up with a plan of their own. That plan also died.⁵³⁸

By July, Klein was on his way out and Ziegler asked for one final favor. Haig and Ziegler wanted a summary of what cabinet officers, public opinion makers and Klein’s public relation friends thought about the President’s situation. Klein took on the lofty task, eventually arriving at the conclusion that it seemed as though Nixon’s “Tricky Dick” image was reemerging. Klein also noted that the press was showing clear “anti-Nixon bias,” even going as far as writing, “This is not a time the media can be proud of,” when he noted that the press was going after innocent members of the Administration.⁵³⁹ On June 5, 1973, Klein resigned effective July 1. At no point did the President ask that he stay any longer. “...I was pressured by Haig to stay ‘a little longer,’ which I did, but the

537 Klein, Herbert G. Making it perfectly clear. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 393

538 Klein, Herbert G. Making it perfectly clear. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 394

539 Klein, Herbert G. Making it perfectly clear. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 395

President at the time did not ask me to change my decision to leave eventually. Had he done so, I might have stayed one more year. Fortunately, I did not.”⁵⁴⁰

⁵⁴⁰ Klein, Herbert G. *Making it perfectly clear*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 392

CHAPTER 6

KLEIN IN CONTEXT

Following his resignation from the Nixon White House, Klein returned to the newspaper business. However, he wouldn't fully disconnect from the unraveling of the Administration until years later. Upon his resignation, Klein lamented the position itself. "The difficulty right now is whether or not you can do [the job] with an individual with this much responsibility; I think probably not, and the structure will change some. But, the thing that'll go forth will be the systems we have and the goals we have. It'll be a matter of more people doing it, not all under one person," he said in his exit interview.⁵⁴¹

While a member of the Nixon White House, Klein's contributions were overshadowed by those who were more prominent and less friendly than he toward the media. In fact, Klein is sometimes referred to as "the press man's press secretary" despite never serving in the position under President Nixon. His disconnect on press engagement, particularly from H.R. Haldeman and Charles Colson, pushed him outside the inner circle that basked in attention as presidential aides.

Though he may not have developed lasting relationships with many of those he worked with, praise from his relationships with the press, and even those outside of Nixon's inner circle were not lacking. Klein's efforts to keep the Nixon Administration open did not go unnoticed by his friends in the press. "You have fulfilled a great and demanding role with dignity and graciousness. Everyone who has come in contact with you has nothing but admiration for your integrity and skill," wrote Vice President and

⁵⁴¹ "Exit Interview with Herbert G. Klein." Interview by John R. Nesbitt and Terry W. Good. July 13, 1973.

Editorial Director Emmett Dedmon of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Daily News*, in a personal letter to Klein following the announcement of his departure.⁵⁴² Carl DeBloom, Executive Director of *The Columbus Dispatch*, wrote that he'd miss Klein's "valuable help as a member of the administration over the years."⁵⁴³ Attached to his letter was a copy of the papers' June 27, 1973 editorial on Klein's departure:

Saturday marks the last official day on duty for a most valuable servant in the White House – Herb Klein. Richard Nixon and Mr. Klein have been friends for nearly three decades dating back to the days when Mr. Nixon was running for his first seat in Congress and Mr. Klein was a \$25-a-week newspaper reporter in California... Throughout it all, Mr. Klein has made and kept friends by a simple formula – being open and candid and answering both questions and affronts with an unruffled directness... Watergate may have delayed [Klein's] departure a little but not because the Klein name was tainted. It was not. In fact, he was generally excluded from the heel-clicking clique which preferred its own brusque, domineering approach to Mr. Klein's low-key candor... Mr. Klein served on many occasions as the lonely fireman who doused brush fires created by less astute Nixon aides. It was Herb Klein who could be depended upon to set the record straight... When the Watergate-types began edging Mr. Klein away from the Oval Room he would take to the road, stroll into newspaper offices across the country and tell the story. The mere fact he was greeted with "nice to see you again, Herb" both after and before his visits is evidence he was a Nixon aide who could be believed.⁵⁴⁴

Felix R. MicKnight, co-publisher and editor of the *Dallas Times Herald* expressed his gratitude toward Klein, noting his "magnificent service." *The Herald* printed an editorial on Klein that noted how Klein emerged from the Watergate scandal unscathed.

In the flame and smoke of Watergate the name Herbert Klein has been conspicuously absent. Which surprised absolutely no one in the nation's

542 [Box 54/Folder#5], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

543 [Box 54/Folder#5], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

544 "Valuable Aide Departing." *The Columbus Dispatch* (Columbus), June, 1973.

press...The American press thanks Klein, a man who has been to all the 50 states explaining and interpreting newsworthy functions of government, for his service. Too bad there weren't more Herb Kleins around the White House.⁵⁴⁵

Another of Klein's supporters was Hugh Sidey of *Time* magazine. In his editorial he wrote of Klein, though not without bristling criticism of Nixon's Administration:

...for 27 years [Klein] has been a considerable chunk of Richard Nixon's better nature...He is a rather remarkable story. He was, these last years, abused and downgraded and ignored by Nixon and his supermen and yet he has stayed loyal, kept his honor, and goes off as one of the President's few remaining displays of decency and good humor...When they finally pushed him farther and farther from the Oval Office he hardly complained. He was no saint. Nor was he the best White House aide in all history. But he was an oasis of consideration and sympathy in a Teutonic desert of heel clicks and "Yes, sirs...here was one of the few men around Nixon who gave more than he took."⁵⁴⁶

Sidey's "rival" Howard Flieger of *U.S. News and World Report* wrote to Klein and attached Sidey's editorial. "I absolutely loved this piece," he wrote. "...and I'm not in the habit of saying nice things about the opposition."⁵⁴⁷ To which Klein replied, "Obviously, I deeply appreciate the Sidey piece, but more so, I appreciate both our personal friendship and the continuous good relationship with U.S. News."⁵⁴⁸ *The Denver Post* sent their opinion piece to Klein directly. "We don't know whether anyone [in the White House] really appreciates the quality of the job [Klein] did for the President. But many in the press know and they, at least, will miss him," they printed, of Klein's

545 "A Trusted Servant." *The Dallas Times Herald* (Dallas), June, 1973.

