

Oral History Interview
with
WALTER TROHAN

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Washington, D.C.
October 7, 1970

By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Trohan, to begin with could you give me a little of your personal background?

TROHAN: I was born in Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania July 4, 1903. My father moved to Chicago in 1910 so that I was raised in Chicago, went to school in Chicago, and I consider myself a Midwesterner because I have that accent. I don't often admit that I was born in Pennsylvania, and I didn't have much to do with it. I went through grade and high school in

Chicago, and then to the University of Notre Dame. Before I went to college I worked for a small paper in Chicago called the *Daily Calumet*, I was offered a job the night I graduated from high school by a fellow named Bill [William A.] Rowan who was the city editor and who subsequently came to Congress, a Democrat, in the Truman administration, toward

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the tail end of it. I think he served three terms. He is now dead, a very fine fellow. And I had intended to go to law school at the University of Illinois but I got fascinated with the newspaper business and I went on to college with the specific idea of becoming a newspaperman and I chose my courses accordingly; English, history and that sort of business.

After getting out of college and I went to New York where I worked a while, didn't like it, and came back to Chicago, where I went to work for the City News Bureau in March 1927. And on February 24, 1929, I was offered a job on the *Tribune* covering courts, which I did. And I came from -- covered the convention in 1932 and came to Washington in 1934, being brought here by John Boettiger who was to be FDR's son-in-law. Then I have remained here ever since which is a pretty long stretch.

I served as Executive Director of the Washington Bureau and then I was Director of the Bureau, built it up from four men to about fourteen and retired from the Bureau on January 1st, 1969, but I still write a column three days a week, which is about what I did in the last few years I was running the Bureau.

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And I don't care much for it and I hope to quit sometime next summer, because I'm building a home in Ireland. I want to get far enough away from here so they won't persuade me to work. I wanted to quit when I did quit, but they talked me into continuing the column.

Then in that time, I was -- oh, I covered the White House -- I was brought down here to cover the White House which is what I did under FDR, and got quite chummy with him, and got very friendly with [James A.] Farley, whom I met during the Democratic convention. And he sought advice from me, and as a matter of fact, so did FDR. When he came through Chicago, he asked me in a -- he was on his way to make a speech in Minneapolis, one of those "Lucky Strike Hour" speeches, and he asked me to arrange an interview with Tony [Anton J.] Cermak, then mayor, which I did. He got nowhere with Cermak, because he thought the greatest man in the world was Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York. Jimmy Walker, of course, was against Roosevelt and for Al Smith, or at least "stop Roosevelt" at practically any cost. And Farley also wanted to know the local situation. We got very chummy and I

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ran into Al Smith at that convention too.

I didn't meet Roosevelt again until after I came to Washington. I came to Washington in October 15, 1934, and we went almost immediately down to Warm Springs, in say November, around Thanksgiving time. I met him again down there and got -- we were quite friendly, although I disagreed with him, but you don't fight with your news sources.

In the course of time I met Mr. Truman, rather casually, because I didn't really cover the Hill very much, but I did occasionally go up there, and I was a great friend, and I still am, of B. K. [Burton] Wheeler, who got Mr. Truman on the Transportation Committee -- the Commerce Committee -- railroads. Wheeler was interested in and he...

HESS: Interstate Commerce Committee.

TROHAN: Yeah, Interstate Commerce, and Truman got in this, and because of that connection Mr. Truman got into the subcommittee on the conduct of the war. And he, in those days, sought a great deal of advice from Mr. Wheeler because Wheeler was an old hand at that time, and quite an expert investigator. And in those days, also, Mr. Truman was a friend of [Lewis B.] Schwellenbach

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and Shay [Senator Sherman] Minton from Indiana. I think he sat with them, between them, and I remember some of that. Anyway, they were pretty chummy and I know Shay very well because he came from Indiana, I had to know him. And I knew Lewis Schwellenbach quite well and knew him when he got into the Cabinet. Well, in...

HESS: What was your impression of Mr. Truman's handling of the Truman Committee?

TROHAN: Oh, I thought he did a good job from a political point of view. He wasn't going to dirty up the administration any if he could help it, but he was trying to do the best he knew how. I knew Charlie Patrick Clark on that committee, who claimed to be the brains and the genius in it, which I do not think he was. He wasn't a very bright fellow.

HESS: Did you know Hugh Fulton?

TROHAN: Yes, I knew Fulton, who also claimed to have done the whole thing single-handed, but that happens, and is an old Washington custom. And then in -- oh, in along in, let's see, '44, because of his conduct with that Committee and because he was rather well-liked, Mr. Truman began to be mentioned for President. A great many people didn't take him seriously. Most of the

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political experts they'll tell you differently no, but most of the reporters in Washington had been considering him not too seriously before that.

