

Oral History Interview
with
FRANK K. KELLY

Writer and journalist; speechwriter in the Research Division, Democratic National Committee, in Presidential campaign of 1948; speechwriter for Senator Scott Lucas, 1949-51, and for Senator Ernest McFarland, 1951-52; Director, Washington, D.C. office of Harriman for President Committee, 1952; and executive positions, after 1952, in the International Press Institute, American Book Publishers Council, Stephen Fitzgerald Company, Fund for the Republic and the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

Independence, Missouri
April 15, 1988
by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

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Summary Description:

Topics discussed include the Kansas City *Star* in the 1930s; the Nieman Fellowship; the liberation of Paris; the National Housing Agency; Research Division of the Democrat National Committee; American Veterans Committee, "Files of the Facts," Democrat National Committee, speech writing for Truman's 1948 campaign, atomic bombing of Hiroshima; election of 1948, press conference of Franklin D. Roosevelt, W. Averell Harriman's Presidential campaign in 1952, International Press Institute; news coverage of Latin America; McCarthyism; Fund for the Republic; Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; Nuclear Age Peace Foundation; and dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur.

Names mentioned include Pete Wellington, Richard Lupoff, Francis M. Kelly, Ernest Hemingway, Hal Boyle, James Conant, Walter Lippmann, Martha Gellhorn, Andrei Gromyko, Ken Birkhead, Porter McKeever, James F. Byrnes, William Batt, Martin Quigley, John Barriere, Johannes Hoeber, David Lloyd, Phil Dreyer, Clark Clifford, Tallulah Bankhead, Jonathan Daniels, Jack Redding, George Else, Thomas E. Dewey, Charles Murphy, Walter Winchell, Oscar Chapman, Elmo Roper, Henry Luce, Louis Bean, Walter White, Charles F. Ross, Henry Wallace, Ted Alford, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, Scott Lucas, Ernest McFarland, W. Averell Harriman, James Lanigan, Adlai Stevenson, Joseph Stalin, Grace Tully, Alben Barkley, Charles Jamison, Wallace Drew, David Krieger, Robert Hutchins, Douglas MacArthur, and Richard Russell.

Donor: Frank K. Kelly

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JOHNSON: I'm going to begin by asking you where and when you were born and what your parents' names are.

KELLY: I was born right here in Kansas City, Missouri on June 12, 1914. My father's name was Francis M. Kelly and my mother's maiden name was Martha King. And my father had been very much interested in the Democratic Party in Kansas City and so was his father, my grandfather, Michael Kelly.

JOHNSON: What was the address of your birthplace?

KELLY: 3031 Holmes Street. I was born in a house next to a fire station at 31st and Holmes, then occupied by my mother's parents, Alf and Constance King. Later they

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moved to 2912 Charlotte. My father was a city fireman at the time. I grew up in Kansas City; I went to the Catholic schools and De La Salle Academy down on the Paseo.

JOHNSON: What was the name of that?

KELLY: De La Salle Academy. Before I went to De La Salle -- that's a high school -- I went to St. Vincent's parochial school in Kansas City. And when I graduated from high school the Depression was on, so my father lost his job at the National Cloak and Suit Company, and we moved to Indianapolis for a while. I started writing science fiction. I had my first science fiction story published when I was 16 years old.

JOHNSON: While you were at De La Salle?

KELLY: Yes. I continued to write science fiction all through the '30s.

JOHNSON: Who would have influenced your early writing abilities or talents?

KELLY: I was greatly interested in science all through school. I was concerned about space exploration. This was at a time when most kids weren't interested in that,

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I guess. I started writing these things and sold every story I ever wrote. Recently a collection of them has been republished by Capra Press, called *Star Ship Invincible and Other Stories*, that I wrote back in those days.

JOHNSON: What journal did you first get published in?

KELLY: The first one was called *Wonder Stories*; it was edited by a man named Hugo Gernsback in New York City. He started up the first science fiction magazine in the United States. Now there is a man in England named Michael Ashley who is doing a book about the early American science fiction writers, and he's got a section in there about my work. I was one of the youngest American writers that had science fiction published, at the age of 16.

JOHNSON: Did you write for the school paper?

KELLY: Yes, I did. I was an editor of the *University News* at the University of Kansas City. We moved to Indianapolis and then returned to Kansas City. I attended Butler University in Indianapolis and then went to KCU when my family came back here. I graduated in 1937 with a degree in liberal arts. I had no thought of

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going into journalism, but one of the editors of the Kansas City *Star* was a friend of one of my professors and he said, "Have you ever thought about working on the *Star*?" I went down and talked with Pete Wellington, the night editor, and he finally offered me a job as a reporter. I started at the *Star* in February of '37. I was a general assignment reporter, feature writer, then a copy editor on the city desk and the telegraph desk.

I stayed with the *Star* for four years, and then in January, 1941, I went to New York and worked for the Associated Press in Rockefeller Center. I was awarded a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University in September, 1941, for outstanding work in journalism. In January, 1943, I entered the U.S. Army. I served for three years in World War II as a soldier and as an Army correspondent in Europe. I received a citation for distinguished service from Lieutenant General John Lee, one of General Eisenhower's deputies. I came back from the war and returned to the Associated Press. And then I wrote a novel about the United Nations, the clash between the U.S. and the Soviets over Iran back in 1946. That was one of the first times when the Truman administration met head-on with the possibility that the Soviets were trying to expand in the Middle East. I

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made that the background of my book. It was published by Atlantic Monthly Press in 1949.

JOHNSON: What was the title of it?

KELLY: *An Edge of Light*.

JOHNSON: It was published about what year?

KELLY: That was finished in 1948, just before I went to work for Mr. Truman. It was published in January of 1949. The whole focus of the thing was how the press handled the crisis of 1946 that occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union.

JOHNSON: You say you had a liberal arts degree from the University of Kansas City which is now UMKC, the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

KELLY: Yes. I also had a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, which is equivalent to a master's degree. I had a year at Harvard and received faculty status there.

JOHNSON: They didn't have a major just in liberal arts at KCU, did they?

KELLY: I really majored in English literature.

JOHNSON: But you had history courses too?

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KELLY: Yes, history and French. I took French, which came in useful later when I was in the Army overseas.

JOHNSON: But science fiction was your first big interest.

KELLY: First writing.

JOHNSON: The first theme of your writing. So you studied science, but more as a hobby?

KELLY: Yes, it was just that I was interested in it as far back as I could recall as a little boy, walking out at night looking up at the stars. I had this feeling I wanted to explore the stars. I was quite sure there would be space travel someday. Somebody has written about my early work. I predicted a lot of things that would happen later, and some of the illustrations with my stories were almost exact duplicates of the kind of space outfits that the astronauts wore when they landed on the moon.

JOHNSON: Who wrote these things about you?

KELLY: A writer out on the West Coast.

JOHNSON: What's his name?

KELLY: Richard Lupoff wrote it for a science quarterly named *Science Fiction Review*. He did an interview with me for a public radio station on this subject.

JOHNSON: When was that?

KELLY: This was seven or eight years ago now, maybe more, maybe ten years ago.

JOHNSON: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

KELLY: I have one brother who is dead, and one sister who is living in Santa Barbara where I live now.

JOHNSON: What's her name?

KELLY: Catherine.

JOHNSON: So you just had one brother and one sister. And your father was a fireman...

KELLY: Later, he volunteered for service in World War I and went to officers' training camp at Camp Funston. He came out with a captaincy. After the war, I guess it was the National Cloak and Suit Company that was looking for officers with military background, and he got away from working with the fire department and became an executive. He was sort of an efficiency expert; he could look at almost any type of problem in a business

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and tell you how you could do it much more efficiently and at less cost. So he became a very successful executive in that way. Later on he was with Sears; most of his career was with Sears.

JOHNSON: Your father was not in politics, involved with local politics?

KELLY: No, he was not directly involved except that our sympathies were always with the Democratic Party.

JOHNSON: How about World War I; you say he was in the war.

KELLY: Yes, he was.

JOHNSON: What division?

KELLY: The 89th Division. He was in action and was badly wounded, I think it was in the Argonne.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what regiment?

KELLY: I think it was the 355th, 89th Division.

JOHNSON: Did he ever meet Harry Truman in those years?

KELLY: No, I don't think so. I was just looking at Mr. Truman's picture in his World War I uniform out here in the museum, and it looks very much like the uniform my dad had, you know, that type of belt and all that. My

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father was a very thin, very wiry person. Like Mr. Truman, he was a captain, too, who served in combat in that war.

JOHNSON: Was your father in that Argonne battle toward the end of the war?

KELLY: Yes, that's where he got hit with shrapnel. It tore a big hole in his neck. It also put deep lines in his face. When he came home I could barely recognize him, but he gradually recovered.

JOHNSON: So you don't know if he was acquainted with Truman?

KELLY: I don't believe so. Although once, many years later, when I was talking with Mr. Truman in the Oval Office, he said to Charlie Ross, "You know, I've known Frank's family from way back," but I don't know how well they knew each other. Mr. Truman was very generous with remarks like that.

JOHNSON: Your father was a fireman. Was this a Pendergast patronage sort of job in those days?

KELLY: I don't know; he was with the city fire department. I know that my grandfather, Michael, had some kind of patronage job with the Democratic organization.

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JOHNSON: Did your family know the Pendergasts?

KELLY: I think my grandfather may have known Jim Pendergast. I think I heard my dad say that he did. Jim Pendergast, wasn't he in the Army with President Truman?

JOHNSON: Yes, that's how they got acquainted. You graduated from high school around when?

KELLY: 1930; I was 16.

JOHNSON: So you graduated from high school.

KELLY: There were several years when I couldn't go to school because of the Depression. My parents didn't have the money. I worked in a box factory in Indianapolis and I worked in a hosiery mill. Finally I got enough money, with my parents' help, to go to the University of Kansas City.

JOHNSON: But they were living here all that time, your family?

KELLY: No, we moved from here during the Depression for a couple of years to Indianapolis where one of my father's lieutenants, John Hale, gave him a job with the Veterans' Administration.

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JOHNSON: So, two years in Indianapolis and then back to Kansas City.

KELLY: Then we came back to Kansas City and my dad then got a job with Sears Roebuck. he had been with the National Cloak and Suit Company, which went under; folded up in the Depression.

JOHNSON: Did you have a scholarship?

KELLY: Yes, I had one from William Volker. You probably know William Volker was a great benefactor of the University of Kansas City. I had a Volker Scholarship, and when I graduated I went right on the *Star*.

JOHNSON: What kind of writing did you do for the *Star*?

KELLY: Oh, every kind, general assignment. I covered fires. I was at the General Hospital for a while. A funny thing, when I was hired by Pete Wellington who was then the night managing editor of the *Star*, he said to me, "I don't think you're going to stay here, because you're basically one of those writer types." He said, "I hired Ernest Hemingway and he ran off to write books." he said, "You'll probably do the same thing. Just when we get you trained," he said...

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JOHNSON: What was his name you say?

KELLY: Pete Wellington. He was a dyed-in-the-wool newspaperman.

JOHNSON: He saw a little bit of Hemingway in you then?

KELLY: Yes, and so then four years later I came to Wellington and said, "I want to get a leave of absence to go to New York and write a novel." He said, "I told you so. You're acting like Hemingway." He said, "You can have the leave, but you'll never come back." And I didn't. I went to New York and finally got on the AP through Hal Boyle, who was another Kansas City man. Boyle was later a Pulitzer Prize winner, you know, in journalism.

