

Exit Interview
With
LYNDON K. (MORT) ALLIN
On
September 4, 1974



**NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
RICHARD NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY**

Exit interview with Lyndon K. (Mort) Allin
conducted by Susan Yowell
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SY: We started this whole thing as a result of listening to other Presidential Libraries saying that if there was any way we could get a very basic statement of individual staff responsibilities, and to the outline of functional organization of the White House staff, it would be invaluable in going through the papers, because all the office files come in and-- yours are a little different because most of your boxes of newspaper clippings speak for themselves. They come in and it's difficult to really place an office in the whole organization pattern and know the chain of command and the inputs for various activities in the White House. We came up with the idea of interviewing parting people. That was the easiest way to get to them when they were leaving the staff, and now we are trying to finish up on people who are leaving the administration. We are trying to get even people who are continuing on with Ford's activities. These will probably get changed drastically. At least the Nixon Library will hopefully have some kind of a starting point to work from, it may stay right here. What we're asking for really, we're trying to avoid anything in official areas of structure policy or whatever. [We're] just trying to get an outline and trying to pinpoint some areas that we think people will want to talk about in more depth in the Oral History Project. This will be equivalent to a background interview where if there are areas that you think should be discussed then we would like for you to mention those, so we can come back to you some day and find out how things worked. In any event we have some basic questions. When--you joined the staff in 1969?

LA: Right, January 24.

SY: Did you work in the campaign?

LA: I was the National Director for Youth for Nixon in the campaign. Started in November 1967 and continued on until 1968. Then after the election was over I worked on the inauguration and was interested in getting a job in the administration, but didn't seem to be getting anywhere. Did some checking around with HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare] and talked with [Patrick] Buchanan, who originally hired me for the Youth for Nixon job, and then on January 23, when I was sort of wrapping up the inaugural committee, they called and asked if I would be interested in working on the News Summary. The other fellow who was working on it at that time, Buchanan, was Tom Huston, and both he and Buchanan were given the joint responsibility for the News Summary along with their speechwriting duties. I think about three days into the administration they realized that they were going to need somebody else who could spend almost full time. In fact, several people spent full time in the news center because it was taking most of their time, and they were unable to do any speechwriting, or memos, or anything else. So Huston knew that I enjoyed newspapers and magazines. All my college and even back into high school and grad school, I had been very interested in the newspapers. In fact, even before I came here I was reading about fifteen magazines a week and I always read four or five newspapers. My grandfather had me reading the Chicago Tribune editorial page when I was about six before I ever read the sports section. So I was a sort of lost cause in that sense from the beginning. And so just, they brought me down here and said, "How would you like to go through these

papers and put together a summary?" I had never had any journalism background, never any journalism courses, never worked on a newspaper, but had always been interested in the newspaper media, current events and politics. Of course, I had always been a strong [Richard] Nixon supporter going back to 1952, so it was just an amazing combination of events that made, you know, a perfect situation.

SY: Had you ever worked on News Summary during the campaign?

LA: No, no. I knew Buchanan and Agnes [Waldron] worked on it. I don't know if you have talked to Agnes, but you ought to, about the whole beginnings of the News Summary. But no, I wasn't familiar with it at all, it was a whole new ballgame.

SY: How did you see the job when you first came into it?

LA: Well, it's sort of hard to remember. I know it was just incredible excitement that--you know, to be working at the White House. I think about within a week or two after I was here, they let me handle the night assignment--the late night assignment as much as possible. And one night we didn't get the summary done until about two o'clock. We usually would take it over to the Oval Office and put it on the President's desk when we were done. And that night, for some reason, he was having a meeting in the morning or something, and so I couldn't go through the West Wing basement. There was some confusion, and I had to go outside the White House and come back in up the front portico there. I think that was probably the first time I really got tremendously psyched up about the whole experience. Going to the White House at two o'clock and giving the News Summary book to the usher to give to the President in the morning. I'll never forget that. At first there was another girl here, I guess she came on in a couple

weeks: Carol Bauman. She was only here, I would say roughly between February and August of 1969. She would come in in the morning around 6:30 and go through the seven or eight morning newspapers that were available that day and write up a three to six page summary of those stories and editorials. At that time, at first we included the New York Times and the [Washington] Post, but then the President was reading and everybody on the staff was. So that was cut out and she would stay until about 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon so that part of the assignment was sort of broken up. She'd take care of the Today Show and I don't think the [?] Star had started yet. But anyway, she took care of all that and that was out of the way. So we didn't have quite the number of assignments that eventually ended up under me. Then she would also work on some of the magazines and newspapers. So, we sort of split it a little bit more at that time. We also did the wires separate from the networks and we'd get the wires done by six o'clock every night. About, oh, it must have been two years into the operation we decided it would be better if we could integrate the wires and the networks and each one of these steps to integrate and to make what we thought was a more readable and useful document. [It] also made it more difficult and time consuming to put together, so I never envisioned all the hours that I would be putting in in the beginning. But I don't think I had any reluctance about it because it was just so great to be working here. In fact there were only--we brought in another fellow Ken Smith, who helped us with the clipping and the filing but at first we were only receiving about fifteen papers. So we did all our own clipping and filing when we were done writing up all the various papers. Then I would say about

a month into the administration, the President suggested that it would be a broader base collection of papers that we get: papers from Phoenix, Dallas, California, the Midwest, rather than just mainly Eastern papers, which we were able to get within twenty-four hours. So once that expanded, we had to get somebody else in here to help with the clipping and filing. That first month or so my wife [Mary Ann Allin] came down. I put her to work in helping with the clipping, just so we could keep our head above water. So we were doing everything then. At that time both Buchanan and Huston worked on the networks, and we split it off where we each take one, or where one guy would take two and another guy would take one. But I would say within about eight months to a year, Buchanan progressively drifted out of the whole area and that left more for me to do. In about a year to sixteen months, Huston began drifting out of the whole area. So we added one or two other people to help out. It was always a little bit more difficult then for me because both Buchanan and Huston had done this kind of stuff before and they were much more familiar with current events and politics and what the President would be interested in than was anybody we could bring in here, far more than I. I guess a lot of the burden, so to speak, sort of began to accumulate about two years into the thing.

SY: When Buchanan and Huston were still here, how much editorial responsibility did they exert on News Summary?

