

February 12, 1970

Dear Mr. Asman^x; DAVID F.

Belatedly I respond to your December 31 letter and extend my apologies for the delay. In replying to your request, I believe you will more readily understand the cause for the delay.

Let me share with you some reflections that I hope you will find of interest -- reflections on governmental service ranging almost a third of a century, bringing me to close association with two Presidents of the United States, first with President Eisenhower and now with President Nixon.

After receiving a Master's Degree in Political Science, my first taste of political life was during my tenure with the House of Representatives -- first as assistant librarian, then secretary to the late Congressman Wesley Disney, and finally with the Committee on Armed Services. This work, plus my vast experience with the Army, gave me an insight as to my destiny.

What is it like to work in the White House, you might ask? It is incomprehensible to people who have never served at the apex of our government. And working at the White House is different from working anywhere else in the government or for that matter in the private sector.

First, the impact of what one does in the White House. To pick up a phone and call anywhere in the country, instantly opening doors never before attainable, just by saying "The White House is calling." Nowhere else can this be attained.

Second, the scope -- and volume -- of work. Realize that the Presidency is the focal point of all matters of grave national concern, whether international, national security, economic, human well-being or distress, or whatever else may be considered of high importance by our 200 million fellow citizens. Our President is chief of his political party; chief of state, chief executive officer in the United States government; chief public opinion former; chief initiator of legislation.

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As a result one's work in the White House truly knows no bounds. More than this, and again in contrast with work on lower governmental levels, all of these Presidential involvements become amalgamated in the White House, so that one's participation in foreign affairs influences domestic policies; one's involvement in human welfare impinges on domestic policy as well as politics; and one's concern with the national security is bound to influence foreign policy and every aspect of domestic policy.

Such considerations place a high premium on finding Presidential staff assistants who have a rather broad perspective and understanding of the dominant aspects of American life, and a special appreciation of the way the federal system must work.

I mentioned volume. Excepting perhaps the offices of the Senate Majority Leader, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and certain Cabinet offices, The White House is the only point in our government at which the flow of public business never ends. If it's not a drought in the Southwest, it is a hurricane in Mississippi; if it's not a riot on the West Coast, it is a crisis in the Congress; if it's not a war in Asia, it is a problem such as Cuba in the Caribbean -- and I assure you that the political unpredictabilities are certain always to give you electric shocks at any point in this process where you feel like letting down.

Summing it up, the telephone burdens are relentless; the mail burden is insurmountable; the visitors seeking to contact the prime staff assistants are forever more than can be accommodated; and the necessity for staff meetings, gatherings of representatives of the executive departments, Members of Congress, and outside dignitaries from coast to coast are always more than you have time to accommodate.

So our days run about like this: not uncommonly, we begin with a business breakfast between 7:00 and 7:30 a. m. ; there is normally a staff meeting at 8:00 a. m. ; from this one moves into a pattern of movements, and emergency telephone problems and unanticipated crises, interspersed ordinarily by business luncheons of one type or another, that will consume the day until at least 7:00 in the evening. More often than not, you must then proceed to an official function where you are requested to appear not so much because of what you are, but because of the position in the government that you temporarily occupy. Normally you carry your work with you in the evening so that you cannot reasonably expect to put it aside until the vicinity of midnight -- and so one is back up again somewhat before 6:00 a. m. the following morning, back on the same regimen the following day. The interesting aspect of this is not so much that it exists, but that it remains like that,

day in, day out, month in and month out, for as long as you stay in The White House.

From the time you first walk into the building, that first day, you will immediately be faced with ringing telephones, people waiting, mail stacked up and meetings to go to. Never again while you are in this building will there be time to make any changes.

Why should I subject myself to this kind of harassment, you ask? Evidently, for me, it is a great honor, as an American, to work closely with the President of the United States and to be so situated in our free system that his convictions and efforts can perceptibly influence the progress of the American people. The constant sustaining force in The White House for everyone here is the realization that it is a privilege and a distinction to be at The White House, and that it affords an opportunity for productive service to our country.

