

Oral History Interview
with
SAMUEL C. BRIGHTMAN

Assistant Director of Publicity, Democratic National Committee, 1947-52; Director of Publicity, DNC, 1952-57.

Washington, D.C.
December 7 and 8, 1966
by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Brightman, would you for the record, give me a little of your personal background, where were you born, where were you educated, and what positions did you hold prior to your services on the Democratic National Committee?

BRIGHTMAN: I am a native of Missouri. I was born in Lancaster, Missouri. I went to public schools in Columbia, Missouri, and St. Louis, Missouri; to Washington University and to the University of Missouri. I worked on the St. Louis *Star-Times*, the Cincinnati *Post*, Station KSD in St. Louis, and on the Louisville *Courier-Journal* before I went into the service in

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World War II. After World War II, I worked in the Government with the Surplus Property Administration, and the veterans emergency housing program; returned to journalism with the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and, then, came in 1947 to work with the Democratic National Committee. I worked for them for eighteen years. I now have my own public relations operation -- which deals in the area of public affairs and political counseling.

HESS: Regarding your early years in Missouri, sir, do you recall anything about Mr. Truman during that time?

BRIGHTMAN: I knew who Mr. Truman was. I never met Mr. Truman until he was a United States Senator, and I was the Washington correspondent of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. I had no close association with him then, but I was covering the Truman Committee, which was investigating

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the war effort before I left Washington to enter the service myself.

HESS: Do you recall anything in particular about that meeting?

BRIGHTMAN: No. I saw Mr. Truman during my military service at the time of the Potsdam conference, but I did not talk with him. I was not on duty at the area where the "Big Three" meeting was held, but back at the press area dealing with the news media.

HESS: How are you selected for the Democratic National Committee? How did you come to be on the staff?

BRIGHTMAN: I came here because Jack Redding, who had worked closely, as I had, with Charlie Ross during the Potsdam conference, was recommended by Charlie to become the publicity director of the Democratic National Committee. Mr.

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Truman and Chairman Hannegan accepted his recommendation, and when Jack Redding became publicity director, he called me at the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and asked me to come back to Washington and become associate director of publicity, which I did.

HESS: That was in 1947?

BRIGHTMAN: That was in 1947.

HESS: What were your first tasks when you came up here?

BRIGHTMAN: Combination of writing and handling telephone contacts. I eventually wrote most of the publication, "Capital Comment," a newsletter that the Democratic National Committee was putting out. I wrote a good deal of news releases, and, of course, later on I got into the planning of the convention and the campaign materials. Also, when I first returned to

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Washington, the fact that I had a wide acquaintanceship among the Washington reporters, which Jack Redding did not have, meant that a good many of them called me with inquiries involving the Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee.

HESS: When in 1947 was it that you came to town? The first of the year or the last of the year, roughly.

BRIGHTMAN: I came in in the spring. I would have to check back to see the date. As a matter of fact, I came in during the period when the fight over passage of the Taft-Hartley Act over President Truman's veto was a very hot issue, and I was very deeply involved in that fight from the moment I returned to Washington from Louisville.

HESS: On that subject, how important was that to Mr. Truman's subsequent election in '48? Just

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how important was his veto of the Taft-Hartley bill?

BRIGHTMAN: I think it was very important, and I think the fact that Gael Sullivan, who was then executive director of the Democratic National Committee, Jack Redding, myself, not only did everything we could to sustain the veto, although we failed, but the fact that the labor unions who had been somewhat disenchanted with Mr. Truman's reaction to the railroad strike, were aware of what we were doing, knew that we were really trying to sustain his veto. I think this was an important factor in the support which Mr. Truman received in the '48 election. For example, Mr. [Alexander F.] Whitney -- now dead -- who was president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, felt understandably bitter about Mr. Truman's actions during the railroad strike but later came around and supported Mr. Truman fully, and I think that the activity of the Democratic National Committee,

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his knowledge of it, in fighting to sustain the President's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, was a very major factor in that support.

HESS: In Mr. Redding's book, *Inside the Democratic Party*, he goes into that episode quite a little bit and tells about trying to get Senator [Elbert] Thomas back from Switzerland, and Senator [Robert] Wagner, who was then on his deathbed, to come from New York.

BRIGHTMAN: We had planes on call to bring Senator Elbert Thomas back from Geneva; we had arrangements with Bob Wagner to bring his father down, we had special private cars on call to bring him down by train, if it turned out that his vote would be crucial.

HESS: As I understand it they needed thirty votes, and they only got twenty-five. At one time they thought they were going to get all thirty, do you remember who backed out?

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BRIGHTMAN: I have forgotten the exact count. My recollection is that there were several votes and I would not be able to identify them by name. But there were several senators who would have voted to sustain the veto if it was demonstrably possible to do this. That the actual count came within one or two votes of upholding the veto but when it was impossible to get the extra votes, then the people who would be damaged very seriously by casting this vote were released from their commitments, so that they would not be damaged back home. That's what made the vote slide back down, and this is a fairly normal procedure on the Hill on many pieces of legislation, and in both parties.

HESS: In June of 1948, the President took his trip, his preliminary campaign trip, more or less, and went out to the west coast. What part did the Democratic National Committee play in that

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particular trip?

BRIGHTMAN: We were playing the normal role of trying to see that he went to places where he would have the greatest effectiveness, to see that the political people were not excluded from seeing him on this nonpolitical trip and to make suggestions as to nonpolitical comments which might be usefully made in these various areas.

HESS: Did the Democratic National Committee help on any of the speeches, or was it just mainly itinerary and who to see in the different areas?

BRIGHTMAN: The national committee made suggestions. The final speech drafts were completed at the White House. Mr. Truman was not a man to take something handed to him and read it verbatim without impressing his own personality and thoughts on the document.

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HESS: During the course of that particular trip was when Senator Taft mentioned about the whistlestops, and in Mr. Redding's book he states: "It was an opening too good to miss. The Democratic National Committee announced with sober face: 'Mayors and Chambers of Commerce of thriving, patriotic, modern, civic-minded attractive and prosperous American municipalities recently described by Senator Robert A. Taft (Rep. Ohio) as "whistlestops" are being polled to determine whether they agree with Taft's unflattering description of their homes?'" Whose idea was that?

BRIGHTMAN: That was my brainstorm. We had a lot of fun with it. In retrospect I would say that we did not gain any substantial amount of votes out of this, except I think we did throw the Republicans and Senator Taft off balance a little bit by responding with humor to his charge that Mr. Truman had blackguarded the Republican Congress

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at every whistlestop in the United States. Of all of the responses we received to the telegram mentioned in Jack Redding's book, only one refused to say, "We're a fine progressive city and not a whistlestop." One individual, and I have forgotten now, whether he was the mayor or president of the Chamber of Commerce wired back, "I am not going to fall into your Democratic trap."

I feel that humor is a very slippery thing to work with in politics, but the situation we were in in '47 and '48, we were in a sense, similar to a quarterback who is way behind and can try any offbeat play; throw the bomb as often as he wants, without worrying about adverse effects. I do think that we did use humor several times in the 1948 campaign. I think it may have thrown the Republicans off balance, and I think some of the humor we used later against Mr. Dewey may have helped to reinforce the

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feeling that he was rather a pompous man who, rightly or wrongly, many of the voters suspected of wanting to be President so he could tell the people what was good for them. He was vulnerable to humor; we used it on some of his speeches and, I think, Secretary [Harold L.] Ickes did some programs in which he referred to Governor Dewey as a "candidate with sneakers." The actual facts are that the polls had persuaded Governor Dewey that he should not conduct a vigorous campaign on the issues, that he was so far ahead that all he needed to do was to utter the proper platitude and everything would come out well, and it was a rather vacuous campaign on the Republicans side. I can remember correspondents had been out with Governor Warren, who made one unnewsworthy speech every place he went, complaining about the fact that he wasn't really campaigning. On the other hand, Senator Barkley was campaigning quite vigorously and hitting

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the issues. Now, there is a feeling in some circles these days that Mr. Truman's whistlestop campaign was composed of "give 'em hell" rhetoric. If you actually go back and read those speeches, you will find that although they were sometimes not given in elegant language, that they were hitting at real issues. They were factual, they were saying things about the Republican party, that the Republican party did not choose to answer because they thought they were so far ahead they didn't need to, but Mr. Truman was not conducting a campaign of epithet and noise, and in his whistlestop tours, he was citing the record, chapter and verse, and if you reread those speeches you will find that there was a great deal of fact in each one of them which the

Republicans chose not to reply to, and which proved to be damaging. Basically, what Mr. Truman was saying was that the Republican Congress, the so-called

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"do-nothing Congress," had demonstrated that it was out of touch with the wishes, the aspirations, the needs, and the problems of the average American family.

HESS: Why did Mr. Truman attack the 80th Congress so much of the time, and not Mr. Dewey? I know he did attack Dewey and he did come out against Dewey, but the major thing in the campaign was the 80th Congress, why was that?

BRIGHTMAN: Because the 80th Congress was there. It was for real. It was an example. They said the farmer didn't want storage bins so he could get crop loans on his grains. They said the family didn't want better social security coverage. They said that the average family didn't want price controls to protect him against gouging during a period of shortage. That was the record of this Congress and that was what they said, and the Congress was the Republican party. Now, '48 was, in my opinion, a test of

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the basic strength of the party, party philosophy, and party performance. Either party might have nominated a more glamorous personality by today's TV standards. But the question was the record of the two parties, their interest in your family and its welfare, and its security. And there was the record, and that was what Mr. Truman kept talking about. It was in terms you could understand. If your grocery bill had gone up, if your social security payments were inadequate, if you weren't covered by social security or the minimum wage, if you were a farmer who wanted to get a loan on your crop and there was no place to store your wheat or corn so you could get a loan, these were things you could understand, and these were things where the party record was clear. My own opinion, without meaning to detract from Mr. Truman, because I think he conducted a marvelous campaign -- I think that this was much more of a test of party strength than '52, '56 or

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'64. Mr. Truman wasn't just saying Mr. Truman wants to do better for the farmer, or Mr. Truman wants to spend more on educating your children, Mr. Truman wants to see that your social security payments will keep you living in decent self-respect. He was saying the Democratic Party wants to do this, and the Republican Party proved by its action in this do-nothing Congress that it would not recognize these problems and deal with them.

HESS: Do you think the refusal of the 80th Congress to appropriate that money to the CCC -- the Commodity Credit Corporation -- for grain storage bins was important in the Midwest?

BRIGHTMAN: Tremendously important, of course.

HESS: Now the Democrats took Iowa that year, which was an unusual thing.

BRIGHTMAN: I can remember the phone calls before

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election in which the Democrats in Iowa said that they were going to carry the state for Mr. Truman, and I can remember that we wanted to believe this, and we knew there was this tremendous discontent with the Republicans in the Midwest, yet we could not help but ask ourselves, are they guilty of the same wishful thinking we are. Can they really carry it?

HESS: Mr. Truman spoke at Dexter, Iowa at the National Plowing Contest on September 18th.

BRIGHTMAN: I think there is a sidelight there on the farm issue. One, we let it be known that Mr. Dewey's farming interests were solely to get cheaper grain to feed his dairy cattle; two, anyone in a small town, or farm in Iowa, had only to look and listen to Mr. Truman, and then look and listen to Mr. Dewey, to find out which candidate had some idea of how he lived, what his interest and problems were.

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HESS: And, Mr. Truman at the National Plowing Contest did mention the Commodity Credit Corporation problem. So, he mentioned an important thing in an important speech to the farmers at the plowing contest.

BRIGHTMAN: That's right. And he did in many other places in the Midwest, and the plains, dry farming areas.

HESS: On the subject of the 80th Congress. Jack Redding states that you wrote an account of the reaction in the country to the President's backfire on Congress. Do you recall anything in particular on that account that you wrote at that time?