LA: Well at that time, you see, [when] the News Summary first started [it] only went [to] five people when we first began: went to [H.R.] Haldeman, [Ronald] Ziegler, the President, [Herbert] Klein, and I think [Henry] Kissinger, and perhaps [John] Ehrlichman. Then it grew to maybe ten. I don't know

who the next few people were. People like [James] Keogh, maybe Ray [Raymond] Price, and so forth. But at first, it just went to those five people, and even when it went to ten, and to even when it went up to twenty-five, you had more of an opportunity to put in your own interpretation of things. And the President did want that. He wanted to know how things were coming across, and in order to do that with the networks, you sort of had to give--say we really got jumped on here, or as usual [Eric] Sevareid let us have it, or typically [David] Brinkley. We used more of those phrases then than we did once the summary started going fifty, seventy-five, a hundred forty people, because there were many different viewpoints to those 50/75/140 people have, and they didn't always accept some of these comments. And also, it was made available, obviously the possibility of it becoming available to the press, and for them to make an issue about some of this stuff increased tremendously. So, that was cut back. I would say when it began, we used to do it because it was going to less people and because they were, I don't know if opinionated is the right word, but more willing to exercise editorial comments. They were more, and there is no doubt if you compared the News Summaries of the first year and a half to the last year and a half it would be the difference between night and day. It was a briefer document in a way, too, for the first year, because we weren't, the administration wasn't in nearly as many issues. I think it was about August, September, or October of 1969 when everything, you see, we seemed to be getting involved in...it was welfare, the economy, consumers, there was the moratorium, and all that stuff just started picking up. That's when we started getting more issues, and I think the News Summary began

growing in length.

SY: How did you receive guidance on what programming you should include in a News Summary? What were your channels? You said that--

LA: Well, one of the reasons that the President set up the News Summary under Buchanan was he didn't feel that it should be under either Herb Klein or Ron Zeigler. Not because of any personal drawbacks of them, but it would be normal if you were operating out of the press secretary office, doing the News Summary, you would watch more closely what the Press Secretary was saying was getting covered. It would just be human nature, you know, to say, "Well, gee, we really did a good job in giving out that story," and if another story didn't get out it might never be noted. Similarly, in Klein's office, they were in charge of communications and a public relations--getting stuff out. Again, you would be in a situation where you would be, you might be tempted to put in favorable columns, or editorials and drop other ones. Not Klein or Zeigler, but people working for them in their office trying to, you know, the human thing makes things look a little better. So, the President made that arbitrary decision that it should be out of those shops and because Buchanan worked on it during the campaign and even back into 1967, he wanted him to continue to be under his aegis. So, there was a degree of autonomy here that many other people, I don't think had around the White House. That was always something that made it very attractive to me. It was a similar attraction that teaching has had. You can be in the classroom; it's your own ballgame, it's up to you to maintain the kind of standards that you think you should. Now there were obviously, as I already mentioned, one thing the

President wanted a broader range of papers, from the Southwest, the West, and Midwest, and so forth. Either you'd send a memo on that or it came from Haldeman, you know how the Staff Secretary memos work. The other thing: they sometimes--we'd get a memo saying we don't need puff pieces, the President said. "I don't need to see the puff pieces," and then the same way he didn't think he needed to see all the worst crap. It was sort of like we don't need the New York Daily News editorials every day (which were always positive) and we don't need the New York Post editorials every day (which are always negative). Find the stuff that's different, don't just take the stuff you expect to get. So there was that to use as guidance and from time to time, there would be calls from Haldeman's office or from other staff people saying, "Why the hell is this in the News Summary? Do you people really feel this is necessary?" That would be about some event that happened in Pakistan. It was regarded as insignificant, more likely it would be something back here that reflected negatively on the administration. There was very little of that, much less than people would tend to think, because of the myth that exists about the first terms. Just much less generally because of the way people regarded Haldeman as running the White House staff, we didn't have that situation here. But there were times when the phone would ring and say, "Why the hell was this in there?"

SY: Would that come directly to you from Haldeman?

LA: Some come to me, some came to Buchanan. (Snickers) Well, we'll let them--but there were instances of that type.

SY: You mentioned some of this was in the form of written memos. Would that be documented?

LA: Yeah, there would be memos. I don't know if they would be in my files or Buchanan's, but they would all be in the Staff Secretary's files, I'm sure. That's where they were, almost all of them. Some of them would be from Haldeman--Haldeman memos. There were also things, you know, you talk about the editorial judgment. There was a time when Senator [Charles] Percy decided he would look into Chuck Robb for some atrocity in Vietnam--whether Robb had been involved, his platoon, or something like that. Percy suggested the Army look into it for an investigation and he made what I regarded as a rather big deal out of it. In fact, a number of us around the office here, were talking about it and were a little bit taken aback. When it was on the networks that night--Percy saying he was going to route this letter over to the Defense Department, thereby he was blowing the thing up out of proportions, a letter to a constituent saying you ought to look into this. It was at a time when President Nixon was--the whole Vietnam thing was very sensitive, when he was trying to retain close relations with [Lyndon] Johnson and work together and he had made a concerted effort all the time never to criticize Johnson or cause him any grief about Vietnam. Well, that night the networks, at least one network, if not two, ran Percy and it was just a very irritating situation the way it all developed. When we saw on the wires that afternoon, we couldn't believe the way Percy had handled it. After watching it for six hours, you know, on the wires and seeing the stuff on the networks, I think I put something in the summary to the effect, you really, Chuck really raised the flag on this one or some wise comment that really wasn't necessary, but it was accurate. In fact, the next day when we got the call it was, "What the hell do you

people think you are doing?" We had a number of people who were not aware of the situation, watched the clip, and just gave their view of what Percy was doing and everybody thought it was just sort of an asinine move on his part and it was later agreed that that was the case. Anyway, we got a call from Haldeman because the President was quite upset about it and he was ready to have Ziegler make a statement in the press room that Senator Percy, you know, that wouldn't be complimentary to Percy and he called over here and said, "Who the hell said this on the networks?" And I said, "Well, nobody exactly put it that way." So, they said, "Why the hell is it in there that way?" And so he wanted the whole thing watched over and wanted a complete report exactly what it was so there were, you had to be careful about that and we learned from that lesson. I went up to New York that day to see a Cubs game, I think, and I was--Buchanan was furiously typing a memo out in defense of his subordinate over here as I left.

SY: Did someone ever review your input to the Nixon administration? I mean, back in 1969, did they [review] your input before it was exactly typed?

LA: Yeah, Buchanan used to do a lot of the editing. Right, right. When I do the magazine report or when we do the digest comments. I'd say, I don't know when it stopped, but at least for the first six months, they would just go through and edit. It wasn't so much just taking out, there wasn't any taken out ideological stuff. They might take out some stuff they didn't think was all that newsworthy, but generally it would be just to edit it and cut it down. Buchanan was pretty good at slashing things down to the bare bone. So there was some of that and then again, it was one of those things where they just

aid, "Enough of this, Allin." You know, do it yourself and then they just stopped.

