

Oral. History Interview
with
GEORGE TAMES

Photographer, *Time* magazine, 1938-1945; and for *New York Times*; 1945 to present. Served as President of the White House News Photographers Association, as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Photographers Gallery, U.S. Senate, and as Chairman of the White House Still Photographers Working Group.

Washington, D.C.
June 11, 1980
by Dr. Benedict K. Zobrist, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
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ZOBRIST: You're a Washingtonian?

TAMES: Yes, I was born and raised in this city. I'm one of the rare ones, I guess, and I've seen quite a bit of history over the years. I was born in 1919, which makes me 61 ½ years old. I dropped out of high school in 1936, I think it was in the tenth grade. I had to get out and earn some money. I went to work for *Time*, Incorporated, as an office boy, in 1938, and then picked

up the photography game about 1939-40. I covered Roosevelt's third campaign in 1940, and also the campaign of '44.

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When I say "covered," I mean "limited coverage." I was in Chicago in '44 for the Democratic convention, but I did not go to the convention as such. I worked in the mini-bureau we had set up although I did photograph around the convention. I really started covering campaigns during Truman's first run for President, in '48. I've been to all the Presidential nominating conventions from 1948 to the present, and I'll be going to Detroit and New York in '80. I don't know about the future, but at least I'll be doing that.

ZOBRIST: When did you first meet President Roosevelt, and what was your reaction? Earlier this evening you were discussing...

TAMES: Being a youngster, I reacted to Roosevelt as most people who have never been around a President react to Carter today. There is something about the office of the Presidency. There is a certain grandeur, a special feeling. But as far as Roosevelt was concerned, why, he was a god. In my family, a very religious family, my mother

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had three icons on the wall, and I remember as a little boy seeing them. One was St. George; another was the Virgin Mary; and then there was Roosevelt. So, I've always thought of him as a little bit more than just a man.

ZOBRIST: Could you tell us a little bit about how the press reacted to him and how they viewed him? I think that the role of the President versus the press has changed considerably since that time.

TAMES: The press, the writing press, generally liked him. They liked the give-and-take with him. He was stimulating. But as far as the photography end of it was concerned, we had very limited access to him. It was no secret that Roosevelt was crippled and had to be carried, literally carried, into a room, or he would come in on his wheelchair. But we were forbidden to photograph him except under very controlled situations. One example is the famous "fireside chats." We would set up our cameras on tripods in positions in front of the desk that he would use, or whatever setup

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he was using at the time, and then we'd leave the room. Then he would be asked to come in, and when we came in, Roosevelt would be seated. He'd be in command of the situation, the way he always was.

Of the Presidents that I have known, there were some who had a commanding presence, in the sense that when they came into a room, you knew they were there. Roosevelt was one, no question about that; Truman, the same, I never knew whether Eisenhower actually gave this same feeling. Kennedy definitely had it; I don't think Nixon had it. Johnson definitely had it, and Carter does not have it, as far as I can see. That was the feeling I had about them.

When I came upon the scene -- when I first started taking pictures in 1940 -- Roosevelt had already been around for over ten years. I used to talk to the other photographers and they would tell me what I couldn't do and what I shouldn't do, and what could be done. Well, apparently, when Roosevelt was elected and he came to Washington,

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his press secretary at the time -- what was his name?

ZOBRIST: Early.

TAMES: Yes, Steve Early, that's right. He called the photographers into his office. At that time there was such a limited number of photographers -- I guess 15 would be the total -- and that included the theater newsreels and the still photographers. They had a little meeting with him and he said, "President Roosevelt is crippled; there's nothing secret about that. And he has a favor to ask of his friends in the media, his photographic friends, and that is not to photograph him when he's being carried, or when he is in some of the more compromising positions. In return, the President pledges to make himself more available to the photographers." Up to that time photography was very limited; there are very few pictures of Hoover in action, or in the White House. So the photographers agreed to his request, but something happened. Within two or three years, what had been

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a request had the effect of law. By the time I came on the scene, all of these restrictions about photographing Roosevelt had become a condition of covering the President. We were not to get his picture while he was being carried. We were constantly being told and reminded by the agents, and everyone around him, what pictures we could take. That could never happen today, but at the time we went along, because we didn't know any better. Besides, I thought it was the law. I didn't know.

ZOBRIST: Well, in a sense your photographic results perhaps turned out better in that we do have a much better visual record of Roosevelt, wouldn't you say?

TAMES: Oh, yes, but I think...

ZOBRIST: Well, it's a limited type.

TAMES: Also, I think he would have made himself available anyway, even if pictures had been made of him in the wheelchair or being hoisted over the side of a ship, or things of that type that were restricted. I think he was such a good showman that he was able to use the seat of the Presidency to promote, not only himself, but his ideas. In other words, he was the first President to really use the media as an instrument of his own. And you can use them. There's no question about that. These reporters keep talking about how independent they are and so forth. Yes, they're independent until the President bends his little finger and calls them in and gives them an exclusive. You know they will print it no matter what. Of course, it's highly competitive. But, yes, we did get a lot of good photographs of Roosevelt.

I'll mention one of the things that I was most struck by about Roosevelt. Like most good showmen and most good politicians, he had his own gimmick, what the old vaudeville fellows used to call a "shtick," and his "shtick" was the cigarette lighter and the tilt of his head. He would always

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come into a room with prearranged positions. Typically, an agent would be standing next to an empty chair so that when Roosevelt came in the agent would move, and Roosevelt would be able to grab the chair. He would come in on the arm of either his son or an aide, and the moment he would hit the door, back would go the head, a smile would come across his face, and up would come the cigarette lighter, or the arm. And like any good conjurer on a stage, who wanted to distract you so you didn't see what the other hand was doing, he'd have you looking at his head and face, while he'd walk in with his braces, this stiff-kneed walk. He'd also have to stop and rest. But he'd always stop at prearranged positions, and as a result, people would leave the meeting, or the banquet, swearing that they had seen Roosevelt walk. You could put them on a lie detector and they would swear that they saw this person walk, not realizing the whole time that they were being distracted by a good showman. So that's a point of history I have always wanted to emphasize.

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Likewise, when he would walk into the joint sessions of the Congress, up that special ramp, he'd never go all the way up at once. He'd take about five steps and then he'd turn around and acknowledge the members of Congress; then he would go a few more steps and acknowledge the members again. As a result, you never noticed the fact that he was struggling. He was able to project an image of strength and vitality. This held right up until he became ill. We knew he was ill. Any photographer around him knew he was ill, but we kept telling ourselves he was not ill, trying to convince each other that he was okay. Of course, we went along with it. He was heavily made up. We could see that; his face was very sallow.

