

Exit Interview  
With  
WILLIAM HENKEL, JR.  
On  
October 1, 1974



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Exit interview with William Henkel, Jr.  
conducted by Terry Good  
in Room 348 of the Old Executive Office Building  
on October 1, 1974

- TG: One of the first questions we like to start off with is some background questions. How was it you came to join the White House staff? You don't have to go into a lot of detail, but generally speaking.
- WH: Very specifically, it was through Steve Bull. Steve and I grew up together in the same hometown, went to high school and college together, and maintained a close association. Steve became a volunteer advanceman in 1968 when the President was elected was asked to join the staff in the spring of 1969. I was a stock broker with Merrill-Lynch in New York. Steve called me and said that a gentleman by the name of Ron Walker was in charge of responsibility of starting up a new advance team, would I be interested in becoming a Presidential advanceman and after about one second of deliberation, I said "yes," and it started from there. So the one reason I came into the White House basically, I mean, direct reason was Steve Bull.
- TG: You had not done anything in the course of the 1968 campaign?
- WH: Nothing to do with the Nixon campaign committee or the White House.
- TG: So that would have been your first official day on the job would have been--
- WH: Actually it was in August of 1970. I came down full time but I think I did my first advance in the fall of 1969 while I was still working for Merrill-Lynch. And then, oh, I made trips to Chicago, I think we did two in New York City, went out to Denver as a volunteer, and in the summer of 1970 Ron had gotten permission to begin hiring a staff and asked me if I would

consider joining full time again. And I had come to that conclusion too, if given the opportunity. I really wanted to get on board and so that officially I started in August of 1970.

TG: During this time that you were doing this as a volunteer in the fall of 1969, how many members of the advance office were there full time at that time? Just Ron Walker?

WH: Just Ron Walker and one secretary.

TG: All the other people were volunteers such as yourself.

WH: That's correct.

TG: Then when you came on officially in August 1970, how many people were on the staff at that time?

WH: While I say officially, interestingly I was put on the Department of Commerce payroll and detailed to the White House. Joining me that summer were Jon Foust, Mike Duval, Dewey Clower and Ron, who was on board, and that's the nucleus of the advance office. All of us were on detail though with the exception of, I believe even Ron was on detail too.

TG: So you five people then were the advance office. Am I right in assuming Bill, these five people made up the advance office staff from that point on, pretty much through the 1972 campaign and even beyond?

WH: Yeah, Jon Foust left in the Spring of 1972 to go over to the Committee to Re-Elect [Committee for the Re-Election of the President], to take over their advance operation, the surrogate operation. And in the Winter of 1971, I think, Mike Schrauth came on board. And so yes, your question was correct. The nucleus of that office came from the Summer of 1970 through November of 1972 was intact with the exception of Foust and the addition of Schrauth.

TG: Then Ron Walker left approximately when?

WH: Ron basically, officially left I think on January 1, 1973. However, right after the election in 1972 he took an extended vacation overseas, and at the point immediately after the campaign ended, the planning and implementation of the inaugural began and I assumed that responsibility, I think in early or mid November, Ron--or right after he got back, learned that he had been designated. They wanted him to become Director of National Park Service, so officially I took over, as you know, as head of the office in January of 1973. But in practice and reality I was functioning in the Chief Advancement role since November 7 or 8<sup>th</sup> of 1972.

TG: Okay, during the period of time from August 1970 until November 1972--we've got the names of the people who were here. Could you very generally give me an idea of how it was organized--how responsibility was assigned to each one of you? Was it divided up on geographical areas that you wanted assigned to that, or--

WH: Basically we all came on board in 1970. We all had about a commensurate level of experience--Mike, Dewey, Jon Foust, and myself--so that it was a matter of Ron bringing us up to speed, you know, giving us increasingly responsibility to do an actual advance. Throughout that period we were in the act of recruiting, you know, program--soliciting additional volunteers. The essence of the advance office has always been the volunteers as it is today. So responsibility or assignment to a specific stop was really dictated by really where you were last week, were you available--it depended on the schedule. I don't think there was ever--none of us got into a specific area of expertise. We didn't--I wasn't assigned stops because I was an expert at, you know, indoor rallies versus outdoor. It was

just sort of a chronological process of availability. I think Ron viewed all of us as equal in talent and that's how assignments were basically made during that period. In 1971 from quote "Lead Advancement," we assumed a title and a role of quote "Senior Advancement," with the idea that one of the three or four of us could handle it. Say we were doing a multiple stop, we would put volunteers in charge of--let's say we were going to do a three state or a three stop visit on a given day. One of us would become the Senior Advanceman and would have overall responsibility and work with the next reporting link up from the individual volunteers and advancemen in the stop and in essence we became an extension of Ron, diffusing some of his responsibility. And this was in anticipation of a potential very active 1972 campaign. Back in 1971, I would say a lot of this was due to the genius of Ron, who was a good long term planner. And it was his concept that we had to be prepared for a potential massive re-election campaign with a high level, presidential outside public appearances. And he started in 1971 diffusing some of his responsibilities so that each of us could assume a much more responsible role and administer multiple stops.

TG: So each of you advance people coming on essentially with some background, some experience as volunteers of 1968, were given increasing responsibility on the job, in training in effect, and you were all of equal rank. And Ron viewed you in that fashion so there wasn't any hierarchy to speak of and the assignments would come just whoever happened to be available. You might get this stop and Mike Duval might get the next one and Dewey Clower might get the next one.

WH: I think it is correct to say that there was some in that

beginning period rotational aspect too, if there was any logic to it, it wasn't random, it was, you know, in that spirit of trying to increase each of our experiences. If in fact I had done the last advance, it would be logical that I wouldn't do the next, so it was on a rotational basis. Ironically, there weren't too many quiet periods. During this period it was after the 1970 campaign, the President [had] done an extremely aggressive campaign in the 1970 congressional election, and between that and early November, and I guess really into the late winter of 1971, there wasn't much travel. It was a quiet period for us. That's about the only one that I can recall.