546 Sidey, Hugh. "So Long to Old Herb Klein." *Time*, June 18, 1973.

547 [Box 54/Folder#5], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

548 [Box 54/Folder#5], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

departure.⁵⁴⁹ Some even went as far as to say that had Klein been listened to, the fate of the Nixon Administration may have been different. Joe McCaffrey of the *Evening Star Broadcasting Company* in Washington D.C. wrote to Klein a short two-line letter that read “I have great admiration for you, and I regret you are leaving. Had more people listened to Herb Klein more often things would not be as they are.”⁵⁵⁰ Mims Thomason of *United Press International* wrote to Klein in a similar vein, “In many ways, I hate to see you leave the government, because President Nixon needs you.”⁵⁵¹ Ward L. Quaal of the Tribune Company in Chicago thanked Klein for his service and friendship and wrote in a letter to Klein, “Nixon needed you so very, very much and you never failed him. As I told you, you were a ‘bright spot’ among some people for whom I had very little respect and confidence and that is why I know what you meant to the President all along.”⁵⁵²

Newsmen weren’t the only ones singing Klein’s praise. One significant figure who noted Klein’s unique service was then Representative Gerald Ford who expressed his appreciation for Klein in a tribute on the House floor. Ford later said of Klein, “[Klein] was a long-time very close personal friend...about the only one [around Nixon] that I really felt comfortable with. He was and is an outstanding person.”⁵⁵³ Assistant

549 "Herb Klein Did Communicate." *The Denver Post* (Denver), June 12, 1973.

550 [Box 54/Folder#5], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

551 [Box 54/Folder#6], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

552 [Box 54/Folder#6], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

553 Ford interview, April 7 1989 – as quoted in spin control

Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Jerry Friedheim wrote Klein a handwritten note on June 5, 1973. “Just a note of good wishes for the future...you certainly accomplished much for profession and country and there are lots of us who know that!”⁵⁵⁴

However, Nixon’s critique of Klein is perhaps the opinion most cemented in historical memory. Famously, Nixon was exposed speaking ill of Klein in released White House recordings following Klein’s departure. After the conversation between Nixon and Klein’s adversary Charles Colson where Nixon could be heard saying “Klein just doesn’t have his head screwed on” was released, Klein received a call from Nixon.⁵⁵⁵ Nixon’s Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren would later go on the record to say that Nixon had a great deal of respect for Klein and considered him one of his “closest friends.”⁵⁵⁶ “You can laugh about it...and it can be taken out of context,” said Warren. “But I want you to know it is my firm belief that Herbert Klein understands what is behind it. Herbert Klein has the kind of mind to put that in perspective.”⁵⁵⁷ This seemed to be true. Klein heard about the remark while he was playing golf with friends. A reporter called to inform him of the recorded conversation. Klein dismissed the comment as “locker room” conversation but admitted he was bothered by it. Nixon called Klein four days after resigning and apologized for the comment. Klein stated that he felt it was “one of the more noble things that he did.” Years earlier, in the midst of a tightening

554 [Box 54/Folder#6], Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

555 Transcript of Conversation between the President and H.R. Haldeman, 23 June 1972

556 United Press. "Aide Notes Nixon's 'Affection for Klein.'" San Francisco Chronicle (San Francisco), August 7, 1974.

557 Ibid.

inner circle, Nixon expressed his admiration of Klein in a letter dated November 16, 1972. He started with a sports analogy, a common way of conversing between Nixon and Klein:

You are one of the few who have been active in my campaigns from the very beginning, going back to 1946. As I have often said, we have won some of we have lost some, but batting over 600 in the big leagues is a pretty impressive record. Your campaign efforts were outstanding in every respect. The work that you did in enlisting the support of newspaper editors and publishers throughout the country probably has never been equaled in the past and will never be surpassed in the future. In addition, your speeches and your television appearances probably made more news more often than any of our surrogates, which is a tribute to your great understanding of how to get across a point in a way the papers or radio or television will pick up. Incidentally, while the last campaign was undoubtedly the best, the first was probably the more exciting because the thrill that comes from winning the first time out can never be exceeded.⁵⁵⁸

Klein saw Nixon frequently following the President's resignation in 1974. Klein visited Nixon "quite often," often relaxing into the old dynamic they had perfected in the small coffee shops of Southern California when Nixon was campaigning as a young politician. "I think he enjoyed the fact that, part of our friendship was always talking about sports, so we'd talk about sports quite a bit when we were together any time...I wanted to talk to him about the Middle East; we had to talk about sports for about 20 minutes. That was the way he was," said Klein.⁵⁵⁹

558 Box 145/Folder#16, Herbert G. Klein papers, Collection no. 0345, University Archives, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

559 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

Lending a Hand During Watergate: The Frost Interview

Despite being pushed from Nixon's inner circle, Klein was asked to consult on the growing scandal resulting from the Watergate incident.⁵⁶⁰ Klein was in Montreal, Canada when he received a call from Haig requesting that he meet with the President in Key Biscayne, Florida. He had become aware of a rumor that the Administration was hoping he would return to handle Watergate. But after starting his position at Metromedia and considering his previous challenges, Klein had little desire to return. After fielding calls from several people, including Leonard Garment,⁵⁶¹ Klein flew to Key Biscayne, feeling a great deal of pressure from Haig and Ziegler to rejoin the Administration and to handle the Watergate fallout.⁵⁶²

Credibility was lost and Ziegler's diminishing control over the press, as his relationship with Nixon, became more tumultuous. Klein had long been tasked with fixing the Nixon "credibility gap" and a return to the role under the circumstances would not have been unusual. However, he resisted any return citing an obligation to his new position at Metromedia and to his family. Still, when Nixon asked, "I know you got a new job and what do you think?" Klein responded, "I think it would be a real hardship on me. I don't like to tell you no because I've never said no to something you've asked me

560 1972 Scandal during Nixon presidency following the break-in at the Democratic National Convention Headquarters at Watergate Complex. Ultimately lead to the resignation of President Nixon and indictment of 69 people.