ZOBRIST: But the photographers went along with this pretty much, you would say, in terms of what they were getting in return. Could you think of any examples of anyone who violated the trust and how such things were handled?

TAMES: Oh, yes. *Life* magazine wanted to make a point of showing Roosevelt being carried. I think it

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was George Skadding, a *Life* photographer; he worked for the Associated Press and then went over to work for *Life* magazine. One of the assignments he had was to get a picture of Roosevelt being carried, and he did get a shot of Roosevelt being carried onto a train from a car. At the time he was severely reprimanded by the White House to the point where they were going to exclude him from further trips.

I don't know whether it was published or not. I can see the picture in my mind's eye, because I remember seeing the picture, but I don't know whether I saw it in the darkroom, or saw it around

the office, or whether I saw it printed. I have a feeling I saw it printed. I think *Life* printed that picture, but I could be wrong. Either *Life* or *Time*, one of them ran it I'm trying to recall, but I just can't. Since I didn't make it myself, I just can't recall. That was the only incident of a photographer breaking the trust that I can recall. There were so few regulars and we depended on the goodwill, of the White House or we wouldn't be carried along.

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Of course, we knew a lot of things were happening that were not made public. In campaigning with the President, or on trips, in a long convoy, every once in a while the convoy would stop under a railroad viaduct, or some other convenient spot like that. You'd always find yourself going from one end of town to the other by going under a viaduct or train overpass, and all of a sudden the convoy would stop. The regulars would know what was happening. It was just the President, being handicapped, had to have a portable potty so he could relieve himself there, because he couldn't get out and walk like the rest of the fellows could.

If I could digress for a moment, because that reminded me of the campaign of '48 with Harry Truman. The press people were on a truck in front of the Truman convoy. At one point, we didn't know where he was; he just disappeared. All of a sudden, here comes the convoy behind us, over the hill, riding past, and as he came by us the President

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shook his fist and he yelled, "You guys let me down," We were very, very upset about it, and we couldn't figure out what we did. At the next stop we eased around him and he called us over, and he said, "Come on boys, you have photographed me in every possible situation." He said, "I stopped back there at that gas station to use the men's room, and there wasn't one photographer to take my picture in that place."

ZOBRIST: What a sense of humor.

TAMES: As far as Roosevelt is concerned, however, my dealings with him were limited.

ZOBRIST: Well, can we start talking about Mr. Truman? I think that you had stated earlier that he was one of the many future political leaders, including future Presidents that you had known and had observed on the White House scene, before they had become famous. Why don't you start telling us about Mr. Truman and the committees and perhaps some of your first impressions? Then, you might

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talk about the contrasting dimensions between the Roosevelt and the Truman press situations.

TAMES: When I first met Truman, he was chairman of the Senate committee on the war investigation [Special Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program]. To be very honest with you, I was not very impressed with him. But I was a young photographer, and I was just watching him conduct the committee as chairman. Later I met him socially at the Press Club. He'd play the piano for the boys and the girls at the "congressional night," when the Press

Club had several. members of Congress come and do little skits and so forth. He was pleasant enough.

ZOBRIST: Pretty regular person?

TAMES: Pretty regular person. But you have to remember that there were a lot of Senators on Capitol Hill, and you never really got to know them too well, unless they became famous enough to be talked about. At that time Truman was just

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beginning to be mentioned frequently. I was very much surprised when Roosevelt picked him to be his running mate. If I recall, [Henry A.] Wallace, the Secretary of Commerce, was a leading contender at the time, and thought he would be picked. Supreme Court Justice [William O.] Douglas, was also very much in the news at the time and was an active candidate. Believe it or not, there was also some feeling for Senator [Claude] Pepper, old Senator Pepper who is still around. People think he's old today, and he is dragging, but in the 1930s he was quite a populist leader. He was for the little guy, and he was making quite a name for himself. His name was also being considered. Of course, Roosevelt picked Truman, and the first time I photographed him, with Roosevelt, was under the famous Jackson magnolia tree.

ZOBRIST: This was shortly after he came into office?

TAMES: No, this was before the election. This was after he was picked...

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ZOBRIST: Picked to run for Vice President.

TAMES: ...to run for the Vice President. That's the way that I recall, it. That's where we photographed him. I do recall that was the first time that I photographed the two of them together, I did not go to the convention itself.

ZOBRIST: At this time, whom were you working for?

TAMES: I was working for *Time* magazine. I was an office boy there. I was hired as an office boy by a fellow named Harold J.T. Horan, who in 1938 was a stringer for *Time*, Inc. in Washington. He then opened up the Washington bureau. *Time*, Inc., a corporate giant today, had only one man in '38, and he was a stringer. The bureau grew tremendously in Washington.

So, I was working for *Time*, I went to work for the *New York Times* in November of 1945. I had been doing some freelance work for the magazine of the *New York Times*. When I went up and asked to see the people I'd been working for, because I'd

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never met them -- I only knew them over the phone -- they asked me, out of the clear blue, if I wanted to work for the *New York Times*. I said I would, if they met my pay. I wanted \$100 a week, which I thought would be a lot of money, and it was. I wanted to get married and I needed

a hundred bucks. That kind of set them back a little bit. Bruce Ray, who was then managing editor, told me, "I just hired Scotty Reston three years ago for 85 bucks a week, and you want a hundred."

I told him, yes, I wanted a hundred because I wanted to get married, and that was it. So he agreed. They had to create a special category for me, because at that time they had people working for the *New York Times* who'd been on the staff for 25 or 30 years and were not making \$100 a week. So in order to justify my pay, I was hired as the "photo correspondent" for the *New York Times* in Washington.

ZOBRIST: Could I go into your career just a little bit more? Apparently by this time, you had

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established your reputation somewhat, and might I ask in what ways? I would take it that you had gotten some good pictures of Roosevelt.

TAMES: Yes,

ZOBRIST: Tell us a little bit about some of the more outstanding photographs that you might remember.

TAMES: What I was doing, literally, was to try to create a job for myself in *Time*, Inc. I was still classified as an office boy. I was shooting pictures on the side, however. I started shooting pictures by observing what the professional photographers who we had hired were doing. I found myself suggesting pictures to them. Here I am a fellow that knew nothing about it, and I was suggesting angles and so forth. Suddenly I started realizing that maybe I had a pretty good eye for this. Then I also realized that the men who were photographers did not necessarily have the formal educational background that the writers did, and that I could become a photographer with

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my limited scholastic background. When I was hired by *Time*, Inc. at \$18 a week in 1939, they had a whole stable of men in New York, whom they referred to as "college graduate office boys." Some had graduated from some of the most prestigious colleges in the country, and wanted to work for *Time*, Inc. at \$18 a week as office boys. Some of them had masters degrees. Then I came along -- a young man with only a tenth grade education who wanted to become an office boy. They didn't want to hire me. But Harold Horan insisted on hiring me. In fact, he paid me for a whole year out of petty cash, in order to force them into hiring me. Reluctantly, they finally hired me.