TG: You mentioned that Ron was a long term planner. Did this imply that you people, or somebody in the White House, would set out the President's travel schedule months in advance so you people would have a long lead time to make preparations for the various stops?

WH: Yeah, basically, of course, it was the responsibility of Dwight Chapin to put together a long range planning calendar. And it has been my experience around the White House that there was always basically a twelve month calendar, while changes were multiple. There was a concept and a rationale to the President's overall schedule, which, you know, we tried to look ahead, so it did afford some opportunity for long term planning.

TG: Excluding any international travel, I'm thinking now only of domestic travel, could you give me an idea of what a sample advance operation might involve from the point where the advance office was told the President is planning on going to this community, what would you do?

WH: Actually, many times, probably one of the critical functions of

the advance office, especially during these periods of not too hectic travel, was again a planning function of the advance office--something we've gotten very little credit for because it was very invisible really. We would do what we called surveys, pre-advance surveys. Many times, again Dwight Chapin would always have pretty good ideas, a concept might develop. If the President wanted to accentuate a given topic or an issue and with nothing more than that, many times he would convey that to Ron to the advance office and it would be our job to conduct intensive investigations into the feasibility of doing stops including physically sending one of us out to some of these areas. I looked at an awful lot of things that were being actively considered internally within the White House that on a basis of my individual recommendations and recommendations of Mike Duval and Dewey were events that never went through because they were impractical--because of the area that someone said there was a great urban renewal project, when in fact when we looked at it, it was a pile of rubble in a corner of a city that has no access, would have been very, very difficult environment to stage a Presidential event. So we did an awful lot of this, and as I say again, our advance office files will show many of these reports and a lot of documentation of material that we brought back of proposed Presidential events that never flew. But in answer to your earlier question, many times we would get an event proposal, we would go out and do the survey, come back with a very positive recommendation and as such would put together a, what we called a "Survey Report," which would indicate a proposed schedule in memorandum form, detailing and document, some of the concept of the event, some of the potential problems, some of the

highlights, some of the things we could do, options for participation. This instrument, many times was the vehicle that [Ronald L.] Ziegler approved. Once a trip was approved, then it was the advance office responsibility to conduct what we called pre-advance. A pre-advance is really the essence and the essential aspect of all advances. This is when a team of experts goes out with the knowledge that the President is going to do the visit and begins making preliminary assessments as to how we are going to do it. This team would include either Ron Walker and as I said on a diminishing basis once when 1971 really started more likely it was either myself or Mike Duval or Dewey Clower which would lead up this pre-advance team. It would include a Senior member of the Secret Service, either Bob Taylor or one of the principal deputies. It would include in most cases General Redman or his deputy who was then the Commander of the White House Communications Agency. It would include one of the President's military aids. Also it would include a representative for Air Force One. Many times if we contemplated using a helicopter, one of the Presidential helicopter pilots would accompany us, and 95% of these pre-advances one of the Presidential doctors always accompanies this team. So what you have is a group of people all with specific areas of responsibility to support, you know, Presidential travel or appearances going out making liaison with the events sponsors, key local contacts. Many times they could be governors, senators, politicians, business leaders, labor leaders--the gamut of individuals. Go out physically inspect the sites, make recommendations--do we use a motorcade versus helicopters and really orchestrate how the trip is going to happen. The key element of the pre-advance is to come back

with a viable proposed schedule, how it is going to happen, and also each of the components making assessments as to what their manpower, logistical and other commitments will have to be to the trip. Usually the pre-advance signals were the start of the advance also. Many times key members of the actual advance team would travel with the pre-advance, that is the lead advancement, lead secret service agent for the trip, the WHCA trip officer. Many times the pre-advance team key elements of it would return to Washington, leaving in place the others to be rapidly joined by their augmented personnel. Many times the pre-advance would perceive the actual advance by a day or two sometimes two or three days. But when you do a pre-advance, it's pretty tantamount to a public announcement. It's pretty hard to convince people that the reason a JetStar or a Convair or some Air Force aircraft in such and such locale, so usually a pre-advance would precede the advance by anywhere from five to seven of the actual event, five to seven days.

TG: How far in advance would the pre-advance survey take place?

WH: Well, there's a question on terms, I probably confused--a survey usually is conducted by a representative of the advance office alone, they could sometimes precede 'em. I did surveys. The President made a highly successful trip to New England or to New Hampshire in the Spring of 1971. I spent a whole week in the Fall looking over New Hampshire for some viable options. And again the Presidential records or papers that the Advance office gave to the Archives will reveal that it was a massive file that I put together in, I think, late 1970--or it might have been in Spring of 1971, I'm not sure of the exact date--in anticipation that New Hampshire, of course, is the first primary state. The rationale was that we wanted to go in

before the actual candidates and the primary itself started. The President was not "going to campaign in New Hampshire," but we wanted to do a New Hampshire event and it was a very, very important thing. Had to be "not a political visit," yet it wanted to have the elements--crowds, good issue--so I spent quite a lot of time up there. So as I say in direct answer to your question, a survey sometimes could be conducted months in advance. Many times, in more normal times, a survey was usually about two weeks from the proposed event date. We come back, as I say, put together the--formulate the concept with that on-site knowledge of ability based on our professional eye to make judgments. Was it a worthwhile trip, was it a good use of the President's time, then during that period of say fourteen days out, talking about norms, to maybe a week before this was the period where the decisions are made. You know, was the trip going to be approved and scheduled for the President. And then ideally, then seven days from the proposed date of that date the pre-advance would go out. And then depending on the complexity of the trip and again many times we know that whether we left the advance in place or members of the advance in place to begin implementation. Or in many cases the pre-advance team would come back, formulate its recommendations, and then send the team out maybe five days ahead. I'd say the average advance throughout this period or my experience in the advance office, anywhere from basically four to seven days, was the actual time--usually devoted to advancing and putting together a Presidential appearance.