561 Garment served as Special Counsel to Nixon for the last two years of his presidency.

562 "Oral History with Herbert Klein." Interview by Timothy Naftali and David Greenberg. Transcript. February 20, 2007.

to do that I thought was reasonable.”⁵⁶³ Klein recalled that Nixon did not push him further or pressure him to return. He did not directly speak to Klein about the Watergate situation. Klein noted that Nixon never really spoke to anyone directly about Watergate and that even after leaving office, getting him to admit any wrongdoing regarding it was extremely difficult. He did, however, believe that an interview he helped facilitate was perhaps the closest Nixon came to admitting fault.

Klein was involved in arranging Nixon’s interview with David Frost.⁵⁶⁴ “I thought Frost would be tough and whatever he did with Nixon would be believable. And he came close to saying he was wrong, but he didn’t actually say it directly.”⁵⁶⁵ Frost had approached Klein saying that he wanted to interview Nixon. Klein had known Frost for a long time and felt that he could handle the interview honestly. “...he would be a tough questioner, and I knew Dick Nixon was always at his very best, the tougher the questions...” said Klein.⁵⁶⁶ Klein convinced Nixon to take the interview. There had been an immense amount of pressure on Nixon to go on television and admit that he was wrong and an equal amount of reluctance on the part of the Administration. Klein himself discussed the need for Nixon to address the public in this way, just before the interview. The President had told him that he probably would, but made no promises. When asked if Klein felt that the President truly felt he was wrong, Klein responded, “I think he thought

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ David Frost was a British journalist known for television interviews with political figures. Frost conducted the high-profile and now-famous interviews with Nixon who replied to a question on the legality of his actions post-Watergate by saying “well, when the President does it, that means that it’s not illegal.”

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

that Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy had got through with a lot of things. He didn't realize the full force of an antagonistic Congress and a press that was out to get his blood because they had missed the story in the first place. And I don't think he realized the force of that would force him into the position he was in..."⁵⁶⁷ Klein felt as though Nixon thought he'd simply "get away with it all."

Despite what Johnson and Kennedy had "got through," Nixon's was a different type of corruption. Klein felt Nixon didn't fully understand this. "Johnson's people were stealing money, and you had a lot of questions about his broadcast license, other things like that. That's an entirely different thing. When he said, 'I'm not a crook,' he really believed he was not a crook. He didn't steal anybody's money. What he didn't realize was that he was exerting power that he didn't have," said Klein. The Frost interviews would remain one of the most memorable moments of Nixon's legacy and, according to Klein, Nixon himself seemed pleased with the outcome.

Though Klein Struggled, the Press Ultimately Prevailed

In the telling of Herbert Klein's involvement in the Nixon White House and his attempts at promoting an open relationship with the press in a closed Administration, it is important to contextualize Nixon and his Administration's response to dissent. The era in which Nixon's presidency existed was one fraught with protest. From the emergence of the counter-culture to uprising against the Vietnam War, dissenters were a familiar part of the Nixon narrative and the Administration's response to dissenters played heavily into the construction of Nixon's preoccupation with image. Nixon's awareness of the social

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

construction, or deconstruction, of his time provided him insight into the need for a communications apparatus beyond what had existed in the White House prior to his presidency. To Nixon, Herbert Klein and his Office could fill the need to manage information, not merely respond to the press. To Nixon, Klein's operation could manage emerging and progressing opinions that were critical of the President or of his policies.

However, where some narratives suggest that Nixon was unparalleled in his response to those who disagreed with him, this researcher suggests that the American political response to dissent, particularly in times of war, has long been contentious. The Nixon Administration was marred by protest and scandal, largely in part due to his attitude toward the former that planted the seeds for the latter. Immediately before his presidency at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, Nixon established his opinion on dissent stating "...this is the way civilizations begin to die."⁵⁶⁸ In his address to the nation on November 3, 1969, he stated that the threat at home were the dissenters. This was followed however by the moratorium, the largest anti-war movement in U.S. history. It was after this that the Nixon Administration set its sights on the American press.

The summer of 1970 would result in another layer of the Nixon/Dissenter narrative that would parallel the attitudes of administrations before him, but perhaps with far more vigor. After a flood of demonstrations, Nixon suggested that the demonstrators would "serve as the villains, the object against which all our supporters could be rallied,"

⁵⁶⁸ Richard Nixon: "Statement on Campus Disorders.," March 22, 1969. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=1968>.

as Nixon's speechwriter William Safire would recall.⁵⁶⁹ He froze out the press in the invasion of Laos. Nixon's open distaste for dissent and increasing propensity for secrecy within his Administration in light of an already disliked war deeply affected public trust of his Administration. As Stone would suggest, even when the Administration was telling the truth, the public no longer believed. Nixon's low approval rating arguably planted the seeds for Watergate. Nixon, though unique in his own political context, simply added to a long history of aggression toward dissenters.

Providing a historical context by which to evaluate Nixon's responses informs the work presented in this dissertation and as such, is included here. It also adds depth to the understanding of Klein's environment. An aggressive push for managing information likely should not have been a surprise to someone in Klein's position, particularly with his breadth of political experience nor should it be considered entirely out of place considering political response to eras that exhibited similar types of socio-political unrest.

For example, evaluating the Administration's response to the release of the Pentagon Papers as somehow born only from Nixon's distrust of the media or desire for a lack of transparency is both reductive and irresponsible. The Nixon Administration attempted to argue that the release of the Pentagon Papers would do harm to the nation's involvement in the Vietnam War. While some narratives may paint Nixon as being a lone aggressor in this attempt to silence a truth, history tells a very different story. The debate of prior restraint embroiled America's founding fathers. The tactic of prior restraint under the illusion of national security is not a new notion, nor was it at the time of Nixon. James

⁵⁶⁹ William Safire, *Before the fall* (1975), 396.

Madison, following the Sedition Act of 1798 suggested that such a tactic may forever be used in times of war. Madison was a believer that the truth would prevail over error where free discussion was allowed, suggesting that perhaps regardless of the potential harm that could be done, discourse would correct for the error and set everything back on the appropriate course. Jefferson unequivocally believed that the essence of liberty was dependent on the freedom of the press and that the freedom of the press if limited, like through prior restraint, would be lost altogether.