First, I started suggesting pictures to the other photographers. Then I bought a camera, and I started walking around the bureau shooting pictures of the reporters. Every reporter who suggested a cover story for *Time* had to go to the subject's home and ask the wife or mother, or someone else, if they had pictures of him or her when, they

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were at Harvard, or when they were at camp, or anywhere, when he was on the rowing team, and when he boxed, and what have you. The writers would go through the family albums, take them back to the office, have them copied, and bring them back. Then the writer would set up a photo session with the subject, at which time the photographer would come in and literally just walk around the subject, photographing his head. Then the artist would paint the cover, and the photographers hated to do that, because they weren't getting paid extra.

Finally, I persuaded the office to let me do all the photo queries, and while I was doing the photo queries I would make arrangements for the photographer to take the subject's picture. I would write the captions that went with the pictures. One thing led to another. One day I was asked to set up a picture of Dean Acheson, Under Secretary of State. None of the *Life* photographers were available, and Harrison and Ewing who we used as a freelancer, who would get \$15 to

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shoot the pictures, was also unavailable. So when I called New York and asked them what I should do, they said, "You go out and shoot it the way you've been shooting pictures of people in the office. We've seen some of those pictures and they look pretty good."

So, I went over with my rickety little tripod and my little Leica, with no flash attached, except open and shut. Just like Brady, I'd fire a bulb off the ceiling. I got Dean Acheson to sit down and I walked around him like the other photographers used to do. Then I got him to stand by his desk, and I made a picture of him. That picture of him by his desk ran at the lead of the article and the cover shots were copied off my photographs. They sent me \$30. Since I was only making \$28 as an office boy, I said, "This is it." So, from then on, every time a query would come in for a photographer, I would shoot it myself. I wouldn't even ask Garrison and Ewing or the like, and after awhile I was able to buy some more equipment and I started shooting.

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ZOBRIST: Had you won any contests or...

TAMES: No, I had not.

ZOBRIST: Or had you just really just distinguished yourself with the staff people you were working with?

TAMES: That's right. I'd distinguished myself with the staff people, plus I was suggesting more pictures. The thing that really impressed them was what happened when we covered the funeral of the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox. There was a very big funeral for him, and *Life* magazine sent three photographers to cover it. I went along to shoot for *Time*, and the others were shooting for *Life*.

Well, the caisson with the body stopped in front of the old Navy Department on Constitution Avenue, at which point they transferred to a horse-drawn caisson. On the last mile everybody walked. They had the honorary pallbearers -- the Cabinet members, war leaders, and so forth. Well, there

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were the three *Life* photographers and myself. When *Life* magazine came out it was a double-truck layout on two pages. There was a huge picture across the top of the two pages, and then four pictures below. The top photo and three of the other pictures were mine. All the other three photographers only got one, one picture, in the layout. It was simply because I had staked out the area in advance and walked the route and decided the picture to get would be a shot of the caisson coming into the gates of Arlington Cemetery. I got up on the hill, in back of the main gates, and as the caisson was coming across the bridge I started photographing. When it made the turn to go into the gates, I photographed that and had the caisson going in with the whole convoy behind it and the people walking, dignitaries walking, and the whole city in the background, the skyline. So it was that, plus the fact that I was researching some of the stories by then, and writing some of the research for the stories. This is not really the

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the type of oral history you are interested in. I think that you will probably...

ZOBRIST: But it gets you to the White House.

TAMES: It gets me to the White House, yes. And gets me to Harry Truman.

ZOBRIST: Before you start on Mr. Truman, in order to set the scene and I want you to tell the story, as you will, but I think it would be interesting to have you, as a press photographer, describe what were the circumstances, how much of a free run did you have of the White House.

TAMES: Absolutely none! Nothing like the access today. At the White House there was a press room, a small one, right in the West Wing of the White House.

ZOBRIST: Is this in the basement?

TAMES: No, this was on the first floor to the right just as you came in the door, on the right hand side. But it was a small room with about 15 desks in it, and that was the press room. You

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must consider that the regulars who covered the White House numbered less than 20 reporters, and about five photographers. That excluded the three theater newsreels, and they usually came over every once in a while because theater newsreels were big in those days. They were the TV of their time. We had limited access but you have to remember that we had a President that didn't move around very much, and there wasn't that need.

ZOBRIST: And also, wasn't this a time before you had a press theater? What was taken was just taken in the Oval Office, I would suppose.

TAMES: Oh, yes, just the Oval Office, and a few times under the portico for visiting dignitary arrivals and other such ceremonies.

ZOBRIST: Rose garden, too?

TAMES: Rose garden, but not much, not as much as the later Presidents made use of that. I think

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probably Kennedy made more use of the physical facilities of the White House, and of Washington, than any of the other Presidents. The outdoor dinners and music under the stars type of thing; that was more Kennedy's style than Roosevelt's style. There wasn't that much interest. Really most of those shows, extravaganzas, that are staged on the lawns are for TV media, which is what you're getting today. Everything at the White House today is geared towards TV media.

ZOBRIST: There is an observation that I might interject at this point. From my own point of view and perhaps you would wish to comment on it, it appears to me that the Oval Office in the Roosevelt and the Truman period, as compared with today, has had different color schemes and lighter, brighter lights and a whole different sort of presentation in the room. This probably is a change that you have seen.

TAMES: Oh, yes. Of course, what is being done today is that the Oval Room has become a stage, stage

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center. And sometimes I feel that we are just actors; we are playing a part. Some of the Presidents even consider us actors, and use us in that respect. I think that Nixon was very artful in that; L.B.J. also did that. I've seen the change, you know, the lighting. The old carpet that used to be on the floor with the Presidential seal on it; that's gone and a lighter carpet is there because they need the light to reflect back up for the cameras. If they had followed the suggestions of some of the photographers we would have been able to photograph in there without any lights. You could put recess lights in the ceiling on a rheostat that could be turned up when the media came in, so that you are able to photograph what is happening. Today, with the fast films and the faster lenses, even with dim lights, we are able to work. There was also a room we called the Fish Room. What we refer to as the Fish Room today is the Roosevelt Room, not the Cabinet Room. The Fish

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Room was a room off the President's office, but still in between the Cabinet Room and the other rooms. You see, the West Wing has been redesigned several times. The media is no longer in the old press room there, but we are now where Roosevelt had his swimming pool. We are down in that pit area where the swimming pool was. It literally is two layers; the main press room is up above where the pool was. They just floored it over, and then where the pool was at the lower level, they just made that another series of rooms, or booths and so forth, for the media. The Fish Room was used for Security Council meetings and also as a holding room for distinguished visitors when they came to see the President. They were escorted into this room. We refer to it as the Fish Room, because it had some of Roosevelt's trophies on the wall, plus the fish tanks, and this gave the visitors something to look at, sort of calm him down before he saw the President. That was what that was used for.