JOHNSON: Hal Boyle, yes.

KELLY: A correspondent, a very close friend of mine.

JOHNSON: So you never covered any Truman politics when you were with the paper?

KELLY: Well, no. At the time the Pendergast machine was collapsing I knew about it, of course, but I was not assigned to any of that.

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JOHNSON: You didn't cover local politics?

KELLY: No, except for some very ordinary stories, interviews and things like that. I really had no great interest in being in politics. I was reading some of these oral histories here, and one of the people said that Frank Kelly was one of the people brought into the '48 campaign who had no experience in politics before. I've always joked with my friends; I said, "I started at the top in a Presidential campaign." I really never expected in all my life that I would end up working for a President and writing speeches for Presidential campaigns.

JOHNSON: What year was it you left for New York?

KELLY: That was in 1941. I was there in '41. In '42 I went up to Harvard for my Nieman Fellowship.

JOHNSON: How did you get this fellowship?

KELLY: Well, you applied for it. It was established under the will of Agnes Nieman who was the owner of the *Milwaukee Journal*. She left some money "to advance the standards of journalism." President James Conant of Harvard didn't want to start a journalism school, so he

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said, "We'll give ten or twelve fellowships every year to outstanding journalists to come to Harvard and spend a year, attend any course they want, and write their views on journalism." So it was a wonderful opportunity.

JOHNSON: By now you had done some special things, or outstanding things for AP apparently to get the fellowship. What was it you had done?

KELLY: Well, I had written feature articles on many topics for the *Star*, and I had covered the early impact of the war for the AP in New York. My wife and I got married two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I married Barbara Mandigo, of Kansas City, on December 5, 1941. The next night, the 6th, Hal Boyle and his wife had a big party at their Waverly Place apartment; they must have had 50 or 60 newspapermen there. I remember one of them, a Chinese correspondent, saying, "Well, don't you realize the Japanese may attack you at any time?" The American correspondents were saying, "Oh, they wouldn't dare do that." That was the morning of Pearl Harbor!

JOHNSON: Yes, that was the eve of it, wasn't it?

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KELLY: We had no idea that night about what was going on in the Pacific. We were plunging into the war -- and we didn't know it.

JOHNSON: What stories did you do for the AP when the war began?

KELLY: I covered some of the mobilization efforts in New York and the blackout. During the first total blackout of Manhattan I was up on the top of the RCA Building. I covered a lot of things about how they were organizing for war. Before that, though, on the *Star*, I had written a lot of what they called editorial page features. I would do research on all kinds of topics, like foreign affairs and many other fields, and they would print them on the editorial page opposite the editorials. So some of these were among the articles I sent to the Nieman Foundation.

JOHNSON: How did you meet Hal Boyle?

KELLY: Well, he and I sort of grew up together in Kansas City. I don't recall exactly how I did meet him, but I've known him for a long time.

JOHNSON: Did he write for the *Star*?

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KELLY: No, he never did; he worked for the AP.

JOHNSON: In New York.

KELLY: No, in Kansas City. He and Walter Cronkite. I think Walter Cronkite was a United Press man, but they both were wire service men. He never worked for the *Star*. But we had a lot of mutual friends. When I went to New York and I couldn't make much of a living writing short stories and novelettes, Boyle said, "Well, why don't you join the AP?" He recommended me and that's how I got on.

JOHNSON: By that time he was in New York for the AP. He later became a noted war correspondent?

KELLY: War correspondent, yes. He had a column, a daily column, that went to hundreds of papers.

JOHNSON: Yes.

KELLY: He and I both applied to be war correspondents just before I left for Harvard. His application came through first, and mine was late. So I ended up in the Infantry, and Boyle ended up as a correspondent. He landed in North Africa, you know, with the first American troops over there.

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JOHNSON: How long did you spend at Harvard then on this fellowship?

KELLY: I spent just from September '42 to January '43 when I had to go in the Army.

JOHNSON: You were drafted?

KELLY: I was drafted. I was sent to Fort Devens for infantry training. One night I was sitting at the Harvard Faculty Club, drinking brandy and talking with professors from the Harvard Law School, and the next day I was on KP in the Army. It was a tremendous change from the Harvard atmosphere, where I had a chance to talk with people like Walter Lippmann.

JOHNSON: You actually did talk to Walter Lippmann?

KELLY: Yes. He spoke to the fourteen Nieman Fellows at a private luncheon at the Faculty Club...

JOHNSON: And shortly after that, you were in a boot camp at Fort Devens?

KELLY: Yes. We took rifle training and went on long marches through the snow. It was a bitter winter at Fort Devens.

JOHNSON: You were well-acquainted with Walter Lippmann?

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KELLY: Well, no, not well, but I remember that he predicted an Allied landing in North Africa, and it came a few weeks later. We had all kinds of notable people who talked to the Nieman Fellows. We could invite anybody we wanted and they usually would come. I had a seminar with Chancellor Heinrich Bruening, who was the last chancellor of the Democratic Republic of Germany before Hitler. He was angry with Count Von Papen and the other German aristocrats who put Germany into Hitler's hands.

JOHNSON: How come they didn't let you go in as a correspondent into the Army?

KELLY: I don't know. Later, after my basic training at Ft. Devens, I returned to Harvard under the Army Specialized Training Program; spent six months learning to be a personnel specialist, and then I was sent to Camp Lee in Virginia for more training before I was shipped overseas. When I got to England an officer came through looking for people with journalism backgrounds. So I was pulled out of this replacement depot just in the nick of time. I probably would have died on the beach in Normandy if I hadn't been selected to be what was called an Army correspondent. So from there on I was interviewing the wounded; we landed on the beach quite a

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bit behind the first waves.

JOHNSON: What was your rank?

KELLY: I was a sergeant.

JOHNSON: What outfit was this that you were with, this Infantry outfit?

KELLY: Well, it was an Infantry training unit, and I ended up in the channel base headquarters.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the numbers?

KELLY: No, I don't.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the division?

KELLY: Well, we were in a replacement depot in Bristol, see, and in those days you weren't assigned to a unit the way that you were in World War I. You were sent overseas with infantry training, and you were put in what was like a big spare parts depot. There were, I don't know, hundreds of men in this place. Most of us, I guess, were supposed to replace men who were killed in the first landings in France.

JOHNSON: What outfit did you end up with?

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KELLY: I ended up with what we called the SHAEF credentials (the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force -- SHAEF) and for a while I was attached as a correspondent to Patton's Third Army when he was sweeping through France on the way to Paris. We rode into Fontainebleau right behind the German Army, which was retreating. I remember we walked through some of the apartment buildings in that French town. They had left all their personal belongings. Some of the girls in the town had been living with the Germans, and had run off with them. We climbed into our trucks and rolled on to Paris; I was there during the day of liberation in August, 1944. That was something I will never forget. We came in right behind General Le Claire's French Armored Division. General Eisenhower gave the French troops the privilege of being the first Allied soldiers to enter Paris. We rode right behind them -- greeted by screaming, waving, weeping French men and women who filled the streets. There was a tremendous celebration.

JOHNSON: So you were attached to the Third Army at this point.

KELLY: Yes, for a while.

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JOHNSON: Did you ever meet up with Ken Hechler?

KELLY: No, I didn't.

JOHNSON: He was an Army historian.

KELLY: No, I didn't meet Ken. We talked about these things, but we never ran across each other. I did run into Boyle at the Scribe Hotel in Paris. I ran into Martha Gellhorn, a correspondent who was married to Ernest Hemingway. He had brought her to the *Star* one night and I had met her there. So I said to her, "Martha, where's Poppa?" Everybody called Hemingway "Poppa." She said, "I don't know. He's probably drunk somewhere; I hope he breaks his damn neck."

JOHNSON: This was in Paris?

KELLY: Yes, she was very angry at him for some reason.

JOHNSON: You had met Hemingway at the *Star*?

KELLY: Yes. One time...

JOHNSON: Had you met him after that?

KELLY: No, that's the only time. He came through there right after he had finished writing *For Whom the Bell*

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Tolls. He showed up in our City Room with Martha Gellhorn and said he'd take everybody out to a bar for a drink. I remember that she wore a beautiful mink coat. So one poor guy had to watch the *Star's* telephones while the rest of us went to a bar up the street. I told him I was working on a novel and I said, "Give me some advice on writing." Hemingway said, "Well, the best advice I can give you is to quit when you're going good." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "Well, I found it's hard to get started with a blank piece of paper when you're writing a book, but you finally get underway." He said, "Then the thing is just pouring out of you." He said, "As soon as it starts to pour out of you, stop, because the next day when you pick up those pieces of paper and see that you've written something in white heat, it really encourages you to go on and you can do a whole book that way." And I found that worked. I've written a number of books, as you probably know.

JOHNSON: Well, that's interesting.

KELLY: That was a piece of practical advice.

JOHNSON: Has that been published anywhere -- that particular piece of advice?

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KELLY: No, I haven't seen it published anywhere.

JOHNSON: So, now you're in Paris right after the liberation.

KELLY: And then shortly after V-E Day my father collapsed and died, and my mother was injured, so the Red Cross got me a compassionate leave, with the understanding that I would probably have to go on to Japan, to the Pacific operations, if the war lasted. So I flew home in June of 1945.

JOHNSON: Now what happened between let's say July of '44 and the end of the war. From Paris you...

KELLY: Well, we went up into Northern France, and I was then assigned to an outfit based in Lille, France, right on the border of Belgium, not far from Belgium. And we were there at the time when the Germans started lobbing over V-bombs, you know. That was a terrifying experience.

JOHNSON: How about the Battle of the Bulge?

KELLY: We were on the edge of that; we weren't right in the core of it. I remember looking out -- we were billeted in these old French apartment buildings that the French had fled from -- and seeing our tanks going by and these poor

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guys peering out. It was cold and foggy, and our guys were going up to fight those Panzers. A lot of them never came back.

JOHNSON: You weren't attached to the Third Army?

KELLY: Not anymore. I was just briefly attached there while we had gone into Paris. Then I was transferred to the Channel Base Headquarters in Lille. I never understood how they shifted us around. But I was doing stories for *Stars and Stripes* and hometown papers. Doing a lot of interviews with the wounded. See, to build morale the Army wanted correspondents to interview the wounded and send back something about it. I also did recordings of interviews for American radio stations, using a heavy wire recorder.

JOHNSON: Okay, so you're doing something like what Ernie Pyle did?

KELLY: Some of that, yes.

JOHNSON: Did you ever meet Ernie Pyle?

KELLY: No, I didn't. Boyle was a great admirer of his, but I never ran into Ernie.

JOHNSON: Because he came up through Italy, and he wasn't in

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your party?

KELLY: Yes, but Pyle and Boyle were very much alike; they really liked to go with the Infantry.

JOHNSON: So you interviewed a lot of the wounded and sent their stories back.

KELLY: Yes. I was at Lille when the word came about my father. I flew back to the United States, and went out to Kansas City to help my mother arrange some things and get some help for her. Then I was sent to Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, and I was there when Mr. Truman dropped the atom bombs and the war ended. Everybody was thrilled, jumping up in the air, you

know, screaming. The war was suddenly over! Jefferson Barracks is right outside St. Louis. We went downtown to join the celebration. Nobody had any doubts then that Truman had done the right thing in dropping those bombs. We all wanted to get out of the Army. I had been in then for close to three years. I had enough points from being overseas so I did get out in December of '45. I went back to the Associated Press in New York.

JOHNSON: Where were your headquarters -- or your office.