While President Nixon himself *was* particularly distrusting of the press and dissenters, the groundwork that allowed him to operate off this attitude was laid by his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson created a very distinct narrative within the “with us or against us” model that has long been part of the American military lexicon. Johnson argued that even well-meaning protesters could be influenced by Communists. This movement from straight affiliation with Communist organizations to susceptibility to being influenced by Communist mentality fed into a fear narrative that would increasingly become part of the support for suppression of expression in times of war. Johnson relied heavily on the narrative of dissenters of the war as Communist supporters. In fact, when CIA Director Richard Helms submitted a report to Johnson saying that there was no significant evidence that would prove Communist influence on the United States peace movement and that the protests would have occurred regardless of the Communist element, Johnson chose to ignore this, and likewise, so did Nixon.

Nixon's attempts to limit speech were not necessarily unique. Historically, the norm for the United States has always been to limit speech.⁵⁷⁰ In fact, the suggestion that such acts are abhorrent was arguably solidified by the Nixon Administration's attempts. For example, the Nixon Administration was the first to see a very significant move by the courts to secure the First Amendment rights through the *New York Times* case. The case established an important moment for the American public in its perception of the First Amendment and placed emphasis on the responsibility of the Supreme Court to uphold it. The case fortified the public accord that First Amendment rights were perhaps most important to support in times of war, not less.

Nixon's attitude toward dissent is not tangential to the overall narrative of Klein in the White House. It is essential. Removing Nixon from the greater context of United States political and journalistic history and viewing him and his aides as anomalous, skews the assessment of his Administration's historiography and by extension, the study of Klein himself. Klein as a formative figure does not exist without the Nixon's attitude toward press and political dissent. Likewise, Nixon's actions did not occur within a vacuum, devoid of foundations laid by previous administrations.

The Closed White House: Emergence of Secrecy and Skepticism

Klein's primary goal during his time in the Nixon Administration was to maintain an open White House, allowing the press access to the President and access to information pertinent to the informing of the American people. Klein, himself, had

⁵⁷⁰ Stone, Geoffrey R. *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime: From the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism*. New York: Norton, 2005.

reported on politics throughout his career, and fundamentally understood the significance of authentic and transparent communication. The relationships forged between members of the government and the press could, and inevitably would, play an important role in the solidifying of the Administration's legacy. Nixon and his inner circle, independent of Klein, chose to walk a more precarious path.

Following Nixon's tenure as President, the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, the news media was dramatically changed. Nixon's policies and enforcement of strict secrecy within the White House and the freezing out, wiretapping and threatening of the press changed the dynamic in which the press operated. In previous administrations, like that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the press enjoyed more freedom and civil relationships with the White House. Every member of the press knew that Roosevelt suffered from polio, but kept it a secret from the public. Most members of the press were too aware that Kennedy enjoyed some philandering but also kept it a secret.⁵⁷¹ Following Nixon, a distrust and skepticism emerged between the press and the Administration. Future administrations would become more secretive, building on the groundwork laid by Nixon, and the press so too would become more aggressive, ushering in a new era of investigative reporting that sought to uncover similar political scandal and corruption. It is perhaps this larger legacy left by Nixon that provides a fruitful area for researchers of journalism history today.

The significance of Herbert Klein in the origin of this legacy is not to be overlooked. Klein is the very character that personifies the tumultuous relationship of

⁵⁷¹ Small, Melvin. *A companion to Richard M. Nixon*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Richard Nixon and the establishment media. A researcher can follow the thread of Klein's relationship with Nixon throughout his political career and see the parallel narratives of their relationship and Nixon's growing distrust for the major press outlets. Klein's failed efforts to ensure that the press would retain access to the Office of the President mark the beginnings of a more secretive White House and diminishing trust between the Office and the press. More so, Klein's early departure marked the beginning of a series of press men who would prematurely leave the Office of Communications suggesting an inherent and perhaps impossible conflict between protecting a presidential image and producing an open and transparent line of communication with a more aggressive press. Further research into the subsequent holders of Klein's position could shed light on this struggle in the modern American White House.

Emergence of the Propaganda Apparatus

Perhaps of greatest significance is the emergence of the propaganda apparatus during the Nixon Administration. Despite Klein's attempts to establish an open White House, the Administration's preoccupation with image and the perpetuation of that image disallowed it from authentic forms of communication. This was a result of Nixon's insecurities and the moments in his political career that accentuated them. The propaganda apparatus was nonexistent before the Nixon Administration but is now a permanent fixture within the American political system.⁵⁷² As such, a historical reassessment of the legacy of Nixon reveals legacies that are potentially far more reaching than those that are commonly assessed in the telling of Nixon's history.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

Klein's role in the Nixon Administration was constricted largely because of the building of Nixon's "propaganda apparatus." Nixon had desired, as seen through the correspondence of his closest aides, for the media be controlled and managed. Image reigned supreme and facts were used not to illuminate truths, but to support a desired image.⁵⁷³ When Klein pushed against the prioritization of image and proposed reorganization of response to the press to address concerns over a growing credibility gap, Nixon's aides pushed back with fervor. To provide the press with greater access to the President meant that the White House lost control over Nixon's image, something they viewed as uniquely their own. Of course, the press as a representation of the people felt Nixon was, and should be, rightfully theirs. This control of image spilled over into all aspects of the Administration. Nothing was to be seen that could reflect badly on Nixon as a leader and in an era polarized by war and social reform, nothing could be seen at all. Hugh Sidey of *Time* magazine wrote a critique of the Nixon Administration published on March 19, 1971, unabashedly referring to propagandistic tendencies:

The trouble arises, too, from the picture of unrelieved perfection and happiness which comes from the White House propaganda apparatus day after tedious day. The descriptions speak of the President and his men in total control, winning success after success, never doubting or discouraged – this in the face of facts that everybody must live with: unemployment, congressional stalemate, inflation, helicopter losses, pollution and the disintegration of city structures. In this atmosphere of make-believe, larger successes like the very substantial withdrawal in Vietnam are lost from view. Euphoric press-agentry may have been effective 25 years ago, but it is nothing short of poison today...⁵⁷⁴