BRIGHTMAN: That particular piece, I don't recall. Basically, we wrote and wrote and wrote the areas which this group, that group, the other group, were neglected or ignored by the Republican Congress. The 80th Congress was quite a good

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Congress on foreign affairs, but it was -- I still say -- a very bad Congress on domestic affairs. The House Agriculture Committee wrote a report which said, in effect, that the American farmer was insulted by any Government help -- that he would rather go it alone. Not going into details, there are very many particular problems the farmer has. He is not like an automobile manufacturer who can tailor his product to the demand. He cannot do as happens legally or illegally where a group of manufacturers get together to determine his price or his product. He has to take what he is offered. If the price goes down, his reaction is as an individual who doesn't work as a group, cannot make the corporate decision to lay off so many people when they cut

back car production or what have you. His gut reaction is, I'll try to grow more bushels to make up for the drop in the price per bushel. And this, of

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course, compounds his trouble through the law of supply and demand. Nobody has solved this problem, I think, to the satisfaction of the farmer, or the person who is a friend of the farmer, or the Government, or anyone, but, at least Mr. Truman was not telling these people that you have no problem, and everything will be fine if you're just left alone to shift for yourself without any Government help.

HESS: One point you've already hit on, but I'll bring it up again is, the fact that some authors like to bring up the fact that a few of the things the 80th Congress did for Mr. Truman, so to speak, are what he will be remembered for -- the Marshall plan, the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill -- but, are campaigns usually run on domestic matters more than foreign affairs?

BRIGHTMAN: I think, normally, domestic issues are more important. There is no question that the

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Korean war hurt the Democratic Party in the 1950 midterm elections, and there is no question that the Korean war was a very strong factor in the size of Mr. Eisenhower's majority in 1952, although, I happen to hold the personal belief that he would have won comfortably even if there had been no Korean war. I, also, think that he settled the Korean war on terms that would have brought forth a national uproar and threats of appeasement if Mr. Truman had settled the Korean war on the same terms. When I say this, I am not criticizing the settlement which Mr. Eisenhower made in Korea. I would, also, say there is nothing that I have more admiration for Mr. Truman for than his decision to remove General MacArthur from his command when General MacArthur was attempting to go beyond his military actions which Mr. Truman felt would have the gravest repercussions. I happen to agree with him. The hardest thing on earth -- as Mr. Johnson is finding out right now -- is to stop

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aggression by any kind of totalitarian force without accelerating aggression to the point where we have devastating military conflict, which no one wants. This applies, obviously, much more now with the type of nuclear weapons we have, but it was still true in the Korean war where you had the possibility of intercontinental warfare occurring between Russia and the United States. I should, also, say that although the Republican 80th Congress was quite good on things like the Truman program, the Marshall plan, the beginning of McCarthyism was in the '48 campaign. It was not effective for the Republicans, but they were playing with the "soft on communism" issue in the '48 campaign.

HESS: When did that first come up? Over what issue? Where did they think they'd found any justification for such a charge?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we had some evidence that people on

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the far left had been in the Government during World War II. We had a whole series of events which caused Mr. Truman to discharge Henry Wallace, and for Henry Wallace to run as a third party candidate. It is difficult for me to believe that all of the resources that were thrown behind Mr. Wallace were completely domestic, and were just domestic liberalism. I think Mr. Wallace was an honorable and patriotic man, but I think that some of the people who were involved with him did not have complete allegiance to our own country. I think there were some bad apples in the Government during World War II. I think Mr. Truman showed as much courage in facing up to the situation of Henry Wallace, as he did facing up later on to the McCarthy problem. One, the American people have a tendency to like to think there is some kind of a plot or conspiracy or something if anything goes wrong, I guess people in every country do;

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two, the noisiest people in that area are the superpatriots, the people who say, "Let's blow North and South Korea off the face of the globe even if we wind up blowing the United States off the face of the globe."

It takes a lot of courage to be strong, to commit people to die without getting spectacular victories in return. I think Mr. Truman had that courage. And, as we all know, he has been criticized for not using our atomic weaponry in Korea, and he's also been criticized from the other side of the spectrum for using our primitive atomic weapon on Hiroshima.

HESS: In Mr. Redding's book, he says that you and he attended the Republican National Convention in 1948. Can you tell me what you remember about that episode? Anything in particular -- anything stand out?

BRIGHTMAN: Not really. Basically, I was attending

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as a technician, to look at their arrangements, some of which we improved on when we took over the hall. It was interesting to watch the Dewey Republicans exercise their control over the party at the convention, which they did not have over the congressional wing of their party. In both parties, the convention party is a different party than the congressional party. Basically, I was looking at it as a technician. How can we have a better convention than they have?

HESS: What did you see there that you could improve upon? Can you recall anything in particular?

BRIGHTMAN: We did a few improvements on things like lighting and camera positions, and if you go back and reread the proceedings we were pretty longwinded, but not as longwinded, and not as dull and repetitious as the Republicans were in that convention.

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HESS: You were looking at it from a technical viewpoint -- how to improve the convention.

Mr. Redding mentions that he saw A. F. Whitney there. Were you with him when he talked to A. F. Whitney?

BRIGHTMAN: No.

HESS: Mr. Redding mentions something about Senator Vandenberg, who had been mentioned as a candidate, but someone had started a smear campaign against him. Do you remember what that was?

BRIGHTMAN: My recollection was that it was not a smear campaign, but a blackmail campaign against him because of some activities of his son. This is a subject I don't have full recollection of, and I'm not sure I should have mentioned this, but that is my recollection.

HESS: Awhile ago you mentioned that there were several times during the campaign that the Democratic National Committee used humor

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against the Republicans. You mentioned a couple of those, about the whistlestop, and so forth. Do you remember any more?

BRIGHTMAN: Oh, one time Governor Dewey made a speech in which about the only specific thing he had to say about conservation was he was in favor of fish ladders. We said, "Gee whiz, the Communist world is looking at us for signs of disunity, can't we all agree that we are in favor of fish ladders, and get this divisive issue out of the campaign."

We had a little bit of fun with Mr. Dewey when he lost his temper and used rather rude language about an engineer who got the wrong signal and went backwards towards a crowd when he should have gone forward. This didn't happen very often. The Dewey campaign was quite efficient. "Scotty" [James B.] Reston did a column about the efficiency of the Dewey operation with Jim Hagerty, as against the happy-go-lucky

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atmosphere in the Democratic campaign -- Mr. Truman and Charlie Ross. He described the stop of the Dewey train, the efficiency of releases, everything was done on schedule, the two-minute whistle blew, and so on, and finally Mr. Hagerty gave the final warning to the photographers to scramble aboard. Mr. Reston wrote: "The final whistle blows and the Dewey train pulls out with

a jerk." Mr. Reston was counting on the copy desk to take out that last sentence, but it appeared in the papers, and somehow Mr. Dewey got the idea that this sentence referred to him, and he was unhappy about it. After Mr. Dewey had his unkind words about the engineer, every time the train changed engineers and train crews, Mr. Truman got out of his car, shook hands with all of them, thanked them for the fine way they were running the train. Freight cars all over the country were chalked with signs by railroad workers against Mr. Dewey. I'm not sure how

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many votes were involved there, but I suspect it was not a situation that caused Mr. Dewey any great happiness.

In all this, that again is part of this basic thing. Which party cares about the average guy? Now, Mr. Truman can understand how a guy could make a mistake. He can understand how a family might need a couple of extra dollars for grandfather's social security to keep him going. Whether he understood it or not, Mr. Dewey managed to give the impression of a fellow who thought -- engineers are not human, they are just people who are supposed to do things; people aren't human, they are statistics. This is very important in that campaign.

HESS: How did J. Howard McGrath come to be chosen as chairman of the Democratic National Committee for 1948?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we had this long tradition of

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Catholic chairmen -- Howard was a Catholic -- he was a very popular senator; he had been a Governor of Rhode Island; he was an astute politician; he was not up that year; he was a chairman who could be chosen without any intra-party struggle; he was acceptable to liberals; he was not at the time of his selection offensive to the southerners, although later on he stood up quite firmly to them. I sat in his office when he, in very gentle and polite terms, told the delegation of southern governors that there would not be any retreat on the civil rights issue.

HESS: Before the convention?

BRIGHTMAN: Before the convention, yes. But, Mr. Truman was from the Midwest. There was no great Democratic power base in the populous Western states at that time, so even though Rhode Island was a small state, a Catholic chairman from the East was recognition to the

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East. As I say, Mr. Truman was from the Midwest, his chairman had been Bob Hannegan, from the state. Of course, Hannegan was chairman when Mr. Truman became Vice President.

HESS: In 1944.

Did J. Howard McGrath make a good chairman?

BRIGHTMAN: I think so. We hadn't reached the development when a chairman really needs to be a full-time, full day, three hundred sixty-five days a year chairman. He understood politics, he got along well with politicians, he delegated authority, he used the party machinery, I believe, effectively to get as much of the Democratic Party strength behind Mr. Truman as could be done with the Wallace and Thurmond candidacies gnawing at our flanks on both sides.

HESS: How big a problem were those two gentlemen and their respective followers?

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BRIGHTMAN: They were a problem to the extent that they took votes. I think Mr. Truman would have carried New York without the Wallace candidacy. I'm not sure that the Thurmond thing was that devastating in the South. In a sense, all this was a blessing in that it gave Mr. Truman a freedom that he would not have had if he had been elected solely by populated urban areas or if the segregationists in the South had been his margin of victory. As it was, he came in without really anyone having any due bills on him.

HESS: Was there anything in particular that was done to try to prevent the Wallacites and the Thurmond group from cutting in so much on the votes? Were they countered in any measure?

BRIGHTMAN: On the national level the general line was, in the East and North our position was liberal on domestic issues, we were for

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enlightened foreign policy, we were firm against communism. Somebody thought we ought to be softer in our dealings with Communist nations, and said, "forget 'em", but there wasn't any way we could forget them.

In regard to the South, some of the most rabid segregationists were some of the most liberal people on domestic issues, public power, REA, aid to farmers, social security. All we had to tell the South was that Democratic programs had benefited the South. We did give the southern states, and the speakers in southern areas, information to show how the South in the Roosevelt-Truman administration had advanced socially and economically much faster than the rest of the country. They had farther up to go, but under the party that the segregationists were damning, they had actually made really spectacular social and economic gains.

HESS: Now, the Wallace margin of victory in New

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York really kept Mr. Truman from winning the state. What more could have been done in New York to counter the Wallace movement from taking New York away from the Truman column?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't think anything could have been done. I think if there might have been a little stronger organizational effort in New York; if some of the people who decided in the last two weeks that it was possible to carry New York, and started working frantically, had said two months before election, "There is a chance to carry New York" and had done it, we might have carried it. There were some people who just read the opinion polls and the newspapers, some of them never lifted a finger, others in the last two or three weeks decided that there was a chance and went to work, but I think the Wallace vote was there and there wasn't anything that could have been done to cut it. The answer was in getting other people who just sat it out, who

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decided it was a waste of time to go vote for Mr. Truman, and they didn't want to vote for Dewey or Wallace, so they just sat it out, and we didn't have the manpower in some areas to tell these people, "There is a chance; go vote."

HESS: What was his special appeal in New York?

BRIGHTMAN: Who?

HESS: Wallace.

BRIGHTMAN: He got these ultras ranging from Communists to just ultra liberals, and we have people now who I don't think have a Communist bone in their body, but they think that it is our fault that there is a war in Vietnam. The same people thought we could have had better relations with Russia in 1948. I don't agree with them.

HESS: Did Wallace have a special appeal to the Negro voters?