KELLY: In Rockefeller Center. In the AP Building there

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overlooking that plaza, you know, where the skaters are in the winter.

JOHNSON: Yes. You were there for how long then?

KELLY: Well, I went back in '45, and then in the spring of '46 I realized that the AP salaries hadn't kept up with the fact that inflation was beginning to take hold. So I took a job for a while as an information specialist with a Government agency that Mr. Truman had set up, called the National Housing Agency under Wilson Wyatt. And then Congress didn't fund that, so I did a lot of free-lance things. Then I got a contract to write a book for Atlantic Monthly Press about the crisis between the U.S. and the Soviets over Iran, the one I referred to in my book, *An Edge of Light*. I had just finished writing that book when I got this phone call from Washington asking me if I wanted to get into the Truman campaign.

JOHNSON: So this was between '46 and '48 that you were working with the Housing Administration...

KELLY: I worked for the NHA from June of 1946 to May of 1947. And then I was doing some free-lance writing. For a little while (three months) I was an assistant

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editor on the *New Republic* at the time when Henry Wallace was the editor. Henry was an eccentric character. He occasionally dozed off in the editorial conferences. I didn't see him as a possible President,

JOHNSON: Well, how about Wilson Wyatt, did you get acquainted with him?

KELLY: No, I didn't meet him.

JOHNSON: In Housing; what did you do with the Housing Agency?

KELLY: Well, I was an information specialist. We wrote press releases, articles, brochures about...

JOHNSON: And you were promoting Truman's housing policy.

KELLY: Yes. Truman's program for housing for veterans and others. Later on in the campaign, that was one of the things I worked on.

JOHNSON: You had already had experience in that area.

KELLY: Right.

JOHNSON: And that's about as close as you had gotten to political type reporting I suppose.

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KELLY: Right.

JOHNSON: How long were you with that agency?

KELLY: Just one year, or a little less.

JOHNSON: And then you free-lanced, you say.

KELLY: Yes. And then I got this contract with the Atlantic Monthly Press, that offered me enough money so that I could spend about a year working on this book.

JOHNSON: Now was that a combination of fact and fiction?

KELLY: Yes, it was kind of historical fiction. I had been one of the AP correspondents assigned to the early days of the United Nations. In fact, I had covered the first meeting of the U.N. and interviewed Andrei Gromyko and people like that.

JOHNSON: You did, you interviewed Gromyko?

KELLY: Yes. And I later had an interesting experience with Gromyko. A friend of mine was promoting tea, worked for the Tea Bureau in New York, and he said he would like to get a statement from Gromyko about how he liked tea; you know, the Russians love tea. So I said I thought it could be arranged. We went out to the U.N. and over to

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Gromyko. Gromyko was very affable in those days. He has this image of being the iron man, you know, with the frozen face, but he was amused by the question I asked him. He said, "You want me to help capitalists exploit the selling of tea? All right, I'll drink some tea." We took the picture. I don't know whether the Tea Bureau ever used it.

I just finished this book, and I sent my wife Barbara and my son Terry -- by this time we had a little boy -- up to Vermont to stay with some friends up there. And I was planning to join them there. But I went out to a place called McSorley's Old Ale House with a friend in New York. I overslept the next day. I notice in reading Ken Birkhead's oral history that he thinks that he called me on a Sunday night, but I believe it was a Monday morning, because I had overslept and missed the train. Anyway, the phone woke me up. I grabbed it, and heard a voice saying, "The

White House is calling." I said, "You must be kidding; I don't know anybody at the White House." You know, it didn't seem real. I woke up, seized the phone, and the voice said, "The White House is calling." I couldn't believe it.

JOHNSON: Do you have the date?

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KELLY: Sometime in April I think, of '48.

JOHNSON: Well, had they been able to read your Iran book by this time?

KELLY: No, that hadn't come out yet. It didn't come out until the fall. But Kenny had read a lot of my stories; I'd had stories published in *Esquire* and *New Yorker* and various other magazines. Ken Birkhead also knew that I had been a feature writer for the *Star* and the AP, and had been a Nieman Fellow at Harvard.

JOHNSON: Now, there is one question, you know, about this Iran crisis, which has controversy to it, and that is whether Truman ever issued an ultimatum to Stalin about getting his troops out, or we'd move warships in, and this sort of thing. Had you ever heard of that before?

KELLY: Well, I've heard rumors of that, but the only thing I recall was that Porter McKeever told me that Jimmy Byrnes, I think Byrnes was Secretary of State then, had sort of a showdown with the Russian representatives at the U.N. Maybe it was Gromyko at that time. McKeever told me that Byrnes had told them that if they didn't move out, that some drastic steps would be taken by the United States, and this came directly with the authority

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of the President, something like that.

JOHNSON: Porter McKeever told you this?

KELLY: Porter McKeever. He was the PR man then for the State Department, or the American delegation to the U.N., one or the other.

JOHNSON: But he had told you that this is what Jimmy Byrnes had said.

KELLY: What Jimmy Byrnes said, yes. I don't know if Porter is still alive or not.

JOHNSON: Generally speaking, did your book support Truman's policies?

KELLY: Yes. Well, my book was about how eventually this crisis was resolved. I have the quotes from the Iron Curtain speech in there at Fulton. So, if you'd like, I could send you a copy of that book *An Edge of Light* published by the Atlantic Monthly Press.

JOHNSON: Yes, we'd like to have one for our collection.

KELLY: There aren't any left; I think I can still find one. At any rate this call came from Washington, and I told the White House operator that I didn't know anybody

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there. She said, Well, there's a Mr. Batt calling you." So on comes this big booming voice, "This is Bill Batt, Frank." And I said, "Well, that's fine, but who are you?" He said, "Well, you don't know me but I've got a friend of yours sitting here, Kenny Birkhead." So he puts Birkhead on and, of course, I knew Kenny's Missouri voice, very much like mine. Kenny said, "It's no joke, Frank; we really are looking for writers, and we think President Truman's going to make more speeches than anybody in history and I know you're a good writer -- I've read a lot of your stuff - and we would like to have you come down and work with us."

So I said, "Well, it sounds very interesting. I'll have to check with my wife, of course, and get her approval, and a few things." But that's how it started.

JOHNSON: Now, you had known Kenneth Birkhead.

KELLY: Yes, we had gone to the University here, the University of Kansas City, Missouri.

JOHNSON: So he was a Kansas City boy.

KELLY: He was on the campus with me; we talked about everything under the sun. When we both moved to New York, we continued to be close friends. He was one of

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the finest men I've ever known.

JOHNSON: His position at the time he called you was what?

KELLY: Well, he had been called in by Bill Batt to be one of the first persons to work on this Research Division of the Democratic National Committee.

JOHNSON: What had he been doing prior to that?

KELLY: I think he had been working with his father on that Friends of Democracy organization.

I knew his father, too, Dr. Leon Birkhead, L.M. Birkhead; he was a Unitarian minister in Kansas City. They were very interested in keeping an eye on extremist groups of all kinds. They were dedicated to maintaining constitutional democracy. They had a lot of research files on the German-American Bund and other extremist organizations...

JOHNSON: Was that connected with ADA [Americans for Democratic Action]?

KELLY: No, that was a separate organization.

JOHNSON: Dave Lloyd apparently came from out of the ADA.

KELLY: Yes. I don't know whether Kenny belonged to the ADA

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or not, but Kenny was very active in the American Veterans Committee. I was, too, for a while.

JOHNSON: Apparently, that was a liberal organization.

KELLY: Yes, and Birkhead had persuaded me to join the AVC. I said I didn't want to belong to any veterans' organization, to tell you the truth.

JOHNSON: Was it supposed to be a counterpoint to the American Legion?

KELLY: Yes. Our motto was "Citizens First, Veterans Second." We weren't going to try to lobby Congress to give us more and more pensions or more and more of this or that. We were going to try to get the American Government to carry out the principles of the United Nations -- a lasting peace and what we had fought for in World War II.

JOHNSON: International minded?

KELLY: Yes, very international minded. And Kenny had been one of the leaders. There was sort of an internal struggle between the liberal side -- headed by Birkhead and others, including Charles Bolte, who was very active in it, and those who were suspected, I don't remember

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their names now, of being fellow travelers, or pro-Communist or something. So there was some kind of an internal struggle going on, and I was with Kenny's wing of the American Veterans' Committee. Anyway, we were very good friends, and the fact that he was willing to work for Truman certainly impressed me. Well, I called my wife and said, "What do you think? Truman's awfully low in the polls. I don't think there's much chance he's going to win, but on the other and, it's a tremendous opportunity." And she said, "Well, look at it this way; is it the right thing to do?" My wife is a very upright, religious person. She said, "would you want to work for Truman because it's right, whether he's going to win or not?" And she put it straight to me, you know.

JOHNSON: Not exactly pragmatic, more principled than that.

KELLY: Yes. She said, "How many times will you have an opportunity in your life of writing speeches that the President might use?" She said, "I just think it would be a wonderful thing to do, whether he wins or loses." But other friends I talked to about it tried to discourage me. In fact, one man, this friend of mine on the Tea Bureau, said, "I'll give you a fulltime job."

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Don't have anything to do with Truman; he's a dead duck. He's going to lose and people will think you're of low mentality even to work for Truman." That's what he said. I said, "Well, Quig"

-- his name's Martin Quigley -- I said, "You know, he might win." "Oh, no, he doesn't have a chance." You know the feeling was strong.

JOHNSON: Was he an Eastern liberal, so to speak, Quigley?

KELLY: No, he was very skeptical. He came from Minnesota. He had been a newspaperman too. But he just felt, you know, that Truman wasn't going anywhere, and it was a terrible thing for me to waste my talent on him.

JOHNSON: Before we pursue that any further, the AVC, the American Veterans Committee, how long did that last?

KELLY: It's still going.

JOHNSON: Oh, it still is. It wasn't killed by McCarthyism?

KELLY: No, it's still running. It had its peak though, I think, in the first years after World War II. But it's still going, and I still get material from them. I am not active anymore.

JOHNSON: You were living where at this time? In 1948?

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KELLY: We were living in Patchin Place in New York City.

JOHNSON: Is it an apartment complex?

KELLY: It's a little group of apartments; it's kind of an alleyway really off one of those little Greenwich Village streets. We had a little apartment there.

JOHNSON: Did you have any children?

KELLY: We had this one son, Terry. We decided to hold on to the New York apartment and I went down to Washington. I was billeted with the other fellows who were working for the Research Division, in an attic in an old house on New Hampshire Avenue or somewhere in there.

It was hot as blazes. There was no air-conditioning. That was where we lived at night, where we slept, on those cots up in the attic.

JOHNSON: And they were building an underground there?

KELLY: It was right down the street from our office; they were building the underpass under DuPont Circle.

JOHNSON: You mean for automobiles?

KELLY: Yes, day and night we had sledge hammers pounding

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away. And in our office, when we were trying to write speeches for the President, the noise would be so loud. If you wanted to discuss something with somebody, you had to bellow at the guy at the next desk.

JOHNSON: No air-conditioning, and noisy.

KELLY: Oh, it was terrible. We all had our shirts off some of the time.

JOHNSON: And you had to be there 24 hours a day, so to speak?

KELLY: In a way. When we went back to our attic to sleep we still carried on discussions.

JOHNSON: Where did you do most of your research?