573 John Calhoun Merrill, *Journalism Ethics: Philosophical Foundations for News Media* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997), 17-20

574 Sidey, Hugh. "Bad News From the Pollsters." *Time*, March 19, 1971.

Nixon's aides were committed to shaping the way in which the press could and would report on Nixon, not to establishing how the Administration would control its image in light of press coverage. Klein was committed to remaining open, building a relationship with the press, and when needed, correcting press inaccuracies. Klein's aim was to provide and respond. His colleagues aim was to control and dismiss. These drastically different aims were inevitably unable to be rectified. For Klein, the manipulation of the press was contrary to his principles as a former newsman. What Klein was unable, or unwilling, to accomplish was creating an agenda against the press built on inaccuracies in reporting or particularly harsh perspectives of the President or the Administration. Later administrations would attempt to accomplish this.

Contemporary parallels have been drawn between the Nixon Administration and the Administration of Donald Trump. While on the surface, both Administrations have exhibited a similar contention toward the press and a technique of aggressively attacking media, distinct differences remain. For one, it is significant to note that the communication apparatus that was set up during the Nixon Administration has since taken on numerous forms and is unlike the system that Nixon had in place during his presidency. Klein was the first to hold the office of Director of Communications and since his founding of the Office, administrations have built on and modified the responsibilities that it comes with. As such, comparing Klein's role to present-day Directors of Communication within the White House creates some inherent challenges.

Likewise, comparisons between Nixon and Trump are problematic. While obvious assessments are made of their preoccupation with image and the media, their backgrounds, political experience and private versus public persona's differ greatly.

While Nixon was acutely aware of press coverage surrounding him and policies, he was not, by most historical accounts, a ravenous consumer of news. Trump, is largely reported as being the opposite, at times being accused of getting important information straight from broadcast news sources. Trump's preference to use Twitter as a method of communication that bypasses traditional press can be viewed as a parallel to Nixon's use of broadcast media to bypass the mainstream press of his time. However, this comparison is reductive. While Nixon sought to use broadcast media to speak directly to the public, he meticulously prepared for his appearances and his aides regularly discussed the potential for too many appearances to cheapen Nixon's message. Trump's regular and sometimes unedited Tweets intimates a limited degree of preparation, suggesting that image is less of a concern than is pushing forth an agenda. Nixon feared press manipulation arguably to a point of paranoia while Trump seemingly assumes unequivocal press manipulation. Still, on the surface, similarities abound. The handling of Nixon's image by Haldeman, and the veiled, and sometimes not so veiled, threats via memorandum, made against the Eastern Establishment seem to read almost as a first draft of the Trump Administration's public and unabashed battle cry against mainstream news.

However, as mentioned previously, the reality of an administration pushing against the press is not a new one. Nixon was not the first and it is unlikely the current administration will be the last. In fact, it is more likely that current administrations will use the blueprints left from previous administrations to build upon. While outside the scope of this study, a comparison between the Nixon and Trump Administrations as it relates to the Office of Communications may provide insight into the evolution of the Office of Communications. This study remains focused on its founding and the unique

contributions of Herbert Klein. It is possible, however, that had Klein stayed within the Nixon Administration, or had he not been pushed from the inner circle, Nixon's propaganda apparatus would have failed to reach the stature it did. After all, other aides functioned as contributors to an image-making machine and Klein's perspective would likely have served as a balance, keeping the precariously balanced scale from tipping in the disastrous way that it had. This type of speculation, while not easily substantiated, provides worth food for thought and furthers the significance of Klein's exit, as well as his entrance into the Nixon White House.

Klein's office has become a staple not only in the modern White House, but in companies and organizations, largely functioning as public relations mechanisms. Klein was frustrated by the overwhelming responsibility of the new Freedom of Information Act during his tenure, something that is now a staple in the relationship between politicians, the press and the public. Further investigation into the evolution of the Office of Communications in the modern White House would add to the understanding of the lasting legacy of the Nixon Administration in the area of media management and press relations. The varying use of the Office as well as the individuals who followed Klein would provide valuable insight into the ways in which the image of the Presidential office contends with the desire of the public for truth.⁵⁷⁵

575 John Calhoun Merrill, *Journalism Ethics: Philosophical Foundations for News Media* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997), 17-20.

The Challenges of Investigating the Nixon Administration's Media Legacy

Because this dissertation attempts to add to the historiography of Richard Nixon, it necessary to identify the unique challenges of assessing the Nixon presidency. While Klein emerged as a formative figure through the investigation of primary sources dealing with the press, the aides surrounding Klein and Nixon himself immediately and directly impact the relevance of Klein. As such, this study would be remiss if not to address the surrounding context of the Nixon Administration's media legacy.

The presidency of Richard Nixon is perhaps best described as contradictory. Nixon was only as conservative as he was allowed to be and as liberal as he had to be. He was tactful in his domestic policies. Nixon was able to fundamentally disagree with something but, in an election year, support it for the sake of votes.⁵⁷⁶ Nixon himself noted in his memoirs that his personal standpoint on particular issues was less important than his legacy as a whole.⁵⁷⁷

Despite his early years as a politician, support from members of the press elevated his career and notoriety, as a whole, Nixon felt as though the press was ultimately against him. Klein was one of his biggest cheerleaders as a young reporter, elevating and complimenting Nixon whenever the opportunity presented itself. Nixon visited local press outlets and sat with editors, reporters and even toured printing facilities, but where the national press was concerned, Nixon's relationship quickly soured. A particular turning point in Nixon's relationship with the press was after the trial of Alger Hiss.

⁵⁷⁶ Small, Melvin. *A companion to Richard M. Nixon*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

⁵⁷⁷ Nixon, Richard M. *The memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Warner Communications Co., 1978.

Nixon recorded that he felt as though the media had turned on him and that the Eastern Establishment and intellectuals couldn't bear a fight and certainly couldn't bear to lose one.⁵⁷⁸ He suggested that they had established a personal vendetta against him.