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BRIGHTMAN: I don't think so. I was at a rally in Harlem and I have never seen anything like the turnout Mr. Truman had. I don't recall what Wallace's Negro vote was, but I do not think it was very large.

HESS: You just mentioned the Harlem rally, that was on October 29th of '48. Would you tell me about that -- what you recall about Mr. Truman's visit to Harlem?

BRIGHTMAN: There was a tremendous crowd and very responsive. There was a sea of faces there. We had a very good crowd reaction in the whole New York area, and had a tremendous reaction in the garment district, which was supposed to be infiltrated with Wallace voters, and a lot of the press were so hypnotized by the opinion polls that they just under-read and under-evaluated the size of the crowds -- they said, they are just people to admire him for a spunky fight; they

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are out to see him, but they are not going to vote for him, and that sort of thing.

HESS: What seemed to be the general mood of the crowd there?

BRIGHTMAN: Friendly, enthusiastic. My guess is that he did just as well as Mr. Roosevelt with the Negroes, and basically we're talking about the middle class Jewish vote when we talk about the garment district, and I think he did very, very well with them. I do have the feeling, without having the figures at hand that document it, that overall it was the Democratic vote that could have been brought out if the organization had had a little more confidence that he was going to win.

HESS: Mr. Truman was in New York on the 28th and 29th, and he spoke at Madison Square Garden, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, as well as out in Harlem. Were you there at all three speeches?

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BRIGHTMAN: Yes. And, he also made some others. The Brooklyn Academy of Music was a traditional speech, tremendously enthusiastic crowd there, which meant nothing because this was a case that was different from the street crowds, which were spontaneous. This was an organized crowd in which John Cashmore had captains every few aisle seats to see that the people that were supposed to be there were there and had their noisemakers, and were ready to applaud on cue. And in Brooklyn was a place where the organization worked very hard. This is something different from the street crowds. You don't have to have a tremendous organization to fill the Academy of Music or even Madison Square Garden, but when people were standing four deep along Fifth Avenue in the tens, and twenties, and thirties, this has to be people who are coming out.

HESS: Who were the leaders of the Democratic Party

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in New York at that time?

BRIGHTMAN: You didn't have a leadership in the sense that one person really controlled the state, the borough leaders were pretty much their own dukes in their area. The state chairman had more strength upstate than he had in the metropolitan area. Actually, it has been a long time since you've really had a -- it's hard to remember when the Democratic Party had the kind of control over its own people in New York, comparable to what Mr. Dewey managed to impose over the Republican Party when he was Governor.

HESS: Who was national committeeman there?

BRIGHTMAN: I have to go look that up. Mrs. [William H.] Good was committeewoman; Ed Flynn was the national committeeman, but Ed was, by that time, in what you might call semi-retirement...

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HESS: He had been committeeman for a long time hadn't he?

BRIGHTMAN: ...he hadn't been really active. The State chairman was Paul Fitzpatrick who came from Buffalo, and as I say, had an upstate following. Continuing, you could add here -- Senator [Herbert H.] Lehman had his own group, but had no really statewide power; Bill O'Dwyer didn't have anything outside New York City and then didn't control some of the boroughs there; Jim Gerard, he must have been a borough chief some place, and I couldn't tell you which one now; Mrs. Good, I mentioned, from Brooklyn; John Cashmore was a boss of Brooklyn; Frank Sampson, as I recall, was the Manhattan county chairman then; Jim Roe, I think, was Queens; Jim Farley was a grand old man, but he couldn't go and tell somebody, "You do this, or you do that;" Jack Ewing who was in the "Little Cabinet",

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and head of what later became HEW, was a native of Indiana, who was a wealthy corporation lawyer, but had no real political base up there; Jim Mead was an ex-Senator, by then.

Really, you go through these names -- Bob Wagner was an alternate; Monroe Goldwater who had been around a long time and had no overall basis of power -- you go look at that whole delegation, but there wasn't any one group or even a triumvirate who was really worried about this. Carmine DeSapio was the congressional district delegate, and all he had was a neighborhood base of power then. You can run through here and find people who had a greater power later on -- but this just wasn't a state then where you could pull together an effective leadership pattern.

You have to remember that the so-called bosses and organizational strongmen, not only in New York, but in other areas in '48, they may have been strong when they produced delegate

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votes for Mr. Roosevelt in 1932, but over the years, they had been living not on their own organizational muscle, but on riding on Mr. Roosevelt's coattails.

HESS: Was there any one man that gave you more help in the New York delegation than anyone else, or not?

BRIGHTMAN: You couldn't really pinpoint anybody. I don't think -- it is my personal opinion - - that even in the closing days when some people got converted, most of the professional politicians just -- they took the opinion polls, they took the newspaper evaluation of the Wallace strength, and they didn't really think that Mr. Truman was going to win.

HESS: Who were those people that got a little enthusiasm along towards the end, do you recall?

BRIGHTMAN: I think all of the borough leaders, and

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state chairmen, got a shot in the arm when not just crowds in his last trip in New York, but crowds elsewhere, and so on. I don't think it would be fair for me to say, because it would be not a complete list, or a reliable list, and, also, it wouldn't be an accurate list, but you've got some guys who will go out and work like hell, and don't come in and make speeches to you, and you have other guys who come in and make a speech to you and say, "I'm really giving it the old muscle now, because I think we are going to win after all." Maybe they don't think he's got a bit of a chance really and they are spending all their effort on the rest of their ticket and not worrying about the President, so I don't think I ought to answer that question.

HESS: Did Gael Sullivan think he had a chance to be appointed chairman of the Democratic National Committee at the time that McGrath was appointed? Why did he quit in other words?

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BRIGHTMAN: Well, this has to be supposition. I think he was disappointed that he wasn't made chairman. I don't know whether he expected to be named chairman, deep down in his heart. I think, also, he felt a little the fact that although he came from Rhode Island, he and Howard had not been political allies or particularly close there and actually Gael's political strength came from his Chicago days and from Ed Kelly. I think the other factor was that he was offered an interesting job, and a financially rewarding job, and he felt he should take it.

HESS: That was with the motion picture owners association?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes. Gael was a very valuable fellow. He helped inspire and strengthen the party during some very difficult days, and I just don't think you can state too strongly that he

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deserves a great share of the credit for the fact that, by and large, labor did come back and support Mr. Truman in '48.

HESS: He was highly instrumental in getting A. F. Whitney and the President back together, was he not?

BRIGHTMAN: That is right.

HESS: What other things had he done on the labor scene to bring labor over to the Democratic side?

BRIGHTMAN: During all this period when we were trying to sustain the veto, he was talking to the labor leaders, not just Whitney, but all kinds of labor leaders, telling them what we were

doing. The national committee was going out and asking for radio time, putting people on the air, at a time when it was practically bankrupt, we were spending money to have these

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votes available; he was making sure that everybody knew that; but, he did an extremely good job keeping touch with a wide range of important labor leaders, saying, "What do you think we should do about it?" Maybe he already knew what he was going to do. Asking for advice, but also telling them and making sure they knew we were doing this and that and the other. He put in tremendously long hours in the office and on the telephone calling these people. In some ways, the telephone is a curse, but, also, there is a lot of difference between writing a fellow a letter and saying, "I just did this today," and calling the guy up and saying, "This is what we did today to try to beat this Taft-Hartley, what do you think we ought to do tomorrow?"

HESS: Personal contact. Was he disappointed that he was not appointed chairman of the Democratic National Committee?

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BRIGHTMAN: I assume so, but, my relationship with Gael was not the sort where he would tell me he was disappointed. I don't really know who on the political scene he would have confided in. I would be surprised if he ever told Jack Redding that he was disappointed. I may be wrong.

HESS: Were they particularly close?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes, I think so. Gael really was responsible for bringing Jack in on Charlie Ross' recommendation. Jack was already here when I came here. An awful lot of sessions Gael would call us both in. During the Taft-Hartley a lot of times, he would call us in the office and they would talk about things, the three of us, in between telephone calls, and so on, maybe we would stay in his office for two or three hours, have lunch or dinner together in his office, talking about things that needed to be done. I traveled with him, I liked him very much,

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and I thought he did a great deal for the Democratic Party. Knowing what I know now, that I didn't know then, in retrospect he did even more than I gave him credit for at that time.

I've seen a group of national committee people come in, oh, we were getting beat, and everybody said we didn't have a chance, all the troubles in the world, no money and everything, and Gael would give them a speech, and you could literally see the people stop slumping in their chairs and sit up and you could actually see...

HESS: The confidence get a hold of them.

BRIGHTMAN: ...the hope coming back in. The hope coming back in. The party really was, again I have to say, I had been on the outside, I didn't know about things then, but I think it was awful close to falling apart, and I think Gael held it -- not singlehanded -- but was a tremendous

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force in holding it together, giving it some spunk. And the other thing that is very strong in my mind is that that was the '48 convention and it was a pretty dreary bunch of Democrats and Alben Barkley's old-fashioned keynote address got those people "whooping and hollering" in all that miserable heat, and shook them up, and got them in a fighting mood, and I don't think Mr. Truman's Turnip Day speech would ever have been the tour de force that it was if it hadn't been for what Gael Sullivan had done with the leadership, and what Alben Barkley did with the convention of delegates and alternates in his keynote speech. It was a different ball game after that. Very few speeches change things a great deal in my opinion, but I think both of those speeches were important. I think Governor Stevenson's two convention speeches in '52 were more important than any of the other speeches he ever made in his life, before or since.

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HESS: Two speeches in '52?

BRIGHTMAN: He made a brief, but very well done, really it was supposed to be a pro forma welcoming speech as the host governor at the start of the convention which turned out to be an important step toward his nomination. The other speech, I refer to, is the acceptance speech, which I think is better than any speech he made after that, that I know about.

HESS: How instrumental was Barkley's keynote speech in obtaining the vice-presidential nomination for him?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, he might have had the nomination without it, as far as I was concerned, after the speech it was inevitable. Lots of Barkley's people thought Mr. Truman wanted somebody else, and I think that's true. I had to go around and deal with Mr. Barkley on the text of his keynote speech and get things set up for the shots

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we used to do in those days, of excerpts for the newsreels, the Sunday before the keynote was actually delivered, and even though I had lived in Kentucky and worked on the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, a lot of the people in the Kentucky delegation treated me practically like an enemy spy, feeling that I was -- because I was with the national committee -- that I was among the people that they thought wanted to keep Mr. Barkley from being nominated for vice president.

HESS: Who did they think that the national committee would favor?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, they thought that Mr. Truman wanted somebody younger.

HESS: Didn't he ask Justice [William O.] Douglas?

BRIGHTMAN: There have been reports, and I cannot say this except from hearsay, that he offered it to Justice Douglas and that he offered it

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to Wilson Wyatt, who put Alben Barkley in nomination.

HESS: Why do you think Barkley wanted the post?

BRIGHTMAN: I think he realized he could never get the presidential nomination, and he wanted the recognition from the party for all he'd done for the party. As important as being a Senate leader for your party is, in many ways it is more powerful than being vice president, the fact still remains that you get that from a small group of people who pick you for a variety of reasons, including your skill in operating within the Senate, and so on, and being nominated by the representatives of the party nationally, particularly if you are a border state or southern resident, is something different than being given a job by your Senate colleagues. I think he realized, even though he went through the motions in '52, I think he realized in his heart in spite

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of all his pride and his iron constitution, and so on, that it wasn't in the cards for him to be nominated President, and he wanted to have a vote of faith, confidence, and respect, or whatever adjective you want to use, from the national party. And, he was a good campaigner. As I said, the Warren campaign, not through any fault of the Justice, was a pretty sorry thing, and Barkley put on a real campaign. And Barkley had a tremendous ability to evoke party loyalty. I don't care whether he was speaking in the Bronx, or Raleigh, North Carolina, he had a tremendous ability to evoke party loyalty -- pride in what the Democratic Party stood for, and an anti-Republican feeling. I heard him make a speech in the fifties, in which he had people cheering, and not derisively, cheering seriously, when he was attacking Republicans because they opposed rural free delivery of the mail.