KELLY: We had these files that we put together from a lot of documents supplied by government agencies. We created what we called "Files of the Facts." I was very interested in that part of our work. As a newspaperman, I thought that Truman could put these things across in a very simple way, as if he were speaking as a reporter, saying "these are the facts;" it would impress people. We got together with these folders from the government departments. We had one on human resources, and others

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on agriculture, housing, veterans' benefits. I worked on that [the later]. I was very interested in what happened to my father as a veteran, You know, we had lots of veterans in '48. I thought that they were a very important factor in the election.

Loyalty and subversive activities—that was Dave Lloyd's field. The 80th Congress, and the lobbies—I worked on that with John Barriere; Johannes Hoeber worked on labor; Dave Lloyd on civil liberties; Bill Batt on foreign policy; and Johannes Hober, prices; Phil Dreyer, natural resources. And we all worked on Thomas E. Dewey, who was the Republican Party candidate.

JOHNSON: When did you arrive to start work?

KELLY: My recollection is that it was sometime in the latter part of April. I know it was just before the President went off on his non-political trip across the country. I think he went early in June for a couple of weeks, and this was sort of a trial run for the whistlestop campaign.

JOHNSON: And your wife stayed in New York City with your son?

KELLY: Yes, she stayed and I went home on weekends. Not

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every weekend, but fairly often...

JOHNSON: So you got back on weekends.

KELLY: Well, most of the time I was in that attic, sweating there, or over in the DuPont Circle office. We were like a group of people in a monastic order, five of us working on these speeches.

JOHNSON: But there also was a Publicity Division over DNC.

KELLY: Yes, but we didn't see them often; we didn't have much contact at all with the DNC.

JOHNSON: And they were in the Ring building which apparently was not all that far away, two or three blocks.

KELLY: It wasn't far, but I don't think the DNC wanted to be in the same building.

JOHNSON: You just felt that you were not that much so you stayed away from the DNC?

KELLY: We just did our work on our own; we reported to the White House staff. I remember the first time I went to the White House -- I can't remember the date, but it was shortly after I arrived -- and Bill Batt said to

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me, "Come on, we're going to a meeting in Clark Clifford's office." So I said, "Okay." I guess Kenny Birkhead went along too. So we went into Clifford's office, and were sitting there and there were some guys reporting about what was happening in the Middle West, and how low Truman was in the polls. The President happened to walk in and Clifford said, "Well, Boss, we're getting a lot of bad news here," and Truman looked at us and grinned at us all and said, "Don't worry about it, boys, I'm still going to win. I'm going to take Dewey like that." He snapped his fingers, and Clifford smiled and said, "Well, Boss, you might be able to do it." You know, I think even Clifford, from the remarks he made, was very skeptical. And we all were.

JOHNSON: This was in Clifford's office, and Truman came over to see you people?

KELLY: Well, I don't know whether he was coming to see us or to see Clifford, but we were all there. He came around and shook hands with each of us, and thanked us for joining his campaign.

JOHNSON: So that was the first time you met Harry Truman?

KELLY: The first time. I saw him occasionally at the

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Star, but I don't recall that I was ever introduced to him.

JOHNSON: Do you remember about when that was? The meeting in Clifford's office?

KELLY: It was probably late April or early May.

JOHNSON: Just shortly after you got there.

KELLY: Yes. And then the only other time I saw him up close was one night when he did a radio broadcast from the White House. Members of the Research Division were invited to come in for that. My wife couldn't make it down from New York, but I went over. They had this small room with a microphone and a desk. Margaret and Mrs. Truman were there. Tallulah Bankhead introduced him from New York on the NBC hookup. I'll never forget; she said, "Now, I want you to vote for my friend, Harry Truman. He's a true man." The President looked around and grinned and he said, "She's implying Dewey is not a true man." I haven't seen that anywhere, but that was kind of a wisecrack aimed at Dewey.

JOHNSON: They were great friends, Tallulah and Harry.

KELLY: Yes. I remember Margaret was wearing a sash, and her blouse was coming out of her sash while the President

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was speaking, and Mrs. Truman was pushing it back in. It was a very domestic scene. But after the broadcast, Mr. and Mrs. Truman and Margaret went one way down the corridor, and we went the other way. Jonathan Daniels was there, and Bill Batt and myself and some others, and we started the other way. I happened to fall into step with Daniels and Daniels said, "Isn't it sad; you know, that man's such a wonderful man, Harry Truman, and he thinks he's going to win, Frank." And I said, "Well, Jonathan, doesn't he have any chance?" "Oh, Frank," he said, "have you ever been in a political campaign before?" I said, "No, I never have." He said, "See, you're an amateur. In every campaign," he said, "the staff becomes convinced that the candidate's going to win." So Daniels put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "You'll be very hurt if you succumb to that fever. Now, just remember, the President's a great guy but he's not going to win." I said, "Well, I suppose that's the way it is." But that's how strong the feeling was. Daniels convinced me again that Truman didn't have a chance.

JOHNSON: A lot of professional advisors sure had egg on their face after that.

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KELLY: Yes, they sure did.

JOHNSON: I think that the broadcast you're talking about was in October, from what I've read, and that's the one that was sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Was that the one with [David] Dubinsky? Was Dubinsky there?

KELLY: I never met Dubinsky.

JOHNSON: Was that a labor speech?

KELLY: Well, to tell you the truth, I can't remember.

JOHNSON: You remember the personalities more.

KELLY: Yes, I just remember Tallulah Bankhead's voice and the President smiling, and that remark about Dewey.

JOHNSON: It was early October so he still had about three or four weeks before the election. But you had done a lot of work, of course, by that time, prior to this time and...

KELLY: One of the elements of the campaign -- and I think had something to do with it -- we were trying to sum up what the issues were, and I worked this into several talks and I think he used them: "Peace, prices and places to

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live." There was a housing shortage as you know, and there was inflation, and then there was the peace issue. There was a great division about whether Truman should have sent Judge Vinson to Moscow or not. It seemed to me that was a very important move he made. I also recall the big struggle, the debate that went on, on whether he should call the Congress back on Turnip Day. I recall a meeting in which Oscar Chapman -- I guess he was Secretary of the Interior at that time - - was very dubious about that. I'm really not sure whether the President was there or not, but I think he was. Anyway, Chapman said, "You know, Dewey can come down here and he will work with Taft and the Republican Congress and they'll put some bills through, and they'll make you look bad." As I recall it, Truman laughed and said, "You'll never see Dewey and Taft working together." He was right, you know. They couldn't work together; they were two wings of the party.

I think that decision to run against the 80th Congress was probably the key to the whole campaign.

JOHNSON: So you worked directly with Clifford in his office, and Batt was your intermediary, so to speak, so you never had any direct contacts with DNC.

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KELLY: Right. I don't remember any meetings of the two staffs, but I have a dim recollection that we had one talk with Jack Redding, who was then the publicity director for the National Committee.

JOHNSON: But DNC was paying your bills, weren't they, and paying your salaries?

KELLY: Yes, but sometimes our salaries were late too. I think we were getting \$8,000 a year a piece, or something like that.

JOHNSON: Prorated by how long...

KELLY: Yes. But the annual figure was something like that. I did get a chance up in Boston to be with the President there. I went up there because Atlantic Monthly Press was about to publish my book on the Iran crisis. I told George Elsey I was going to be there, and the President was

swinging through New England, and I said I'd like to go to one of the big rallies because, you know, most of the time we were in Washington just writing speeches and we couldn't get on the road. So Elsey gave me a card of the Secret Service and I got into the hotel where Mr. Truman was, just as he was coming out, and I've never seen such a mob in a lobby. They had to fight to get

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him through, and people were just cheering madly. Elsey got me into a car with Dr. Graham; it was right behind the President's I guess. Graham was his doctor, and he had to be close to the President. The policemen were trying to get the caravan of cars to move, and I looked over at this big Irish cop next to me on a motorcycle and I said, "How does this crowd compare with what Roosevelt drew when he came through Boston?" This cop looked at me and said, "Roosevelt never drew a crowd half as big as this in Boston. We like Harry better up here." And, you know, I saw the results later, and he did carry Boston by a big margin.

JOHNSON: So this was a big speech that he gave in Boston apparently in October.

KELLY: Yes, in October, that was a rip-snorting speech, I'll tell you.

JOHNSON: And had you had anything to do with...

KELLY: Yes, I think he used a few of my lines. I was at the convention in Philadelphia when he made that acceptance speech. I was on the floor there. I had been assigned to help the Platform Committee write the Democratic Platform in 1948. We were all sitting around this hall;

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I guess it was about 2 o'clock in the morning, no air-conditioning, you know, and we were dying of the heat. Truman comes out in this white linen suit and starts off, I think with, "Senator Barkley and I are going to win this election." Everybody jumped up. It was the wildest thing I've ever seen. Everybody was like zombies and all of a sudden they were alive. They were yelling. Truman amazed all of us that night.

JOHNSON: He looked pretty fresh, considering the hour.

KELLY: And Mrs. Guffey was releasing all those doves. We were ducking those birds. They were flying over our heads; it was a great Democratic scene. Only the Democratic Party could put on a thing like that.

JOHNSON: Well, do you remember your first assignment for the Research Division? Do you remember your first research and writing assignment?

KELLY: I think it was something about the 80th Congress. But as a matter of fact, Bill Batt told me that what he wanted me to do, and Kenny Birkhead too, was to go over all the drafts and try to sharpen them up as a writer. Pick out phrases, you know, short sharp sentences that the President could use. I didn't come up with the

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"Give em hell" statement. I know...

JOHNSON: Whose drafts now were you doing?

KELLY: These were some of the other fellows that drew a draft of something and I'd...

JOHNSON: In the White House? The White House staff?

KELLY: No, these were in the Research Division.

JOHNSON: Sharpen each other's drafts?

KELLY: I also wrote some drafts, I don't know how many, mainly dealing with the Congress and with veterans benefits. I was asked to tighten up some of the drafts written by others.

JOHNSON: With the 80th Congress and veterans benefits. So you pointed out all the faults I suppose of the 80th Congress?

KELLY: Oh yes, we gave them hell. I even had a line in one draft about Mr. Dewey's going around this country peddling snake oil. Clark Clifford told me later, when Truman read that on the train, "No, I can't say that, that's a little too much." I guess we went too far on that one.

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JOHNSON: A snake oil salesman, huh?

KELLY: Yes, he wouldn't quite go for it. We'd get carried away, you know; you'd get this campaign fever.

JOHNSON: You get these metaphors, these figures of speech, and he'd say there's a limit . . .

KELLY: Vivid phrases. I remember there was a discussion once that maybe we should bring in the fact that Dewey didn't have any war record like Truman, you know. So far as I know he didn't take part in the Armed Forces in World War II. And Truman vetoed that absolutely; he said he would never use that as an issue in any way. discussed everything under the sun, every topic you know.

JOHNSON: You contributed to these "Files of the Facts"?

KELLY: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you do research on local communities that he visited?

KELLY: We were all, you know, generally utility men. I made some of the phone calls, seeking information.

JOHNSON: Did you use the WPA guides?

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KELLY: Yes, we did; we used them a lot.

JOHNSON: Apparently they were a major source for your local communities.

KELLY: I think some of the others did more of the local work; they wanted me to polish up some drafts.

JOHNSON: So you did a lot of editing.

KELLY: Yes. Before they went over to the White House. I did quite a bit of research but also...

JOHNSON: But where did you do your research?

KELLY: Well, from these big folders that we got from Government agencies.

JOHNSON: They would come over to you? You didn't have to go out running around the Government for these things?

KELLY: As I recall, the White House sent them over.

JOHNSON: How about the public library; did you use the public library?