The difference in Nixon's relationship between the local press and the Eastern Establishment press is an important distinction. While prevailing narratives commonly suggest that Nixon had a general distaste or hatred for the press, this study focused one of his oldest aides, establishes a slightly different understanding. Nixon did feel strongly about the Eastern Establishment press, but he also felt as though the local press was a strong and necessary tool for reaching his constituency, and perhaps not as savvy as national news organizations in distorting his message. A broad and sweeping suggestion that Nixon hated all media and had a contentious relationship with the press in general would appear to be a gross misrepresentation and colors his actions differently than perhaps is accurate. Klein's work in the Office of Communications provides ample evidence of the efforts Nixon's Administration made to connect and retain relationships with local media, though at times crossing traditional boundaries of a press-politician relationship.

The Pentagon Papers are often discussed in the context of Nixon's relationship with the press. The Pentagon Papers had a significant impact on Nixon's presidency and his goals for reelection. After the release of the papers, Nixon's distaste for the elite and Eastern Establishment was further solidified. Information regarding Vietnam and Nixon's attempt at stopping the information from getting to the public, further painted him as a

⁵⁷⁸ Nixon, Richard M. *Six crises*. New York: Doubleday, 1962.

sinister character. The focus again turned from Nixon's political accomplishments to his attitude toward dissent and what he viewed as personal attacks. Nixon's approval ratings began to sink and concerns over his ability to win a second term emerged. The Committee to Reelect the President (CREEP) more fervently fought to secure the presidency, to infamous ends. Nixon became adamant about freezing out the press, sealing media leaks through the creation of the Plumbers.⁵⁷⁹ He believed his greatest defense was an offense and so his Administration pushed boundaries for what Nixon felt was the greater good, the securing of and success of his policies and the establishment of his rightful political legacy.⁵⁸⁰

The extent to which Nixon disliked and distrusted the media, and broke with Klein was laid bare following the release of the "Nixon Tapes." His anger throughout his term reached a pinnacle during the release of the Pentagon Papers when he stated that he would use whatever means possible to shut down the press, including challenging the *Washington Post's* TV licenses, a move that almost bankrupted the *Post* entirely.

Nixon's resentment and anger toward the media seemed to have gotten the best of him throughout his presidency and his trend of self-victimization and paranoia perhaps put the nail in the coffin of his Administration. Nixon, in his memoirs, exposed his tendency toward self-victimization. The entirety of the introduction of his autobiography carefully documents the number of pages he was forced to "give up" to explain

579 Special Investigations Unit established on July 24, 1971 by Nixon in order to stop the leaking of classified info to the news media. The unit was involved in illegal activities while working for the committee to reelect Nixon (See Watergate).

580 Ibid.

Watergate, not as a duty but because he was defamed and was forced to discuss something that he felt had little significance in light of his overall contributions as an American politician and “peacemaker.” Throughout his life, post-presidency, Nixon downplayed the events of Watergate and what they exposed of his Administration. His biography itself reads as a defense. Mimicking his campaign strategies, his defense is an offense and his offense is putting out his narrative, on his terms and telling Watergate in great detail as a self-sacrificing measure to ensure that the “facts are straight” and that his legacy was secure.

It is significant to note that Nixon’s accomplishments as President were not few. He appeased his liberal counterparts through the development of policies and projects, like the Environmental Protection Agency. Largely considered a liberal move, Nixon noted that he created the EPA only because it allowed him to avoid the implementation of more liberal options. He intended to move the country to the right, and he ultimately did. Domestically, Nixon ended the Selective Service, expanded Social Security benefits to the disabled, increased funding to the arts, reorganized the postal system, and lowered the voting age to 18-years-old. He accomplished significant gains at home but it is perhaps his foreign engagement that provides a richer narrative in the telling of his history. Nixon’s accomplishments in foreign relations during his presidency were striking as well. He ushered in nuclear disarmament with the Soviet Union, opened relations with China,

and created the Nixon Doctrine⁵⁸¹, which would prove to be influential to future administrations.

What makes Nixon's legacy so interesting is not that it is wrought with scandal, secrecy, and intrigue but rather that it is ripe for the taking. Even a major biographer of Nixon's takes different perspectives on how his presidency should be viewed. For the most part, as Stephen Ambrose suggests in his three volume Nixon biography, that Nixon's legacy is filled successes and failures. How he is remembered is determined by what is written of him. Nixon was accurately aware of this. What newspapers wrote of him during his presidency would ultimately reflect what historians wrote of him after his presidency. If historians are to look at his legacy from a domestic perspective, they will note many successes. If they look at his foreign policy, so too are there many indications of movement from the Nixon Administration.

However, if historians are to focus more on Nixon's relationships with the public and with the press, the narrative is far different and the legacy is far more sinister. Nixon himself, as expressed through his memories suggests that that persona is far less important and relevant in his legacy and goes on the defense by presenting the offense that he is, inherently misunderstood and misrepresented. The historiography of Nixon and the media will certainly be built upon, but contributions to the literature may have less of an impact on his legacy than the angle by which the research approaches it. Investigating Nixon's history through the lens of scandal and press manipulation inherently limits the

581 The Nixon Doctrine stated that the United States would assist in the defense of allies but would not come to the aid of all the free nations of the world, signifying that each ally nation was in charge of its own security in general.

scope by which to evaluate a significant time in the history of politics and journalism. While this is unavoidable to some degree, it, as a result, obscures attention from individuals, like Klein, whose contributions to both fields were unique and worthy of scholarly investigation. For all the effort that Nixon made to write and control his own legacy, it is perhaps one of the most uncontrollably and widely contested narratives of a presidential figure.