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HESS: Where did he campaign most of the time? Did he go into the South?

BRIGHTMAN: He campaigned -- my recollection is that he campaigned on a national basis. He wasn't just confined to the South, for his basic campaign. He campaigned all across the country.

HESS: Mr. Truman made one trip into the South, I believe, down into North Carolina.

BRIGHTMAN: I've forgotten how far South he went there. He was in the southwest. I can't remember whether he got down in to the Deep -- I don't recall his getting into the Deep South.

HESS: I believe at one time that he went down to Miami with the VFW...

BRIGHTMAN: American Legion, I think.

HESS: ...He went to Raleigh. He made a speech there.

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BRIGHTMAN: He was in Texas, but I can't remember his being in South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana. I am quite sure he was in Texas.

HESS: Yes. On his swing back from the West, they came back through Texas, and he was in Miami at the American Legion Convention the day before he was in Raleigh. I believe that was the only time that he was in what you call "the Deep South," excluding Texas. Why was Warren's campaign so ineffective, do you suppose? Why didn't they put the man to better use?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, he's not a fellow that can stir up a crowd with wit and rhetoric, it had to be content with him, and they weren't giving him any content. If Dewey was campaigning innocuously, which he was, Warren was campaigning twice as innocuously, and he wasn't really stirring anybody up.

HESS: The Democrats had a little trouble getting

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someone to be the chairman of the finance committee, and finally got Mr. Louis Johnson.

BRIGHTMAN: The treasurer was Joe Blythe, of North Carolina, but they did have trouble getting somebody to be chairman of the finance committee, and Louis Johnson who was a very wealthy corporation lawyer came in, and he was a good finance chairman. He was a hard man to say "no" to.

HESS: That's the kind of a man to have in in that type of job, isn't it?

BRIGHTMAN: I once heard a contributor say about a party treasurer, that I will not name that, "He's the nicest treasurer I've ever known, and the easiest fellow to say 'no' to," unfortunately, the qualifications for a treasurer would be the meanest man you ever knew and the hardest man to say "no" to.

HESS: Do you think he was a good finance chairman?

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He had a pretty difficult time raising money to pay the bills for some of the radio addresses didn't he?

BRIGHTMAN: That's right. Sometimes we didn't know whether we would be able to get the money up in time to make the scheduled radio network broadcast.

HESS: Was there ever a time when the money did not arrive?

BRIGHTMAN: We never had to cancel a broadcast. I think some of the checks that I may have handed over to the advertising agency couldn't have been cashed that day, but by the time they got to the bank the money was there.

The second interview with Samuel C. Brightman in his office in Washington, D. C., December 8, 1966. By J. N. Hess.

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HESS: I'd like to start off a question that was raised by something you said yesterday. In our interview yesterday, you mentioned that when you joined the Democratic National Committee staff in 1947, that you thought the party was close to falling apart. I'd like to go into that a little bit more. What do you think brought that situation about?

BRIGHTMAN: I think we'd "Had enough," which was one of the best political slogans in recent years, the Republican slogan in '46, and we had taken a bad defeat in the Congress. A lot of people at that time did not realize the basic iron strength that Mr. Truman had, his ability to communicate with the voters; which was not to be confused with eloquence, or oratory, it was his ability to find common ground with them and to get them

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to see what he had done and to vote for him. I do not think that -- people had been used to Mr. Roosevelt's style, Mr. Truman had a different style, and I think this had disturbed a lot of people that had been used to riding Mr. Roosevelt's coattails, and wondering whether they could ride Mr. Truman's coattails. In all candor, I must say, I think the Democratic Party was in, not a state of utter disarray, but some of the more vocal people were saying, "Well, should we go another way, should we get someone else to be our presidential candidate," and this was a serious problem. You could bring the party people in and get them to understand what Mr. Truman was doing, what the party was doing, and get them convinced that something was going on, it was good for the party and good for the country, and, I think this was done in a very unspectacular way.

If you were at the '48 convention, you will

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remember there were all kinds of what everyone would now say were absurd efforts to substitute someone else on the ticket for Mr. Truman. None of this occurred, there was no reason it should have occurred, and I happened to be one of the persons who said it never would occur.

HESS: Tell me about a few of those attempts. I know about the attempt to try to put Eisenhower through. Are there any that are not generally known?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't know about that because I was publicly committed to Mr. Truman, and as I recall the ultraliberals wanted to nominate Mr. Eisenhower, and they finally wound up with a person I respected and admire very much, Claude Pepper, but he was not obviously presidential timber at that time.

HESS: In speaking of the convention; we talked a little bit about the convention yesterday, Mr.

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Barkley's keynote address, but what else comes to your mind when you think back on the days of the Philadelphia convention?

BRIGHTMAN: Strengthening of the civil rights plank, which I am sure Mr. Truman didn't object to, but which he did not want to do himself. He wanted it to be done by the convention delegates, and it was a stronger civil rights plank than the platform committee had made, and we knew that it was going to be adopted, we knew that some of the southern people would walk out, so we put a copy of the Bill of Rights over the door where they would walk out, so they would be walking out under that. They walked out under the copy of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I would guess that Mr. Truman got a lot of votes that he would not have otherwise got had not these people walked out.

HESS: Roughly, how soon in the year was it thought that the Southern delegations might walk out over

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the civil rights issue?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we didn't expect all of them to walk out. It was obvious before the convention that some of them would walk out. There was a fund raising dinner held before the convention in which Senator [Olin D.] Johnston, who supported Mr. Truman in the national party, reserved a table right in front of the President, at the Mayflower Hotel, and then kept anyone from sitting there. I was at the Mayflower, Mr. Truman was having dinner over at the Statler. This was a dinner in two hotels. I went over to the Statler. I made the decision at the Mayflower that we should not use force to take these people away from their empty table and put other people in, that it would be better to leave the empty table, as evidence of dissent, and then I went over to the Statler. I did not talk directly to Mr. Truman,, but I relayed the message that I had told the people at the Mayflower to leave the table empty. The

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press was buzzing about this; he was going to speak at the Mayflower, so most of the press were there -- and I said that I made the decision which can be overruled to leave this empty table there, rather than to use force or anything else.

This was accepted by the President and his people. They knew that there would be this empty table, and the stories about it, and he came over there to make his speech -- this he did. We had another dinner later on that year at that same ballroom, which the then District Attorney Pat Brown, now ex-governor Pat Brown, was one of the main speakers, and these were the young Democrats, and Mr. Truman got up at that dinner and said, "The next President of the United States is going to be a Democrat and you are looking at him now." This prediction proved to be very accurate.

HESS: Were you there that evening?

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BRIGHTMAN: Yes.

HESS: Back to that civil rights amendment that was put through, the Humphrey-Biemiller plank, do you think the President really supported that more than he did the somewhat softer plank that had been voted on before?

BRIGHTMAN: If you will recall, Mr. Truman had a commission which made a report on the civil rights situation, and the unfairness of the so-called separate but equal schools, and other social and legal discrimination against the Negro, which was far ahead of its time, it was the strongest thing in that area to date, and he accepted it, distributed it. I don't know whether he wanted a compromise or a stronger version, all I know is that he made no effort to stop the stronger version, and he lived with it and campaigned with it, and being a native of a border state, as is Mr. Truman, I can

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understand his mixed emotions over that, if he had any. As far as public posture was concerned, Mr. Truman never flinched from positions on civil rights which were far ahead of the acceptance of society, not only in the South, but in the border and the northern states, he never flinched, he never backed away from it, and some of the things I am sure were uncomfortable with him from his background and the social customs of his state. He showed complete conviction and courage in this area. I would say -- just as some people respect him for the Truman doctrine, the Marshall program, many other things, I think many people looking at the civil rights situation today forget his courage in that area, and fail to contrast it with the position that Mr. Eisenhower could never find it in his heart to say that he supported the Supreme Court in its first school decision, as a moral position, even though he would say

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that the Supreme Court has said this and we have to respect the law. I think Mr. Truman showed wisdom and courage in that area and that is an area where he hasn't been given adequate credit.

HESS: Some authors say that Mr. Truman's civil rights stand was taken for reasons of political expediency. What do you say about that?

BRIGHTMAN: A tremendous number of liberals who thought we could live comfortably with Russia after the war, as we did during the war, Averell Harriman said we couldn't and I think Mr. Truman recognized we couldn't.

Mr. Churchill's Iron Curtain speech at Fulton, Missouri, Westminster College, it would never have been made unless Mr. Truman wanted it to be made, and that shook up a lot of people

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in the United States. They admired Churchill, they remembered that Great Britain had fought with the Russians, as we had, in the war against the Nazis. This would not have been done if Mr. Truman had not wanted it to be done, and yet, at the same time, he tried to keep channels open. One of the things he's berated for is saying that Mr. Stalin -- he called him "Old Joe" -- was a decent fellow himself. Mr. Truman had the ability to see that Stalin had to live with his own constituency and the world.

Mr. Truman managed to contain the Communist aggression with a minimum of muss and fuss, without a full-scale confrontation with Russia, which could have occurred.

HESS: You mentioned the Turnip Day session yesterday, and the Turnip Day speech that was, of course, Mr. Truman's acceptance speech, and it was the time he called Congress back. I have

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a couple of questions on that. Do you know if he cleared that announcement with the Democratic National Committee? The fact that he was going to call Congress back into session.

BRIGHTMAN: No, I don't know that. I think we thought he would.

HESS: You thought that he would call them back?

BRIGHTMAN: I did.

HESS: What made you think so?

BRIGHTMAN: Because they had left a lot of work undone. I had never heard of Turnip Day, and I was born in Missouri and lived there quite a spell, but I still think that this was a very important thing. If he hadn't called the Congress back, people would have said, "You don't really want it."

So, he called the Congress back and they did the predictable. They did nothing he asked

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them to do. A lot of people said, "He just called them back for fun and games."

The actual fact is that he put them back there and made a public record; "Are you or aren't you going to do this, this and that."

HESS: Whose idea was it to call Congress back? Have you ever seen this document? It's a memorandum that is at the Truman Library in Samuel Rosenman's papers and is entitled, "Should the President Call Congress Back," dated June the 29th, 1948.

BRIGHTMAN: I have not seen this memorandum. I have seen others with roughly similar content. One thing that interests me very much here is what it has about Senator [Joseph C. J. O'Mahoney, who participated in a network debate with Senator Taft, prior to that election. Senator O'Mahoney, senatorial courtesy precluded him from saying some of the sharp things about the Republicans

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and Senator Taft that we had suggested. In the heat of the debate, he did say the things. It was a very heated debate and it wound up with Senator Taft stomping out of the studio saying that the thing had been rigged against him. Senator O'Mahoney, of course, was not a doctrinaire man, but a western liberal, and civil rights didn't make any difference to him. Some other things had more of a bearing on his own constituency, but basically, he was the sort of a man that President Truman was. He had a basic commitment with the average man who was not living off of investments or not a man of the corporate society, but was his own man -- whether he was poor or rich.

To that memo -- that particular one -- I have never seen this. I don't honestly believe that Mr. Truman counted the points pro and con to weigh any memorandum like that, he just did what he thought was right.

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HESS: In Mr. Redding's book, he states that, "I had generally known that the President was going to call a special session of Congress, but the action came as a complete surprise to the convention," so, it was suspected that this would happen. Do you know if he cleared this with people like Sam Rayburn, the "Big Four," before the announcement? Would that be the normal procedure on something like this?