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As I mentioned earlier, we, the photographers, were not allowed into the White House proper, into this area where the writing press had the press room. We were only allowed to go into what we referred to as the "doghouse," and everyone remembered it as such. It was simply a room about six feet wide and approximately 30 feet long, where the photographers were allowed to stay. When it came time to photograph Roosevelt we were called out of there and into the White House and then back to the doghouse.

ZOBRIST: Was this room over in the administrative wing?

TAMES: It was where you go into the White House, West Executive Wing; that is the office area, which is nearest to the old State, War and Navy Building, that very ornate building.

ZOBRIST: Yes.

TAMES: All right, as you walk into that door, in the

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White House proper, on your left was a driveway, and what we referred to as the "doghouse" really was the room where the White House florists and garden would keep his cuttings and would make up the bouquets and so forth for the Presidential events. So they took him out of there and gave him another spot further down the White House, into the White House proper, into the basement, and we were given that room. But the photographers thought that was a great improvement, because prior to that they had to stand out on the street. They weren't even allowed into the White House proper, into the building at all. I think that one of the reasons the photographers had such great affection for Truman is that we all recognized that he literally made us first-class citizens.

One day after he had become President and taking a tour of the West Wing, he came into the press room and started talking to reporters. He commented, "Where are the photographers?" And they said, "Oh, they're in the doghouse."

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He said, "What do you mean the doghouse?"

"That's where the photographers stay, outside; we don't let them in here."

So immediately he passed a resolution, he said, "The photographers come in here with the writers." That was the first time that that had ever happened, and that's why we refer to the fact that he made us first-class citizens. People tend to forget that photographers were not looked upon with great favor in those days. It's only been since the end of World War II, and particularly since TV, that the photographer has come into his own. In fact, the pendulum has swung the other way, where the photographer has almost more importance than the writer, the commentator, the word people, because we are becoming more and more a picture society rather than a word society. If you don't see it, it doesn't have the impact. And everybody plays for it.

In fact, I might comment along that line. I'll never forget the time the *New York Times* was going

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to do a story in the magazine on Harry Truman's first year. Mr. Krock, who was the bureau chief, went over to interview Harry Truman and I was sent over the following day to photograph him. I was led in from Charlie Ross' press office through the Cabinet Room, through the President's secretary's room, and into the President's office, unprepared. I wasn't expecting to go that fast. Here I am alone, with the President of the United States. Even though I knew him personally, and I knew him as a Senator, and I felt at ease there, I still looked around, and I saw no Secret Service agents. I was amazed that I was alone with him. To make conversation while I was unloading my cameras and getting ready, I said, "Mr. President, I was over at the U.N. yesterday..."

ZOBRIST: That was when the U.N. was...

TAMES: At Hunter College. They were organizing at Hunter College. And he said, "Yes, what the hell's going on up there?"

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I said, "Mr. President, I really don't know. But I'll tell you one thing; I saw TV for the first time in my life, and I was very much impressed by that." I said, "The main room in the main hall of Hunter College was not big enough to hold all of the delegations. Some were stashed inside rooms where they were watching the proceedings on TV, I went in and watched that." And I said, "You know one thing that struck me?"

He said, "No, what?"

I said, "Well, politicians have got to learn that they are on camera all the time." I said, "Some of those people literally were disgracing themselves, what with their scratching, and nose picking, and things they were doing. They didn't realize that all this was going, not on the air but at least it was going into the other rooms, and there was the possibility of it being broadcast.

The President said, "Yes, I've been thinking

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about that." He said, "You know, it used to be that in order to be a successful politician you had to have 70 percent ability and be 30 percent actor." He said, "I can visualize the time when you're going to have to be 70 percent actor and have 30 percent ability."

I think that's what's happening today; I mean everybody plays for TV. Everybody's an actor on the stage. I think what Shakespeare wrote is coming to pass. I mean we're all actors for everyone else. We bantered it back and forth, and he sort of leaned back in his chair and rocked a little bit and looked at me and he said, "I wonder what Huey Long could have done with TV."

I said, "What about Father Coughlin?"

He gave another example and then said, "Can you imagine what Hitler would have done with TV?" He said, "Look what he did with theater movies. Now," he said, "TV's got to watch itself." I don't recall exactly what word we were using then, but the feeling I was getting was that this

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media has the seeds for our destruction. And that was before Orwell wrote *1984*.

That was one thing about Harry Truman; he had a good sense of history, and he could project into the future. He had a sense of something that was going to happen thirty years after his Presidency. We had such fun with him.

ZOBRIST: How would you describe him as a subject? Was he easy to work with?

TAMES: Very easy to work with. Very easy. In fact...

ZOBRIST: And what kind of rapport did he have with you fellows?

TAMES: Harry Truman created what he referred to as the "One More Club." Photographers always asked for one more shot. This was in the days when you used a 4 x 5 Speedgraphic and you used bulbs. The fastest photographer took six seconds from the time he fired the shot until he was ready to

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fire the next one. And while you were reversing your holder and putting in your bulb and cocking your shutter and getting ready, things were happening that you would see with your eye and you were missing. So, you'd always shout, "one more." You never shot more than two, because if you start shooting more than two you're wasting film, plus the fact that you usually got it in two. If you didn't have it in two, you just didn't have it. But we used to always shout for one more.

President Truman created the One More Club and he named himself president of the One More Club. He prided himself in this. In fact, when visitors would come to the White House, he'd greet them formally and then he'd turn them around so that the photographers could get a good picture. He'd tell these people; he'd say, "These are my friends; they're members of the One More Club, and besides being President of the United States I am president of the One More Club,

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and this is how you do it. You just stand right here and we're going to shake hands and you look over there and we follow whatever instructions they yell at us. Because I am President of the United States and Commander in Chief of the most powerful nation in the world, I take orders from no one, except the photographers."

You talk about getting along; that's one of the reasons he could do anything. He was such a nice fellow that we, the photographers, would say, "Well, it's the President's birthday in three days;

let's go buy him a cake. And then we'll go in and take a picture of him blowing out the candles." We'd send in a request asking if he would like for us to buy him a cake and come in and make a picture. Oh, he'd love to have a cake. He'd love to observe his birthday. And that's exactly what we would do.

Before I get off of it and while we're rambling here, and these thoughts keep coming up to me, I would like to give you one more "Trumanism."