HESS: What was your opinion at that time?

TROHAN : Well, my opinion, I was really not -- I think I was with the majority. I didn't think that Mr. Truman -- I didn't take him seriously. I didn't think he had enough experience and I didn't think he had been around long enough; I didn't think he had a background. And I just thought it was more or less speculation. I knew he was rather well-liked on both sides, very partisan sort of fellow. He would have no use for any Republican. I remember at that time a member of that committee with him was a good friend of mine, Owen Brewster, of Maine.

Brewster went out to Missouri, Jackson County, or as a matter of fact to Kansas City, and Truman apologized to him and said, "I can't bring you to the house because my mother don't like Republicans." Now, that's a fantastic story, but I believe it.

HESS: Is it a true story?

TROHAN : That's what Brewster told me. And also when Truman got nominated he wrote a letter to Brewster which ought to be among Brewster's papers somewhere, a very peculiar one, he wrote it from his home, mother's home, and it was airmailed with one, two and three cent stamps. He evidently rifled his mother's stamp box to find enough stamps to send this airmail. It was a handwritten note as I remember and quite revealing. I don't know what Brewster did with it. His papers ought to be somewhere. It ought -- I don't attempt to tell what was in the letter but you ought to get it. And I'm sure you can because it must be there someplace.

HESS: Did you think that Mr. Truman being mentioned as a vice-presidential candidate in 1944 was somewhat of a stop [Henry A.] Wallace movement?

TROHAN: Yes. That was part of the anti-Wallace movement, but I didn't take it seriously. I knew they were going to stop Wallace. I was pretty sure they would anyhow. And, of course, in that time, everybody and his brother was -- well, it wasn't as bad as in '40. In '40 everybody was a vice-presidential candidate. Many of them, Jimmy [James F.] Byrnes and Louie [Louis A.] Johnson, former Secretary of War and later Secretary of Defense, oh, there were fifteen -- [Harold] Ickes was trying to get in there. He wrote a letter that's in

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his memoirs, telling -- proposing [Robert Maynard] Hutchins of the University of Chicago, President Hutchins, and then he finally wound up in the letter saying that a lot of people say that I would be the logical man. That's in his memoirs. It's a very strange thing.

HESS: One question on 1940: Of course, that was the time Mr. Roosevelt ran for the third term, and James Farley did not like him running for the third term. What do you recall about Mr. Farley himself wanting the nomination in 1940?

TROHAN: Well, I spent the 1940 convention with Farley, as we were great friends, and at that time Farley really was for [Cordell] Hull for...

HESS: He did not want it himself?

TROHAN: Not exactly. He didn't think he was quite there. He thought he would be -- take second place with Hull. He could have it for a couple of terms and then succeed...

HESS: With Cordell Hull?

TROHAN: And then follow Hull. That was his idea. And he had some votes from Massachusetts, but he didn't take them seriously, and he didn't seriously think he was going to be -- that he was a candidate for the presidential nomination.

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HESS: Did he think Cordell Hull would make a good nominee?

TROHAN: He thought Hull would make a good nominee and he thought Hull could have had it. He didn't think he, Farley, could have had it. He was -- when it came down to the point where Roosevelt was going to take the third term, he, in my presence, told Jesse Jones that Jones could have it if he would make a play for it. He could have stopped Wallace then. There was a stop Wallace movement at that time if you remember, and [Paul Vories] McNutt, former Governor of Indiana, was interested, but Roosevelt wasn't very hot for McNutt. McNutt had got himself into some kind of income tax trouble.

HESS: What did you hear Mr. Farley say about Mr. Roosevelt taking a third term?

TROHAN: Well, Farley was against a third term on the grounds that he thought that two term limit was a wise decision and taking a third term would stop younger men from coming up in the party and wreck the whole structure, and I think he was right, the third term was a mistake. There were other men that could have done it, Hull could have done it. I think Hull would have made a

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good President. I think Farley would have made a good Vice President. However, today Farley is delighted that he didn't get it, because he's alive, and he wouldn't be had he gotten the job.

HESS: Moving on to 1944 and the convention. Did you attend the convention in Chicago in 1944?

TROHAN: Yes, I've attended every convention since 1932. And in 1944 there was an interesting note to me. I was in the room with Farley, in his room in the Blackstone Hotel where I stayed in a suite, when Mr. Truman came in. Mr. Truman walked in the door and said hello to me.

"Oh, I was getting ready to leave," I said.

Mr. Truman said it wasn't necessary; he just had a small thing to say. And Farley said, "You can say anything in front of Walter."