SY: Did you get any specific guidance on the type of news, whether you should emphasize political, domestic, foreign affairs, human interest?

LA: Well, we were, we would focus on Administration related stories, and so they could include all across the board, now anything you know would be on--

[INTERRUPTION]

SY: Where were we?

LA: I think we were just done on Chuck Percy.

SY: Oh, we were talking about possible areas.

LA: Oh, okay. We covered any major administration event. That would always be the number one priority. How it was being covered, what was the comment on it, editorials on it, etc. And the next thing we would look for would be new items of interest that were not covered on the wires and the networks and we would find those on byline article by the White House reporters out around in papers around the country. Then there would be focus on First Family. If there was an article on Mrs. [Patricia] Nixon, Julie [Nixon Eisenhower], Tricia [Nixon Cox], whatever. We'd almost always write those up as the President was interested and everybody else was interested. But it was mainly a question of just going through the papers and going through the wires and taking first of all what was newsworthy. Any news judgment would be, and then you would expand on those areas which specifically related to the administration. The more closely the President was identified with it or the White House staff was because that's what everybody around here was working on. Then you would focus in on those in more detail.

SY: Were there any changes in guidelines for the summarization?

LA: Only these intermittent calls, you know, anywhere from every item of six weeks to six months where somebody would suggest is all the crap necessary. "Do you have to have all bad news? Can't you guys ever find anything good?" That kind of stuff.

SY: When a member in your chain of command, so to speak, when Haldeman passes the word on the President's recommendation when another staff member made a suggestion--would that pass back up the line, say if you wanted to do this?

LA: I don't think there were ever that kind of suggestions. No. There were times when, you know, we would suggest to staff people if they saw things in their own hometown paper or papers they saw, or magazines that we didn't see, just route it down and we would be glad to consider for inclusion, just like we did anything else, but we didn't run that back. The only thing that was determined there as far as News Summary was the distribution. That was always Haldeman's shop, who it would go to. We quickly saw the frictions in that area and said, "that's something they can handle." The thing on the Presidential, not the President, but when there would be objections to something in the News Summary, I think it was, you know, a lot of things that Haldeman did were clearly reflections of what the President wanted. Either reflections or my own feelings that sometimes what the President wishes were, were squared or cubed by Haldeman or [Charles] Colson or others who wanted to succeed to the maximum expectations that the President may have, which may explain a lot of things that happened. But anyway, sometimes I think the President would usually see the News Summary first thing before he would even see Haldeman. Haldeman or Ehrlichman or somebody told this to

Teddy [Theodore] White and he said during the whole first, most of the first term the President would always spend about twenty minutes or so going through it and then Haldeman would come in. Haldeman had already read his, and if there was something in the News that Haldeman did not see in his copy, we immediately heard about that because he would go in there and would not have known about it. This happened one or two times, accidentally. There might be some bad stuff in there and I think that probably what happened was that the President would say, "What the hell is going on?" in this area, or "Why is this a problem?" I think more than the President himself saying, "We don't need this crap in here," it was more people who were having to hear about that crap that were inclined to tell us, "You don't necessarily need to include it all." But that happened very, very rarely. I don't think I can emphasize enough that this whole idea of the paranoid palace guard over there protecting the President. On the News Summary, it was just a bunch of nonsense because we could put anything in there, and we did. We had one where Nicholas Von Hoffman up at Yale, we had a Yale Campus Daily, somebody sent in and referred to the President as a turd. It was right in the News Summary. You know, and it was a wicked article, just Hoffman at his worst. Von Hoffman at his worst. But here was a Washington Post guy, you know, a major columnist and we weren't going to find that article in the Post and so we included it in there. And nobody ever protested that. There was some rough stuff on the First Family, there was rough stuff on Haldman, Ehrlichman, everybody. Obviously there was less during the first term than there was during the last year or two, but it was always put there. In fact, if we saw a critical article or column from a

source that would generally be considered to be friendly, we would give it as much, probably more attention, like Jack Kilpatrick. You know when he would be critical, then it would get more attention than say, Joseph Kraft or somebody like that. So there was never any specific restrictions. Nobody ever said, "Don't put any more of that guy in here" or "Don't do any more of that, we don't need it."

SY: Was your emphasis on television, or did you have any really?

LA: No, the real emphasis as far as the basic summary itself would be on television, because that's where, you know, 70% of the public gets most of their information. Furthermore, that was-- the President didn't see television and most of the staff people didn't see more than one network if even one network. There were meetings then, people were with their families or dinner, so you always gave a complete report on television no matter what the story was, how insignificant, you'd at least give it a line or two. Even a Harry Reasoner commentary on the weather, just so people would know what the hell was on, on the networks and in any of the White House reporters. White House reports we always gave that much more careful attention because that was what people here were working on, was concerned about, and that's why those reports were much more detailed. We take the wires as a sort of a supplement to the networks and then we take the out-country papers for supplement in the area of opinion, and things you hadn't caught before.

SY: When you were asked to expand those summaries to include middle America papers, who selected the papers to include or were they just kind of logical?

LA: I think it was pretty much logical. We did about, we went up to about forty papers, I guess, and the most we got was fifty.

Between forty and fifty, and I dare say that thirty-five to forty of them would be on anybody's list of the major papers. Now we got a couple of papers that the normal bird might not bother with: the Manchester Union Leader being William Loeb's paper up in New Hampshire, dominates the state, had a key role to play in Nixon getting nominated in 1968 and a colorful personal journalist that we used to like to follow. So we got him, well, he sent us the thing complimentary anyway, so how could you turn it down? And then we got a paper from Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida, which I think another friend of the President's who lives in Florida, may have had them sent to us, so we would have a little wider viewpoint from down there.

SY: Did you have any from California?

LA: We had from California, we had Long Beach, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, those three. But it would just, it would just come down--I think major papers that anybody would recognize as such.

SY: Was there every any consideration given to the morning press?

LA: We used the USIA [United States Information Agency] three times a week for immediate reaction summary, we included that. We also got from FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service]--which is a State Department operation, I guess--communists' commentary, but generally we didn't use that too often because that's those narrating in NSC [National Security Council] was covering pretty well, I'm sure. Then we would only use the foreign press reaction when it had to do with Presidential news conference or some other major event where all the comments were on, just to get a sampling.

[INTERRUPTION]

SY: I think we got about as far as the fall of 1969, you were

talking about the organization of the staff.

LA: Weak in that whole area.

SY: But continuing with that: any major changes in the organization?