KELLY: I guess we got some stuff from there. There was so much stuff coming in. But I did notice the stuff that we got from the bureaucrats was so heavy and turgid,

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that we couldn't use much of it. But we needed the facts. How many veterans were there, how many were getting pensions, and was it true that so many people were cut off from Social Security? All of that...

JOHNSON: Would you send the questions over to them to answer or would you just try to extract facts that they had in their own reports?

KELLY: Well, we'd have meetings sometime, and Bill Batt would take the questions over to the White House staff. Charlie Murphy would call him and he'd say, "Okay, I'll get you all the information you need on that;" and he'd send it over. It was a unique operation; I don't think there has ever been a campaign like it.

JOHNSON: So you put this information into paragraphs.

KELLY: Very short paragraphs.

JOHNSON: Short paragraphs, and they would go into this "File of the Facts."

KELLY: Well, we'd draw on that, and then we'd also use the facts in these speeches. A lot of the President's acceptance speech in Philadelphia seemed to draw heavily from these files of the facts, because he kept saying,

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"Now this is the way it is."

JOHNSON: How about that trip in June, that so-called non-political trip? Did he borrow pretty heavily from your...

KELLY: Yes, I remember that. I got my first thrill on that trip. I'm pretty sure it was that trip. We had a radio on, and we could hear the President speaking somewhere; I let out a yell and said, "Hey, he just used one of my lines."

JOHNSON: Perhaps the speech from Omaha...

KELLY: I don't know where it was now. That was a great thrill. Here I was in my early thirties and the President of the United States was using one of my lines. It's a funny experience.

JOHNSON: Ghost writer?

KELLY: Yes.

JOHNSON: But you don't know what speech that was.

KELLY: I really couldn't tell.

JOHNSON: Did you hear more of that, too, later on, of phrases from your draft?

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KELLY: A number of times I heard phrases I had prepared.

JOHNSON: Did they usually end up pretty well rewritten?

KELLY: Oh yeah, there was quite a lot of rewriting.

JOHNSON: Who did most of that rewriting would you say?

KELLY: I think that Elsey and Clifford, and Charlie Murphy did a lot of it. I got to know Murphy pretty well afterward.

JOHNSON: They were sort of the final filter?

KELLY: Yes, they were the ones.

JOHNSON: David Lloyd, of course, gets high marks.

KELLY: Yes, Dave Lloyd came in after I did; he didn't come until about June or July, I think.

JOHNSON: So they may not have edited his as much.

KELLY: Yes. Dave seemed to have a way of writing stuff that Clifford and Murphy and the rest of them liked very well. He was an excellent writer.

JOHNSON: Their style.

KELLY: Yes. And after the campaign, I guess, Dave went over

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to the White House onto the staff at that time. But you know, Truman was very forgiving to me, because I had all these friends in the newspaper business, and one of my friends -- I didn't know it -- was a tipster for Walter Winchell. On a trip to New York I told some friends that I had lined up a job as a professor at Boston University in communications. I said, "I hope Mr. Truman will win, but there's nothing certain, and I can't count on a job. I haven't asked him for anything, and I wouldn't, so I need a job. I've got a wife and a kid." The next thing I know there's this item in Winchell's column that says, "Frank Kelly, one of Truman's speechwriters, is so doubtful of Truman's chances that he already has lined up another job." But Murphy or Clifford said, "Don't worry about that." Murphy told me that the President just laughed and said, "I don't pay any attention to Walter Winchell."

JOHNSON: When would that have been?

KELLY: That must have been in September, somewhere in there.

JOHNSON: Toward the end of the campaign, so probably October sometime.

KELLY: Then the story broke in the *New York Times*, you know,

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about our group, and it had all our names in there and all that. I don't know how that came about. That kind of worried people for a while.

JOHNSON: Because you were kind of working under wraps.

KELLY: We were supposed to be under cover. Yes, sort of, I guess.

JOHNSON: Is that one of the reasons you spent almost all of your time in that building?

KELLY: Well, I wonder; now I wonder. At the time it seemed a good idea to build our "esprit de corps." We got to be close friends.

JOHNSON: Now, you must have gotten out some of the time. What did you do?

KELLY: I went home almost every weekend to New York.

JOHNSON: But during the day, you just...

KELLY: During the day we were pretty much together; we had lunch together and dinner together and so on. But you know, after the '48 campaign, if you want to get into that at all, I did have a long interview with President Truman in the Oval Office. Then I wrote a chapter in a

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book about him called *Men Who Make Your World*. I don't know if you have that book here or not; it's published by Dutton.

JOHNSON: I haven't seen it, but we'd like to get a copy.

KELLY: Charlie Ross arranged it for me. I was then assistant to the Senate Majority Leader. Clifford recommended me for that job after the election.

JOHNSON: Now who edited this book?

KELLY: I'm trying to remember the man's name; it's escaped me now. The first Chapter is called "The Little Guy who Shook the World." My title was "Man Who Shook the World," and they put in that "little guy" business. The editor wanted to describe Truman as a "little guy," I guess. I told Charlie Ross that the editor had changed the title, and he said he was sure Truman would understand what had happened.

For that article, Mr. Truman gave me about 40 minutes in the Oval Office. At one point he was describing some things to me, and Charlie Ross leaned forward and said, "Mr. President, you're just telling Frank some things that are top secret; have you given him clearance for that?" Truman grinned and said, "I

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knew his family in Kansas City; he has top clearance, Charlie."

JOHNSON: Do you know the date of that interview? Was it before or after the Korean war started?

KELLY: He didn't mention Korea, so maybe it hadn't happened. He mentioned the atom bomb, and his decision to stay in Berlin when the Soviets blockaded the city.

JOHNSON: Yes, because after Korea he said his major decision was Korea.

KELLY: Yes, then it must have been before that, I think, because for one thing, when I asked him about the atom bomb, he said, "Well, Frank, you know we were burning up thousands and thousands of Japanese men, women and children in B-29 fire bombs." So he said, "I asked how

many people we'd have to kill, and they told me. And I said, 'Well, old General Sherman said, "War is hell," and when you're in hell these things happen.' I've never seen that quote anywhere else.

JOHNSON: Did he set a figure of how many Japanese would be killed by the atom bomb?

KELLY: No, he just said many thousands. Then he leaned over

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toward me and said, "You know, Frank, those Japs are just as human as you and I are." I said, "Well, I thought so, Mr. President." Later, I remembered that the Japanese had been regarded as sub-human during the war.

JOHNSON: Yes, a lot of them were cannon fodder, of course.

That Turnip Day session, did you have anything to do with promoting that idea?

KELLY: Well, I was in on that I believe.

JOHNSON: Do you remember how that originated?

KELLY: I don't know how it originated; I certainly didn't originate it, but I thought it was a hell of a good idea.

JOHNSON: You did support it?

KELLY: Oh yes. The only one that I recall that was very, very skeptical about it was [Oscar] Chapman, as I mentioned. I think the whole Research Division staff was in favor of it. That is my recollection.

JOHNSON: But the Publicity Division of the DNC may not have been, is that right?

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KELLY: Yes, I heard that they were very divided about it, and that some people in the White House were doubtful.

JOHNSON: Do you have any outstanding memories of Hoeber and Lloyd, Dreyer, Barriere?

KELLY: Well, yes, I have outstanding memories of all of them, of course, Kenny Birkhead the most, because he and I knew each other longer.

JOHNSON: How long did each of you work for the campaign, or did you all quit about the same time?

KELLY: I think people left at different times. I went up to Boston on election day in 1948. My wife and I were packing that night, and we had the radio going. All of a sudden Barbara said,

"Hey, I think Truman's winning." I said, "What?" So we ran and turned up the sound on the radio. An announcer was babbling, ""It looks now as though Harry Truman is going to win. Votes are pouring in for Truman..." Then, the next day we were taking a train at Grand Central Station, going up to Boston, and there was this redcap. I said to him, "Oh, it's great, isn't it, that President Truman won?" He said, "I don't know about you folks, but my folks are glad he won!" There was a strong feeling among the blacks. I

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said, "Well, I worked for him." He said, "You did?" He gave us a big smile, and he couldn't do enough for us.

A funny little thing, when I arrived in Boston I was asked by the president of Boston University to make a speech on why Truman won. Elmo Roper had been scheduled to speak in a convocation at that university on why Dewey had won. Roper had predicted that Dewey would be elected. And he said, "We just got this telegram from Mr. Roper saying he's very ill." So I had to go out and make a speech on why Truman won. That was one of the most delightful experiences I ever had in my life.

JOHNSON: Oh you did, you made a speech for whom?

KELLY: Five thousand students and faculty members.

JOHNSON: You filled in for Roper?

KELLY: Yes. I replaced Roper. They said, you just came off the campaign. Tell us why Truman won. At that time, I didn't know why Truman had won, but I just went on and made a speech anyway.

JOHNSON: You mean extemporaneous?

KELLY: Extemporaneous.

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JOHNSON: Do you have a copy of this?

KELLY: I don't. I was very nervous when I saw the size of the crowd. But you know, my wife was going through some material here at the Truman Library, and she ran across a line in which Bill Batt was saying to his wife, "We need a theme for this campaign, something very simple for the President." And Janie Batt said, "Well, the theme is very simple: 'We're right and they're wrong.'" And that was the feeling we had all the way through the campaign. That was the feeling I tried to convey to the Boston U. audience. And they cheered me!

JOHNSON: Did you feel that even though Dewey was supposedly a liberal Republican, he would be a throwback to laissez-faire, or Hoover-type, capitalism?

KELLY: Yes, we were afraid of what would happen if Dewey won. We thought we might lose all the gains of the New Deal. I did get to go to a dinner years later, at which Tom Dewey was present. It was at the Century Club in New York. Henry Luce, who I had gotten to know by then, gave this dinner. Dewey got pretty loaded, and Dewey had Luce up against the wall, and he was saying, "Henry, if it hadn't been for you and your damn magazines, I

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would have put on a hot campaign and I might have beaten Truman."

JOHNSON: So he was blaming Luce for that strategy?

KELLY: Yes; he said, "You had those articles, 'The Next President Crosses the River,' and all that stuff, and I swallowed it." I thought that was a funny little postscript. I don't think Luce was at fault. Dewey thought he had the '48 election in the bag, and he blew it.

JOHNSON: Yes. Do you recall the events of the night before the Turnip Day session in which Matt Connelly asked the Research Division to come up with all these Truman speeches on the issues so they could be placed in the *Congressional Record*? You apparently had an all night session to get all of these ready during the Turnip Day session, so Truman's position could be put into the *Congressional Record*, which apparently it was.

KELLY: I know we had a lot of late sessions. I don't remember this particular one.

JOHNSON: Did you have much contact with Matt Connelly in those days?

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KELLY: Not until years later when my mother visited Washington and wanted to go and see the President. So I called down there, and Mr. Truman agreed to see us. My mother and my wife went and my little boy, and we got inside there in the Oval Office and my mother said to the President, "I'm glad that you and Frank won that election." Truman smiled and said, "Well, Frank, mothers know what's true, don't they?"

JOHNSON: Was this the session when you had the interview?

KELLY: No, this was another time when we went in to see him. My mother had brought a book of his speeches, including some of those that I had worked on. You know that *Truman Record* book that Francis Myers has a forward in; it contains the major speeches of 1948. So, after talking with the President, she said, "Now, I want you to sit right down there, and write something in there about my visit to your office, because my bridge club in Kansas City will never believe I was here unless you write it." Mr. Truman said, "I know, Mrs. Kelly. I know those bridge clubs." And he sat down and wrote a wonderful inscription in that book for my mother. I still have it.