At that time I was preparing -- no, that was a little later. I was preparing to write Farley's memoirs for him which I subsequently did, we were very close friends. And we now talk practically every day on the phone.

Then, anyway, Mr. Truman came in to ask him for his support for Vice President. By that time it was

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pretty obvious that it was going to Truman. [Robert E.] Hannegan, Democratic National Chairman, was for Truman. That's when I first began to take Mr. Truman seriously was when I

talked to Hannegan before the convention. But I think I took him seriously before most of them. I began to take him seriously in the fall of '43 because Hannegan would go to the football game and he sat right near me. We'd talk about various things in between plays and I saw him favoring for Truman, and knowing that he was party chairman, that made quite a little difference. He was in the Post Office then.

HESS: When Mr. Truman came to Chicago that year, he came with the idea of putting Jim Byrnes' name in nomination, as you know.

TROHAN: That's right.

HESS: Mr. Byrnes had phoned him and asked him if he would and Mr. Truman replied that he would, and coming to Chicago fully intending to place his name in nomination. Did he say anything about that the time he came in the hotel room?

TROHAN: No, this was the time -- by this time he was a candidate himself. He had been cleared with Sidney --

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labor was for Truman and he didn't care much for Wallace. I wouldn't say, "Cleared with Sidney," because I think that's a vile phrase. The point was that it wasn't that Sidney Hillman picked Mr. Truman; it was that labor liked him. Hillman was not a king maker, but he was the spokesman for labor.

HESS: He could have given a veto.

TROHAN: Yes, he could have given...

HESS: A labor veto had he wanted to.

TROHAN: Yes, he could have, but he decided not to and then Mr. Truman came in then and asked for Farley's vote in the convention. And Farley said I'm sorry he had a half a vote -- and he said, "I'm sorry, but I'm pledged to Barkley," which he was.

HESS: What did Mr. Truman say then?

TROHAN: Truman said, "Well, that's all right." And then Farley said (and this is the most amazing thing I ever heard one politician say to another in all of my years -- and that is quite a few), he said, "You're going ahead." And he added: "Before you take it, you've got to ask yourself if you have the capacity to make a decision once the facts are put in front of you."

And Mr. Truman did not say, "Yes, I'm going to

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get it," or he wasn't going to get it -- he wasn't feeling that he had it in the bag by any matter of means -- but he was courteous enough to come around to Farley and touch the bases. And as he

left I turned to Farley and I said, "That's the damndest thing I've ever heard one politician say to another."

And Farley said, "What do you mean?"

"Well," I said, "you so much as said to him that he hadn't the capacity to make a decision once the facts were placed in front of him."

And Farley said, "Well, I don't know that he has."

Farley, of course, subsequently changed his mind and decided that he did have. But at that time...

HESS: He just didn't know.

TROHAN: Within his own party, Mr. Truman wasn't taken too seriously and everybody was so happy to get rid of Wallace - I hate to say it -- they'd have taken almost anybody because Wallace was, as Westbrook Pegler called him, "a bubblehead." A nice fellow, but very light, and very susceptible to influence and would have been a terrible President, because you wouldn't have known what he was going to do from one day to the next, in

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my opinion. I subsequently -- I saw Wallace many years later and Wallace began to make a full 180° turn; he died quite conservative.

HESS: Really?

TROHAN: Yes. He was beginning to see that a lot of these things were pretty silly. But one strength Mr. Truman had, he was a politician, he was a Democrat. He'd do anything for the party. He did some very silly things, in my opinion, but I know why he did them. Like the time he fronted for Alger Hiss. He wasn't fronting for Alger Hiss, per se, he thought they were attacking him through Hiss. Roosevelt would have sacrificed Hiss at the snap of the finger. He would have sacrificed anybody, but Mr. Truman figured that that was a fight on him, so he supported Hiss whom he didn't really like; thought he was a terrible fellow. Mr. Roosevelt had an entirely different system.

Roosevelt was a great guy for creating agencies, take War Production Board, and he put Mr. Sidney Hillman and [William S.] Knudsen together on it with equal powers, and neither one would get anywhere.

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And then he would name another board. The Republicans used to say, "Now, we got him; now we got him." And the next week he'd have a new board and they'd drop what they had and start on the other one. He kept them confused and off stride. Well, Mr. Truman wasn't -- wasn't a great guy for deceit in that sense. He would go in and front for a fellow, even though he thought the man was a terrible fellow and privately he hated his guts, but it was part of his code to defend everybody in his organization. Mr. Truman had two marvelous phrases. One of the greatest

things ever said to anybody in the White House was, "If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen." That's very, very true. That was his attitude and he could take the heat. Of course, he gave it too. And the other thing he said was, "The buck stops here." That isn't quite true, not as true as the other, because the buck can be passed by Presidents and frequently is, generally is, including the present occupant.