LA: Trying to remember how it all happened, I can't very well.

SY: We had Ken Smith coming in, helping in clipping and filing.

LA: Right. And I guess it was also, it was after Carol Bauman left in August of 1969, ostensibly because they were moving further away, but also because she had, was one of the first conservatives, to have real doubts about the direction of the administration policy. She was especially upset about the welfare program and probably one of the more prescient persons in that area. Because at that time, more conservatives were going right along with everybody else, thinking that that was just a great program. She did an editorial analysis on it, which is somewhat opinionated because it went--it had emphasized the conservatives' objections and she felt very strongly it was a major departure in the wrong way and that was one of the reasons that she left. Leslye Arsht came on in I'd say about a month after that and she was here for two years.

SY: What was her--

LA: She helped in, I guess it was around about that time that I probably became more totally in charge of things, so I'd pick articles and she would write them up and I would do the editing. We worked together on the wires and Ken Smith began-- he was an intern that summer and he began to be included more in some of the preparation summary. His main assignment though was to go through these thirty papers, thirty or forty papers, we were getting every day and pick out articles or columns that he thought that I should see or Buchanan should see for

possibly considering for summary. So he would bring them to my attention. I think probably in 1970 then we brought on Sandra Kiely. I think it was in 1970, I may be wrong, maybe it wasn't until 1971. But Ken had to keep track of all the files and Lynn kept--

[INTERRUPTION]

SY: We constantly have these little interruptions.

LA: Whenever Sandra did come on board, she was the first person we had who could spend full time on the filing and the research and the Xeroxing. We got a lot, a growing number of requests for complete articles because more and more people were getting the News Summary. There were more and more filing areas of topics. As I said, the administration was getting into more and more subjects all the time, so that was always expanding. And there was never any real coordination in the White House of clipping function. As you may know, and we just sort of took it on for the sake of the library, and for my own sake of sanity, as we would have everything here. Then when it was all over the archivist can decide what they want to get rid of.

SY: May I ask, did you have a filing system for clippings in the early part of the administration or was this something just evolved?

LA: It just evolved. Back in the first part of 1969 we only got a few papers. Now, we clipped those articles we used in the News Summary and we may have clipped some others. Generally we just keep the stuff we used in the News Summary. So probably for the first three months of the administration, there's probably not more than a carton or two of clippings. But then after that we just became more systematic once we had Ken in here full time where he could keep these clips. If Buchanan wanted

various speeches he was working on--Huston would want them and some of the other speechwriters would use them--never as much as they could have, but it was not as up to date as it should have been because that wasn't our priority. Once we started keeping the stuff, it just seemed to me that we were the only office receiving that many papers and that we might as well keep it, if we were going through the papers we might as well clip them. So we would mark them and we had a staff of volunteers that Rae Zeeman headed up who handled most of the clippings and it was, they didn't start clipping I guess until late 1970 or 1971. So the girls down in Presidential papers, Jan Schleicher and Bernice [Carter], they did some of the clipping which they did not take to very well. They had been keeping a scrapbook in the Johnson administration and also kept in the first year or so in the Nixon administration. What this boiled down to was just taking full pages of papers and pasting them up. There was no subject organization or anything. It just seemed that if we could get a range of about twenty-five papers and just take the various articles on major subjects and keep them that way, it would probably be more helpful in the long run because you can always go to the, you know, the more inventive paper, like the Post and the Times, which is what they were doing and go through their completed issues if you wanted to. So we got them deferred off the scrapbook and into the clipping area and they got way behind in the clipping area and that's when the volunteers started helping out. But we just sort of took it on because, you know, thought it should be done. There was an indication from Haldeman that it should be done. I think one of the things that may have prompted us probably six months into the administration, people were asking

for articles of the first few weeks. So, you know, we sort of felt we better start keeping this stuff and then it just grew. Many more things in those files than is necessary, the stop by Greece, the subcontinent and everything. But again, every one of those areas, somehow or other we were, you know, the administration policy was tied into. So if at some point in the future somebody has the time, I think they can, you know, get a good sampling of what people were saying about all these different issues at that time.

SY: Probably the newspaper print will out live the--

LA: Well, that's another thing, you know. I think there ought to be real consideration given going through this stuff on the President, First Family, his major news conferences, summits, Xerox all that stuff, because otherwise it won't. A lot of it held up much better than I thought it would. Some of it just wasn't taken very good care of. The first six months Ken would just sort of shove this stuff into a file. When we had volunteers and you are working on these file drawers, there would be students come in for a few hours every week and if the file drawer didn't have enough room in it they just crammed the stuff in there and you would have to constantly say, "look, move it to another file." So I think there are some things that are lost there. But again, it was not our priority project, nobody had really said, "you do it, and be sure it is done right." But I knew nobody else was doing it quite as complete as I felt it should be. Now Agnes did a lot of stuff, but that was primarily oriented to what Zeigler wanted. And she had her own filing system. She's the one who should have been in charge of this whole thing, but nobody could ever seem to quite get it as coordinated as hopefully they will now do

it. But they don't know if they will ever have a library, who knows if they will want any clips. This new fellow who is going to take over the News Summary job--last night when I was talking to him about this whole clipping thing, one of the first things you've got to do is get together with Agnes, Paul Keys, [Robert] Hartman, the rest of them to figure out what in the world they want done with the clippings and about the Ford Library. Some thought has got to be given to it and he said, "Who's going to make this decision," and I thought, "We're leaving." So somebody else has got to decide how they want to do it, so just sort of befuddled there. But you know it's a month now, and stuff starts to pile up, and you lose a lot of stuff that I think should be invaluable as far as the most incredible honeymoon that anybody has ever had.

[INTERRUPTION]

SY: Okay, I think.

LA: I think we are in 1970 or 1971. I don't have-- see, I cannot recall exactly--

SY: We now have Ken Smith, Leslye--

LA: Leslye, and Sam Drucker, well, Rae Zeeman is really the man, [Anne] Higgins and volunteers. We even at one time sent the clippings to Goodwill to have some of their handicapped people work on them, but some of the papers came back in rather incredible conditions so that project had to be dropped.