JOHNSON: When was that?

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KELLY: This was in 1951, I think it was.

JOHNSON: Okay, this was after that interview you had done, about a year later, after MacArthur was fired maybe.

KELLY: I wrote an article about my mother's conversations with Truman that was published in a magazine called *Focus Midwest*. Did you ever see that?

JOHNSON: No.

KELLY: It was a wonderful conversation.

JOHNSON: Well, if you have a copy and want to Xerox one for us, we'd like to put it in our files.

KELLY: He was so warm, so friendly. He really appreciated the Research Division; he said that very plainly.

JOHNSON: More so than Chapman and Ewing and other DNC people?

KELLY: He said, "You know, Mrs. Kelly, those boys really helped me win that election." Of course, my mother was there, and what else would he say if it was your mother? I always tell myself he meant it anyway.

JOHNSON: Well now, besides these people that worked directly with you, like Hoeber and so on, were there any other

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individuals in the White House that you had any special relationship with or contacts with?

KELLY: Let's see, I mentioned Elsey and Clifford and...

JOHNSON: You had fairly numerous contacts with Elsey and with Clifford and Murphy, those three.

KELLY: Right.

JOHNSON: Those were your links with the White House.

KELLY: Three links, yes.

Of course, Clifford sent me a note after the election with that autographed picture of the President and all that stuff.

JOHNSON: And Barriere apparently was the young fellow.

KELLY: He went to work for the House, and I think he ended up working for Speaker McCormack.

JOHNSON: With the Currency and Banking Committee there for some time. Hoeber had come from Europe in '33, but he apparently had learned American ways very well.

KELLY: Oh yes, he really did, and he was very gung-ho the whole time. He was more of the scholarly type, precise. And Barriere had hair stuck up in shock waves, and he

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sputtering in those days; he had a very, very explosive personality. I remember that about John. And of course, Phil Dreyer too, was a very energetic, bouncy fellow. Dave Lloyd was always very quiet and studious.

JOHNSON: He and Hoeber were much alike, would you say, and Hoeber, and Barriere and Dreyer were more impulsive. perhaps.

KELLY: Yes. And Bill Batt had a lot of explosive flare he really did a good job of keeping us pepped up. sure Bill had a lot of grave doubts about whether the President would win. But he'd arrange these sessions for us with Louis Bean you know, and Bean had his own polls that showed that Truman could win. Whenever were feeling down in the basement, why, Louis Bean come around and say, "No, no, Truman's got a good chance to win."

JOHNSON: Well, apparently in August Batt put together memorandum about what kind of strategy and themes be emphasized and what kind of groups should be especially appealed to. I think labor, blacks and were the main target groups, and then farmers, of course, were kind of in that too.

KELLY: Yes, Bill showed drafts of that to all of us.

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contributed suggestions.

JOHNSON: And this received apparently good marks from Elsey. Would you say that the campaign strategy did generally follow that?

KELLY: I think it did. You know on Inauguration day, I was sitting there in the plaza at the Capitol, next to Walter White of the national Association for Advancement of Colored People. He said, "Frank, you know who won the election for Mr. Truman up there don't you?" And I said, "Well, I know you folks had a lot to do with it."

He said, "Let me show you something." He had a little notebook, and he had all the different cities, the percentage of the black vote that went for Truman. it was stupendous, you know, 80-90 percent.

JOHNSON: Of course, you could almost make the same argument for the farm vote, too, in the Midwest like Ohio.

KELLY: Of course, Truman also said labor did it. In those days labor could turn out a vote.

JOHNSON: Blacks, labor, and farmers -- would you say they were the key?

KELLY: And the veterans. Truman appealed to the veterans a

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lot. I think that was a silent factor, in my view.

JOHNSON: They were, of course, a very large group that cut across.

KELLY: That cut across everything.

JOHNSON: Yes.

KELLY: But an important fact was that Truman had this wonderful record in World War I. He never displayed it, but everybody felt it. The press sometimes referred to him as "Captain Harry." People were aware of his bravery.

JOHNSON: And of course, he was a Mason which added some importance to his prominence in some state and local politics, and maybe even the national plane.

KELLY: Yes. I guess that campaign will be studied from now on, indefinitely, won't it?

JOHNSON: Yes.

Were you well acquainted with Charlie Ross?

KELLY: Well, I knew him fairly well. He was very honest, a man of deep integrity. I remember I told Charlie that after I had written this chapter in the book, I said,

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"Ordinarily I wouldn't do this, Charlie, but would you mind looking it over before I send it to the publisher?"

"Oh, would you? That's great," he said, "I wouldn't ask you to do that."

So I gave it to him and he gave it back. He didn't ask me to change a word. He sort of pulled at his collar and he said, "You really caught the President's strength." He had tears in his eyes. "Isn't he a great guy?" And I said, "Yes."

JOHNSON: Well, he wrote an article for *Colliers* about that campaign after it was over.

KELLY: Truman was very stricken when Ross died at his desk.

JOHNSON: Yes. Well, now that speech in Boston that you went to, was that the only speech that you...

KELLY: That's the only time I was really out there, on the road, and I could feel the roar of the crowd, and feel the excitement.

JOHNSON: But you were never on the train?

KELLY: No, I wasn't on the train. But it was tremendous in that hotel, and going through the streets of Boston. I thought, "Well, maybe it's only in Massachusetts." On

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the night before election, some of my friends called me up from Kansas City. They said, "Well, Frank, we are going out and put mortgages on our houses; we're getting good odds, we're all going to bet our life savings on Harry Truman. That's right, isn't it?" I said, "Oh, for God's sake." "Well, you're right there near the horse's mouth; tell us, what odds should we get?" I said, "Well, look, gents," I said, "the latest surveys we've got show that he probably is not going to carry either New York or Pennsylvania; Wallace is going to take New York away from him, enough votes so Dewey will get it. And I don't know anybody who has carried the Presidency without New York and Pennsylvania." I said, "I'm not telling you one way or the other, but think it over a few times." Some of them went ahead and bet on him anyway. But that was a remarkable thing that he did make it. I felt I had to be honest with the people in Kansas City. I had to remind them of the odds against Truman. I wish now that I had bet on him.

JOHNSON: Now, Wallace, I think, cost Truman New York...

KELLY: He cost Truman New York. There were enough "Progressive" votes to do that.

JOHNSON: Were you worried about the Wallace and Thurmond

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defections?

KELLY: Somehow or other, as the campaign went on, nobody talked about it. I guess Bill said that originally one of the ideas behind the Research Division was to counteract the Wallace vote.

JOHNSON: Did they feel that Thurmond might take votes away from Dewey?

KELLY: Yes, I think there was some of that feeling. Nobody talked too much about that. Wallace was the only one that caused worry. But I remember that Democratic convention with these signs about "Let's draft Ike" and all that stuff. There was a lot of bitterness at that convention among the Southerners. You know some of them walked out.

JOHNSON: I think James Roosevelt had even led a "Democrats for Eisenhower."

KELLY: Oh yes, they wanted to get Eisenhower.

JOHNSON: Did you ever meet any of the Roosevelts?

KELLY: Yes. In April, 1938, at the end of my first year as a reporter on the *Star*, I went to Washington on my vacation. I visited Ted Alford, then the *Star's*

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Washington correspondent, one morning in his office in the National Press Building. Alford said to me casually, "Would you like to go the President's press conference with me today?" I answered, "I certainly would."

We walked up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House and came to a small guard-post. A guard came out and said, "Good morning, Mr. Alford." "Morning," Alford said. "By the way, this is Frank Kelly, a new man on the *Star's* staff. I've invited him to go to the press conference today." "Fine," the guard said. "You'll enjoy it, Mr. Kelly."

We walked up a driveway and into the White House. We crossed a wide lobby, and the next thing I knew I was in the Oval Office, standing around the desk. Roosevelt read a few announcements from a sheet of paper, answered a few questions with dry humor that made the reporters chuckle. He had a long cigarette holder in his mouth, and he paused to light a cigarette. I was amazed at the size of his head and the breadth of his shoulders. He seemed to be enjoying himself immensely.

F.D.R. concluded the meeting by saying: "I'm sorry I haven't got much news for you boys today." "Thank you, Mr. President," one of them said, and most of them

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hurried from the room. Alford took me around the desk, and said to Roosevelt, "Mr. President, this is a young reporter for the *Star* I brought with me today -- Frank Kelly." We shook hands. F.D.R. cocked his cigarette holder in a corner of his mouth, "Do you like being a newspaperman?" I said, "I like it a lot, sir." He grinned. "I thought about being a reporter myself when I was young." He chuckled a little. "I guess I took the wrong turn." I couldn't resist saying, "You're doing pretty well, Mr. Roosevelt." "Thank you," F.D.R. said. "This is a pretty good job, too."

That was the only time I had an opportunity to see and talk with President Roosevelt.

In 1952, when I was the Washington director of Averell Harriman's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, I worked with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., who was active in the effort for Harriman. I thought F.D.R., Jr. was shrewd and aggressive, and rather an opportunist. When we got to the Chicago convention and it became obvious that Stevenson would probably be the candidate, F.D.R., Jr. was ready to switch over to Stevenson.

In 1954 or '55, when I was vice president of a public relations agency in New York -- the Stephen

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Fitzgerald Company -- F.D.R., Jr. called me one day to tell me that he had become a legal representative for Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic. "Would you be interested in being the public relations advisor for the Dominican Government?" he said. "It would be worth about \$75,000 a year, plus expenses." I reacted angrily. "I wouldn't take it for any amount of money," I said. "And I don't think you should be Trujillo's lawyer either. You've got a great name, and you shouldn't be lending it to Trujillo." He snapped back, "I think any man is entitled to a lawyer. That doesn't mean that I agree with what Trujillo is doing." I didn't hear from F.D.R., Jr., after that.

I met Eleanor Roosevelt when I became a vice president of the Fund for the Republic in 1956. The Fund offered prizes for the best television plays on civil liberties, and Mrs. Roosevelt was one of the judges. She was a wonderful person -- very intelligent and charming. I've met Jimmy Roosevelt, too. He has been in Santa Barbara many times.

JOHNSON: Going back to Kenneth Birkhead, what kind of personality was he?

KELLY: He was a very warm, generous, easy-going sort of guy.

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Very genial, down-to-earth person. His wife, Barbara, was a friend of my wife, too.

JOHNSON: What about his writing style? What would you compare it to?

KELLY: Kenny reminded me a little of Will Rogers. He had a strong sense of humor. Kenny didn't claim to be a writing stylist, but he could put together the facts. He was a real digger. He worked with his father on the Friends of Democracy. He could uncover links between groups better than anybody I ever saw.

JOHNSON: But you had to be very careful about accuracy, I suppose, because you realized that they would jump on you whenever they could.

KELLY: Kenny was very scrupulous about those things. A very, very honest man.

JOHNSON: What is the situation nowadays as far as the national committees are concerned? Do they have research divisions similar to yours?

KELLY: I don't know. I went off, you know, went to work on Capitol Hill and worked for Senator [Scott] Lucas, and later for Senator Ernest McFarland.

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JOHNSON: What was your last day on the job for this Research Division?

KELLY: Sometime in October, I think, just before the election.

JOHNSON: Okay, before the election you resigned. Were some of you thinking of leaving about the same time?

KELLY: Yes. I think Hoeber left a little earlier.

JOHNSON: Was Lloyd the only one that stayed on with the White House?