In his farewell address following his resignation, Nixon suggested that giving in to the hate of one's enemies, letting them know that you hate them as well, will be the end of oneself. This poignant statement suggests that Nixon became aware of the impact of his self-victimization and how it was his attitude toward those who felt hated him that eventually brought forth his end. It was certainly a sentiment that Klein had, in one form or another, preached throughout his relationship with Nixon. This realization, however came too late. Nixon's self-victimization was not one that originated in his tenure in public service. In fact, it was a narrative that began as a child. Coming from a poor family, a working-class father, and two brothers who died of tuberculosis informed a young Nixon's life in ways that were significantly different than perhaps many of his political peers. This also informed his opinions on the "elite" and the Eastern Establishment. He never fully grew out of the awkwardness and self-loathing that plagued him as a child and this subsequently fed into his over analysis of the perception of those around him. Despite all his success, Nixon never truly fit into political life in a way that would allow him to engage in a way that resonated with the masses through a mass medium. Instead, he was far more concerned with the matters of politics than the manner of it. This, combined with his distrust and distaste for the press and those who

dissented against his ideas and policies, would cause him to take opposition far more personally than perhaps warranted.

In the understanding of the Nixon White House, and its media legacy, there is particular importance in the narrative of Herbert Klein. While Klein resigned before Watergate and enjoyed less privilege in the White House in the later years, this investigation into his contributions in the Nixon White House sheds a considerable light on a missing narrative. The role of the Director of Communications, and the origin of this role, is significant. While Klein did not serve as Press Secretary, the reasons are significant to note. Nixon's choice of Ziegler over Klein, and his positioning of Klein are just as informative, if not more so, in how Nixon viewed his relationship with the media. The marginalization of Klein, a longtime friend and confidant of Nixon, should not be mistaken as a lack of importance of Klein. On the contrary, knowing what is known about Nixon's relationship with the media, the removing of Klein from Nixon's inner circle should warrant a great deal of curiosity and motivate further investigation into the man, and the office he created.

While it is true that Klein's influence diminished and that his connection with Nixon weakened as the years went by, it is important to evaluate this alongside the fact that Klein was perhaps Nixon's oldest adviser. From his earliest years in the political scene, Nixon shared his feelings, ideas and frustrations with Klein. From his earliest campaigns, he personally asked for Klein to take sabbaticals from his work as a journalist and help guide his campaign. Though he understood that Klein might be too much like Hagerty, he still made room for Klein in his Administration, even creating a new post for which he would serve as Director. Granted, Nixon had conceivably developed this post to

stifle Klein, he could have so easily eliminated Klein from his team from the start, entirely. This foray into Klein's historical narrative perhaps opens the door for more questions than it answers. However, of great significance is the preliminary investigation of Klein as both long-time friend and White House foe, as well as cursory understanding of the challenges that emerge when Presidential image and journalistic ethics meet in a heavily politicized setting.

Rise of Technology

As discussed in this study, new media technology created a unique challenge for Nixon and his Administration. Nixon was, for lack of a better term, traditional. His political style lacked the youth and vigor of a Kennedy and as such, he was far less prepared for the shift from a traditional newspaper press relationship to a television press relationship. The introduction of immediate commentary following speeches and events was seemingly jarring for the President. Discussion regarding his appearance was unsettling and fed into his growing perception that he was being "picked on." Just as the modern White House deals with the onslaught of social media, Nixon's White House dealt with the heyday of broadcast television news. However, suggestions that Nixon disliked broadcast television are reductive and somewhat misleading. Nixon was aware of the benefit of the medium and its power to influence public opinion. He was determined to learn how to use it to his benefit.

Nixon's first request to Klein following his election was that the Administration find a way to use television to its advantage. Nixon learned that the medium was a powerful tool and that controlling the technology meant he could reach the people

directly. This was something that the press did not allow him to do. It would appear as though Nixon valued television a great deal and sought to use it whenever he best could. As established in this work, Nixon's aides studied the way in which broadcast news functioned, including typical lengths of segments, how stories were slated and audience retention as guidelines to best produce Nixon's communications.

In fact, one of the most iconic moments the media legacy of Nixon was during Nixon's campaign with Eisenhower as his vice-presidential running mate. The press exposed accounts that suggested that Nixon was provided money for living expenses. The stories almost cost him his place on the ticket. Nixon famously gave his "Checkers" speech, and for the first-time, a politician used the new technology of television as a political weapon. His efforts were wildly successful and he would utilize the medium to bypass the press many times. These events would further solidify, in the mind of Nixon, that his enemies were in the press. If Nixon's direct statements to the people were received well in the press, but those edited for news programs and woven with commentary were not, the lesson was clear: the press manipulated what the people would have supported. This notion would elevate a dislike of the industry during his campaigns, to an outright war on its practitioners during his presidency.⁵⁸² This is precisely why Nixon wanted Klein. He needed a veteran reporter to delegitimize the press, and do so in a way that was methodical while using knowledge of its systematic process to create an alternative means of communication with the American public.

⁵⁸² Small, Melvin. *A companion to Richard M. Nixon*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Nixon's reluctance to bypass the press manifested itself in other ways as well. During his presidency, Nixon held the fewest number of press conferences of any president from FDR to Carter and the most number of presidential addresses of any President. He would speak directly to the American people 14 times in the first 19 months in office. This, scholars suggest, brought a whole new meaning to the term "bully pulpit."⁵⁸³ Nixon used Vice President Spiro Agnew as a battering ram against the media. It was Agnew who suggested that the news media was liberal and elitist. The Nixon Administration introduced "liberal-elitist media" into the contemporary political lexicon. It is still a term widely used today. Nixon froze out reporters whenever he could. Few press conferences meant that when the press did have the opportunity to ask the President questions, they often appeared unruly. So few opportunities presented themselves that reporters would fight to have their questions heard. Nixon pointed to this as an example of how the media was boisterous and aggressive towards him. In some cases, Nixon and his Administration would go as far as to wiretap reporters.⁵⁸⁴

Nixon's relationship with the media would further sour after the printing of the Pentagon Papers. Significant on its own, Nixon's attempt at stopping a national newspaper from publishing, was not entirely surprising. While this is commonly focused on, less discussed are the actions taken after an attempted injunction failed. Nixon turned to more subversive methods that proved his prowess in understanding the emerging power of new media technology on the financial stability of the industry. Similar to his

583 Grossman, Michael Baruch., and Martha Joynt. Kumar. *Portraying the president: the White House and the news media*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

584 *Ibid.*

dealings during the controversial Hiss trial, Nixon had the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg, the individual who leaked the Pentagon Papers, searched illegally. To Nixon, Ellsberg represented the typical elite, a Harvard graduate and former employee of the Brookings Institute, and *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* represented the Eastern Establishment. Perfectly packaged, the Pentagon Papers case solidified for Nixon the fact that the press was out to get him.