SY: You marked them and they--

LA: They were all marked. We marked them for Rae and her volunteers too, the elderly ladies to do. But at one point we just got so far behind we thought, "well, we'll try this," you know. Anne had gotten a feeler that they might be interested in helping out. Anne Higgins, and so we sent them out, but as

I say, some of them came back. Some of the young folks got a little bit carried away with their marking, you know. They decided to draw on, so we didn't think that was too good in the long run. But there have been all sorts of different ways to do that. Again, it was just the reflection, it was not the number one priority. Just get it done however you could get it done. Let's see Sandra Kiely, Ken Smith, Leslye Arsht were all here at the same time. Then Ken graduated, shall we say, out of the going through the newspapers area, and began to work full-time in writing and preparing the summary with Leslye and myself. Then we brought in Steve Embry, who was here I guess in 1971 and he worked exclusively on marking papers. Then Jon Hoornstra took over for him in 1972 and Jon's been here doing that for two and a half years. Then Pat Strunk replaced Sandra Kiely in beginning of 1973, and Bruce Winerod replaced Leslye in 1971 and he was here until the election November 1972, he was here a year. Let's see who did we have, that is not true, Bruce Winerod did not replace Leslye, he was an extra person added in about March of 1972 when we just had so much to do.

SY: By that time you would have had four people writing.

LA: Right, right.

SY: You, Leslye Arsht...

LA: Ken Smith, no that would be only three. No, no. Let's see, there was Allen Smith and Arsht in 1970 and 1971, and some of Arsht in 1969. Then it was Winerod, who was brought on in 1972. Sherby McGrath was brought on in 1972 and Ann Graham was brought on in 1972. I think that's about it. We had a staff in size varying from four to six, never more than six and never less than four. Now up until 1970--in the 1970s, Buchanan and Huston helped out somewhat on the networks but then they phased

out of that area. So they helped, it would be Buchanan, Huston and myself and Leslye who were doing most of the writing with some help from Smith.

SY: When you directed the assignments for these people, were they mostly just on the basis of people first came to your shift or were specific people assigned to areas, did one person specialize in domestic --

LA: No, no. We could never specialize by people's interest or their ability because if you were watching the networks, you had fifteen different subjects and there was no way really to press somebody else's button and say, "Hey, Charlie, that's yours." So everybody had to just be a generalist and it was force feeding generally in the area of economy for everybody because everybody is weak in the economy--just like the networks are. And then on the newspapers primarily, there I would go through them and mark the stuff I wanted written up because if you just give everybody ten different newspapers, a lot of the same stuff just keeps turning up--same ideas, same columns--and people end up wasting their time writing up stuff that isn't needed.

SY: Is the peak you made of going through fifty newspapers a day by yourself?

LA: Oh, no. Jon or Steve or Ken were always responsible for doing that. I would mark some sometimes, but generally they were responsible for doing that. What they would do, would give me these piles of single sheets that had articles on them that I should see I would primarily go through, I tried to go through ten papers every day and then I would mark the articles out of those that I wanted written up. Then I would go through the sheets that Steve, Ken, or Jon would bring in and then mark

those articles that we wanted written up.

SY: How much of the writing did you do after you took over the direction of the News Summary?

LA: Well, on the magazines I did most, I would do most of the magazines myself. We did Time, Newsweek and U.S. News as a routine every Monday, along with New Republican and Human Events probably for there years and then we realized, as people had been suggesting, that they read Time and Newsweek and U.S. News, those that were interested in them. So we dropped those and that made it possible to, you know, branch out a little more in the opinion journals when we had time. But there were times when we'd include fifteen different magazines in one magazine report and I used to enjoy doing those. As far as the columns would go, it would just depend on how much there was and how much we were trying to get done. Generally, I would try to mark twenty-five to thirty columns a day. Maybe twenty to thirty columns a day for them to write up and then I'd edit them and put them back in the order I wanted to. Now if somebody was off or somebody was watching a TV show or whatever it was then I would do the writing but that varied. Like on the networks, I'd work at time four nights a week, at times three nights a week, at times two nights a week. It would just depend on the strength of the staff at the time and how we could work it out.

SY: So all of you would have been involved in all phases in putting together the News Summary?

LA: Right, right.

SY: With possible exception of your final editing.

LA: Right, with the exception of the editing and with the exception of selection of the articles themselves, on the magazines and

the articles I did almost all the selecting, what was going to be done. Just largely because you had to have a central point, otherwise people would end up writing a lot of the same things somebody else had been doing.

SY: You're supposed to keep track of that many?

LA: Yes.

SY: I know something that will be confusing to someone at first glance that someone did something, the different types of summary you have and I know that it is one of the different stages of having that little label at the top, they used some of your daily digests. Could you try and run through?

LA: Okay, the first two years at least, and then even in the campaign of 1972, Buchanan did a news play in the morning which was a two page sheet. Actually, he began doing this after Carol Bauman left, as I told you, she had been doing that review of the morning papers and that was done at 6:45 every morning and done by 8:00 and put on the President's desk. So that was done the first two to three years and then also during 1972. Later Buchanan, Bauman, or Allen, and that was always a two or three page document sort of a sketchy sort of things sometimes, nothing much to it. Then when we started in 1969 and on into 1970, we did the wires, the networks, the magazines, and the columns all separately. In other words, some days a person could receive four different stapled documents. Well, that was very unusual. Usually there would be two different ones, sometimes three. One would include the wires, the AP, UPI which we would go through and we would mark up the wires rather than rewriting them at first, and that would all be done even before the networks were on. So that would be done at six o'clock. Then we would do the networks

and that would be written up separately and we would do the magazines and that would be done separately. We do the columns and editorials and that would be done separately, and then along in about 1971 we integrated the networks and the wires, made it more readable and got rid of the repetition that was obviously happen when you start the same topic all over again on a different document and tie it together a lot better. Then later in 1971 we began to integrate everything--magazines, columns and everything along with the networks and the wires. So we had one document and that's how some of those babies got up to forty, fifty, even sixty pages in the campaign. That the people included--I think the President for one, thought it would be a lot better to have them separate. So we went back to the separate things, where we had the networks and the wires together and then the comment together. So then people could go through and see what the hard news was and then when they had time, they could look at the comment, so that was the digest of recent comment. I think we have always had that title for digest of comment or something and those were the editorials and bylined articles. The magazine report as such was something we used to do on Mondays for about three years, maybe three and a half, and then when we dropped Time and Newsweek and U.S. News, there wasn't the same urgency to get it done on Monday every week, because they came out Monday morning and that's why we tried to get it done right away. So then the magazine articles could turn up at any time during the week and I suppose for the last two years we haven't had a magazine report as such, we just included the magazine articles with editorials and comments. Maybe when I get back from Europe and I go through all my stuff I can figure out, you know, breaking

points and when things were done as I haven't reviewed on dates I'm in just sort of a fog.