KELLY: Yes, he was.

JOHNSON: Birkhead went back to what he had been doing?

KELLY: Yes, Birkhead I think very soon thereafter got a job with a Senator. I went up to Boston University as an associate professor for a few months.

JOHNSON: This was after you had given this talk.

KELLY: No, I gave the talk right after I arrived there.

Then I got a call from Senator Lucas asking if I would want to come down and talk to him. As you know, Barkley became Vice President and they elected Lucas to succeed

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Barkley as Majority Leader and he needed a speechwriter. I was recommended to him, and so I went back to Washington in January. I was only up in Boston for ten or eleven weeks.

JOHNSON: And you were in what department up there, English?

KELLY: No, communications, journalism. When I returned to Washington, I stayed on with Lucas for two years, and then he was beaten by the "Wizard of Ooze" -- you remember Everett Dirksen. That was what we called him. He defeated Lucas in 1950.

JOHNSON: I certainly do.

KELLY: I stayed on with Ernest McFarland of Arizona in 1951 and half of 1952. He was later beaten by [Barry] Goldwater.

JOHNSON: Senator McFarland was elected Senate Majority Leader after Lucas was defeated. And then Goldwater beat him in the 1952 election?

KELLY: Yes. I decided that I would get out of politics. The only candidate I ever worked for who won was Truman. Both Senators I worked for got defeated.

JOHNSON: Well, what did you do then?

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KELLY: In the spring of 1952, I told McFarland that I wanted to move into another field. The Fitzgerald Company offered me a job as a Washington representative of the agency's clients. I moved from Capitol Hill to an office on 16th Street.

Then Harriman decided he would try to get the Democratic nomination. One of his advisors, James Lanigan, had consulted me often when Harriman was seeking Senate appropriations for the Marshall Plan. I had arranged a breakfast meeting for Harriman with a group of leading Senators.

Lanigan called me up and then he came to me. I remember it was a rainy day, and Lanigan came in with rain dripping from his hat. He was panting with excitement. He blurted out, "Averell has just talked with Truman and he told me Truman would back him if he got into the race -- and for him to go ahead. We want you to be in on it. We need you." So I joined the Harriman campaign as the director of the Washington office.

JOHNSON: That was in 1952? You know Truman had talked Stevenson into running.

KELLY: Yes, I know. Stevenson decided later that he would run. But at the time Lanigan came to me, the race was

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still wide open.

JOHNSON: Oh, before Stevenson accepted.

KELLY: After Stevenson had said no to Truman's first offer of support, Harriman had a talk with Truman and Mr. Truman gave him a green light. He said he should at least see what he could do; see if he could get a lot of delegates. Truman, I know, thought highly of Harriman, and that he was qualified for President.

JOHNSON: So you worked in the Washington office for the Harriman campaign.

KELLY: I was designated as the Washington director of the Harriman for President Committee, but I traveled all over the country with Harriman, and wrote speeches for him.

JOHNSON: You were well acquainted with Harriman. Does that mean that your speeches then are with the Harriman papers?

KELLY: I don't know. I don't know what became of them.

JOHNSON: They're at the Library of Congress.

KELLY: The Harriman papers?

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JOHNSON: Yes.

KELLY: There's a man writing a book about Harriman; he came out and interviewed me the other day about Averell, a few weeks ago.

JOHNSON: So what did you find out when you were going around the country promoting Harriman?

KELLY: Well, we had our own airplane, of course. Harriman got an airplane from the United Airlines, and I called it the "Harriman Express." It was the funniest campaign because Averell had never run for anything. Later on when he was Governor of New York, he got very sophisticated. But in 1952 he was full of the diplomat's caution; he would say, "Frank, let's not get too jazzy." I showed him how we painted up his airplane and he said, "I don't know whether you should have done that." I said, "Well, Averell, you know you've got to loosen up." He'd get going in a speech and get all stiffened up; we wondered if he would ever be good at speechmaking. But you know, he had a lot of appeal because people respected him. We'd get to talking about his experiences flying around. he told me, "You know, Stalin used to call me up at 3 o'clock in the morning

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from the Kremlin, and send a limousine over for me to come over and talk with him when the war was going very badly. And one night Stalin said to me, 'Now, I want you to get this across to Roosevelt. You tell Roosevelt to do this or that.' And I said, 'Marshal Stalin, Mr. Roosevelt is the President; I'm just his Ambassador.' Stalin flushed and said, 'We know that you run the country; you Capitalists are the real power. Now, you tell Roosevelt to do this.'" Harriman said, "He really believed it. Stalin thought that I and my millionaire friends, that we could tell the President what to do."

JOHNSON: Well, Harriman was probably about the richest man in the country.

KELLY: Whenever we needed campaign money, I'd say, "Averell, we're running short of money." He'd say, "Well, call up my bank." It was the only time I ever had a bank to draw on in a national campaign. So I'd call Brown Brothers-Harriman (his bank in New York) and they would fly a man down in a whipcord suit; he'd come in with a check, and we'd have what we needed.

JOHNSON: This was in '52?

KELLY: Yes, and I ended up with Grace Tully as my secretary.

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She had been FDR's secretary. She knew every politician in the country. So she put us in touch. When Grace Tully called, she could get anybody on the phone. She came in to see me after a few weeks and she said, "You know, Mr. Kelly, what year this is?" I said, "Well, I think so, '52." "Do you remember when President Roosevelt died?" I said, "1945." She said, "I've been here seven years now. Mr. Harriman brought me over here and I've never had an increase in salary." So I

said, "You haven't? Well, we're going to give you a raise." I think I said she'd get a 50 percent increase -- immediately. So I went over to see Harriman (as I did every day) and I told him this, and he put his glasses down on his desk. He said, "50 percent?" I said, "Averell, it's been seven years since she's had a raise." He simply hadn't given it any thought.

JOHNSON: Make up for lost time.

KELLY: Yes.

JOHNSON: So he said okay?

KELLY: Yes. He just hadn't thought of it. He saw the justice of giving her a large raise.

JOHNSON: And she had never asked, I suppose.

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KELLY: You could get a taxicab with Averell Harriman; he never had any money, you'd have to pay the cab. Why did he need to carry money? He was money.

JOHNSON: Yes. I met him two or three times before he died. So how long did that last then, that work with Harriman?

KELLY: We went to the convention with Harriman. When we got there were discovered that Adlai was swinging around again, and was about to take the nomination.

JOHNSON: And Truman felt he had to...

KELLY: Well, Truman first swung over to Barkley, but the labor guys got together at a breakfast with Barkley and told him he was too old to run. I wasn't there, but I heard that Barkley wept and everything else. You can just imagine; when you think of Reagan now, Barkley was 70 or something like that, and they wouldn't let him run. But Stevenson voted for Harriman on the first ballot at that convention; I saw him do it.

JOHNSON: He did?

KELLY: Yes. And then he decided to accept the draft. Stevenson wanted me to stay on as a speechwriter, but I

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didn't want to do it. I was very angry at that point; I felt Stevenson had let Harriman down.

JOHNSON: You mean Harriman suggested to Stevenson that he take you on as a speechwriter?

KELLY: Yes, he said, "Frank, Adlai knows about your work; he'd be glad to have you down in Springfield." But I had already been offered another job by the *New York Times* to direct a study of world news at the International Press Institute. So I took that. Politics is a very wearing thing,

and I was tired of being with losers, to tell you the truth. And I thought Harriman was better qualified to be President. He had more experience.

JOHNSON: Well, what was Harriman's attitude toward Adlai?

KELLY: Well, he liked him all right. He thought, you know, that Adlai was inclined to swing back and forth on some things.

JOHNSON: Do you think that Harriman's big handicap was actually his tremendous wealth? That this was a handicap?

KELLY: Well, I think that and the fact that he had never

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held an elective office. Stevenson had won the Governorship of Illinois by a big margin in 1948.

JOHNSON: Had you had any dealings with Stevenson while you were on the Lucas staff?

KELLY: Yes. In the campaign of 1950 when Scott and I were going up and down Illinois, we had a hard time getting Adlai to come out and make some speeches. We finally did, but he took a kind of haughty attitude toward Lucas. He thought of him as a standard politician type. I did, however, write one line for a speech that Stevenson delivered in which I referred to Everett Dirksen as a "Pecksniff from Pekin." He came from Pekin, Illinois.

JOHNSON: Sure he did. Yes, I know where that is. I'm an Illinoisan.

KELLY: Well, they got a kick out of that, so he said, "I'll keep that in." Ordinarily, Adlai would rewrite everything 25 times. I liked Stevenson, though. I got to know him better afterwards. He was a brilliant, lovable human being with great compassion for the sufferings people had to endure.

JOHNSON: So in '52, after the Harriman campaign

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collapsed...

KELLY: Then I went to work for the International Press Institute with money from the Ford Foundation. We had a \$200,000 grant to study the flow of international news.

JOHNSON: In New York City?

KELLY: Yes, I did a study of international and global news, showing how little information Americans get in the newspapers about other countries. It's really shocking, you know. It was in those days; it's a little better now.

JOHNSON: The *New York Times*, though, was still pretty strong, wasn't it?

KELLY: Well, pretty good. The chairman of our committee was Lester Markel, the Sunday editor of the *New York Times* and he was very shocked to find out that the *Times* coverage of Latin America, according to our study, was really poor. They did beef up their coverage after that.

JOHNSON: You mean general newspaper coverage of Latin America was poor by American newspapers?

KELLY: Oh, practically nothing. They said there's no reader

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interest. We did a survey of 50 telegraph editors, asking, "What do you do when you get a story from Latin America?" "Put it on the spike; nobody wants to read about Latin America."

JOHNSON: That's one of the reasons we probably have the problems we have today, especially the public understanding.

KELLY: Sure.

JOHNSON: How long were you with that?

KELLY: Let's see. That was '52-'53. Then I was a consultant to the American Book Publishers Council on Censorship. They were having a lot of problems with attacks on books. I helped the book publishers to establish better relationships with the press and the libraries, in 1953-54.

JOHNSON: This is at the time of the McCarthy business?

KELLY: Yes, the McCarthy era.

JOHNSON: Did you write any speeches or articles about McCarthyism?

KELLY: From 1954 to 1956, I was a vice-president of a public

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relations agency in New York -- the Stephen Fitzgerald Company. Then I was elected a vice president of the Fund For the Republic, which was formed to fight McCarthyism, by the Ford Foundation. Dr. Robert Hutchins was the president. I was recommended for the job because I had Washington experience, and knowledge of the press. I was the public information officer of the Fund from '56 to '75.

JOHNSON: And you were a vice-president?

KELLY: Yes.

JOHNSON: Right under Hutchins?

KELLY: Yes. Then in '59 we set up the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara. So I moved with my family out there and we've lived there for the last 29 years.

JOHNSON: Okay, you were in New York City most of the time before that. You were living in New York City?

KELLY: Right. And the last six years I've been serving as senior vice president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation which a number of us created to focus attention on reducing and gradually getting rid of

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nuclear weapons, focusing on that one issue only.

JOHNSON: Where is that?

KELLY: Santa Barbara.

JOHNSON: When was that established?

KELLY: In 1982.

JOHNSON: You were one of the founders?

KELLY: I was one of the founders.

JOHNSON: Who else was involved in founding that?

KELLY: Well, Charles Jamison, who was president of the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce; Wallace Drew, a vice president of Smith-Barney; and David Krieger, who is a political scientist from the University of Hawaii and now lives in Santa Barbara.