TG: How much time might you spend then on any one advance? I guess days for a lack of a better way to define it, perhaps a day on site maybe two visits there actually, right?

WH: Well, again my participation of a--the actual advance normally took--there were advancements and the whole team in place anywhere from four to seven days ahead of the event.

TG: Now that's for that period of time up to the event you would probably be devoting your entire working day to that event?

WH: Absolutely, my experience on advance was in most cases, the day started around seven and basically anywhere from ten, eleven in the evening, with many meals skipped, you know a lot of frenetic activity in between. It was basically, you know, a fourteen to sixteen hour day commitment.

TG: Once on site, you mentioned earlier that you were coordinating and acting as liaison with various local people there. How did they see their role in this, did they see you as one of the invaders coming in, they'll take over the whole show and run it, or did they see you as people who were coming in to work out the schedule that would satisfy them and satisfy the President and everyone would go--

WH: Obviously that's the ideal. In practice we always attempted to maintain the idea that an event was the local people's event, we were here as the experts to--one, principally introduce the President into their event and environment. And two, because of this, you know, this experience, assist them in overall event planning, based on our experience. In practice and reality we ran the show.

TG: I would assume though that the method you employed to so to speak "run the show" was properly done so that you wouldn't alienate them and they came away feeling quite pleased and satisfied.

WH: Absolutely. I mean, there were a couple basic watch words to describe the Presidential advancements. One, this a phrase that

Ron coined and I don't know if you have heard it before is "Presidential Advancemen must have a passion for anonymity." That to us, the greatest accolade could be bestowed on advancemen was if no one knew that the advancemen were ever there. That's a very idealistic, unrealistic objective, but I mean--something that we technically, we worked for was the advancemen was an anonymous thing. We felt very, very strongly about it. It was a tenet of our operating philosophy that the advancemen be an anonymous force, a good phrase, you know. Again, in reality, it didn't always happen this way, but ideally if we, you know, our function could be described as a catalyst. But in a pure sense it really doesn't happen that often.

TG: You mentioned one other person on the White House staff, outside of the pre-advance team that was Dwight Chapin. Were there other members of the White House staff that you would have been in contact with or directly or were most of the communications from the advance office channeled through Ron Walker when he was in charge of it, did you people report to him and he would then in turn take the information request to other people--

WH: There was a, you know, a very almost fixed for years, reporting chain, it went from the advancemen on the road, be it either one of us, one of the full-time advancemen doing an actual advance or event for the President or acting in a senior capacity. Our reporting link was to Ron Walker. Mike Schrauth performed a Herculean function here in the office actually being, we called him "Chief of Staff," but in essence I think a better phrase for him was the "Intown Coordinator" or the "Advance Office Coordinator." But the reporting chain was from

the actual site or the event site to the advance office, to Ron Walker, many times through Mike Schrauth. Ron's chain went from, Ron's memorandum and most of his communication was addressed to [H.R.] Bob Haldeman, via Dwight Chapin.

TG: So by and large then you would not have had much direct contact with other members of the White House staff, outside of those that would participate in some of these team pre-advances.

WH: Right, but again depending on the nature of the visit, many times the individual advancements would work very closely with a representative of the Domestic Council if it was an issue-oriented event, the advance office works quite closely with members of the Congressional Relations staff. We worked, of course, that was Bill Timmons's operation. We worked very closely with Harry Dent, who had during that period, you know, liaison with the Republican National Committee and the politicians. So, in addition, as I say, to the professional associates that we had, you know, the Secret Service, WHCA, the Institutional, we dealt operationally in a very close liaison with, as I say, Congressional Relations, with the political thing. If it was an issue oriented substantive event quite closely with the Domestic council, if it involved a foreign visitor, the NSC [National Security Council], so--no, we worked quite closely with many, many individuals in the White House and other areas omitting critical the advancements probably spend a tremendous amount of time on the telephone and in key contact with speech writers operation providing, you know, local color, nuances, insight into the area. The concept of the advancement was that he was the White House's eyes and ears in that locale and was acting as the President's personal representative. That's a phrase we used a lot, both on the road, with many,

many items uses that publicly and in meetings. I am representing the President. I am the President's personal representative. But as I say, that was another area emphasizing our contact with the speech writing group and throughout a period from I guess really 1971 through to the November 1972 campaign. The advance office worked quite closely with Dick Moore for color items. Many a Presidential activity or--some good thing the President could do with a minimal amount of time, like a telephone recommendation. I can remember a couple that I participated in. A football player out in the state of Washington had broken his neck and died. I put in a telephone recommendation that the President telephone the family, which he did, and then the President incorporated that into a speech that he gave at the airport. Other instances like that where the advancement could pick up on-- because he was reading the local newspapers and one of our jobs was to find out what's happening in that locale and you know, using our judgment. Many times we would convey this information back to the White House, to the Dick Moores, the speech writers, the other people. Many a little side bar trip that we did, were created by the advancement. Again, seeing something that looked appealing and then running it back up the chain, through the Domestic Council, to the issues channel, you know, as I said, there's a lot of aspects of Presidential travel that the advancement really had a good amount of latitude on the road to make recommendations. The ultimate approvals weren't the advancement, but if you were doing your job on any given advance, hopefully you were coming up with a couple of additional proposals for the President's activity, that "would humanize him" and could have, you know, good local impact.

TG: After all the planning you had done and the President was now coming out to the locale, to the site, would you have been the coordinator to see that everything went off according to plan, or would that have been turned over to Ron Walker or Bob Haldeman or Dwight Chapin?

WH: Well, there was a term used throughout that period of a tour director. From beginning of my experience as a volunteer in late 1969 up until somewhere in the spring of 1972, Dwight Chapin was the Tour Director and it was his, he had what I would call operational responsibility for the successful execution of the event. But the actual in reality, there were three, really four people, maybe five on the ground during the Presidential event that had the responsibility for its execution. There was Dwight Chapin, functioning as a tour Director, then you had Ron Walker functioning as the Chief Advanceman. Then you had the actual advancemen who had probably the greatest local knowledge and on site knowledge of what was supposed to happen. And then Steve Bull who, or the Military Aide, who was usually the individual moving the President physically, keying off of the advancemen.