When news of the Watergate incident hit the papers, Nixon froze out the media.⁵⁸⁵ Nixon, went after the moneymaker of the *Post*, its television stations. FCC investigations were made into the licenses of two of the *Post*'s stations in Florida. The investigations cost the *Post* nearly \$1 million in legal fees and their stocks dropped by 50 percent. Owner Katherine Graham said in her memoir that existence of the *Post* during that time was at stake.⁵⁸⁶ The impact was not on the *Post* alone. Broadcast stations, fearing that their licenses might be terminated or otherwise investigated became less inclined to report on Watergate or the Nixon Administration. Understanding that such FCC investigations could bankrupt the station, attention was turned to other stories. Newspapers faced less of a risk and so continued to report on Watergate and the Nixon Administration.⁵⁸⁷ The "Nixon Tapes" would later reveal the depth of Nixon's disdain for

585 Rather, Dan, and Mickey Herskowitz. *The camera never blinks twice: the further adventures of a television journalist*. Thorndike, Me.: Thorndike Press, 1995.

586 Graham, Katharine. *Personal history*. New York: Knopf, 2001.

587 Small, Melvin. *A companion to Richard M. Nixon*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

the “elitist” press.⁵⁸⁸ Nixon expressed his complete efforts to devastate the media, lest it destroy him.

Conclusion

The aggressive prominence of Nixon’s personal insecurities has long framed historical narratives. However, recent years, and the emergency of new primary sources have shed new light on how others in his Administration influenced, or attempted to influence his decision-making. Individuals like Klein, while often times relegated to the indexes of Nixon’s historical narratives, were not only significant because of their proximity to the President, but because of the circumstances by which they were pushed away from Nixon during his formative years in the White House. As this research documents, Klein’s standing in the Nixon Administration, both as a longstanding fixture in Nixon’s political life and his position as the first ever Director of Communications in the history of American politics, warrants a continued excavation of his historical significance. When further investigating the conflict between truth and image in American politics, Klein and others in his position provide important information on how the historical narratives surrounding the two are influenced by the personalities and attitudes of those at the center.

Following his resignation, Nixon’s farewell speech included perhaps the most poignant statement of his political career. He said that it was the hate for those who show you hate that will eventually destroy you. This was something Nixon had learned too late. His presidency was bookmarked by Klein’s initial promise to the press following his

⁵⁸⁸ Safire, William. *You could look it up: more On language* from William Safire. New York: H. Holt, 1989.

inauguration; that the Administration would be open and accessible, and Nixon's lesson learned; that one should be careful not to let enemies (his in the press) dictate one's legacy. Despite Nixon's long political career and his rather significant domestic and foreign accomplishments, the historiographical legacy of Richard Nixon is relegated to the singular moments that were defined, if not a result, of his adamant fight against those who felt were out to get him. Despite those in the White House like Klein who tried to reframe Nixon's perspective on press coverage, Nixon and his team focused so extensively on negative daily news coverage, feeding into self-victimization. Nixon's long and sometimes contentious political past, and dismissal of Klein's suggestions (as evident during his "last press conference") brought additional scrutiny of Nixon's actions.

While this study focuses primarily on Klein, it is a challenge to provide a historical narrative of Klein and the press without addressing Nixon's personality and personal history. The key players in the Nixon Administration profoundly affected the ways in which Klein could and could not operate. The intense desire for control over Nixon's image inevitably encroached on Klein's ability to allow access and transparency as promised.

The introduction of lesser recognized figures into prevailing historical narratives presents a unique opportunity to fill gaps within existing literature. This preliminary look at the involvement of Herbert Klein accomplishes several things. For one, it sheds necessary light on an individual who had a unique and long-lasting relationship with one of the most controversial politicians in American history. Additionally, it brings attention to the creation of a fixture of American political life, as well as public life, the Office of Communications. Alongside these two important entries into the discussion, Klein's

relationships with those within the Nixon White House present additional avenues of research. In the context of a complex subject like presidential image and press relationships, no singular figure can effectively wield all the power, as Klein himself noted. The President was not entirely in control of the Administration's relationship with the press, nor were Haldeman or Ehrlichman, as traditionally thought. History continuously confirms Ziegler's limited role and Klein's adversary, Charles Colson, despite superseding Klein on various occasions and pushing for a more aggressive relationship with the press, had limited impact as well. The fragmentation of these influences on the overall historiography of the Nixon Administration's relationship with the press is evidence that focus on individuals provides important context to the overall historical narrative.

Klein's involvement in the Administration contributes to the understanding of the challenges newsmen face in political Administrations, naturally, focused on retaining control of image and public trust. The time in which Klein served is significant in light of the strength of broadcast television and the shift from traditional newspaper coverage to a new media that the press, the public and the world of politics were all becoming accustomed to. Not unlike today with social media, broadcast television transformed both literal and figurative conceptions of image. Klein learned to wrestle with an emerging medium that was proving to be immensely powerful and having a lasting impact on public perception. Ultimately, Klein's resignation resulting from his growing discomfort as part of the Administration and his unwillingness to see his Office downsized and placed under the control of Ziegler confirmed the inability for an individual seeking to create an open Nixon Administration to succeed.

For all the complications of the Nixon Administration, the greatest complexities are perhaps the ones that are most assumed but least investigated. Richard Nixon and his relationship with the media have undoubtedly changed the way in which the contemporary administrations operate. Where once a propaganda apparatus did not exist, after Nixon, it is now a permanent fixture in American politics. So too, a press that operated more conventionally as a checks and balance to and in conjunction with the functions of the government, after Nixon, became part of a more skeptical and closed relationship. The reassessment of these two areas of the Nixon White House provides a rich and unique narrative that sheds light on less explored areas of the legacy of one of the most controversial administrations. Herbert Klein stands at the intersection of both. A staunch newsman, a witness and participant in Nixon's long political career situate him at an important crossroads in this historical narrative, one that warrants further research beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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