BRIGHTMAN: I would assume that -- without being able to testify other than hearsay -- that he had talked with them about it, but that the general reaction of the Hill leadership would have been, "Well, let's go do our own campaigning at home and not stir up people." Congress likes to go home after a convention. I'm sure they knew that he was going to do that. I have grave doubts that they approved of it. Mr. Truman, you know, was the only President we have had for a long time, except for President

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Johnson, who was a combination of a man of the Congress and a man with another political base in the field.

HESS: What value to the subsequent victory in November, do you think that the calling of the special session might have had? Was it a valuable thing to do, politically speaking?

BRIGHTMAN: I am not sure. It couldn't have hurt, and it probably helped.

HESS: Why couldn't it have hurt?

BRIGHTMAN: We had a Congress that would not even take a moderate step forward and calling them back gave a fresh reminder to the electorate. The 80th Congress was terribly unpopular domestically.

HESS: Right after he finished speaking was when they released the pigeons, is that correct?

BRIGHTMAN: I think the pigeons were released before

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he came in.

HESS: Whose idea was it to release the pigeons?

BRIGHTMAN: Emma Guffey Miller, the national committeewoman from Pennsylvania. My recollection is they were released sometime before Mr. Truman came in, but they weren't all back in their cages.

HESS: Mr. Redding says in his book that that took him by surprise, he didn't know anything about the pigeons.

BRIGHTMAN: None of us knew anything about them.

HESS: She had moved those pigeons in ahead of time and nobody knew about them?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, it is understandable. You have a lot of people working on a convention and they are occupied. Politics isn't a tidy thing, it isn't like other organizations where everybody has his clear chain of command.

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HESS: A lot of things going on. Anything else of interest about the convention, anything that might not generally be known?

BRIGHTMAN: No, I think this pretty well covers the convention. It was, in a sense, the first TV convention and in a sense not. The first TV convention, as far as national impact was 1952, on the other hand in '48 was the first convention where we found the impact of TV on the participants. *Time*, *Life* and NBC had sort of joined together and TV was enough of a novelty that these people with their ribbons could run around and talk to anyone and get all kinds of attention. TV, as I said, was still nationally a novelty. On the other hand, the true impact of photo journalism then was the newsreels, theater newsreels. They had much more coverage and we had quite a bit of problems including a special theater newsreel showing, which I can tell you a little more about, if

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you are interested. I can remember the night of the acceptance speech where the TV newsreels were out on either side of the stands, and Mr. Truman got up to start his speech and the microphone was high enough so that it made a bad picture for the theater newsreels, and Tony Muto, who is now dead, who was more or less the dean of the theater newsreel men, screamed at Mr. Truman to lower the microphone. In the general confusion Mr. Truman couldn't hear him. Nobody but Tony Muto would have screamed the way he did. Tony kept screaming and Mr. Truman finally pulled the microphone down for the remainder of the speech.

The other thing that I said I would mention if you were interested, was that the Republicans made a documentary film, or whatever you want to call it, using the March of Time people, about Mr. Dewey, and they offered it to the theater newsreel people and asked

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them to carry it, and they agreed to do it. And when we heard about this, we went to the theater newsreels and we said, "Look, whether you believe that Mr. Truman is going to be elected President or not it is obviously clear that there is going to be a Democratic majority in the Senate, and there probably will be a Democratic majority in the House, and we think the motion picture industry if it shows this film glorifying Governor Dewey, without doing an equivalent one on Mr. Truman, will get itself in trouble with the Congress."

So, the theater people said, "We will put your feature on."

We said, "We don't have a movie. We don't have any money to make a movie. Why don't you provide a movie since you are going to show the Republican film?"

The upshot was that the companies drew straws, and in two or three days, we did a crash

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program of making a movie out of film clips, which I think were fresher and stronger and was shown after the Dewey film in the theaters. I think it helped us. It wasn't as sophisticated, nor as carefully made as the Republican film, but I think that was probably a strength.

HESS: Did you have primary responsibility of putting that together and writing it?

BRIGHTMAN: I worked on it--Mr. Leyshon worked on it. We took these clips, we put them together, working sometime from negatives, sometimes from positives, we put the music and the narrative on top of the film at the last minute. On the other hand, where the Republicans had Mr. Dewey doing artificially contrived things that the scriptwriter had written, we had the real thing, we had Mr. Truman dealing as an equal of Joe Stalin, Winston Churchill, Clement Attlee, and so on. We had things in the White House where

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Mr. Truman picked up a little girl spontaneously and hugged her. She was there for one of the charity drives; a little girl with braces. We had all kinds of actual things. We had a real thing that brought the real Mr. Truman through, and the Republicans had a contrived thing with scenes of Thomas Dewey, and they had people like Arthur Vandenberg looking like he was at a gunpoint standing against a wall and saying, "He is so a nice fellow."

I think, in retrospect, it was a very good thing that they did what they thought was a very clever thing to get this film circulated and that forced us to respond where we wouldn't have done otherwise, and we had a much less artistic, less tightly edited film, but it was a better film, because it was for real.

HESS: Mr. Redding says just about the same thing in his book because he said, that you could use

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film clips that were available of Truman, just as you said, and they weren't available for Mr. Dewey.

Who established the itinerary for the 1948 campaigns, the trips? How is an itinerary established?

BRIGHTMAN: It was done by everybody and his brother. It was a group thing and I assume the final decision was made by Mr. Truman. You have national committeemen, state chairmen, senators, congressmen, national committee people, and people who are interested in where he might get some votes, you had all of these forces pushing on the itinerary. I have never been at a meeting where the President threw his weight around, and I think mostly they were meetings of the pre-press conference huddles or meetings of the Democratic Advisory Council. I have never been at a meeting where he took someone else's decision without looking at it himself, so I assume that in '48 the

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Democratic National Committee recommendations were studied by the President and the White House staff. When you get a decision back from the White House, and you are not in the White House, you are not told that the President has decided this or his staff decided this.

HESS: You are just told what it is.

BRIGHTMAN: You are told what it is.

HESS: Now, you mentioned the pre-press conference, when were those, when did you sit in with the President?

BRIGHTMAN: I sat in on them for a very brief period, prior to the 1952 convention -- quite a brief period.

HESS: In the summer of '52, before the convention was over, the spring and summer of '52. Why was that your duty, why were you there at that time? You were publicity director at that

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time.

BRIGHTMAN: I had been associate publicity director, then I became publicity director, and at that time, the publicity director sat in on the meetings before the press conference.

HESS: Did he ever ask you any questions?

BRIGHTMAN: Not of importance. He had a good political feel, he got a briefing from Joe Short or later on from Roger Tubby, and some of the staff people.

HESS: What would they usually discuss in those meetings -- what they thought was going to be asked?

BRIGHTMAN: Questions that they thought were going to come up and how to answer them.

HESS: Do you think Mr. Truman ever got surprised sometimes by a question in a news conference?

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BRIGHTMAN: Oh, of course. He had all kinds of questions that pop up in a news conference, and I would say that one of the things that impressed me most was that on the questions of substance he was extremely well prepared.

HESS: Did the national committee, back in the days of the '48 campaign, pay very much attention to the polls?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes, they paid a great deal of attention to them. The closing stages of the campaign, as we saw in Jack Redding's book, when we thought they were hurting our morale and, also, thought that they were behind the voters, because there was a much greater lag in the

opinion polls then. We attacked them and said they were misleading the people, they were not up-to-date and we got vigorously counterattacked. The pollsters said this was just sour grapes from people who had no chance of winning the election and the

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opinion polls were right and we were playing a cheap political trick attacking the polls. Of course, it turned out we were right and they were wrong, and I don't think they did anything malicious. I do think they were behind -- they were slower then. Elmo Roper quit polling. He said it's all over, two or three weeks after the last convention. He quit doing any polls.

HESS: Was that along about the first of September?

BRIGHTMAN: Oh, I would have to look it up, but I think he quit polling...I don't think Elmo Roper had a poll after Labor Day, maybe he had one but he said it was over.

HESS: I think Gallup...

BRIGHTMAN: Gallup continued and I think the Crosley poll was published in some newspapers.

HESS: ...I think Gallup quit about two weeks

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before the election.

BRIGHTMAN: You see, there was a theory that was very popular back in those days, that everybody was "frozen" so far before an election.

HESS: They thought they had made up their minds.

BRIGHTMAN: People had made up their minds and the latter part of the campaign didn't amount to anything. I don't think that is true. I think '48 is evidence against it, and I personally feel that in '52 Mr. Eisenhower's campaign was slacking, but not to the point that he would have lost. "I will go to Korea," gave him a shot in the arm and put him back up. In '56 for reasons that are not completely logical, the Suez thing, I think helped him, when it should have hurt him, and I think, at the same time, in '62, the Cuban confrontation helped the Democratic Party. You could make an argument that the fact that this occurred

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provided an argument against the Democrats, but I think it helped us.

So, the point I am making is that I think Mr. Truman made a 1st minute surge, I think that Mr. Eisenhower in '52 by this, "I will go to Korea," got an extra fill up and made his victory even

bigger, and I think the Suez crisis turned the Democratic rout into a Democratic disaster. I think the Cuban thing in '62 made the Democratic Party do better in the midterm election than it would have done otherwise, they would have lost more seats if it hadn't been for that. So, I don't believe that people "freeze" to the point of immobility, they may "freeze" if nothing shakes them loose, but I don't think that you can forget about the last two or three weeks of the campaign on the basis that everybody is set and you're wasting your time and money. I think an election can be won or lost in the last two or three weeks.

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HESS: Do you think the '48 election was won by Mr. Truman in the last few weeks?

BRIGHTMAN: I think the election was won in the last few weeks. I think I addressed this point earlier. I don't think it was won by Mr. Truman singlehanded, I think it was won by Mr. Truman and the Democratic Party.

HESS: When did the national committee move their headquarters in New York?

BRIGHTMAN: Approximately Labor Day.

HESS: Who went up? Who was on the staff up there?

BRIGHTMAN: Most of the people were there. [Louis] Johnson operated basically out of Washington, and Bill [William M., Jr.] Boyle who was doing the detail scheduling, had sort of a skeleton force, but the basic thrust of the force of the national committee was taken to New York, and

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we were still coming back and forth. And partly this arrangement, I think, was superstition, and partly it was the fact that the focal point of political coverage had not moved to Washington to the extent that it is now, and in '48 transportation -- charters, trains, etc. -- was much more flexible out of New York than it was in Washington. Now, I think it is darn near equal, give or take a few places, there are a few more flights a day, but in '48, communication you probably had to give New York a slight edge, and in the transportation of '48, you would have to give them a big edge. It was a transportation center by plane or train.

HESS: And, that was set up in the Biltmore is that right?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes.

HESS: There was some talk about buying a building, wasn't there?

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BRIGHTMAN: It was the old Lotus Club Building out in the fifties, I think. I think rental and not buying, as I recall, but it was not suitable.

HESS: You mention Bill Boyle, and Redding says in his book that he was set up in Washington to direct a central operating headquarters for the train, just what was that? What did that entail?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, that was the detailed scheduling and the background. Say a train is going from Jonesville to Smithville and will stop at so and so, and these are the local candidates, this is the economic interest, this is the Republican vote against the interest of these people, and so on. In other words, a detailed briefing on every place he is going to speak.

HESS: Who makes the decision about what local candidates get to come aboard the train? Who

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gets to ride with him, and how long they stay?

BRIGHTMAN: The advance man and the person who is doing the actual scheduling, the party officials, and candidates. Occasionally you will get a problem where you've got a maverick, perhaps a national committeeman who hasn't been really enthusiastic about the ticket who wants on the train and the question is, do you hurt your cause more by throwing him off. One time there was an attempt to throw Dwight Morrow off the Democratic National Committee for not supporting the ticket and one of his major defenses was that he rode the train of the presidential candidate.