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One time I was talking to him about Eisenhower, and generals, and what he thought. He commented, and he said, "You know, George, a general without an army is just another GI named Ike." And I found that to be very true. There is nothing more pitiful in this town than an "ex." A general without an army or a post, a Senator who has been defeated, a President who has been defeated, or even one who has retired, such as a Senator, a Congressman, even photographers. You no longer have the perks; there's a certain status you achieve here and you go along and all of a sudden you find yourself out, and you come back and nobody's paying any attention to you.

I was at the Capitol just recently, and I ran into Suzy Park (I think that's her name). She worked for the Speaker of the House, and got caught up in this Korean scandal, and when the Speaker didn't run for reelection, she just lost her job in his office as a receptionist or whatever she was doing, and she was gone. I ran into her in the hallway and asked her what she

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was doing and she was almost in tears. She said, "I came up to look around." She said, "They won't even let me park my car up here." She was talking about the Capitol police, and she said, "When I used to drive up before, why, they would just run up and jump into the car and park it, have me leave it there, everything is fine, but now they won't even talk to me." I have seen Senators come in who have been defeated, who have the privileges of the floor. I have seen them come into the lobby or just come in to walk around, and in a way it's pitiful to see. But it never affected Truman; he was just as happy when he was an ex-President. He kept up with it, and wrote letters, and we kept in touch with him.

I liked the fact that when I covered the funeral of Sam Rayburn with President Kennedy and I was standing outside the church with a great group of the media, plus other people, here came Harry Truman to pay his respects. He was tap, tapping along with his cane, and he looked

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up and spotted me and he came right on over and stopped and shook my hand and said, "How are you doing, George?" He said, "How are my boys? How are the members of the One More Club?"

There is something else while I am telling you about the One More Club. When Harry Truman left, we had a party for him, just the photographers. We bought him a watch where you could set the alarm and it would ring. It was a novelty at that time. We told him now that he didn't have a whole staff of secretaries to keep him on time, maybe he would like to wear this watch. We

were in the basement of the Carlton Hotel, and he played the piano, and we all sang. This was when he was going out as president. He turned around at the door, and he waved goodbye to us, and then he stopped and he hesitated and he said, "You know, many times in my despair at the White House, I've always wondered whether the nation and the world would have been much better off if Harry Truman, instead of being President

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of the United States, had played piano at a bawdy house." Then he turned around and left.

Before he left, he suggested that since he was leaving the Presidency and Eisenhower was coming in, maybe it would be a nice thing if the photographers would contact Eisenhower and ask if he would like to be president of the One More Club, so this could be a continuous thing. By voice vote, right there, and in his presence, we said, "There has only been one president of the One More Club, and not only do we not continue this with the incoming President, we are dissolving the One More Club as such." And he remained president of the One More Club to this day. In fact, some of the personal letters that we boys have received, he has signed himself as president of the One More Club instead of President of the United States.

All right, I think what we should do now to wind this up for today, is to give a series of vignettes on Truman. Then we'll just tie them

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in, and the next time we come we can really get into it.

I think I'd like to relate the wonderful time we had at Key West, about '47 or '48. Harry Truman loved it there but there was no beach. He loved to swim in the ocean, so the Navy literally brought over either a couple of truckloads, or a barge load of sand, and just poured it at one end of the base there, and Truman had a little beach. He could just go off and swim when he wanted to. They set up a couple of little shacks for him to change his clothes. Some of the media types got a few drinks in them around those clubs in Key West, and they decided that they would buy a small, miniature mule that they saw for sale. They brought the mule up to the main gate of the naval base. They sort of threw their legs over it; they had it in the back seat, and just went on through. They went right on down to the Truman beach, and put the mule in Truman's

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shower. Needless to say, after being in that shower all night, he sure left plenty of his marks around. When the President came the next morning to take a bath and he opened that door, this mule came out, and he really, really broke out in laughter, and just thought it was one of the greatest jokes. But the commandant of the base didn't think it was funny at all. He called the Marines that were on guard that night, and wanted to find out how that mule got on the base. When we heard that this was happening we told Charlie Ross, the President's press secretary, who then called the base commandant and said, "The President thinks it was a great joke," and they let it go at that. So that's what we did.

While we're on the subject, I'll never forget something involving a correspondent whose name was Joe Fox; he was a writer for the *Washington Star*. Joe Fox had a great stock of white hair, which was always blowing very wildly, particularly when he got a few drinks in him. Joe

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was sitting on a curb in Key West, and the tourists were photographing him as a native phenomenon. We were in the press room one day, and we got this call in from the gate, from a Marine, to talk to the press office. And they said, "We've got a man out here says his name is Joe Fox." He says, "What shall we do with him?"

We said, "If he's in, keep him in; and if he's out keep him out."

ZOBRIST: When you went on these trips down to Key West, where was the press based? Did you stay on the base?

TAMES: We stayed on the base, at the BOQ quarters.

ZOBRIST: Well, when you would go down to Key West did you have free access to the base, and to the Presidential area, or were there certain times of the day that you could photograph the President? How did it go?

TAMES: Well, usually when the President went there

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he went there to relax, and there usually wasn't much activity as far as photographs or news being made, if there was any news, it would be announced in the press room that Charlie Ross had set up. I think there was another press secretary after that. These things just, you know, blend into one. The President would stay at the commandant's house. You could walk up to it. There were only one or two agents around. Of course, the President or Mrs. Truman or somebody would get out and walk around, or take a ride somewhere, or go down to visit one of the submarines, and we'd hear about it. We'd go; or he'd go fishing and we'd go with him. But there would be very little to do. Of course, it was a vacation, and they would announce that the President was not going to do anything, and everybody would just relax and go their own way. In fact, things got so dull, I'll never forget that one time we organized a media parade. What we did, was to line up a11 the press -- there must have been 75 of us and some of the staff -- and

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we got pots and pans and cans and garbage lids and everything we could make noise with. A couple of people had harmonicas, and we all formed a single-file snake, and we came past the Truman residence. The President and Margaret and the Boss came out and they got a big kick out of this group of people acting for their benefit. It was a feeling that we had with Truman, that we've never had with any other President. It was a family; we were "family," more than we were adversaries the way the press is today. We didn't have any adversarial relationship; it was a very close personal relationship. It showed in his concern for individuals and their families and problems, not only in the immediate family, but even if we'd go to them with problems.

One of the photographers, Henry Griffin, of the AP, was always going to the Navy's Chief's Club. He'd like to be with the Chiefs, and one Christmas, or near Christmas, he found out a couple of the Chiefs had time for leave, but there

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was no way to get off the island. There was no way to get out of Key West. So he went to Truman and he told him, "There are a couple of GI's that would love to go home, and there's no way to get out. Why can't we get them as far as Washington on the mail shuttle?"