I want to get this perfectly clear and ought to have put it at the beginning. I'm not an admirer of Mr. Truman's. I wasn't while he was a Senator, I liked him well enough, and in the White House I didn't care

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for him at all. I was a critic, if anything. But I didn't go like some people did and try to make peace with him. I said my say and he publicly called me an SOB., publicly. It was in...

HESS: What was the occasion?

TROHAN: Oh, he was getting aboard an airplane and Krock had written something he didn't like, Arthur Krock of the *New York Times*, Mr. Truman said he could take it from that SOB Walter Trohan or Walter Winchell (which annoyed me very much to be classified with that character), but I didn't expect it from Arthur Krock. I forget what the episode was, but it's in Facts on File. There's a little note mentioning me and him at that time. It must have been in '50, '51. He had also called very many people the same thing and a lot of them went in and tried to make peace, but Mr. Truman was not an easy guy to convince, although he was an easy enough fellow to make peace with, but I was not a fellow to crawl on my belly. Others did, like Drew Pearson, who went in after he had been called everything nasty, with some justifications on Mr. Truman's part. Frank Waldrop, the editor of the *Times-Herald* went in and made peace, but he didn't kid Mr. Truman.

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Mr. Truman despised him for it, as a matter of fact. If the man is going to play both sides of the street, he's not going to be trusted by anyone. I knew, of course, the Cabinet very well. I spent a lot of time with a great many of them, Tom Clark for example, and John Snyder and...

HESS: What do you recall about Mr. Snyder for instance?

TROHAN: Well now, I can tell you, I used to go down the Potomac; a fellow I knew had a yacht here and we'd go down and then back. Often we'd pass Mr. Truman on his boat.

HESS: On the Williamsburg.

TROHAN: Yes, on the *Williamsburg*, going up or back. It was always interesting to me, I had a pair of glasses. We'd wave because I'd go down there with either B. K. Wheeler or Gerald Nye, both in the Senate. He'd recognize us. And it was a very curious thing, the two of them -- Mr. Truman and Snyder -- would sit there with their arms around each other like a couple of boys on the levee of the Mississippi watching it go by. Just a manner of deep personal friendship, not

even talking. They just liked each other's company, as young lads do. Truman was a man's man. He liked men and he liked to

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relax with men. He had little to do with women, not enjoying their company particularly. He was very fond of his wife, and a very decent man morally, and he was a lot better than many of the Presidents in the White House. As far as I knew or could learn there was never a breath of scandal affecting him. He was very fond of his wife who was a great woman. She believed her job was to be a wife and not going around to beautify America or to make speeches or to campaign or anything else. She always rather amused me because she came from the right side of the tracks in Jackson County, and he came from the wrong side. There are photographs of them when he was making speeches, where she is looking up at him as if to say, "You're still fooling them." She apparently kind of marveled at the way he did it.

But I was going to say in that '40 -- in the campaign in '48, I went to Tom Clark and told him; look if Mr. Truman plays this thing properly, the *Tribune* might support him, or at least not support his opposition, because it was beginning to look like Mr. Dewey was going to get the GOP nomination, and we couldn't take Mr. Dewey. If Mr. Truman plays his cards right, he might get our support, which would be a great help

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in the Midwest. Mr. Truman refused to believe it and spurned it. He wouldn't have any part of the *Tribune*. Oh, I'm not sure that he could have had it, of course, but as it worked out we were not very enthusiastic for Mr. Dewey. We finally, grudgingly, gave him an endorsement, but we didn't give him too much help.

HESS: What was the basis for that attitude on the *Tribune's* part? Why didn't they like Mr. Dewey?

TROHAN: Well, we didn't care for him because he was part of the Eastern establishment and he was for the war and we were not. He had been anti-war in the early years of the conflict and then to get the nomination he switched to go with the Eastern establishment. There were many other things, but it was mostly that, We were for Robert A. Taft anyway, and we resented what the Easterners were doing to hurt Taft.

Now there is a couple of things that went on in my time that you ought to maybe be interested in. As you know, Mr. Truman was, once he got in the White House, subject to that terrible disease of the Presidency, flattery. I don't know how much of this took, but I do know that at one time Sam Rosenman, who

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remained from the Roosevelt administration to do some speechwriting, laid flattery on with a trowel. He said to Mr. Truman, on one occasion: "You know, when you went into the Presidency, I wondered, I must confess that I wondered whether you were big enough to fill Franklin D. Roosevelt's shoes." Then he added: "Now I wonder if FDR came back whether he could fill your shoes."