TG: Would these four people then work pretty much together throughout the entire event?

WH: Absolutely, it was, we always worked, if not in eye ball contact, certainly by radio contact, it was a very, you know, tightening--trips didn't change. I mean the environment changed, the events changed, the mechanism for seeing that the President got through the events successfully was that, Chapin, Walker, lead advanceman, or advancemen, Bull, Military Aide.

TG: I understand that there was an advance manual prepared. I'm not sure that I've got the right name but were you at all

involved in writing this up?

WH: Definitely, the original manual, I guess it has its antecedence in back into President Nixon's Vice Presidential days in 1960. That campaign, it was a campaign advancement manual put together in 1968. There was an advancement manual then after the President, again this is principally and I emphasize the phrase, a candidate's manual. Then when Richard Nixon became President the task was given to Ron Walker, or Ron seized it as a means he was going to have to operate by taking the precepts and some of the philosophies of the campaign manual which, you know, a lot of this stuff is really good stuff. And then incorporating it into the Presidency, the mantle of the office, the tremendous logistical assistance that the office of the President receives. A candidate has to worry about sound systems, myriad of technical details that because of the office of the Presidency are accorded to the President as President. So Ron did this, I think in 1969-put together an Advancement Manual incorporating the concepts that evolved over maybe a period of twenty years of campaigning. Richard Nixon's campaigns and then incorporating it with the fact that he is now President, had this support. This quickly became dated and immediately following November 1970 campaign and then again we learned a lot during this period, the advance office had really gotten started in August. Ron had learned a lot in that period from I think probably the summer of 1969 when he started writing that advance manual. You know, a year of experience had developed and a lot of concepts and techniques had been developed. So between November of 1970 until about January of 1971, that was my principle task, was to completely rewrite the Presidential advancement's manual, which I did. And I also

wrote about a 50 page check list trying to synthesize into a chronological flow the various responsibilities of an avuncle, you know, committed to writing to literally a check list with little boxes to check off. You know, "Have I done the following things," or I think a very useful instrument as a training vehicle, but also as a means, you know, even to this day I occasionally look at it.

TG: So it is a, it has continued an application, you say you still look at it on occasion, that's simply because you have memorized it to a point where you don't have to refer back to it.

WH: That's correct and as I say, I completely revised it. In the late fall or early winter of 1970-1971, and in the winter of 1973, we completely re-did it again, in light of practices and philosophies and things that have changed.

TG: Who were the principle revisionists?

WH: Myself and Red Cavaney and frankly right now we are in a situation where we are trying to find the time to revise this manual in light of the change in Presidents.

TG: Would a copy of that, of each one of those revisions be somewhere among the Advance office file and turned over to Central Files?

WH: Yes, I say that I know that we specifically, I know when Louie Gombo, (TG: - Lloyd Gaunt) yeah, Gaunt was here and I know that we at least gave her at least, I think we gave her an earlier version. And I know there is the latest version. I would hope that some of that material is in there. I can't guarantee it, but I know there are copies of the manuals.

TG: That probably would be where we could find out the people that you probably contacted on site whenever you would go there for

one of your surveys that was a question that I was going to ask, you mentioned in trying to get local color and get current on whatever was happening in the local area and the thought crossed my mind that really in order to prepare yourself for that you would have to probably have to check with a number of different people in a locale. It wouldn't simply be the person that was president of the organization that the President was going to speak before but the high school coach, or the mayor--

WH: Absolutely, and again, I think this is something I'm very, very proud of, and I know Ron is. The girls that worked in this office, I think anyone that, who has examined our files will recognize that this office made a concerted effort to file and to keep all pertinent information and we had a very, very good system here. Our philosophy was that we really feel that we had living files, more so than a lot of other people. The president probably went to Chicago ten times during his Presidency. Well, if the President, I learned the President was going to Chicago, one of the first things I would do, I would refer to Chicago files. If I knew we were going to the Conrad Hilton, I know we did an event there in 1972 so our files are replete with contacts. All sorts of materials assisted us in doing that stop, that given stop, but which was collected and kept on the philosophy that it would become a very helpful instrument in the future.

TG: Would there be occasions where you prepared for let's say a Chicago visit next week, you could go back to the Chicago file of the previous visit, pull that material out and file it in a new file that you are preparing for this next Chicago visit? Or would everything remain in the old file, perhaps copy it?

WH: What we would do if there was anything that had pertinence for

upcoming trip we copied, we did keep our files, we tried to keep them quite accurate.

TG: So the material in any one file would be fairly complete and would represent all the documentation that you had accumulated for that particular visit.

WH: Right, no question, that as I mentioned earlier there would be a copy if we had done a survey associated with the trip. It could happen a month before the actual trip, that would be in there. Included in that file the given trip file could be, you know, brochures and information on sites to be visited. Many times we took volumes of photographs of various sites and locales, all that would be in there. And then again all the build up of memorandums, the trip from its inception to its completion, including copies of the Presidential "Thank You" letters are in there. This is something we worked very closely on, our philosophy was too, that the follow up to an advance was very, very important and as such Ronald Elliott since I can remember, we always made carbon copy, one copy on all Presidential "Thank You" letters, they're in there. As a matter of record we normally would have someone from the local area--even though the advancement in most cases had left--send us copies of the local news clippings. These are part of our trip files. So as I say from the very inception to the follow-up and occasionally, again Mort Allin and his operation sometimes there would be follow-up news articles a month later in one of the papers that they were monitoring. Mort was always pretty good about sending up a clipping of that, that would end up in the trip folder, so that our files were based on a trip from its inception to its, you know, its ultimate conclusion.

TG: You mentioned follow-up. Was there a report prepared after the visit by one of the advance people or the person on the scene?