ZOBRIST: The shuttle plane, yes.

TAMES: The mail shuttle that goes up to Washington. The President said, "I don't see any reason why they couldn't fly them there. So Griffin went back and told the commander, "The President says it's okay. He can't see any reason why these two Chiefs can't fly as far as Washington on the mail plane." He got them out that way.

Can you picture us trying to use Carter's name today as a reference, saying, "The president says ..." Never! Never!

One of the pictures I've made of President Kennedy which you probably have seen, and has been published many times, is a shot of him leaning on his desk in the White House. He is

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silhouetted in the window. I got directly in back by the fireplace and shot, and I underexposed the picture to get that black dramatic effect, with the light coming in the window and so forth. He's leaning, with the whole weight of the world on his shoulders. I titled that "The Loneliest Job in the World." But those are not my words. In fact, they are Harry Truman's words in describing the office. One of the women in the *Times* office saw my picture and said, "I know exactly what you want to call that; I don't quite remember how it was, but Harry Truman said something that I think fits that." She went in and got a book in our library and found it, and came back and gave me the quote, "The loneliest job in the world." And that's exactly what I've used. But I'd like to tell a little aside on that particular picture.

President Kennedy had a broken back and it would give him great pain. He wore a brace, or corset sort of thing, and he never was able to

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sit for any length of time without really being in great pain. So, he would get up and walk around, and if he was reading he would put the papers down; then he'd stretch his arms and carry the weight of his body on his arms and give his back some relief. This is a gesture that I saw him do many times as Senator, and as President. I was doing a story on him and staying in his personal secretary's office, Mrs. Lincoln, and I would stick my head in his office every once in awhile and see what he was up to. When I saw him do this, I walked in, and made a couple of exposures from the back. Then I went and made a couple of exposures from the side in order to get a profile of him. Then I knew why he was having the weight of the world on his shoulders. He was reading the editorial pages of the *New York Times*. He was stretched out there; he had

his arms stretched out and he turned his head to the right and looked at me when he heard the click. He saw me and he said,

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"I wonder where Mr. Krock gets all the crap he puts in this horseshit column of his."

So, here I've got a picture in which everybody feels that the man has got the weight of the world on his shoulders, and all he is doing is reading the *New York Times* editorial pages and not liking it at all.

ZOBRIST: And getting worked up.

TAMES: And getting worked up.

In the 1948 campaign, on the Truman train, that was a very successful campaign swing. Many incidents occurred. I remember one night we were sound asleep and there was a pounding on our door. It was the porter saying, "You better get up because the President is on the back of the train in his pajamas and he's talking to the railroad workers. " So we all ran back there, and there he was on the back of the train talking to the railroad workers.

I think one of the funniest incidents that

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took place, I think it was in Iowa or Kansas. The photographer is always looking for some gimmick to photograph the President to show the area where we were. I was standing back below the train, below the President there, and I noticed this little girl about two or three years old, and she had an ear of corn in her hand. I said, "Hello."

She said, "Hello," back. Her father was with her.

I said, "Is that for the President, the ear of corn? Do you have something for the President -- a present for the President?"

So she looked at me with these great big eyes, not saying anything, and her father said, "yes, yes, that's for the President."

So, I said, "Oh." I went over and got one of the Secret Service agents and I said, "Look, here we are in Iowa, corn, little girl, ear of corn, gift for the President." I said, "What a combination for a picture; why don't we get

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her to go up and give the President the corn and then we'll get this nice shot."

He said, "Wait a minute, I'll talk to him. He goes up, and the President says, "Sure, hand her up."

So we handed her up, and here's the little girl, the corn, the President and his smile. The President says to her, "Well, I understand you have a gift for me, this ear of corn."

And she said, "No, sir, I happened to be walking past the pigpen and picked it up." And with that he let out a real roar, and we got a wonderful, wonderful smiling shot.

Well, of course, you know everybody remembers the picture of the *Chicago Tribune*, with the "Dewey wins" headline. The UPI photographer, Frank Cancellare made that famous shot. He would do these things and he had a natural...

ZOBRIST: Are you going to tell us about the...

TAMES: Oh, the campaign on the train and how the

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writing media was ignoring him. They were not literally ignoring him, but he would make so many stops that they wouldn't go around the back and listen to him anymore. They would just stay in the press room on the train, the press car, listen to his speech as it was being piped in, and continue playing cards. So I walked back there one day and I said, "My God, that was a big crowd back there listening to the President this time." One of the reporters looked up at me and said, "What were they, high school kids?" and continued to play, and ignored it. When I came back to Washington I commented on that to the President's running mate, Barkley, who was Senator Barkley at that time. He was running with the President, and he said, "Well, I think those reporters missed a very important point, that everyone, even if they were only high school kids, each one has two parents; and when she or he goes back and says, I saw the President and he told me this, and he came down and shook my

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hand," he said, "they will more than likely vote for the President, and I think they are missing that point." One of the correspondents, the senior correspondent in Washington at that time, was a UP writer, Merriman Smith. He was on the train and he let it be known that he was leaving the Truman train in the next two days to pick up the Dewey campaign train because he wanted to become acquainted with the incoming President. Well, needless to say, the word got down to Harry Truman, and he got very annoyed at this, because he felt betrayed. There was a sense of loyalty. He figured that the fellows were all with him, and most were, really.

So we didn't see Merriman again until after the election. I was outside the Blair-Lee House when the President came back to Washington, about two days after the election. He was walking over to his office that morning, and Merriman Smith was there on the curb, Harry Truman came walking across with that brisk military walk, and

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Merriman Smith walked halfway across the street to meet him and he said, "Congratulations, Mr. President. Congratulations! Congratulations?" The President continued walking, Merriman was walking crablike, sideways, because the President never even hesitated in his stride, and he

looked up with this great big grin at Merriman and said, "How's Dewey?" He never forgot it, I'll tell you, and neither did Merriman. He tried to make up for it the next four years,

ZOBRIST: Before you leave the '48 campaign, would you tell us about the President's comments with the farmers?

TAMES: Oh, yes, I think we...

ZOBRIST: Was this at Dexter, Iowa?

TAMES: There you are, you remember, the plowing contest.

ZOBRIST: The plowing contest.

TAKES: Yes, and we were going into Dexter. I had

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forgotten where that was, but that was in Dexter, the plowing contest. We were going down this dirt road, maybe it was even a temporary road, just going into this...

ZOBRIST: Into a field.