Now, that's strictly for the birds, but that's the kind of stuff that goes on there. I don't think that it over-impressed Mr. Truman. I think he was aware of it because he finally eased Mr. Rosenman out and then he went on building his own team. He started out with the FDR Cabinet and he had a great deal of trouble. Mr. Truman was not in love with Roosevelt particularly, because Roosevelt just accepted Truman as an adjunct, something that he had to have on the ticket. He never took him in any kind of confidence, never told him anything, advised him on absolutely nothing, and rather ignored him. He treated him as he had been treating Henry Wallace, to be truthful, as just a necessary evil. Mr. Truman resented that naturally. After all he was Vice President and he was picked for a certain

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function and he should have been treated differently. I must explain, a great many of the White House Secret Service men didn't like Mr. Roosevelt, and they told me a great many things about him.

HESS: What did they say?

TROHAN: Well, for example, they had the Hollywood man making him up when he was fading in the 1944 campaign. And by the way, I may be a little bit ahead of myself. What Farley meant, and said, which I didn't make clear when he talked to Mr. Truman, was that Truman was going to succeed Roosevelt. He knew that Roosevelt would die; every informed delegate knew at the convention that they were electing Mr. Truman President. There was no secret about it and Mr. Truman knew it too, because everybody subsequently wrote that they knew how badly off FDR was, but they were afraid...

HESS: What was your impression of Mr. Roosevelt's health about this time, '44 and early '45?

TROHAN: Well, I am a reporter and I make it my business to go into things like that, I managed the White House correspondent's dinner, the last one Roosevelt attended.

HESS: In March of '45. What do you recall about that

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dinner?

TROHAN: Well, I put a doctor from Johns Hopkins underneath Roosevelt to look at him and tell me what he could, and the doctor told me that FDR wasn't going to live long.

HESS: You had the doctor sit close to Roosevelt at that dinner?

TROHAN: Right underneath him.

HESS: What do you mean underneath him?

TROHAN: Well, the head table is here...

HESS: Oh. Oh, where he could look straight up at him?

TROHAN : Where he could look straight up and he told me...

HESS: Where was that dinner held?

TROHAN: In the Statler. He told me that from the back of his neck it was scrawny and when you get into that condition, he said, one hasn't got long to go.

HESS: I believe that was in -- was that in March of '45?

TROHAN: I thought that it was earlier than...

HESS: He went to Yalta in February.

TROHAN: He came back and went to...

HESS: He came back and made the speech at the joint session of Congress. After his speech, and I think

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that it was, I'm not sure, but I think it was -- I think it was somewhere along...

TROHAN: Somewhere in there. I thought maybe it was even earlier, but I don't remember. You see I knew -- everybody knew he was fading -- but how do you write it? We knew Roosevelt was failing. He had a press conference, the next to the last press conference, which was absolutely fantastic because Roosevelt was in a bad way. We came in and said, "Good morning," you know. Bert Andrews of the *New York Herald-Tribune* asked Roosevelt what he thought of [Harold] Stassen's speech. Stassen had made a speech, having to do with United Nations, and Roosevelt said: "Stassen?" his voice was thick and dull. "Stassen? Stassen? I haven't heard of it."

Somebody said, "Thank you Mr. President," and out we went.

HESS: He said he had never heard of it?

TROHAN: It was obvious that he was not himself. And I remember Bert Hullen of the *New York Times* saying to May Craig, who came up flabbergasted and asked, "What do you think?"

Bert said, "The last leaf on the tree."

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I think there was one other press conference, but it was at this conference that he began talking about flood control, and nobody knew what the devil he was talking about.

HESS: Nobody had asked any questions about flood control?

TROHAN: No, not flood control. Later I chased through the morning's paper and found a paragraph somewhere stating there was a small flood. But FDR had confused it with the flood control projects that were great campaign in '36, and his mind was going back. People do live in the past. After that conference, I think he had one other that at which he wasn't so bad. Then he went down to...

HESS: Warm Springs.

TROHAN: Warm Springs and that was the end.

HESS: Let me ask you one question about Chicago in 1944: There is the so-called "Douglas-Truman" or "Truman-Douglas" letter that Mr. Roosevelt gave to Robert Hannegan as he was passing through Chicago. He was on his way West...

TROHAN: He was the Justice.

HESS: That's right, he was on his way West. Did you ever hear Hannegan say anything about the letter that

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Roosevelt had given to him?