WH: Yes, we in all cases attempted to have what we called a "Trip Report" done. I think these are very interesting, excellent instruments of the advancement's perspective of what happened on the trip, not just what happened during the President's participation but again a build up of his problems, key problems, the solutions, what went right, what went wrong, who was good and who was bad, everything else. Unfortunately I don't think there is a trip report for every trip. It's just one of those things that occasionally when you are really going hot and heavy, if it was something that could wait and many times, I would say we probably about three quarters of the trips that we did, starting really the trip reports is a concept, really didn't develop until probably 1971 but from that period through the campaign I'm sure that there is. There would be a rare instance when there would not be a "Trip Report."

TG: Well, I'm quite impressed with your documentation that you have obviously done on this in addition to the amount of planning and preparations that went into it. Looks like you had every base covered, and well, it's very impressive really. Particularly in light of the fact that there were only four or five of you that were overseeing this whole thing.

WH: Well, that was in the beginning but, of course, the operation expanded rapidly up to 1972 at a point prior or during the campaign of 1972. There were probably eighteen or nineteen people working in the advance operation, again most of them not being on the government payroll but being on the Committee to Re-Elect payroll. Many of these individuals that we had took

leaves of absence starting in the summer. In July of 1972 and going through the election, there were at least five or six men that came on board that way. In 1972 we had detailed to us quite a few people from various agencies. Actually at its height there were, including secretaries, I think eighteen or nineteen people directly working in the Advance office, for the Advance office on a full-time basis.

TG: Just to get a rough idea of the number of clerical versus professional, this number included secretaries, how many secretaries approximately?

WH: I think at our peak we had six.

TG: Six, so you are talking in terms of about twelve or so advance people.

WH: Correct.

TG: For the sake of Women Libbers, were there any females involved in the advance operation--on site?

WH: Nope.

TG: I won't pursue that (laughter). We've talked about domestic advances on the International travel--it is completely different and far more complex operation, I'm sure. Is there any way you might be able to discuss that comparing or contrasting an international trip with a domestic one?

WH: Yeah, I think that--incremental increase in the number of hours spent in an international advance. The lead time was much longer. You are interjecting a component we didn't do on a domestic travel, mainly the State Department and the Embassy which gave you a built-in increase in the level of support. Obviously, you know, you were negotiating with a foreign government as a guest, domestically the clout of the office of the President of the United States got us many places and you

could get things done quite rapidly when you are in a foreign country, you know, you're their guest, their sensitivity, sensibilities, protocol and many ways, some very, very frustrating differences. It was a difficult thing. I think any other full time advancement, who participated in all the internationals, would probably come to that conclusion by orientation. We were used to getting things done rapidly, problem solvers, action orientated, and expecting quick responses and getting things done. On an international advance you would have to shift gears entirely, you had to worry about as I said protocol. The frustrations--from the White House you were still getting the same questions, demands you know, where is the schedule, where is the information, it is very, very difficult to convey back to here that my contact, the Chief of Protocol in Italy, or what may, has that under advisement. And so that was probably one of the most unique things from an advancement's standpoint, it was the complete shifting of gears from, you know, the way of doing things domestically to have to really turn around one hundred and eighty degrees to go into a foreign environment. But I think we succeeded. I think again answering questions on a long time, about, you know, how advancement got things done, the relative posture, as I said he has a passion for anonymity, but also I think one of our key watch words was tact and diplomacy. Obviously, if you could convince someone, this was one of our tenets of our operating procedure, we know in most cases what we wanted to do, if we could have someone else come to that conclusion and feel that it was his idea then that was a supreme compliment to the advancement's tact, diplomacy and negotiating skill.

TG: Were you as the advancement still the lead member of the advance

team in these foreign trips?

WH: Very definitely, and at times that is a good point, that created probably some more friction that did not exist domestically. Interestingly the President's key advance representatives were all quite young men and many times the State Department bureaucracy and the Embassies etc. found this kind of hard to accept. There were other institutional aspects of foreign travel you didn't get domestically that did create some friction but there was no question the Presidential advanceman was the key, ultimately responsible individual for the successful completion of the President's foreign trip. And as I say a very interesting that this has been pointed out numerous times, both to me and to others, I think it was an impressive thing for many governments, many responsible leaders would note that to the President and sometimes to the advancemen and to the ambassadors, how much responsibility was vested in such young men. But as I say again this was an area the Nixon administration that I don't think got quite the recognition, unfortunately the Watergate thing got some, a number of young men that were involved.

TG: Which one of the--or which international trips did you advance, or were there so many that you couldn't--

WH: Where do you want to start? First one I was involved in was in the European trip in September of 1970 shortly after I had come on board and I participated in every subsequent trip.

TG: Alright, that's sufficient. I didn't know if perhaps you had worked several, some of the other guys had worked the others or--

WH: No, we all participated, you know, to some extent, I mean, on that first trip I only was involved in Italy and the sixth

fleet aspect of it.

TG: Then again the documents in the files would show that Bill Henkel was the guy that did this portion.

WH: No question. And I'll say this: it is an interesting area and I know for your records--I think that probably one of the things that we recognize from the inception of the China trip was that some of the material we were collecting, if there was any question, we kept it. And I think our China files probably has an aspect to the President's trip to China that has not been made public and I think will be tremendously interesting to future, it sounds melodramatic, to historians. But as I say it is a very, very interesting aspect to this thing, so much of it was precedent shattering. One thing that we did--we had these telephonic conference calls twice a day and there are tapes of these calls that were made and about a third of them had been, third to a half have been transcribed. And again as I say very interesting narrative as to the problems that are going on.

TG: Will these files have records of the other members of the advance team, let's say the Walker people, the Secret service, the Military Aides, or the doctors offices? I'm sure that they too prepared reports--would a copy of their reports been in those files?