So as the days move along and as one's energy resources tend to wane, this feeling of service is an automatic recharging device which makes it all not simply bearable, but fulfilling.

This then, are my "bits of personal philosophy", to borrow your words, and, as you can see, I find it most rewarding and most satisfying. It is my firm hope that my meanderings will be of some value to you in your very interesting work. I do appreciate you asking me for advice.

Sincerely,

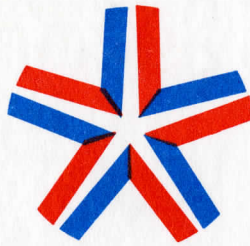
Bryce N. Harlow
Counsellor to the President

Mr. David F. Asman
State Finance Chairman
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BN H:NB:nb

(excerpts taken from BNH speech to Nat'l Secretaries Assn, 11/18/69)

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WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF YOUNG REPUBLICANS

December 31st, 1969

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Arthur J. Zoellner
Madison

STATE FINANCE CHAIRMAN
David F. Asman
Oshkosh

Honorable Bryce N. Harlow
Conselor to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Harlow:

I have just completed reading a New York Times syndicated article about you in The Milwaukee Journal, which I found to be most interesting and informative. And -- I am taking the liberty of writing you at this time with the hope that you might be able to provide me with some information of benefit to me and my work. At your convenience, I would appreciate receiving from you any "tips", bits of personal philosophy, etc. that you have found successful relative to your congressional - legislative relations.

Perhaps, now that I have stated my request, I had better provide you with the "method to my madness" -- i.e. an explanation. In addition to this post, I also serve as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Oshkosh Student Association at Wisconsin State University - Oshkosh and as State Chairman of Legislative Affairs for the United Council of Wisconsin State University Student Governments -- which latter post casts me in the role of the chief lobbyist for the 65,000-plus students within the Wisconsin State Universities System.

I must also add that, although in my early twenties, I have been privileged to have been quite closely associated with government and politics in Wisconsin for quite sometime. Hence, I am both personally and politically acquainted with many state officials and legislators with whom I must deal by virtue of my appointed duties.

Furthermore, I place very great stock in those words of Tolstoi: "The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity." Please don't misunderstand me, I'm not out on any "save the world kick" -- yet these is so very much that should be done, that must be done, in the realm of attempting to impress upon students, my fellow students, a new realization and a new appreciation that one must work within, not without, our political system. In essence, this is my commitment, my "missionary" work, if you will, for the



2. Honorable Bryce N. Harlow
Counselor to the President
continued

time-being. Needless to say -- this isn't at all an easy task as I am sure you can well imagine. As I am sure you know, "students" per se aren't exactly the easiest, most reasonable, group of individuals to deal with. Yet, as I have stated, my commitment stands!

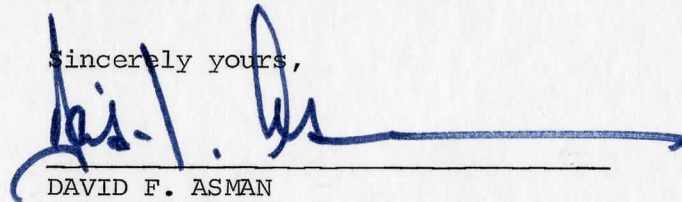
I trust that I have provided you with enough of an explanation of the reasons behind my request found in the first paragraph of this letter.

With respect to students in Wisconsin as well as to student opinions and student viewpoints, if I can ever supply either you or the President with any information, please be advised that I will do so without a moment's hesitation. I know that The White House is often somewhat befuddled by the actions of many students, therefore I have herein stated my willingness and my desire to be of assistance in any manner deemed appropriate at any time.

I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



DAVID F. ASMAN
State Finance Chairman

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