TROHAN: No, I asked him about the letter and, of course, Hannegan naturally enough was not for Douglas. I accused him of just hiding it, in Mr. Truman's behalf, and he wouldn't confirm it, but he didn't deny it either. The story got around. An interesting thing about that '44 campaign was that nobody was mad at Mr. Truman for taking it, the second place nomination, even those who thought he ought to have supported them, even Byrnes. And Byrnes -- Jimmy Byrnes, who was a great friend of mine I would say (I'm a great friend with almost everybody) -- had a very low opinion of Mr. Truman, and when he took the post of Secretary of State, he figured that he would have to save Mr. Truman, and that he was really, really President behind his facade. He found out in a very short time who was President.

HESS: Did you ever hear him say why he had such a low opinion of Mr. Truman?

TROHAN: Well, he had served with him and he thought that -- Byrnes just had a very high opinion of himself, and they don't come much higher. He knew everything and he knew everybody, and he had been around and he had

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met these fellows here, there and the other places.

HESS: And he had been the "Assistant President."

TROHAN: "The Assistant" and he believed the Byrnes myth. He was a Senator. He was on the Court and he was the Assistant President and everything else. He was a very powerful fellow,

and he thought, naturally like a lot of politicians do, that nobody could do it better than he could. So, he took himself most seriously: He was an able fellow, but he wasn't near as good as he thought. He could have been President. He would have made not a bad President.

HESS: You know there was some discussion at the time that Mr. Truman appointed him that it was more in the nature of a consolation prize. You know, "I now have the job that you could have had, so I'm going to give you a high position." Did you feel that Byrnes thought that was why Mr. Truman was giving him the job?

TROHAN: No, I don't think -- well, I don't think Jimmy Byrnes ever had that idea, or at least he never gave me that impression. He just thought that Mr. Truman had picked the strongest man for the job, that was all, and he thought -- what he thought, in my opinion,

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was that Truman recognized that he needed support and he picked the strongest man to really be "Assistant President" and handle foreign affairs, which was the vital thing at the time, and he was the guy who was going to fix up everything; end the war and...

HESS: Did he think he could handle it on his own without checking things with Mr. Truman?

TROHAN: I think so. I think, in my estimation, now this is a terrible thing, I think that what -- the way Byrnes approached the job was that he would do it and then explain to Mr. Truman what he had done and let Mr. Truman explain it to the people.

HESS: Do you recall, when Mr. Byrnes came back from Russia he announced that he was going to make a report to the American people before he even saw Mr. Truman?

TROHAN: I had forgotten that, but I, now that you recall that, I remember it. In fact...

HESS: I believe that was not...

TROHAN: I think that got him in trouble.

HESS: I think it got him fired.

TROHAN: Yes, many people had a very low opinion of Mr. Truman, Ickes was one. Ickes thought he should have been President and could have done it better,

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so he began to get a little arrogant and a little bit difficult. And Mr. Truman brought him up short and threw him. And Ickes didn't think that anybody could get along without him. Truman made it very clear that he could, and he didn't hurt the government a bit. You know, it's like everything else, many people get the silly idea they're indispensable, they are not.

HESS: In the 1944 campaign, did you travel with either candidate? Dewey or Roosevelt?

TROHAN: No, in 1944, was the only campaign, practically the only one I didn't cover.

HESS: Any particular reason that year?

TROHAN: Well, by that time the war was on for one thing, and I didn't -- I had covered Roosevelt, every inch of the '40 campaign. I'd had it and I don't like campaign trains. I don't care for them, they are impossible, very difficult.

HESS: What's the worst thing?

TROHAN: Pierce Butler, the son of the Chief Justice, who was a newspaperman, once made the perfect remark about campaign trains. He said, "A campaign train is like a brothel on Saturday night, with the madam away."

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I guess there is a point to that.

HESS: A pretty wild place?

TROHAN: Well, it's often a blend of confusion and chaos. There are people coming in and going out. Then there's speeches, many political cooks get themselves all wrapped up in the thing, even though the voters have already made up their minds. It's just a mess: The crowds pressing in, you have a devil's own time of listening to the candidate on the back platform and then try to run back and climb on the train before it pulls out. So I didn't go. In the first place, as I say, the war was on, I was pretty busy and then I didn't care for Mr. Dewey and I didn't want to cover any part of him. I didn't want to be anywhere around him. And in that...

HESS: Did you think that Mr. Dewey had a chance of beating Mr. Roosevelt?

TROHAN: No. No, I didn't have any idea. I was with Roosevelt up at Hyde Park in 1944, where we were called on to predict the outcome. Roosevelt was always very gloomy. He always thought he was facing complete disaster in any campaign and he was really very frightened. So, we had to predict, you know,

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and see who around got closest to the result. And I elected Dewey, but just to annoy FDR because I knew he read them all, the predictions, and knew who made them. I was with him in '40 and I figured he was going to carry almost everything, but I was one off. I figured Maine and Vermont and Connecticut would go Republican.