WH: No, some are. There are certain Secret Service reports that were copied on or given copies or were direct to us. But, no the Military, the White House communications, Secret Service--all had formulated and as a matter of policy do put together trip reports as we mentioned but we did not receive copies of them per se. Within the spirit of teamwork and cooperation that the advance office established a--there was a lot of

candor and frankness between these various groups after action, summaries, many times we would have post trip meetings to discuss what went right, what went wrong, not necessarily to ascribe blame for anything but to see how we could do things better in the future and to learn from, you know, mistakes or what went right.

TG: On these surveys, these pre-advance visits, it would seem to me that it would be difficult to, the only verb that comes to mind is to camouflage the real purpose of your visit. Perhaps by the time you went out with this team it was already somewhat well known, that the President was coming in a week or two weeks later, so you really didn't have to--

WH: Normally the pre-advance was conducted simultaneous with or in conjunction with an actual White House Press Office announcement of the President's participation. The survey could be done anonymously. In some cases one on one contact could be made by the advanceman or whoever was going to conduct the survey with the principle event sponsor, or organizer, or someone who was known to the White House, who was trusted, so you could expedite the individuals time at the site to get to the, you know, to get the answers. But many times I played also anonymous roles, played reporter, played in order to get in to do a survey of a school I would say I was on a business trip and my family was--I was looking to change jobs, and I was looking around communities and I had I think at the time I had four children. The schools were very important to me and I went in and sat down with the principal, discuss this and got a complete tour of the school and learned what I wanted to about the school and at no time did that individual know in fact I was representing the President and was trying to ascertain

whether the President should come to that event, that proposed event. I've played many a role to do this--to get into areas or locales or factories, hospitals. That was the mark of a good advancement.

TG: I would also assume that what you mentioned earlier the relative youth of the advancement would allow you to gain entrance to various sites without arousing suspicion that you represented the President. I'm sure that it's difficult for some people to believe that a fellow in his early thirties is actually the President's personal representative.

WH: Very true, but as I say again our attitude too was that we had a lot of respect in our own competence and you know if you couldn't convince a person you knew your job, well then, you did have a problem. I can't cite any instances where this did happen.

TG: Well, obviously not - because you people who have worked this long in the advance office, you had to be successful and very confident. Out of all the advances that you did, Bill, is there any one or several that stand out as being the most satisfying or significant?

WH: That's been an often answered question and it's something that I should have a more pat answer to because--some of them were memorable, frankly. Yet I take a lot of pride in the stop that I mentioned earlier, the visit that the President made to New Hampshire. New Hampshire being very jaded in its New England attitude, one. Two because of its unique primary state status. It sees politicians day in and day out. And as I say, I was in many ways charged with the responsibility of trying to come up with a viable presidential event. And I think--I feel an affinity to that one because I was so much a part of it from

the very, very birth and inception to its completion. And it was a tremendously successful visit in terms of the numbers of people and what transpired. I'm very proud of that one. I think the other one sticks out is the President's campaign appearance in Atlanta, Georgia in early October 1972. It was a tremendous amount of pressure on that stop--the President, of course renominated at the convention. It made a perfunctory swing out of Miami to Detroit--the Detroit area--then on to San Diego and then to San Clemente. And basically the campaign strategy was one that the President could best be re-elected by staying in the White House being President. And, of course, Senator McGovern was, you know, in many ways baiting the President: "Come on out and face the people." The polls were extremely strong in the President's favor and the first campaign appearance, the major campaign appearance was designated for Atlanta, Georgia. And, of course, the south was, you know, if any area the President was strongest in--it was the south. And so the pressure was really on to create, you know, massive reaffirmation of the polls and the vehicle and again the surveys, the pre-advance work. Again I had been active in that--was a major campaign parade down Peachtree Street and the President had done an appearance in Atlanta in 1960 and 1968, you know, a major parade down Peachtree Street. So we had the comparative aspects of it, we had all the other things, it was a tremendous amount of pressure to have this one go off right and it was just a monumental parade, I think. So actually those two pictures on my wall there, both indicating the parade and there was a fun aspect to it too in that I think I could write a book. Someday I may on how to organize a confetti drop on a motorcade with the logistics of distributing

seven tons of confetti to approximately, in that case we had about 70 windows which were not selected randomly because of the security aspect of an open window on a motorcade route had to be strongly coordinated with the Secret Service. There were unique aspects to Peachtree Street in terms of the buildings. Many of them were hermetically sealed as many modern buildings are. And as I say I could write a book on my experiences on that. But the upshot was that it was a tremendously successful event and as I say I feel a tremendous amount of pride in that one. Internationally I think they are all pretty memorable. Without question I'd say that the hardest, toughest, most difficult and probably the most rewarding experience I've spent in the entire, my entire, over four years in the Advance office was the President's recent trip to the Middle East and Russia. It was unique from start to finish. It was historic. Not as historic per se as the China trip, but in many ways much more complicated than the China trip in that the decision to make the trip was predicated on Dr. [Henry A.] Kissinger's and the President's success in achieving a disengagement. And that time table got thrown off and we undertook a massive international trip with basically the advance team went out 8 or 7 days ahead of the President and made that whole swing and beat the President back to Salzburg by two hours and then made the trip over again. It was just an incredible story of dedication. I'm not speaking for myself--on behalf of the members of the White House Communications Agency, Secret Service. Everyone just pitched in and literally worked 24 hour days nonstop to, in fact, put together I think probably the most aggressive in terms of number of appearances, number of countries, number of overnights and number of activities in the

entire experience I had in the White House. I was not part of the round the world trip in 1969 which was a difficult trip but as I say again in terms of the number of events, number of countries visited in a period of time, it was unprecedented and it was done in such a short period of time. And then ironically as in Jordan a group of very tired people, who had made this whole mid-east swing twice, greatly due to the President and the Washington party in Amman, Jordan and from there we proceeded to Brussels and then from Brussels into Russia. Made the entire swing through Russia setting that up and then got back to Brussels to meet the President again, with him on the trip again, so in a period of thirty days it was an incredible experience. Over forty thousand miles of air travel and it was, but again, and I suppose we can talk personally on this, I think in many ways it will be a very fine memory to me that this was I think a period for the President, you know, in retrospect and the conclusion of his presidency. I think it was quite historic and I think in many ways highlighted again some of the unique things he did as President on the foreign policy. I'm very, very proud to have taken such an active role in it, so there may be the three areas of my experience that come to mind most rapidly.