SY: If someone wanted to make certain they had a complete set of News Summaries of all that have been introduced in this office is there any way of really knowing what was, there was no log kept on such and such a day the following items were reviewed--

LA: No, no. I think you've probably got the most complete set with the exception of the very early stuff that I have that I have not gone through and when I get back from Europe, we are going to go through it all. And then we'll take that first three months or so where your files are not complete and compare with what I've got and, you know, maybe do some Xeroxing. I don't think I've got very much if any more but there may be especially in the area of the news piece, because only a couple copies were made of that.

SY: As I recall, it just occurred to me, as I recall from having noticed some of those early recent revises, there were special reports that were done, particularly on--

LA: Right, right. Well, we did special editorial reports where we would take one subject like a news conference, the President's welfare speech, a trade message, something that was getting--a State of the Union speech--something that there was just incredible amount of comment on and within two days after it we tried to have twenty to thirty different editorials and columns, sometimes it would take a little bit longer, like we did one on Romania, when the President went to Romania. It wasn't done until a week to nine days afterwards and yet it was one of those things the President wrote a note back and said it was an excellent job. So there--it was, you never really had to do it then but, you know, you tried to do things as quickly

as you could so they would retain--they would be timely.

SY: Did you receive requests to do these or were they just sort of self-initiated?

LA: Most were self-initiated. It would be very rare--I think we did, you know, there would be times that, you know, we want one on Mrs. Nixon's Latin American trip, but we would have done that anyway. It was just things he wanted to be sure were going to be done. There were far more memos and notes and calls from Haldeman's office, either reflecting the President's wishes or Haldeman's. Probably the first two years much more than there were after that because I think they just grew accustomed to the system we developed and it seemed to be satisfactory, so there was not nearly as much direction in that sense.

SY: I know that you had kind of an informal personal clipping service for various people on the staff and I know you sent our office anything to do with Presidential Libraries, were there any formal services like that for say, the First Lady's staff?

LA: Yes, we sent everything that we would see on the First Lady over there, anything on the first family went to Tommy Stewart and to Helen Smith, actually went to Terry Ivey for them. We would send anything on the staff, you know, staff and Cabinet people out speaking around the country to Haldeman, anything that turned up on people around the country, say [Peter] Flanigan whatever it was. Whenever there was something that we thought directly applied in their area we'd send it to them. Now we didn't do this outside the White House, we didn't send CEA [Council of Economic Advisers] stuff to [Herbert] Stein, although he did receive the News Summary. I don't know if [Paul] McCracken did; I don't think McCracken did. Stein did,

but anyway, that was at the period when it was expanded and I think Stein was at one of those morning meetings when ten of the eleven people there were getting the News Summary. So as was the case of many people and this was when the Summary grew, they said, "How come Charlie has it and I don't?", and that's when it started growing. We mainly, we had material on the speeches, how they were received and we would send that stuff to Price or to Keogh, so we had at times--the page would Xeroxing hundred items, congressional things, Congressmen out speaking around the country, that [William] Timmons wouldn't otherwise see, we would send it over there. Stuff on the Domestic Council, Revenue Sharing would go to Ken Cole or [James] Cavanaugh.

SY: Were you ever asked to do special summary reports for--

LA: No, for other staffs separate? People thought it would be nice sometimes but never, never got off the ground though.

SY: Never taken very seriously. Did you ever do special reports that were given only to the President?

LA: Yes, we did what we called Media Analysis, and I guess we started these maybe in 1970 or 1971. Buchanan did most of this. What we would do--I would go through a week or two weeks of News Summaries and take some notes on common themes that seemed to be cropping up, take a look at some of the major papers and magazines again, augment, and give Buchanan this raft of notes. Then he would go through with his usual surgical cutting and then write a memo up five, six, seven pages on anywhere from three to eight major issues and the way we say them--the trends, how it was developing. Even back in 1969 we did one on the hunger thing, when it was obvious that this was becoming a big issue and the President moved in that

area. I don't know if it was that report that Buchanan did that had anything to do with it but it was becoming a national issue and I think we saw that we could pick up some of these trends. Now over the past, the last media analysis we did was March 11, 1973 and it was not very, a very optimistic one. In fact, in eight areas I think that we mentioned, seven of them were negative, the POWs [prisoners of war] being the only good one. Now that was just before the Watergate thing and we could sort of see what was happening there. As far as editorial comment from a broad range of people who were usually our supporters and it was building then, a week later we asked, "Why don't you guys do another one of those things?" and we just said, "Look, it is so bad there is no point in doing it." And we never did another one after that because there was just nothing else in the last year and a half but Watergate. It was all just a question of how that was being handled. We had written, in fact, in a special report we did after the election. It was about a fifty page job and that was done, not done I don't think until ten days. I think I called it a "Belated Review of the Election Comment" or something but there was another one that the President appreciated and had a note on it but we mentioned in there that this was a summary of, we had a three page summary of the report, the Watergate, you know, in November of 1972 had to be cleared up because it was just growing. You had criticism from the Portland Oregonian to Hugh Sidey, which the Oregonian had always supported Nixon very strongly, but they wanted this thing cleaned up. And that was a constant theme of the post-election comment even then. It has always been a source of regret that people couldn't see how things were building, how bad it was going to be, and how

something just had to be done about it, but nobody ever did. We always had questions from the Press Corps and they always wondered is the Watergate stuff getting in the News Summary, you know, back in June, July, August of 1972, was the President being made aware of it. I don't know how closely he read the News Summary but there are indications that he read it pretty closely during, you know, all through the first term. And AP's [Associated Press] Jules Lowe, who was one of their senior editors, came down and did a review of twenty-five different dates that he himself had picked just to see what the News Summary had. We had everyone of them in there and he said it is all here, there is no problem here. Several others did the same thing, so in that area there was a certain source of pride that we weren't shoving it aside. We had our own Watergate section and all that jazz and we reported it all just as it came, just the action that was forthcoming was not due to success.

SY: How did you handle the press and wires? Was that always cleared through--

LA: No, I got rid of as many of them as possible, that Buchanan handled. That's why even two years after, he wasn't doing a thing on the News Summary. He was still being sent to either one, who did the News Summary, just because he knew these guys a lot better and he was sort of the senior guy. And the publisher and I did, wasn't after any big profile and anyway I had very little tolerance for the press, so I just let him handle them as well as he could.

SY: There has been a lot of comment about the President's marginal notes on the News Summaries particularly for the first period. Did you ever get these and have a feed back?