TAMES: ...into a field where they had the plowing contest, which was a big event where the president usually made his major farm policy speech. We were going down rows of airplanes. I'd never seen so many airplanes, parked on both sides of the road with farmers sitting either on the wings or on the struts or somewhere, watching the President come by. They were very stoney-faced, no reaction, just watching him. The President was looking at them and when he stopped and he got out of his car, he said, "Those farmers are not going to vote against me; they're making too much money under me." And he was right. I mean these fellows had been making a good living under his Democratic regime.

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Since we're going from vignette to vignette, I would like to tell another story. When the White House was being renovated, Truman took us out on a tour of the White House to show what needed to be done. The ceilings were in bad shape. They had placed bars from the roof to the floor of the residential quarters in order to support the ceiling below. The President took us into his private bathroom, where there was a bar leading right down through the bathroom from the roof to the floor, which was the ceiling of the East Room. The President commented, "Many a time I've come up here during a diplomatic reception and I've flushed this toilet and I've always imagined myself landing down in the East Room." What a scene that would have made, I'll tell you. At least he had a sense of humor.

ZOBRIST: While we're talking about the renovation of the White House, perhaps you might want to add a later episode in terms of President Eisenhower's comment on that porch.

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TAMES: Oh, yes. The Truman porch, which poor Harry really took a terrible beating on in the media and in general, from everyone, particularly members of Congress. He was desecrating the White House by adding this porch, they claimed.

While we were in the back yard, the south grounds, with Eisenhower, and this was about a year after he'd been in, he pointed to the Truman balcony and said, "You know, I gave Harry Truman hell about that balcony, but now that I'm in the White House and I've been using it, it's the best thing he ever did." He said, "I'm sorry that I made those comments that I did." He said, "It's been an improvement, both to the appearance of the White House, and in particular, to the Presidential quarters." He said, "I can sit up there in the evening and enjoy the south lawn." So, architecturally, I think President Truman had a pretty good eye and he knew that that was an addition that should have been put in there from the beginning. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if some of the early plans didn't

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show a balcony up there.

One day I had an assignment to photograph Margaret Truman when she was still in college at George Washington University. I made a pretty nice picture of her, a standard shot, and it ran full page in the *New York Times* magazine. It showed a very nice smile and it did reveal her knees, just barely. I didn't think anything of it. I had been in the press room that day, and I got a request to come in and see the President. He wanted to see me. So I walked in there, and with mock seriousness, he pointed to this full-page picture in the *New York Times*, and said, "What are you trying to do, make Presidential cheesecake?"

You know, during the assassination attempt on his life, I had just left the White House before the Puerto Ricans opened fire. I was on my way to the next appointment on his schedule which was the dedication of the statue of Sir John Dill at Arlington Cemetery. So I missed the shooting

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that occurred. Afterward, I was photographing a very serious looking president at Arlington Cemetery.

ZOBRIST: Yes, I think that's one of the most solemn pictures I've seen of him.

TAMES: Yes, it was. It was so uncharacteristic of him; he was always full of bubbly spirit. He could always see the long-range view, always able to see in historic perspective. That was his greatest attribute; he was able to see things in perspective. He read quite a bit, and he retained what he read. A lot of us read, and a lot of us never seem to hold it. But he seemed to be able to absorb and to hold it.

You know, only once can I remember him really being teed off at the photographers. That was the time that on one of the many routine types of photographs we were asked to make in the White House, we decided amongst ourselves that it wasn't worth exposing any film.

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ZOBRIST: He had asked that the picture be taken?

TAMES: Well, we were told there would be a picture available, that there would be a photo opportunity. "Photo opportunity" is a phrase the Nixon people coined. We used to say that we're going to go in to make a picture. That's something else again. I'd love to get into that aspect. Cleve Ryan used to be the electrician; he'd come in and light the Presidential pictures of Truman and others. He did it for over 25 years. When the Nixon people came in they renamed him the "illumination engineer." One day when the news press types shouted for the photographers to make way for the illumination engineer, Cleve Ryan yelled out, "Who got my job?"

I'm drifting off again, so back to Truman.

I think that we decided that it was a terrible picture the president was asking for and it wasn't worth wasting any film. We'd just go in and fire a couple of bulbs, without exposing the film, and come back.

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Well, it just so happened it was a picture that the President wanted, and when he asked for it nobody had it. The word got around about what we had done, and he asked us to come in and see him. We all trooped in, and we stood there like dumb sheep, and he looked up and he said, "Don't ever do that again!" And that's all there was to that. We trooped out very sheepishly, and never did it again.

In the morning he used to take long walks and he had a set routine. He'd come out of the Blair-Lee House about 6:30 or 7 o'clock and start walking. Especially this time of the year when it gets light at 6 o'clock, he'd come out of the Blair House early. In those days, you know, he'd have only three Secret Service agents actually walking with him. He'd have Jim Reilly, who would walk on his right; directly behind him about ten feet would come two agents. And there would be a Secret Service car following along the curb. When they would go, they would walk straight down

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Pennsylvania Avenue to 14th Street, down 4th Street to the Washington Monument, up and around the Washington Monument, and back down 17th Street to the White House. That would be the walk, at a very brisk pace. Of course, when they got to the Monument grounds, the agents in the car, two more agents, would jump out and that would be it.

Today, a Presidential candidate like Anderson, has got five times the agents that the President had in those days. And nobody thought anything of it.

There were the early morning street sweepers; guys would be out there with brooms and with those hoses hosing down the sidewalk, and they'd say, "Good morning, Mr. President." "Good morning, Mr. President." And that would be it. You know, we photographers had a hard time keeping up with the pace that he would keep. There was one photographer named Johnny Rouse, who was very heavy, overweight, and he'd run; he'd start

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huffing and stop, and then run and then stop and run. Finally, the President just stopped, and just held still, and he said, "I always wait when I see a fat man run."

Also, on these morning walks the President was more likely to drop some of his more personal mail right into the mail boxes. That's how some of these...

ZOBRIST: The handwritten ones.

TAMES: The handwritten ones, the ones that ripped the critics of Margaret's singing and some of the cartoonists he didn't particularly care for; he'd let them have it. And he'd use that language in his letters. Some of the White House staff would get after the Secret Service and say, "Why did you let him do that?" They'd say, "You tell him, not me; you tell him, How am I going to stop him from going to the mailbox?" But I understand that after a couple of these hot letters had gotten into print the staff got together and bought him a small, personal mailbox

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with an incinerator in the bottom. They made a big thing of presenting it to him and said, "You can write all the letters you want, but just be sure you mail them in this box."

I think earlier I had mentioned about the number of people today who would tell you that they predicted that Truman was going to win. Well, I was not one of those that predicted Truman would win. I was hoping that he would. I remember when I got off that train, and I ran into Margaret Truman, and she asked me how things looked, and I said, "I don't think they look very good."

She said, "You have no faith," and with that she just turned on her heel and walked away from me.