TG: Switching to something a little different. From the time that you took over from Ron Walker from an organizational standpoint, did you make any changes in the advance shop?

WH: Basically I watched the whole, you know, operation that had been put up disintegrate--that's probably a bad phrase--but the rationale of the advance office really came into being, I think in 19--you know, Ron had a concept in 1969--in 1970. The President as I alluded to earlier had a very, you know, it was

a late decision based on the successful completion of his European trip in September. And early October of 1970 decided that the time was ripe to try and win the Senate in 1970. And in the 1970 mid-term elections so in very rapid order a--my statistics may be off a little bit--but I think we did a twenty or twenty-one state, 28 appearance campaign swing in less than a little over three weeks. And at the time the number of volunteer advancemen was low because we were just getting started. Full time people were as we detailed came on board in August and by a wing and a prayer we got through that campaign and everyone was a successful appearance. But, you know, it was very strong recognition on the part, I think, of Bob Haldeman more than anyone that we were lucky that the President's appearances had gone well. But if that campaign policy was going to dictate such a campaign in 1972, chances are that it would not be over a three week period but be over a more extended period. And again could be an aggressive campaign that we better start preparing for it, in the leadtime, in training, in advancement because you designate someone as a full volunteer advanceman, realistically you become self sufficient and an operating lead advanceman. Our experience was that you need at least five advances under your belt from your first advance as sort of a trainee observer with a, you know, basically a minimal level of responsibility. And then our training process again was very much on job. Interestingly so, as I said, it will take at least five advances in our mind to become experienced enough to do your own lead. Well, when you are dealing with an individual, who is a private citizen, who basically is taking time away from his business, well, he is taking time away from his business,

you can only hit a guy so often. And then conversely our training mechanism and vehicle was Presidential problems, so it was dictated by that level. So our general experience was that it would take about a year, calendar year, maybe longer, to take a guy, from the time we designated someone as a volunteer advanceman to the point where he could, in a campaign, do a stop on his own, again with guidance from the advance office here, from the senior advanceman. So, as I say that sort of was the rationale. That developed in the Advance office. What happened was, to answer your question, about how the operation changed after my tenure--everything was built up on the premise that didn't come to pass. In the 1972 campaign there were periods in 1971 of domestic travel when we were busy, when we did more stops, had more aggressive travel policy. But we had built this thing in anticipation that there may be a last minute or massive campaign effort. And knowing the problems of bringing guys up to speed, as I say, many of the people that I allude to that were hired by CRP [Committee for the Re-Election of the President] that took leaves-of-absence, were again these private citizens that we identified in 1970 and 1971. But through a process by 1972 they were ready. We had enough leads and some we brought on because, you know, campaign practice laws and ethics and a lot of other things, that they decided to take leaves-of-absence and go on the campaign payroll. Well, when I inherited the operation there was no grand design for a re-election and a lot of people had been around here--Mike Duval, Dewey, myself, a group of us, you know, it was time to move on. I very much did not want this job, my philosophy and desires were that I had an unbelievable experience and a heck of a lot of travel, had done things that I will cherish the

rest of my life. But time had come to look for something else. And, I might bore you on this, but I mean through a whole combination of events, a very persuasive conversation with Bob Haldeman once, I read the handwriting on the wall--that if I wanted to stay in the administration I could best serve in this capacity, and so I accepted it. But the idea being there was not going to be this level of travel, this sustained type of operation that we had built in anticipation of something that never really happened. So there was a dismantle, I was very much in favor of it. I don't consider myself a bureaucrat but if you need one, I am. I wasn't trying to build an empire. I'm not about to try to justify it just to have a payroll, just to have people tripping over each other. Basically the advance office, as it was constituted in November of 1972, was pretty well dismantled by January of 1973, with the exception that there was a full recognition that the advance office, its mission and everything else, would continue as it had for the past few years but on a much reduced level in terms of personnel. When Ron left he took with him two of the secretaries, I kept--at that time we had six. Two of them were basically working for Bill [William R.] Codus in the First Family operation. Of the four girls, who were actually working for the Presidential aspect of the advance office, I kept two. Ron took two with him, Mike Schrauth stayed on for a period of time but with the understanding he would be leaving, he was looking for another job. Dewey Clower stayed on. As a matter of fact, Dewey did stay on in the advance office up until about six months ago. I hired Red Cavaney, so basically what I was left with was, and then, Allan Holsted [Allen C. Hall?]-I ended up with myself, not excluding Mike Schrauth, who was

basically destined to leave, three full time professional people, and two girls.

TG: What are the names of the two secretaries that stayed with you?

WH: At that point it was Sally Brinkerhoff---Nancy Spencer. But Nancy got married and left and we then brought on--Something we are very proud of in the advance office, we haven't had much turnover in girls over the years, they found it pretty fascinating and stayed. And then I hired Peggy Venners, who is with me now, about a year and a half, and there was one other turnover, I can't remember the name right now. Sally only left recently to take a job, as a matter of fact for Jon Foust. So we've all sort of set together. That's another thing, I don't know if you are looking for these but the camaraderie that was developed in this office was remarkable. And it's something I think Ron could be equally be proud of. I am, we all are--this group of diverse individuals, which we were, and I think you know us all, Duval, Clowers, Henkels, really a diverse collection of personalities to come together and work in this sort of pressure cooker--all become close friends and have a lot of deep respect for each other, the abilities and talents. And I can honestly say that I can't remember a time when there was ever any back biting, personality clashes or any inter-office fights. I mean it was just a, it's a monument to something, I don't know what it is.