LA: For the first six months, we got carbons of the President's marginal notes and I don't know exactly why but it was very interesting, let's put it that way. The reason obviously, the reason that we got it and the reason that we argued after we were cut off on why we should still get them: because it gave us an indication of what he was interested in and areas that we ought to be focusing on in the News Summary. However, these were memos, confidential memos in many case, to Kissinger and Haldeman, who knows what else saying, "Why the hell is so and so doing this?" or "what are you doing here?" or "good job here" or "let's do more about this" you know, things like that. And I certainly, we understood why it was cut off. It was that we just didn't need to know, wasn't real need to know. And although Buchanan wrote a strong forensic case about how we ought to have it, continue to receive it, sometimes there were fifteen memos--in fact, sometimes Buchanan and Huston, who always wanted to get out of here at night, would stick around, you know, until the last messenger drop. They always came about the eight-thirty messenger drop.

SY: This was a Xerox of pages on which he had written?

LA: No, it wasn't a Xerox of pages, it was of the memos from the Staff Secretary and that's how they did it, he would retype it. They'd retype it and say, "The President noted in today's News Summary such and such and such." And so these guys would sometimes wait around just to see what the News Summary did today to whom. It was that sort of thing or it was a clear indication of how it was being used and if there was a certain area then we would look into it more and we would follow up on it. But as I say, it wasn't really necessary, of course, for us to see, but we did enjoy it for the first six month personal

notices.

SY: After that--

LA: After that the only scribblings that we would get would be those that he wrote. You know, "good job," "excellent." There was one that he wrote back in October of 1972, in fact, everybody used to say how he didn't want, you know, he wanted the News Summary cut down and of course he did. In fact, he always told us that, and we always wanted to cut it down, but the interesting thing was on a fifty-five page News Summary, I think it was a total of fifty-five pages back in October of 1972, he wrote on the top of it that it was absolutely invaluable for everybody and he was constantly amazed at the brilliant work that was being done on it. Now I don't know whether he just saw that fifty-five pages and wrote on the top, maybe there was not another note on the whole News Summary, but anyway that was one of the interesting things.

SY: Were there, other than the ones you mentioned, were there other staff offices or indigent staff members of the White House with whom you had more frequent contact?

LA: We sent everything on Kissinger to his staff, to [Leslie] Janka or [Peter] Rodman.

SY: Well for that matter--

LA: We didn't, we didn't, now times there would be--Haldeman would want Klein, Buchanan and Ziegler to do something together or there would have to be some coordination there, but there was never much coordination. Everybody, unfortunately, operated on their own, doing their own thing. I think Herb to a degree could have done without the News Summary at times because often the memos would be, "Why is this being written--get Klein on this." A lot of the crap was directed his way or [Jeb Stuart]

Magruder. At one period, I guess it must have been in 1971-1972, Haldeman asked me to do a thing called News Summary Notations where every morning I would come back--when I would come in, I would go through the previous night's News Summary, spend about an hour, and there would be areas where I might have ideas on what we might do about this or here's somebody we ought to give some Presidential praise. That would just--things that, you know, might be done as a result of it. I never was very comfortable with this assignment because I didn't like, I didn't want to be in the position of telling other people what they ought to be doing when they were most of them were senior to me, number one. Number two: I didn't like it because I thought that's what people should be doing with the News Summary themselves. In each area, that was one of the main reasons the President asked it be expanded from fifteen people to forty people, he was the first one who said broaden it, you know, because he was sending out too many memos. He said people ought to be taking care of these things on their own, and that was our feeling. We put this stuff in, and we felt the people in those areas ought to be reacting to it, but anyway we did these News Summary Notations and they went to Magruder, with copies to Haldeman. By the next day, Magruder was to respond to Haldeman on how he handled each one of them. Needless to say, the relationship between this shop and Magruder and to a degree Klein, because Magruder was under Klein and Klein had to do some of this stuff--it was not good. Some of the suggestions were harebrained. There is no doubt about it but there were some things done, you know, we got an hour. We got to come up with some ideas. One of the things I remember pushing was the Veterans thing, you could just see it

every day, this whole area of Vietnam veterans was just horrible, just a mess and that was three years ago before the whole thing turned into just a tremendous nightmare.

SY: Did they ask you what areas for specific recommendations on who--

LA: Well, they'd say, you know, no, it would generally be like on page eight of the News Summary, this item here, you know. Why don't we do such and such? Like say, I can remember a couple of them. There was a very critical article in Newsweek on the first three years or first two years, I don't remember what it was. It was so bad it was outrageous. It was done by their White House correspondent, and so it was my feeling that we ought to get a rebuttal. We ought to ask for equal time and Life did the same thing, and Life gave a page to [George] Romney, who wrote an article. And I think [Elliot] Richardson wrote the article in Newsweek. I'm not sure, but anyway, both of those things were done and it was that kind of a thing. There would be other times. Just by watching the networks I could tell are we getting our side across, were our people. All right, this is the fourth week in a row and we have been 15 to 1, it's the Democrats and no Republicans, get the Republicans out of the press gallery. I mean get them into the press gallery, get them to do some interviews, so it would be more that kind of stuff. I don't know, I'm sure those memos are in the files, they weren't really part of the News Summary, but I think they would be in Central Files.

SY: Did you make recommendations on important--maybe at a lower level--human interest thing--on recommended protocol?

LA: Yeah, I was asked to do phone calls and letters and I would when we were pressed to do it. But again, it was in an area

where I thought, there were certain people getting the News Summary that had specific responsibilities. Roland Elliott got the News Summary. In fact, that's one of the reasons Eliska [Hasek] asked to get the News Summary. So we thought all right, you've got it, now you can use it for that if nothing else.

SY: Were you performing any kind of clipping service that could go on a congressional office--obituaries that...condolence letters...

LA: Right. Not so much obituaries, but people who did outstanding things. We were always on the outlook for that. We would sometimes send five or six to Roland, we would send--or to whoever who did proceed him--

SY: Mike Smith.

LA: Mike Smith and Noble [Melencamp], I just wrote a letter to him the other day. Anyways, we would send the stuff to those guys, we would send it to Rose [Mary Woods], and we would send it to Steve Bull. Whenever when we saw something the President might call. Then they developed a system. It was often for one liners. Did you ever hear about the one liner project and the phone calls? The one liner project: there were about five of us on the staff who were asked to come up with ideas for Presidential letters to people in the government or on the White House staff who had done a hell of a job and would get a note, you know. When you had to turn in five a week, you did it, but when you didn't have to turn in five a week, maybe turn in two. Then the project just sort of faded away. People kept recommending some of the same people and every time they'd check. When they'd write one of these, they had to check with five or six different people, so it was sort of frustrating to

hear three weeks later, "Yes, we just approved that one liner after it went through eight people." Then it didn't have any timeliness to it, so I don't know what really happened. It was a good idea though, as far as boosting moral. And people really liked getting them. It was under secretaries, that we might see something on the wires about them or in the papers.