JOHNSON: Is that bipartisan?

KELLY: Yes, nonpartisan. Wallace Drew is a Republican and several other members of our board are. We have several women on the Board.

JOHNSON: The Fund for the Republic -- what were your main objectives, and projects?

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KELLY: Well, we were trying to combat the hysteria that Joe McCarthy generated. We made a lot of grants to different groups to defend civil liberties and oppose censorship and that kind of thing. And we decided what we needed was a permanent all year round Center to study what was happening to democratic institutions in the bureaucratic, technological society. Hutchins wanted to set it up in Santa Barbara; he had a home out there. Finally, he persuaded the Board to move from New York to Santa Barbara. I'm glad he did; I love it out there. It's a beautiful place.

JOHNSON: Good. Did you ever make trips back here to Kansas City to the family?

KELLY: I came back in 1974. I got a distinguished alumnus award from the University of Missouri-Kansas City at that time, but I haven't been back since '74.

JOHNSON: You don't have brothers or sisters living here?

KELLY: No, I have some cousins here, a few distant relatives.

JOHNSON: Now after you left the Research Division you had that interview with Truman, probably in early '50.

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KELLY: That's when Lucas was Majority Leader, I know.

JOHNSON: Was he there with you then?

KELLY: No. I simply made an appointment to see the President through Charlie Ross.

JOHNSON: You would have been there by yourself.

KELLY: Charlie Ross was there during the whole interview.

JOHNSON: We'd like to get a copy of that if we could.

And then your next visit was when your mother was with you.

KELLY: Yes, she came in 1951. She asked Mr. Truman to inscribe a copy of a book called *The Truman Program*, edited by M.B. Schnapper. Mr. Truman wrote in it: "To Mrs. Kelly with best wishes on her visit with her family to the White House -- Harry S. Truman, White House June 26, 1951."

JOHNSON: Was that the last time that you met with or talked to Harry Truman?

KELLY: Yes. We had a funny little episode there too. My son was about five years old, my older son, Terry. So as we were finishing up, the President went over to his desk

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and scabbled around the desk and came over to Terry and he said, "There you are, Terry. Here's a pen that says, 'A tried Truman for President.' You can use that to mark up the furniture." My little boy looked up at the President and said, "I don't mark up the furniture." And Mr. Truman turned bright red and he turned to my wife and said, "Oh, Mrs. Kelly, I shouldn't have said that to your little boy."

JOHNSON: He took it pretty literally, didn't he? What is your boy's name?

KELLY: Terry, Terence F. Kelly. He's interested in politics now in Wisconsin.

JOHNSON: What's he doing now?

KELLY: He's a corporation executive with the Dynatech Corporation, in Madison, Wisconsin. He's a group vice president; has about 12 companies in his group. He travels all over the world...

JOHNSON: Is that the only child you have?

KELLY: No, I have another son, Stephen, who is a pianist, who lives in Santa Barbara. He has presented concerts in the U.S., Europe, and Central America. He has a

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large repertory of classical music.

JOHNSON: So, you saw Truman only twice then after you left the Research Division? Did you correspond with him at all?

KELLY: I wrote him a note on one of his birthdays, and got a nice letter back. Darn it, I'm kicking myself that I didn't come by the Truman Library more often. I should have.

I read Merle Miller's book; that's the kind of book I wish I could have written. I'd love to have done an informal book with the president.

JOHNSON: You might have done a better job?

KELLY: Well, I don't know. But anyway, I missed that opportunity. I guess in every life you look back and see things that you should have done.

JOHNSON: Well, there's some controversy over *Plain Speaking* probably because some of those episodes don't square with the *Memoirs* in matters of fact, especially the visit with MacArthur out at Wake Island. You know that episode. You remember reactions when he fired MacArthur in '51?

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KELLY: Oh yes, I was there; I was working on the Hill then. McFarland was the Majority Leader then. We had been called down by, I don't know if it was Charlie Murphy, or somebody on the White House staff, but a number of Senatorial staff members and myself were asked to come down and give our reactions to what would happen if the President removed MacArthur. First we all turned pale and he said, "It would probably be the biggest blast that we had ever had on Capitol Hill." And it was incredible. I remember going to work, I think it was the day after Mr. Truman did remove MacArthur, and the halls were stacked with mail sacks. So we dragged them into McFarland's office and we opened some of them. There were telegrams from people saying, "Go down there to the White House, get that little so-and-so out of there and hang him on a lamp post. John and Mary Jones." They signed their names to these.

JOHNSON: Yes, we've got them here. We've got 70 to 80,000 pieces of correspondence.

KELLY: Have you?

JOHNSON: Yes.

KELLY: That was the worst firestorm I ever saw on the Hill.

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McFarland, you know, he was a ruddy-faced rancher type from Arizona; he came in and he was pale. I said, "Well, have you talked to the president since then?" And McFarland said, "Yes, and the President said, 'Yeah, you'd think I'd fired God.'"

JOHNSON: Yes, he did refer to him as God, I guess.

KELLY: I heard MacArthur give his farewell speech also.

JOHNSON: You were there?

KELLY: I was up on Capitol Hill, yes. I looked around; I was standing way in the back. (Kenny Birkhead later gave me a copy of a big photo that showed me way in the back of the House of Representatives.) I looked at people, and tears were running down their faces. But I thought it was the worst cornball speech I'd ever heard, and I had heard plenty of corny speeches.

JOHNSON: You weren't up in the gallery; you were in the back of the House Chamber there?

KELLY: Standing way in the back. Well, they let some of the staff people stand there, you know. [Senator] Dick Russell told me later, "That so-and-so MacArthur made us wait for an hour and a half, sitting out there in the

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anteroom of his hotel suite cooling our heels." There were Russell and several other prominent Senators who went down to escort MacArthur up to Capitol Hill. He just blew his own case.

JOHNSON: When was that?

KELLY: This was when they went down to talk with him and take him up to the Hill.

JOHNSON: He was late then giving the speech?

KELLY: Well, I don't know whether he was late or not, but they went down early to talk with him, and he just let them sit out there.

JOHNSON: Did he sort of look down on Congress?

KELLY: Oh yes, apparently. Apparently he looked down on everybody except God.

JOHNSON: How did he sound to you? Do you recall what the tenor of that was?

KELLY: Yes. I was surprised by his voice; it was more high pitched than I thought it would be. I remember one time when Harriman and I were flying around the country in '52, when MacArthur allowed his name to be submitted to

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the Republican convention, and we listened to some speech for MacArthur. We were sure it wouldn't go over. You know, MacArthur was just inept politically. I don't know whether it was Dave Lloyd or somebody else who told me that Truman said to him once, "You know, if MacArthur had been smart, when he landed in San Francisco, instead of going right on to Washington, if he had organized an 'impeach Truman' movement and just gradually gone across the country with it, he might have had some luck."

JOHNSON: The man on horseback; Napoleonic?

KELLY: Yes. Dave said the President said, "You know, what they should have done," and then he outlined the whole campaign of "impeach Truman." Then Truman laughed, "But he didn't do it."

Dave, I guess, had quite a few conversations with Mr. Truman. They liked each other a lot.

JOHNSON: Was there a sense that he sounded a little pompous and he tended to lecture? Is that the kind of feeling you got from MacArthur?

KELLY: Yes, and he gradually turned people off. He couldn't be a man on horseback; he was too pompous.

JOHNSON: When you wrote speeches for Harriman in '52, was

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that the last time you wrote political speeches?

KELLY: Yes, that's the last time. I have no desire to do it again.

JOHNSON: You don't have copies of those?

KELLY: I don't think so. Maybe the Harriman headquarters does, but I don't.

JOHNSON: Do you have papers that you would want to give to the Truman Library?

KELLY: Well see, the University of Wyoming, for some reason, asked me for my papers, and I sort of told them that I would send them over there. But I haven't done anything about it. I've got some papers in the basement. I'm always too busy to go down there and poke around.

JOHNSON: And that includes White House papers, Research Division and Harriman?

KELLY: I may have a few memos and things like that. But I'm sure you've got all the stuff about '48 that I would have.

JOHNSON: Anything else you want to say before we finish up here?

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KELLY: No, I think I've talked at great length. Enjoyed it very much.

JOHNSON: We appreciate it. If you should think of something that you would like to add, of course feel free to do so when you get the transcript, the original draft transcript.

KELLY: All right, sir.

JOHNSON: Okay, thanks.

Appendix A

Addition to Oral History statements made by Frank K. Kelly at the Truman Library.

KELLY: The ancient Greeks knew that good persons sometimes had to make terrible decisions. The situation of a good man compelled to inflict pain for a noble purpose was called tragic.

Harry Truman -- a good man who did not seek the burdens and the responsibilities of the Presidency -- knew that when he ordered the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities he would inflict hellish suffering on tens of thousands of men, women, and children. In talking with me about that decision, he quoted General Sherman's statement that "war is hell." In the Christian tradition, hell is regarded as a situation in inescapable torment. To kill people torments the conscience of any good person, but a good person involved in a war must take the responsibility for killing persons regarded as enemies.

Truman told me that he knew the Japanese were "human, just like us." But he had the responsibility -- as Commander in Chief -- of bringing the war to an end as rapidly as possible. He was told that the atomic bombs would shorten the war and stop the slaughter. So he made his decision -- believing, too, that those monstrous bombs might compel humanity to refrain from future wars.

I admired his global vision and his willingness to take the responsibility for his part in plunging humanity into the nuclear age. But I think that the continuing development and possibly use of nuclear weapons poses the greatest hazard to human life on this planet. That is why I took part in the founding of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, which is dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Harry Truman had a tremendous impact on my life and on the lives of all human beings in this century. I have proposed a Summit Meeting for Humanity -- in the spirit of President Truman, who had compassion for every person and who demonstrated in his life that humility and dignity of a true man. I enclose a copy of my proposal, which I presented at an international conference in Costa Rica in June of 1989. I also enclose an article printed in the Santa Barbara *News-Press*, quoting from my speech at that conference.

I also enclose a copy of a pamphlet entitled "Searching for a President in a Nuclear Age", published by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. The idea of a systematic search for presidential candidates has been in my mind for a long time -- going back to my experiences in working for Truman in 1948 and for Harriman in 1952.

In my long interview with Mr. Truman in the spring of 1949 or 1950 -- and it must have been in one of those years, because Charlie Ross was present at the time and he died in December, 1950 -- Mr. Truman said to me at one point: "You know, Frank, there are people out there in the country who might make good president -- and nobody knows about them. I don't think we should limit nominations to people who are dying to get the job. Anybody who wants it too much should be disqualified. We should find the best candidates and get them to run."

I remembered that Mr. Truman didn't want to run for Vice President in 1944, but leaders in the Democratic Party realized that he would be "the best candidate" and got him to run by convincing him that it was his duty.

In recent years, candidates have to raise 30 or 40 million dollars to be seriously considered. The candidates of 1988 were not satisfactory to millions of voters in both parties. It was hard to generate enthusiasm for Dukakis or Bush. Polls indicated that many people did not consider either of them to be really qualified for the Presidency.

My proposal for a systematic search for the best candidates conducted by a Council of Citizens, has generated some discussion but has not received the support of any of the major philanthropic foundations. I am hoping that it will be tried out by the Democratic Party or by a large civic organization such as the League of Women Voters.

In any case, I think the increasing disillusionment of American voters with the recent presidential candidates demonstrates clearly that Mr. Truman was right. We must find better people!

Appendices B-D are not included in the online version of this oral history transcript due to copyright restrictions.

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