HESS: How important do you believe that the so-called "Negro vote" was going to be in that election?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we thought it was important. The militancy and the effort to say, "We have a bloc vote," this sort of thing was not as strong then

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as it is now. Yes, we thought it would be important.

HESS: Did you think that any particular Negro leader could deliver a certain number of votes? The NAACP, the Urban League or some organization like that?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't think so. I think if you look back, you will find that the Republicans spend a lot more in advertising in the Negro press, and they had a sizable amount of the Negro publishers for Dewey. But there was a strong Negro vote for Mr. Truman, as I mentioned, in Harlem. I think that the Negro vote was probably less of a bloc vote then than it has been subsequently, and, as I said, the Republicans spent a great deal more money in advertising in the Negro press than we did, but I think the rank and file Negro voter recognized Mr. Truman's courage and his standing up for his Civil Rights Commission

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report, but you didn't have the same degree of organization; "We'll vote against you even though you are better than the other fellow unless you do what we want you to." It was a little different situation.

HESS: It is not as organized as they are in the present day.

BRIGHTMAN: They are more organized and maybe they are less useful to themselves and to the country as a whole, now.

HESS: Michel Cieplinski was head of the nationalities division of the Democratic National Committee. Was he more concerned with ethnic groups as the Poles, Germans, and groups of that nature? Was there anyone that was in charge of the Negro vote-looking out after the Negro vote?

BRIGHTMAN: Not by title, but by operation, we had John Davis and John Sengstacke, who is publisher

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of the *Chicago Defender*, both working. We had an incident where a Negro who had been working on the national committee staff held a press conference in Harlem and he said that the national headquarters were Jim Crow headquarters. So, the Negro press from New York City came up to the Biltmore, and I happened to be there, so they came to see me and I took them around the staff in the Biltmore where Negro and white people were working together and came back to my office and they said, "This is not what he was talking about, this is physical integration, and he was talking about intellectual integration where Negroes were hired at the National Committee to deal only with Negro voters."

So, I said, "Well, I would be very stupid if I told you gentlemen, who are reporters for Negro newspapers, which are not addressed to the general market, but are addressed to Negro readers, if I told you I knew more about the Negro press than you do, and it would be very stupid if I

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told you that. The gentleman you are talking about happened to be writing for our newspaper, our campaign newspaper, and I would like to show you some stories he wrote, some of which were his own idea, and let you decide whether he was segregated intellectually." It happened that he had written stories which had no Negro appeal at all, and had nothing to do with the race issue; a good source, a good idea. He wrote it, and this was not intellectual segregation, and...

HESS: What do you suppose he made a statement like that for in the first place?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't think he was bought.

HESS: That's just the way he saw it.

BRIGHTMAN: That's just the way he saw it. And, I think probably the Wallace appeal to Negroes was not money. I think they in effect said, "You're going to have an instant equality if

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you vote for Mr. Wallace," and this appealed to some of the young Negroes and it appealed to the racist press in some areas, and if you look back we still don't have instant equality after all these years.

HESS: On Mr. Cieplinski, just what were his duties?

BRIGHTMAN: To deal with the ethnic groups, basically. He formed committees, they had meetings -- meet with people of various levels, including Mr. Truman when he came to New York, and they were treated not as somebody you buy or sell or give a narrow ethnic appeal to, but people that we were interested in. The basic philosophy of the Democratic Party and the whole ethnic operation is that if it succeeds it will work itself out of business and it will bring more and more people away from their clinging to ethnic anchor points and bring them into the mainstream of politics, and I think that -- and I can't say

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this about the country as a whole -- but the Democratic Party in the political process has, through giving opportunity to people who were discriminated against, brought the Irish, the Italians, and other groups (the first Irish President was a Democrat, the first Italian Senator was a Democrat, and the first Jewish Senator was a Democrat, the first Jewish Governor was a Democrat, and I am not sure, but I think the first Polish Senator was a Democrat) into politics and into acceptance in our society and into the mainstream of our life, and then all of a sudden there is less, there is still some clinging, but there is less and less huddling together as a bloc., and I think, we have brought it to a point now where we are overcoming the final barrier facing the last people to be benefited by this process, and they are the Negroes. But, we get to the point where the little magazine that is published down in the

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Ozarks very slyly said when Claiborne Pell was elected to the United States Senate, that we have a real breakdown in prejudice when a Protestant can be elected in Rhode Island, There was a time when nobody but a Protestant could be elected in Rhode Island, and there was a time when nobody but an Irish or Italian Catholic could be elected.

HESS: It's going back the other way.

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we are going on. Look at Massachusetts. An Italian American was elected Governor and a Negro was elected Senator. Look all over New England. Look in New York where the old so-called ethnic balance is breaking down, you have an Italian running for

this, and an Irish Catholic for this, and so on. It is breaking down and the last breakdown is going to be the Negroes. It would probably be a little faster if we didn't have some of the violence

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that we have. But actually, it is a whole separate book that somebody ought to write. The political route to acceptance -- and mostly the road has been through the Democratic Party -- has been ahead of society as a whole. You could be accepted politically and elected to office before you could belong to some of the exclusive clubs.

HESS: What do you think the special appeal of the Democratic Party is, to some of these minority groups?

BRIGHTMAN: It understands them and helps them, not as a bloc, but just as people.

HESS: Now, back to '48. What do you recall about the problem caused by Governor Dewey's speech calling for the return of most of the prewar Italian colonies to Italy's control?

BRIGHTMAN: I am trying to remember the details of

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the thing, and I can't. I'll tell you our final feeling was that this would be recognized as a contrived appeal and that Italians who were congressmen or a senator; or who had a position of responsibility in the Democratic Party or who had benefited by Democratic programs for security and employment, would put this ahead of the colonial appeal of Mr. Dewey.

HESS: Redding mentioned that you did a great deal of the writing, or much of the writing on the *Capital Comment*, is that right? Can you tell me about that or how was that done?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, we did a combination of things to build the party morale, to try to throw the Republicans off balance a little bit and try to make some news.

HESS: Also, the Democratic National Committee took over the woman's organization magazine, didn't they a little later on, the *Women's Democratic*

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Digest, is that right?

BRIGHTMAN: That was sometime later.

HESS: And changed that into the Democratic Digest.

BRIGHTMAN: That was sometime later. That was after the '52 election.

HESS: We have a number of people who worked with the Democratic National Committee, if you could just tell me a little bit about what they did. Creekmore Fath.

BRIGHTMAN: Creekmore Fath was an assistant to Gael Sullivan. A liberal Democrat.

HESS: Anything in particular that he did?

BRIGHTMAN: I think he was a good liaison with the liberal community.

HESS: Hal Leyshon.

BRIGHTMAN: He was particularly concerned with the

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operation before the convention of making sure that the Cabinet and Government officials remembered Mr. Truman was President in their speeches.

HESS: This was the organization of the Truman file, is that correct?

BRIGHTMAN: His job was to see that they all had something in there, and this was before the convention and he did general work after the convention. Before the convention his special project was to see that these people went out and remembered that Mr. Truman was President.

HESS: Whose idea was that?

BRIGHTMAN: I think it was Bob Hannegan's.

HESS: Ken Fry.

BRIGHTMAN: Ken Fry worked on radio. There was very little TV in that campaign.

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HESS: Fred Blumenthal.

BRIGHTMAN: He was basically down here. He planted things in columns and did general public relations.

HESS: John P. Davis.

BRIGHTMAN: He's the one that I mentioned earlier.

HESS: Representative Michael J. Kirwan was chairman of the Democratic campaign committee. Did you work with him? Did the National Democratic Committee work with him very often?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes. He had been in -- not too long.

HESS: What's the main job of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee? What are they set up for?

BRIGHTMAN: To elect Democratic congressmen. Back in those days, basically, there was very little money available to them and it was a theory then

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that you rose or fell on the presidential coattails, and if you study the history of coattails since '48, you get a very blurred picture. At least it adds up that the coattails aren't what they used to be.

HESS: Neale Roach.

BRIGHTMAN: Neale Roach was in the financial fund raising end, and, also, he was convention manager in '48, and he more or less ran and administered the headquarters, and his other job was in fund raising.

HESS: India Edwards.

BRIGHTMAN: She was, more or less, running the women's division. She -- I forget now when she became actually vice chairman, but when Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse was titular head, India was really running the operation, and she went on to run it in her own right. She was very

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effective, very aggressive in organizing women. In '48, we had a daytime radio program addressed to women, which I think was good.

HESS: It was her idea?

BRIGHTMAN: The "bones" and facts of the program were. I would say that India's two great strengths in those days were that; one, she was always there saying, "Pay attention to the women," which is a habit people -- men in politics get out of doing, and she was always there -- "Pay attention to the women," and; number two, I think she knew how to reach, particularly, the leadership women, who would bring in other women. She was extremely valuable.

HESS: Mrs. Katie Louchheim.

BRIGHTMAN: In '48, I didn't know Katie then. I assume I had met her.

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HESS: Remember anything about her in '52?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes, she became more active and eventually, of course, became head of the women's operation.

HESS: Did you have any occasion to work with any of the members of the White House staff very much -- Charlie Murphy? Do you remember anything, any particular incidents?

BRIGHTMAN: '48 -- no. I was not particularly working with him.

HESS: Anyone in the White House?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, most of my relations with the White House were with Charlie Ross in '48.

HESS: Do you recall any particular incidents that might help to point up some of your duties, or point up some of his duties?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, he was the press secretary. I remember we did a picture book on Mr. Truman,

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and I took the story board over to Charlie Ross, and awhile later it came back and there were a couple of -- I wish I had saved it as a memoir -- there were notations in Mr. Truman's handwriting on the margin about inaccuracies, and so on.

HESS: Did that picture book go over pretty big?

BRIGHTMAN: It went over very well. Some people thought it was undignified. It came out later in the campaign than it should, but it was very well received.

HESS: Whose idea was it to put that out, to make it up?

BRIGHTMAN: It was like a lot of ideas, it was a community thing.

HESS: What do you recall about the general relations between the Democratic National Committee and the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee in 1948?

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BRIGHTMAN: There got to be a point after the convention where they were based in Washington and were supporting the presidential travel with the kind of detailed information that I mentioned earlier, where half of what they did went directly there without going through New York. They also turned out some very interesting information that substantiated material that had already been put in circulation in leaflets, and what have you. Really it was good, but there wasn't the time or the money to put it out in the hands of people speaking at the grassroots level. Bill [William L., Jr.] Batt had a feeling for these things and got out some useful information. In any campaign you are always getting something that you needed two weeks before put together

two weeks later and it is too late to get it around and get it used. I think it was a good operation. It's most usable output was the immediate information

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about the areas where the President and vice president were going and they were scheduled basically out of Washington, and the other operation, the party operation was in New York, so a lot of their stuff went out without ever going through New York, other than in a pro forma way.

HESS: Was there a research division established in 1950 and 1952?

BRIGHTMAN: No. Bert [Bertram M.] Gross came in and ran the research before the '52 convention.

HESS: Did Charles Franklin take over for him?

BRIGHTMAN: When Gross left, Franklin took over.

HESS: Now, were they more in under the Democratic National Committee. I have heard that the Research Division in '48 was set up almost as a wing of the White House operation.

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BRIGHTMAN: I think that is a matter of semantics, that is what I have just said. They were very valuable in supplying material to the platform committee at Philadelphia, but after the convention, what I just said is, the most usable and most valuable material was the material that they supplied for the President's tour, which they basically did directly with the White House. They were here (D.C.) and the President was going out of here, and as I say there was nothing more than a pro forma clearance out of the New York operation on this. This was very valuable, but these were not great policy decisions affecting the White House or the national committee, or anything, we basically hit on the theme of the "do-nothing Congress," and so on, and these people supplied supporting material. It was valuable, useful, good. They did a job, and you are completely correct in saying that -- yes, they were in a sense, a wing of the White House.