ZOBRIST: Well, in that connection, didn't you say there were a few who staunchly felt it was going to happen?

TAMES: Oh, yes. The people who believed they were

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going to pull it off were, one, Harry Truman himself; the Boss, Mrs. Truman; Margaret Truman; Vice President Barkley; and Les Biffle, a Democrat who was Secretary of the Senate. And there was Tony Leviero, the reporter for the *New York Times* who was a very good friend of the Trumans and who predicted that campaign right on the nose. Tony is dead now, but he was a very good reporter for the *New York Times*. He was on that campaign right from the beginning. Yes, he predicted it, and told me. I said, "Tony, I don't think he's going to do it." Tony used to speak with his jaws clenched. He looked at me and said, "He's going to do it." Those are the only official Washington people -- and I think I talked to quite a few in my capacity -- who said that he was going to win.

All in all, it was a great, great period. There was great despair when Truman took over. After all, the young people today can't conjure up the thought of a President being in as long as Roosevelt was. People don't realize how long

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he stayed in, and what a period of our life he covered. He was a war leader and a war winner. Then Truman comes in, a little pipsqueak of a guy with thick glasses, a judge and a Senator. Oh, absolutely no, people said he will never make it, never make it. He proved them wrong, and the proof of the pudding is the fact that today more and more people are saying that it is true he proved them wrong.

ZOBRIST: Before we close tonight and while we're talking about the Truman period, I know that you made so many, many photographs of him. I am just amazed at all the things I'm seeing tonight. Do you have any favorites or ones that you really like

TAMES: Of Truman?

ZOBRIST: Any come through as a high point?

TAMES: Well, I think, yes, the pictures made at his inaugural.

ZOBRIST: In '49.

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TAMES: In '49, of the victory that he and Barkley won. They were really like a couple of kids cavorting around. They were in the reviewing stand with their cups of "coffee" -- plastic cups -- in their hands, with a shot or so of bourbon in it.

MRS. TAMES: In their high silk hats.

TAMES: High silk hats, and obviously enjoying what they were doing. There was no really dramatic picture, because he was not a dramatic person. I mean he didn't make for theatrics; he was not a theatrical person. See, you need somebody who's going to be little "show biz" to give you that type. Most of the great pictures are contrived by the subject himself, who knows he is going to give a good picture when he does something. Mrs. Kennedy knew that when she put a pony-drawn sled in the back yard of the south lawn of the White House and put the two Kennedy children in it, and she was in there guiding it, that that's going to make one big picture. Whether or not it was done

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ostensibly just for the benefit of the children, it sure still made a good picture.

ZOBRIST: Another dimension I think that many people today really do not remember, and it strikes me very much working with the Truman material, and of course, it may be very, very obvious to you, but the Truman period, film-wise, was a black and white period.

TAMES: Oh, yes.

ZOBRIST: Versus on the other hand, the razzle-dazzle of the color that suddenly you started getting with Eisenhower, and then you get to the point where there are no black and whites anymore. You, as a photographer who has lived through this period and used, let's say, both forms, how do you feel, about this? How about the pluses and the minuses, and the psychological dimensions? Do you feel you tell the story better now than you told it then?

TAMES: Well, we're not telling the story any better.

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We have access that we never had before and we're doing it with smaller cameras. But you see, I had the advantage when I was coming along in my career, that I grew up with the 35 [mm] and the Rollei as my tools.

ZOBRIST: You probably started with black and white.

TAMES: Black and white. I was shooting color too, but we had no need for color. The other people who were shooting color and very little of that, were *Life*, maybe, occasionally...

ZOBRIST: Magazines?

TAMES: The magazines. There was definitely no color in theater newsreel or the newsreel TV. They were shooting black and white. It's been the advent of the tape camera, the one with the instant image, that has given us the greatest access, and that is coupled with the knowledge that TV can reach 40 million people average per day. Whereas, we with our stills could

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reach only a limited audience. Compared to 40 million the *New York Times*, daily, reaches 750,000 or 850,000, whatever our rate is today, and a million and a half on Sunday, in a limited area, mostly concentrated in New York City. And it's a week later to the West Coast, by the time our papers get out in the mail. That's why your polls today of your Presidencies run up and down, just like the stock market, because of instant reaction. That's why I'm not saying anything about Carter being defeated; it's still just too far away from the election. Too many things can happen between now and election time. But as far as the coverage itself is concerned, it's the accessibility.

We, the still photographers, and the theater photographer without sound, started getting access to Harry Truman, and that was more access than any other President in our history. We would go in and we would shoot our pictures, but there would be no sound, and there would be no reporters.

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And the subjects could talk back and forth. We heard many, many secrets; many, many good stories, and we never repeated them when we came out because there was an unwritten rule that anything said in there was privileged, so we never said anything.

In fact, it reached the point under Eisenhower, that one time I went in with the rest of the photographers, and I heard Eisenhower say a few things, and I came back to the press room and I typed out a whole page of what he had said. I went into Jim Hagerty, his press secretary, and said, "Look, this is what the President said today." It was something favorable, I've even forgotten what it was, and I said, "I'd like to use it."

He just tore up the sheet right in front of my face, and he said, "No." He said, "It's in his favor this time; maybe next time it won't be. So I don't want to start a precedent." In all of Eisenhower's years, none of the reporters went in with us. Only with Kennedy and Johnson

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did the reporters insist on going with us. First, the reporters insisted on going with us; one pool reporter would go in with the photographers. Then, after that more than one pool reporter wanted to go in. They started letting a few more in, and then the TVs wanted to come in, and so from then on it was wide open. They'd go in with their boom mikes and pick up every whisper. So everything was stilted. The President knew it; he couldn't relax. He really had to be on guard every minute. Look what happens at the slip of the tongue on a campaign. Imagine what could happen in the president's office if he doesn't realize that. Look what happened to Nixon; some of the things he said. If he knew that those tapes were going to be made public, he never would have said those things.

By the way, speaking of Nixon and the tapes, you know it was not unusual for Presidents to tape conversations. What made the Nixon tapes unique were that they were a 24-hour type, with

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staff and everything else, I think both Kennedy and LBJ had facilities to tape individual conversations simply by pressing the button or by tapping with their foot. If they wanted to remember what you were saying, they would tape it. So it's not unusual for the president to tape. Now I've never seen the tapes, but I know enough, I've been around enough, that when people tell me, "Yes, that's been done," I know that's being done. But it's not unusual, and I don't think it is wrong. I mean a man just can't remember everything.

ZOBRIST: Does that about do it for tonight, or do you have more on that list?

TAMES: No. I think we went through the list. I think what we'll do now is just stop and then if you come back again, we'll pick it up.

ZOBRIST: Okay.

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