SY: The press has had a lot to say about News Summary operation and I think you had several interviews. Are there any in particular? Any network particularly good, great--

LA: Of all the articles that were done in News Summary, I think there have probably about fifteen to twenty and I'm not sure the too critical ones were there. If not, I'm going to get them for you because you obviously ought to have them, but we don't generally pass them out. There were two out of--as I say fifteen to twenty that were critical. One was done by Don Oberdorfer of the Post and a little wedding present for Buchanan was done the day of Buchanan's wedding. He got hold of a News Summary at a time when it only went to about thirty people. We think we know where he got it. We think he picked it up off somebody's desk and went off with it and he then bought the transcripts of the networks and then sat down and compared what we have said. Now that was at a time when Buchanan, Huston and I were doing it and we were not all that-- you know, we had never written like a transcript. We don't want that we tried, you now, you can't condense and summarize. But he found some things where we said ABC said, and it was NBC. He had a thing where it gave a misinterpretation of what Severeid had said, which was a misinterpretation, but it was not all that serious. You know, several things like that. I suppose it came up to ten or twelve of them. Some of them were

errors that should be corrected, so ever since that day in 1971, we've always been much more careful. We watch certain segments of the news clips when they're taped, you know it's all taped by video, by video tape and we'll watch those over to just be as careful as we can. But still, there's going to be errors and we recognize that. So Oberdorfer had one critical article and the other one was by Edwin Diamond in New York Magazine, who never saw any of the News Summaries when he wrote the article. He wrote a four page article and had never seen any of the News Summaries. And he wrote about the President's black book or something like this and his whole crux of his thing was that we were sitting here sort of keeping a score card on the White House correspondents in the networks which was--we never did. Never had time to do it, and it was just way off the beat. It was a very negative article and then there was another one. Third one by Bedback Dickein, in the New York Times. And all his was, was a regurgitation of Oberdorfer's three years later. He took Oberdorfer's column and sort of rewrote it for the New York Times op-ed page. And that article got more attention just because it was in the New York Times than any of the others although the others received wider circulation. Like Time Magazine mentioned Bed Dickein, several editorials mentioned it as if that were the authentic truth. Buchanan wrote an article in response to it afterwards, but we had, the first guy we ever had to come in to do a report on it was Roscoe Drummond, back in 1969, and he just couldn't believe it. He was very impressed, but then he was always very favorable to the administration anyway. Then [Robert] Pierpoint of CBS did a five minute report, I think it was in 1969, it may have been in 1970. And he concluded that if the

President were isolated, it was at the time of all the isolation talk, that it was not the fault of the News Summary. So that one came out alright. Then our first real problem was one that Jack Anderson did. He picked up a copy and he wrote about it and compared it to the National Security Agency documents, suggesting it was all sorts of cryptology because he made a big deal about the abbreviations and made it sound sort of spooky and clandestine, as if what are these guys doing behind your backs, type of thing. Buchanan called him up and said "Jack, come on in, I think you've got the wrong idea." He came in and he wanted to write two articles on it, quote from them, but that was at a time when we didn't think it should be quoted because it was a memo to the President, in essence. He spent, oh, about an hour and half going through a week of them, and he was very impressed at the completeness of it. And he did write a short paragraph where he said, "We have now seen them and they are very comprehensive and objective although there are some editorial comments." Then last year, well, let's see, the next major one I guess was Courtney Sheldon in 1972. After the election at the Monitor, he wrote a two part series and he spent I would say five hours going through them and he came, you know, he was very impressed and just convinced that it was all, all the crap was there as well as the good stuff. Then in the summer of 1973 there was all this speculation. Was Nixon reading the News Summary? Was he aware of Watergate? Was he aware of resignation talk? And all this stuff. So we probably did about, I would say, about five or six different guys came in and did pieces on it and everyone of them including one by Jerry terHorst, all of them came out very well. I'm still sure that an Oberdorfer-type article could be

done by somebody if they wanted to, just like anybody could do one on the Washington Post, you know, one specific issue. I think you could do that with any paper and find this isn't quite right or this is off or here's a...type of thing like that. But overall we maintained a pretty high standard on it.

SY: Rather broad question, but are there any particular areas or subjects you think you would like to talk about in more depth on the Oral History project.

LA: Right now, I can't particularly think of any. I think it depends on what direction, you know, the Oral History project goes--what they are interested in and what they are you going to be working on it. Do you know yet? You don't know. The Oral History project has always been a great mystery, as Leslye Arsht found out back in 1972.

SY: We hope that, certainly it was not appropriate while Nixon was still in office to do an Oral History project. Particularly covering the administration years, and we certainly hope the National Archives will do what they have done in the past and coordinate some type of Oral History project covering--

LA: Well, you know I don't have any objections about talking about this stuff. I was never in a sensitive enough position that I think I have to worry about national security or anything. But, you know, what it was like during the last year and a half, but everybody is going to have those thoughts, so I don't know--it is just a question how many people they want to interview, if I had to sit here and read that stuff and write it up--

SY: Well, occasionally there is something, some particulars made that definitely they were involved in what they feel is historical, historically significant which would not be

documented in the paper files and should be talked about.

We're just trying--

LA: Yeah, there wouldn't have been any privacy in like developing the welfare program or any of that kind of stuff that I would have been in on, so I don't know how much I have to offer.

SY: Do you know who his going to replace you?

LA: Phil Warden is going to be the guy who is taking over, he is a veteran Chicago Tribune writer.

SY: I don't know if this is really appropriate, but do you know if the News Summary is going to continue in the same general format?

LA: I think generally they want it shorter. That is sort of an echo of the last five and a half years and you see we developed a systematic merchandise operation and if you have somebody new come in they can sit back and take a look and say, "Well, let's do it this way rather than that way." And I think if that's done, they can probably do the networks with a little less rigidity about what ABC said, what NBC said, what CBS said, and focus more on what the overall impression was in the networks, what the news is. There was obviously more interest in the first couple years here, first four years really, you know, among Colson, Haldeman, Magruder, Klein, Buchanan, everybody. What are different White House reporters saying and what is this network doing, and that kind of jazz. There is none of that now, and so they may not be that concerned with it. They'll still want to know what various White House reporters, how their reports came off, but I don't think there is going to be the same. There is not the same sensitivity of the media. They have no desire to get in any fight with the media, which may be unfortunate at some point, but right now it is a nice

blessing.

SY: Well, I think that covers the basic information we're trying to get. I'm sure that someone would want to talk with you on an Oral History project.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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conducted by Susan Yowell
on September 4, 1974

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