TG: Was this, I told you earlier I wouldn't ask for opinions or evaluations, but I'll violate that for just this one question. Was the absence of any problems, personality conflicts because you people were personally on the same wavelength so to speak, or was it professionally you all agreed with how an event should be planned and handled, or were there honest

disagreements between you?

WH: Oh yeah, very definitely, all of us had I think by the very nature of being advancement, the operation we had to--I mean, you could not, you had to be thick skinned. I mean--you know if you couldn't take criticism, if you couldn't adjust, there's a very famous--I keep on trying one of the sayings of the Advance office. I think it is a phrase that we adhere to: "you can be allowed one mistake but if you make the same one twice, you're through." There was that type of image, we maintained that with our volunteers and we fully expected that same attitude ourselves. I mean, everyone, we're forgiving, anyone can make a mistake but if you didn't learn from your mistake then, you know that was a severe problem. But if you made that same mistake twice, you know, there is no--this is only the first team. We had a lot of pride in our operation, but as I say--sure we had honest differences of opinion as to how to do things. But I think to go back to your question, too--I think philosophically, I think maybe there was a common threat. I think basically we all tended to be, you know, politically moderate, conservatives. I think we all believed in Richard Nixon, all were basically the same age, there were a lot of things I suppose in many ways were common about us.

TG: But you were diverse in terms of your background and experience.

WH: Absolutely, absolutely--personalities, you know, no question. Yet it all got so melted together and it worked very, very successfully and it was something, I think it was a source of pride that we all have. We worked so well together and you know besides just professional respect, you know, and really built some friendships.

TG: I've taken up far more of your time, Bill, than I promised and I'm embarrassed about that. I believe I've covered all the questions except one and that is: Do you have any sort of a permanent mailing address that we can contact you through and let's say five years, ten years? Now some people give names of their parents, their in-laws, their alumni associations, in case of lawyers--bar associations. You mentioned you were a stock broker, I don't know if there is any sort of association or organization that you might continue to be affiliated with that would have your address.

WH: That's interesting, you know--

TG: Your alumni association--

WH: Yeah again that's probably, I'm trying to think, I can give you that--both of my parents are elderly, my father is ill, my wife's parents you know again they're not.

TG: Well, we all face that same problem, I think and that's why we--if the only address that comes to mind is parents or in-laws, we try to get at least one other one.

WH: Yeah, I would--well I'm not that good an alumnus though.

TG: Most of us aren't, but they still continue to hound us.

WH: Sure. St. Lawrence University, Alumni Association, I think it is, Canton, New York.

TG: Do you have brothers or sisters?

WH: No, my sister died recently. No other brothers or sisters.

TG: Your wife's brothers or sisters.

WH: Yeah, but I don't have his address. I'll have to get back with you on that.

TG: Well--

WH: I think I know one way you can keep track of me and Steve is that he and I will know where each other is.

TG: Alright, that's fair enough.

WH: Steve and I are pretty close. We have maintained a friendship for almost over twenty-five years now and I think Steve will always have historical interest in many ways in the White House and I'll know where Steve is and Steve I think will know where I am.

TG: That's good.

WH: I think - sure I can give you my in-laws' home address but I don't know much longer.

TG: Five years from now--

WH: They're thinking of moving to Florida, in fact they own a house in Florida and they own one in New York, I don't know which one they will settle on.

TG: Well, if you are as close to Steve as you say you are--that's good.

WH: I really think so, I think you know vice versa too. I think either one of us would basically know where the other is and we both went to St. Lawrence too, so they could probably track one of the other of us.

TG: Is there anything that I have failed to cover, I'm embarrassed every time I realize how much time I've spent and I've probably retraced a number of things three or four times, far more than necessary but I have enjoyed this and I think you have been very explicit here in your discussions and your descriptions of the Advance office trips etc., but if there is some area that we have some how or other we have failed to touch on? Do you think it is worth while during this initial interview, fine--if not we can wrap up this.

WH: No, again it has been a large investment in my life and in many ways it has been a frustrating thing, it may or may not be

aware of it if you want to take this off the tape, a lot of us are suffering from the association. I'm being sued, so is Ron, you know, civil rights suits, over alleged activities that transpired while we were advancement. But what I'm trying to get to say is that, you know, I'm enthused about this. What we've done, how we did it, I think it is--again ego is involved in it. But I think the other guys were cheered too, it is an interesting aspect. I think it is--it is one in many ways was uniquely Richard Nixon. Everyone's had advancement but no one brought it to the state of the art that we did and expanded it beyond. When we first got started there was always a phrase and it was within the White House, within the Secret Service, within some of the other entities, you know, they always talked about political advancement and that used to be the role of the advancement. In the Johnson administration and others, the secret service would worry about security, departmentalize, fractionalize, entities, basically, mutually competitive, and it was always felt political advancement, always worry about who shakes hands with the President, and you know the hoopla, few balloons, maybe a few hand painted signs. But, you know, we did that but we did a heck of a lot more. And we institutionalized this thing and put together cohesiveness and unity into a very complex, complicated activity, namely presidential travel. And I think we have our friends, the Secret Service, everyone who came in association with the advance office has come to recognize that. Maybe it's selfish on their part, we're doing a job for them, but as I say we did something and I think it is an accomplishment. I think it is a very tangible accomplishment. They aren't just the events and stuff like that was that, you know, from a one man operation,

Ron Walker, who created it really an entity what I think is going to be perpetuated, I think in a way that's an accomplishment. That's something we're proud of and I think all of us, you know, for your historical records I think down the line there is a lot of insights as some of the documentation, some of our files, you know, reveal things. I think there are a lot of us that have good stories to tell, you know, again unique, very unique happenings--I'm willing to tell 'em.

TG: That's what hopefully we will be able to touch base with you in years to come as we go through the files and say this was particularly significant for this reason or that reason. Let's go back and talk with Henkel and whoever else was involved and get more details. But if I don't get out of here now, you won't let me back in next time.

[END OF CONVERSATION]

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conducted by Terry Good  
in Room 348 of the Old Executive Office Building  
on October 1, 1974

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