HESS: And you missed Connecticut.

TROHAN: I missed Connecticut, but we went through Connecticut with Roosevelt on a rainy day and there weren't comparatively very many people out, so I was confused and Connecticut's a curious state anyhow. Sometimes it votes Republican and sometimes Democratic. At that time, they had one Republican Senator and one Democratic Senator and I thought maybe they had got

annoyed with FDR some way or another, but I was wrong. Everywhere else we had tremendous crowds and they went crazy, they lined the streets, several deep, but not in Connecticut. It wasn't a rainy day exactly, it was just that the weather was threatening, and anyhow it didn't work out very well, so I was wrong in that one, very wrong. In the '48 campaign, for example, I thought, like everybody else, that Dewey was going to win until I got to Chicago to cover the election.

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HESS: When did you go to Chicago that year?

TROHAN: About four days before.

HESS: Before the election.

TROHAN: Yes. I was there writing and I ran into a great many people. I learned that the landlords had put out a notice, a sixty day notice, saying that the rents were going to increase on January 1st. And they sent out two hundred and fifty thousand of those on November 1, and the flood of complaints you could hear from here if you would open up the window. That kind of shook me. I talked to many other people and I didn't find anybody that was going to vote for Dewey. But shortly before that, just before I went out to Chicago, the Congressman from Michigan, a Republican named Paul Shafer came to me and said, "Dewey's going to lose; Truman's going to win."

HESS: Why did he think so?

TROHAN: Well, he had gone all through his district which was Republican and he said, "I'm going to get elected, but not as good as I have before." He added, "He isn't going to carry Michigan and he ain't going to carry Indiana, not enough to win." Then he went to Milton Kronheim and said, "You want your son to be a judge,

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give to Truman." And Milton gave, I think, \$5,000 in his son's name, or his name, and \$5,000 in the name of Jiggs [F. Joseph] Donohue, and Jiggs Donohue got to be District Commissioner. Actually Kronheim was for Rene Camalier; he didn't want Jiggs to be District Commissioner, but he hardly said so. Kronheim was the one guy on the strength of Paul Shafer, one of his best customers, who gave the money before the election, Mr. Truman remembered those who gave then, because he was all alone in that campaign.

At the Gridiron dinner at that time, I wanted to have a scene with the stage open and a guy on the wagon all alone whipping the horses trying to get on all the votes. Then close the curtain to the same scene after the election and have everybody in the world on the wagon. That was turned down as too difficult to put on, but as you know, everybody and his brother claimed that they were with Mr. Truman all the way throughout the campaign.

Les Biffle said he went around as a chicken farmer, and found out that Mr. Truman was going to win. And [Louis] Bean over in the Department of Agriculture said he predicted Mr. Truman's election in his book.

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Well, if you read his book, it wasn't very much of a prediction. It was one of those "iffy" things, so he didn't predict anything.

Well, I think I'll tell -- all right -- for your information, some things that would be of interest to someone in the future possibly. One is the great relationship between Clark Clifford and President Truman. This has now been exaggerated all out of proportion. Clifford is wonderful and is very handsome, very nice, very personable, very fine fellow, but he is not one to undersell Mr. Clifford. He has become a great man. He took a job under Lyndon Johnson -- got a job as a hawk and then became a leader of the doves. I think but don't know -- Clark always had the idea maybe lightning might strike in his case. I happen to know, and the story should be told, how he got in the White House.

He was brought into the White House by J. K. Vardaman, then Naval Aide. Mr. Vardaman was Naval Aide because he had been a banker in St. Louis and one time his bank wanted some legislation so he went to Mr. Truman and the latter promised to help him. Vardaman gave Mr. Truman \$350 for his Senate campaign, which was very

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important -- and that was the one that he was supposed to lose against [Lloyd C.] Stark I guess. He did the legislation for the bank and J. K. considered that debt closed and forgotten. One day when he was out in the Pacific he got a telegram which said, in effect, "Will you come to the White House and be Naval Aide?" Vardaman was flabbergasted. He wasn't even bucking for the job, but he went to serve. He didn't know Truman too well. He knew him, but not intimately. So he went in and undertook his duties.

Incidentally, and to make an amusing story, he walked in to see Mr. Truman in the office in late afternoon to report for duty, and Mr. Truman reached into his desk, pulled out a bottle of whisky, said, "Let's have a drink."

J. K. said, "I'm sorry, Mr. President, but I had a bout with that stuff and I gave it up. I found out I couldn't handle it. I used to take a quart a day."

So, Truman slowly pushed the drawer to, he didn't take one himself. Then he said, "A bunch of the boys are having a little poker party tonight, would you care to come?"