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HESS: That is how they were set up.

BRIGHTMAN: That was their purpose. That is why they were in Washington instead of in New York.

HESS: What, in your opinion, were the largest issues in the campaign?

BRIGHTMAN: I think you could boil it down to one issue, and this was the issue that the average family had not been helped by the Republican Congress. Most of the stuff I wrote -- I

wrote stuff against Dewey -- but the main target is that you want them to know what the Republican Party is like, "Look what they did in the 80th Congress."

HESS: What do you think the major campaign strategy mistake on the part of the Republicans was, was there one, were there more than one, what did they do wrong?

BRIGHTMAN: Well, in '46, they won on a great slogan,

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"Had enough" and it is one of the few slogans that amounted to anything in politics in recent years. And then the Congress didn't produce enough. Then they decided that people just hated Mr. Truman and were so tired of the Democratic Party that they didn't have to campaign, so Dewey never really offered any serious program of alternatives to what Mr. Truman had been sending to Congress, and Congress had thrown out the window. Plus the fact that Mr. Dewey had the unfortunate attributes of coming through to a lot of Americans as a slick and smart fellow who didn't really care about them and who was going to tell them what was good for them, along Republican lines. If you will recall the Republicans had given a tax cut that favored the higher bracket taxpayer much more than the lower bracket taxpayer, and then they had been generous enough to put out a statement in their own fund raising thing saying, "Don't throw peanuts to the elephant. If you can make fifty thousand dollars a year,

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you got so much of a tax cut, and if you have this and so on," carrying it right down the bracket, showing that the more you made the more your tax cut was, and suggesting that you contribute some of this back to the Republican Party. Which was very handy for us to say, if you make fifteen thousand a year, maybe you better look at this and see if you are on our side or their side. The Republican vote against expansion of social security -- well, I won't go through the whole thing, it's all there.

As I said earlier, they were a good Congress on foreign affairs, but they were a bad Congress on domestic affairs. They didn't pass anything that worked, they just stopped things that Mr. Truman wanted. They didn't help the farmer. They didn't really do anything except say, "Well, now we killed price controls, and everybody is going to be happy and the law of supply and

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demand is going to take care of everything" and, the law of supply and demand didn't take care of everything. It forced the average guy up against the wall, his rent control went off, his rent went up, prices of many things went up, he didn't get the great flood of goods, services at reasonable prices as the Republicans promised.

HESS: Do you recall anything of interest that happened in New York before or during the campaign? Anything that might not generally be known?

BRIGHTMAN: No, we lived along from hand to mouth and...tried to squeak a dollar out when it was needed to keep things going, to keep in touch with the party, give them a little shot in the arm. This campaign against the polls, I think was terribly important. We were broke as the dickens but we tried to run a full page ad in some of the New York papers showing what a spendthrift record Dewey had as governor without accomplishing some

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things, and the New York *World Telegram* was good enough to refuse the ad, three or four thousand bucks which we were hard to come by to pay for the ad, and it was just going to run in New York. So, then, they said, "Well, we will not carry this ad because we are supporting Mr. Dewey, and we don't believe that the facts are documentable," but those facts were.

By their refusing to carry it, we were then able to have a news conference and say this is what the anti-Truman press will not print and get it circulated for free on the wire services, the whole thing that we could never have gotten if they had just taken our three thousand dollars and run the ad, or four thousand or whatever it was, and we would have had to use reprints and so on. The fact that it was suppressed, then the press had to carry what we had to say about what was in the thing. It is hard to remember today how important that theater newsreels

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were in those days, and that was an extremely important thing in the last minute surge that I am convinced occurred in that campaign.

HESS: Can you tell me about the events of election night? Just what transpired up there in the Biltmore?

BRIGHTMAN: We had a little television set up there at the Biltmore, and we stayed up all night, and we didn't think we were out and we didn't think we were in, and we weren't sticking our neck out on predictions but we weren't counting ourselves out. The evening started for me with Pete Kihss of the *New York Times* wanting to do a story about the ad in the morning papers of a furniture rental company saying they were selling our headquarters furniture and that this was some kind of a sign of defeat and I said, "Look, this has happened ever since people have been renting campaign furniture

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and there is nothing unusual about this, and it has nothing to do with our views about the election or anything -- you just rent the furniture and the company that rents you the furniture advertises it as secondhand furniture to get rid of it afterwards." He was very skeptical. We have talked about it since then. As the night wore on people who had never bothered to get accredited at our headquarters came over because the Dewey headquarters were silent. We never claimed victory. We just sat there and let Mr. Dewey make his ungracious concession, which, off the top of my head, I think occurred about ten o'clock or thereabouts the next morning. There were a couple of mix-ups, there were some bad returns from Ohio in the middle of the night and it took a little

time to get that straightened out. But even after we were sure that we had won, we sat back and waited for Mr. Dewey to concede it rather than go ahead and claim

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victory. Part of that was the fact that he wasn't -- he was all set for a victory celebration and then when he didn't see the victory, he just sat there at his headquarters and didn't talk to the press, and he was very ungracious about the whole thing. As I recall, the final concession was not very gracious. Anyhow, I guess we get a little mean and sometimes we decided we would just wait and let him concede before we claim victory, which we did.

HESS: Did you think Mr. Truman was going to win that election?

BRIGHTMAN: I thought he could win. I didn't know whether he was going to win. I never bought the Dewey landslide thing. I always felt we were the underdogs. I worried about some of the people that called in from the Midwest and said, "We are going to carry our state." You just wonder whether they were hypoing themselves up so they

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would keep fighting. But I never bought the landslide thing. I sincerely believed that the opinion polls had a great lag -- they are much quicker now -- but they weren't reliable on their sampling, they are much better on their sampling now, and they are much quicker because they feed the thing into the computer now, but they didn't do it that way then, and they didn't ride herd on their sampling the way they do now. I go hire a housewife, and I give her areas where she is supposed to do her polling, and unless somebody follows through and makes sure she does it, she is likely to go into a comfortable, congenial neighborhood and never quite get around to going into the less pleasant lower income areas where it takes twice as long to get peoples' confidence and get them to talk with you. This, the lag, and the unreliability of the sampling are realities of '48, they have improved since then. And these were things that we hit at. Now, we didn't

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know whether they made the polls wrong or not, but we knew darn well; one, we were stronger than they had showed us when they quit polling, that there was a last minute surge, and; number two, we knew that our people needed to hear some attacks on these polls so that they would not accept them at face value and not do the work that was needed to get the vote out. So, we hit that very hard. Jack Redding covers that in his book.

HESS: Do you have anymore that you wanted to add on that?

BRIGHTMAN: No. I think that covers it.

HESS: In the 1946 and 1950 campaigns, the off year election, in Mr. Truman's administration, he did not take a very active part, why didn't he?

BRIGHTMAN: I have to plead guilty to not really being close to the '46 effort. In '50, Mr.

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Truman made only one network broadcast that I can remember and that was just before election and it originated in St. Louis. I think the 1950 campaign reflected Mr. Truman's respect for the Congress as an independent branch, that he didn't particularly feel that the members should be put in a position whether it would be a vote for or against Mr. Truman, it should be a vote for or against the members. This goes back to his own experience, where he wasn't always the administration's favorite in the primary, and his experience in the Congress. There was a limited amount of money, and the question then arose, do you strengthen the campaign and do you strengthen the party if you spend it on exposure of the President or if you spend this limited budget on the candidates and let them use it. And, basically, what money there was went to the candidates. The one material attempted to set a basic theme. I

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suppose the biggest thing that hurt the Democrats in the midterm election, as an overall basis, was the unpopularity of the Korean war. On the other hand -- and I am not going to go into personalities on this -- in some cases we had people who lost because they tried to carry water on both shoulders, and they tried to be a liberal and a conservative. They didn't take a draw one way or the other. But, basically, I think it was the normal attrition in the midterm election, and the Korean war. I've forgotten what we lost in the '50 -- off the top of my head, I guess we lost maybe two or three more than the Democrats lost in '66, which was more or less a predictable thing. You had the old law of diminishing returns that hits anybody in political office. The longer you are in as a party, the more people say that you haven't done this right or you haven't done that right, and so on. And you had the question as to how

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hard we should fight the Korean war, and we had the semi-wartime conditions, and so on, and you didn't have a popular war like World War II.

If you recall, Walter Lippmann had the theory that if Dewey hadn't been such a bad candidate, if the Republicans hadn't had such a bad Congress, and if they hadn't had such a bad campaign, the Republicans would have won in '48, which they should have done, and this had some application in 1950 -- the clock was running out on the Democratic Party, the attrition, the lack of ideas, and so on. There weren't any new ideas in the '50 campaign, and there wasn't any great big forward thrust that wasn't something that had already been proposed. It was a negative year again, but not nearly as bad as '46. I don't think the outcome would have been any different if Mr. Truman had done more, or if he had done less.

HESS: When did you become aware that Mr. Truman was

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not going to be a candidate in 1952?

BRIGHTMAN: At the dinner at the National Guard Armory, when he announced it, when it was not in his prepared text.

HESS: Did that come as a surprise to you or not?

BRIGHTMAN: I had suspected that he would not be a candidate. I had, and other people had tried to get some clue as to whether he was going to announce his decision that evening. If you recall, most of the networks were off the air and half the press had left when he made the announcement. I honestly did not know he was going to make the announcement that evening until he made it. I had suspected he would not be a candidate again.

HESS: Who did you think would be the candidate at that time?

BRIGHTMAN: I had no idea.

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HESS: Who did you think that the President favored?

BRIGHTMAN: As of that time? I think probably he -- at that particular time -- he leaned toward Adlai and then I think he got cool on Adlai, and off and on. In '52 you had people going around saying the President wants Adlai, and other people saying the President wants Barkley, and you had all kinds of confusion there. I think the President blew hot and cold on Stevenson, thought he was an attractive person, an able person, on the other hand, I think the President felt that he lacked a burning urge to win -- to be President. You know in '52 what force Governor Stevenson had on the convention floor was basically a kind of an ad hoc thing. The late Frank Myers, Jim Finnegan and John Bailey and other people kind of went to work for Stevenson without any real central direction. Partly, in all candor, it was a dislike of Estes Kefauver. Some people had no great

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motivation for Governor Stevenson, but they thought Estes wasn't a team player and they didn't want him to get it and the strongest guy to keep him from being nominated was Stevenson. You had other people who were very much for Stevenson, but you didn't have anything comparable for him in '52, for example, as the kind of an organization that Kennedy had in '60.

HESS: After the convention, Mr. Stevenson did not move his headquarters here to Washington or to New York, he kept it in Springfield, why did he do that?

BRIGHTMAN: I think he thought that was the only way he could be his own man.

HESS: To disassociate himself, to a degree, with President Truman?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't think it is a matter of disassociating himself, he wanted to be his own

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man. This is something you can get somebody to talk for hours about. I think he admired Mr. Truman, and he liked Mr. Truman, and he respected Mr. Truman's courage. He was a different type of individual. He saw the problems as different things than they were when Mr. Truman campaigned in '48, and he wanted to run as Adlai Stevenson and not as an alter ego to Harry S. Truman. And, he wouldn't deserve to be a presidential candidate if he didn't want to, so, I am not sure I am making this clear, it is not a matter of disassociation, it is a matter of being your own man, making your own decision. And I think that is why he had this combination headquarters in Springfield and Washington, where we were linked up with tie lines and teletypes, and we were back and forth and everything else, but I think he felt that if he moved into Washington -- we all agreed that there was no sense in going to New York and

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spend a lot of money for rent, and by then the transportation and communications were as good or better out of Washington than from New York.

HESS: So you stayed here in town?

BRIGHTMAN: There was no reason other than some kind of superstition to go back up to New York. I think everybody agreed on that. Then, the question remained whether he should operate out of Springfield or out of Washington. I think the two things we wanted were to keep his identity as a midwesterner and more important than that to have his identity as his own man, not disassociating himself, just establishing his own identity and he did that. I cannot recall anytime when there was ever any thought in '52 that Mr. Truman shouldn't get this, or shouldn't be sent there to campaign, if he felt he had the time to go. There were Truman people beneath him who said he ought to be

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running the campaign, and Stevenson ought to be following him, and there were Stevenson people at the lower level said that Mr. Truman shouldn't be in the campaign at all. I never ran into anything at the top level that indicated that there was any of that feeling among Stevenson and Mr. Truman. Mr. Truman campaigned where and when he wanted, and this was fine.

HESS: Did Mr. Truman's rather strong attacks on General Eisenhower sometimes go further than the Democratic National Committee would have preferred?

BRIGHTMAN: I don't think so. If you go back and look at the party newspaper in '52, we had Bill Mauldin doing original cartoons for us which were extremely hostile to General Eisenhower as a military man, and there was no complaint from Governor Stevenson or the people in Springfield. It wasn't Governor Stevenson's style to attack

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his opponent. Basically he preferred to just play his positive case.

HESS: Is there anything that could have been done in 1952 for Mr. Stevenson to have won? What could he have done?

BRIGHTMAN: As far as I am concerned, you can take in all of the campaign management, and all the advertising agencies and all the money, transpose it and the outcome would have been the same. In my heart I felt beaten from the start in '56. In '52 I felt beaten at the start and I never saw victory in sight, but I thought we were gaining in '52, and I think the Republicans felt the same thing, and that is one of the things that caused the Ted Bates spots, if you remember those very cynical spots that they ran in the last part of the campaign. And I think it also spurred the "I will go to Korea" bit. I think we did gain. I don't think we were ever ahead, and I don't think we were ever

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ever actually within striking distance of victory, we may have been reasonably close at one stage, but we had the feeling we were gaining, something was happening. There were some things you had to live with, we couldn't do anything about it. In '56, from beginning to end, I never had the feeling. We gained, but we were just sort of spinning our wheels, going through the motion.

HESS: Anything else of interest on the '52 campaign or election concerning Mr. Stevenson that might not be generally known?

BRIGHTMAN: No, I think that covers it.

HESS: Could you compare the ways in which the chairman of the Democratic National Committee that you served under operated, or how they ran the committee? J. Howard McGrath, Bill Boyle, Frank McKinney, and then Stephen Mitchell? Just give me a little capsule comment on the

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men and their methods of operation, anything that might come to your mind. We had already discussed McGrath quite a little bit in connection with the '48 campaign.

BRIGHTMAN: Well, I think Bill Boyle felt that he was not as free to make his own judgments as Senator McGrath, because he was, more or less, handpicked by Mr. Truman so he did what he thought Mr. Truman wanted him to do. When Frank McKinney came in, I think he was in many ways more concerned with raising some money, which was certainly a problem, than with political issues. Then Steve Mitchell came in. Steve had been something of a nonorganization Democrat in Illinois, and I presume was put in for that reason and because he was a Catholic and we'd had Catholic chairmen, and Adlai was a Protestant. So Steve came in some time after the convention and things had been kind of going on at the committee without central direction.

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There had been sort of an interim between himself and McKinney and it was a very awkward thing. He was a strong man, and left a strong imprint on the committee. He came in as a fellow who sort of was a little leery of the party machinery, and after he was in, he was convinced the party machinery was valuable. His greatest contribution was after the defeat, when he set out to work as a man who had been somewhat hostile to the southerners, to find a formula of accommodation, which was found, before he resigned as chairman. A reasonably pliable "loyalty" formula so that southerners loyal to the national party could come to the convention without hurting themselves at home, and at the same time the national committee would have some protection against utter disloyalties as occurred in '48, and that was the formula that was adopted in 1953 down in New Orleans. It worked pretty well, and was

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accepted by the North and the South -- I said '53 and meant '54. I think you have to give Steve a great deal of credit for the gains that we made in '54 because he had the guts to go on and operate as though the money was going to come from someplace, and nobody knew if it was -- probably an underestimated chairman. When Paul Butler replaced him -- he was basically -- again he had fought his battles in Indiana, and had been a Democratic worker all his life, but in a sense, he was like Steve Mitchell in that people like Jack Arvey and Dave Lawrence weren't personally comfortable with him in the same way they were with Mr. Truman and Frank McKinney or Bill Boyle and Howard McGrath. Not for any special reason, it is just kind of a matter of empathy. I think Paul was a tremendous chairman. He was kind of an underdog chairman, but he was the never give up kind of guy that Mr. Truman was in '48. If it hadn't have been for Paul Butler,

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I don't think John F. Kennedy would have won in 1960, because the national committee and the advisory council put together the indictment of the Republican Party that Mr. Kennedy used in his campaign. Most of the advisory council people who were top advisory council people went into the Kennedy administration. Certainly their ideas were used in the '60 platform. Mr. Truman was always a force for keeping the advisory council liberal, keeping them in business, and I have also seen him leave many of the advisory council meetings and then he would come back so that he wouldn't embarrass advisory council people and they wouldn't feel that they had to say everything that Mr. Truman and his administration did was right, so they would be free to talk without his -- well, then he'd come back and go along with whatever they had to say. He showed, I think, remarkable tact and discernment in using his strength to

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help to keep the advisory council in business when some other people didn't want it who were pretty powerful in the Democratic Party, and at the same time not making it a -- which he could easily have done -- into a reaffirmation of all of the Truman policies, whether they were outmoded by events or not. I think he was extremely thoughtful, generous, and perceptive and

strong in that whole operation, and I don't think we could have won in '60 if it hadn't been for the Democratic Advisory Council.

For example, at the time of the Little Rock school crisis, there was nobody in Congress who was getting any headlines or anybody saying that the Democratic Party was in favor of integration, which was going to be pretty important in the '58 election, until the Democratic Advisory Council put out a statement, then we got headline coverage, and then the candidate who had to run in a nonsouthern area, a nonDemocratic, Congress oriented area, had

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to have some kind of a reference point, he then had the Democratic Advisory Council, and could say, "The Democratic Party is in favor of integration." But, you didn't have anybody in the Congress that amounted to a "hill of beans" who would say anything about it. You had two or three Senators, two or three House members saying something, two or three Governors, but individually you didn't get them on the radio or TV. But the advisory council, Truman, Stevenson, Harriman, Bob Wagner, and Governor [Robert B.] Mayner, and you had all of these people put together, and Kefauver. Eventually, you may recall, everybody who was going to be a candidate in 1960 decided to join the advisory council, except Lyndon Johnson. Symington, Kennedy, were members of the advisory council. Everybody decided he wanted to align himself with the Truman-Stevenson convention, liberal, however you want to describe it, wing of the

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party, rather than the congressional wing before the '60 convention, except Mr. Johnson who stayed out.

HESS: I wonder why he didn't get in, too?

BRIGHTMAN: He had been against it from the beginning.

HESS: What did he find wrong with it?

BRIGHTMAN: He felt that when you don't have a Democratic President that the congressional leadership should take over the party -- we talked about this earlier. There are two parties in both parties. One is a congressional party which gets there by seniority, by safe districts, this and that and the other, and the other is a party of the convention. Now, you go back and look at the parties. This ultraconservative Congress that helped cause the defeat of Tom Dewey was for Taft and against Dewey for the nomination.

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The convention that chose General Eisenhower as a liberal probably wound up with a more conservative President than Senator Taft would have been. The Republican Congress that went to that convention was more conservative than Mr. Eisenhower was thought to be, they were for Taft, with Senator Dirksen there on the floor talking against him. Now, at the same time the

Republican Congress, whether you like it or not, whether you think it is too conservative or not, that had to run with Goldwater as a candidate was mostly not as conservative as Goldwater. The point I am making is that there are two parties, the congressional party and the convention party, and very rarely do they coincide except in the honeymoon days like '64 with Johnson, '36 with Roosevelt. In '40 and '44, even by then, the presidential party and the congressional party were not the same in either party.

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HESS: On that subject, do you think that Taft would have been a more difficult candidate to beat in 148 than Dewey was?

BRIGHTMAN: I think either one of them would have been beaten by Mr. Truman.

HESS: Do you think Taft would have run a harder campaign, a better campaign, more energetic campaign?

BRIGHTMAN: Yes, but I don't think he would have won.

HESS: Why?

BRIGHTMAN: Because I think the 80th Congress beat Dewey and they would have beat Taft worse than they beat Dewey.

HESS: Because Taft was identified with, and more of a personification of, the 80th Congress.

BRIGHTMAN: Yes.

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HESS: What is your definition of a politician, and, what is your definition of politics?

BRIGHTMAN: I think politics is a process of creating a workable society in which the members of society participate. I think a politician is a person who accepts the fact that you are going to have some kind of a popular Government and interests himself in the operation of this form of Government more than other persons. Then we want to say what is a good politician or what is a bad politician. I think, in all sincerity, there are a few people in both parties, who are mostly at the lower level, who are in for purely selfish, venal gains. The majority of the people in politics are concerned, of course, with getting their philosophy accepted by the majority of the voters, who accept majority rule, accept free debate, discussion, who are basically active on the political scene because they believe it is good for our society to have

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this form of Government to make our decisions on a popular basis.

Somehow we get in politics those who spend countless hours and countless dollars for no personal gain to make our Government work. We get a Mr. Truman, a Governor Lawrence, who are short of formal education, long on ability to learn and accomplish things. We get a mixed bag of people who participate in this process. Somehow, they make it work pretty well. That's my feeling about what you call a politician. I don't think it's a bad word at all. I think we would be in a sorry state if we didn't have politicians. I think even demagogic politicians, to the extent that they make people think about their Government, their destiny, their society, have a value, to the extent that a negative creates a positive. I personally think that we have the, in all of its faults and weaknesses, we have the best form of Government in the

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United States, of any free country on the globe. One of the reasons is that we bring all kinds of people into each party's activity and all kinds of ideas into debate. Our parties do involve people, and they do, despite the smudged party lines that occur because of the flexibility of the two party system, give people a choice when they cast their votes. We find unlikely people who turn out to be the right people for the right time. I think that we would be in a terrible shape if we didn't have politicians, good or bad.

HESS: One last question. What is your estimation of Mr. Truman's place in history?

BRIGHTMAN: I am not a professional historian, and I am prejudiced, and it is a difficult question for me to answer. What is your norm, do you say a President who accomplished some consolidation during a relaxed period in history is a great President, or don't you? It is very

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difficult to set a yardstick. I would say that you have to put him in the top twenty percent by any yardstick, and probably in the top ten percent if you equate what he did, to the stresses and strains and conditions of the period in which he was President. It seems to me that he was President during a period which called for courage, imagination, and prompt decisions, carried out resolutely, but which did not enable a President who was doing these things to be labeled as a creative President. For example, let's take the Truman Doctrine. It was something that had to be done, but it probably will not, in our lifetime, be given the same place in history as the Monroe Doctrine or the first hundred days of the New Deal. The action in Korea is never going to be given the same weight as Mr. Roosevelt's going before the Congress asking for the declaration of war after Pearl Harbor. His victory in '48 is never going to be given, I think by people in

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my lifetime, the same weight as Mr. Roosevelt's victory in '32, Yet, other historians may say, "Well, if Mr. Truman hadn't won in '48, we might not have had the courage in Korea, we might not have carried through with the Marshall plan, we might not have had this four more years of reform before the eight years of lull," so, I just plead prejudice in favor of Mr. Truman.

HESS: Have we covered the subject halfway decently?

BRIGHTMAN: I think so.

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