Vardaman said, "I'll be happy to." When he got to

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the poker game, he said, "I've given up cards, too, but I'd just as soon sit and watch and enjoy it."

And again, Mr. Truman went a little sour. They began telling stories. Well, Mr. Truman had a curious sense of humor, though not unusual considering his background. His idea of a very funny story always had the same ending with somebody tipping over the backhouse and somebody falling in, which was pretty rural. And J. K.'s turn came.. He said, "I'm sorry, I don't object to

these stories, I don't object to anything, but I'm one of these curious fellows that after the story goes in I laugh, then it goes out almost immediately, I have no retention."

Well, again, Mr. Truman looked disappointed. So, in a short time he appointed Vardaman to the Federal Reserve Board. Vardaman always said, "I owe my appointment to clean living."

HESS: Did you talk to him about that?

TROHAN: Oh, yes, I discussed it, I printed that story many years ago. I see Vardaman now and then. He was in the Navy hospital around Christmas time and I went over to see him. I always liked J. K. very much. Well, anyway, J. K. when he was...

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HESS: Is he still living down in Pass Christian, Mississippi?

TROHAN: No, he's down at Wrightsville Beach -- no, I'll tell you where he is, St. Simons Island, off New Brunswick, Georgia. You ought to get to him, because he has many stories, and he'll confirm that story. He'll also confirm this one which is most interesting.

Vardaman went to Mr. Truman and said he wanted Clark Clifford in the White House. Evidently Clark hadn't supported Mr. Truman and Mr. Truman didn't like him and he said he wouldn't have him. And he added, "Besides, he's a lawyer," and he, Mr. Truman, didn't have much affection for lawyers, generally. As a matter of fact, a very wise and sensible thing the more you examine it, I think. He said, "No." But finally J. K. said he had to have Clifford, and he did have to have him. Mr. Truman said, "All right. You can have him, but on one condition, that he doesn't speak to me."

So, for three months in the White House, Mr. Clifford came in with J. K. and never opened his trap. Then he moved in slowly, and being a very charming fellow, if you know him, very ingratiating, and in no time at all Truman was leaning on him. But I'm afraid he got afflicted with that old disease of White

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House advisers, he got bigger than he was. Now he's a very charming fellow, I don't want to tear him down or anything else, but he had, let's say he was one who did not underestimate his influence.

HESS: At the time that he was Special Counsel to Mr. Truman did you ever go to him for news tips or inside information?

TROHAN: Yes, I talked to him from time to time about some policy or other. I talked to him -- he prepared a very famous document on Russia, which has gotten wide circulation, because it warned Truman that the Russians were not about to play ball, they were ready to cut our throat. Arthur Krock put it in his memoirs at the end in full in an appendix. Oh, it's a great statement, but it is not Clark Clifford's.

HESS: Who wrote it?

TROHAN: He put it together, but he got it from all of the best brains in the Army and Navy and State Departments. It's -- I wouldn't want to be cruel to Mr. Clifford, but let's say he wasn't the only one who recognized it, he put it into words.

HESS: Even though his signature appears on the bottom of the last page.

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TROHAN: That's right, but he got it from everyone, just a good piece of reporting. It's like many things that I got after talking to everybody and his brother. I get the credit for it, of course, or vice versa.

HESS: And your name appears on the bottom of the last page.

TROHAN: Oh, it's on top.

HESS: It's your story.

TROHAN: But Clark -- one other thing Clark did was just as a matter of interest. One time he was writing a speech for Mr. Truman, which he did many times, he got very chummy with him. And he did a thing which I considered strange, one of those there told me when they were reading the speech, and he finished reading it, and Clark raised up his right hand and said, "May God wither this hand if I ever write the name of the cadaver again." (The cadaver was Franklin D. Roosevelt.) And Truman said, "And may he split this tongue if I ever use the name again," because Mr. Truman, as I said earlier was not really too fond of Mr. Roosevelt, for the way he had been treated, and he had a right to his point of view.

However, this was in 1947, or '46, very early,

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and when '48 came around, he squeezed every vote he could out of the name Franklin D. Roosevelt. But that's politics, those things happen. The only thing that I considered strange about it is, when you write a speech for a man, you are sort of honor bound not to say it's yours, you're just helping him put it in words, that'll work together better. You don't boast. Of course, they always do here. You know it doesn't take you long, it's very interesting, all you have to do in Washington to be a success is to keep your mouth shut and listen enough and sooner or later somebody is going to tell you how important he is or even make himself more important than he is. He'll tell you if he wrote the President's speech, he can't keep his mouth shut. He's going to tell you. The only danger in that thing is you've got to give him some judgment, you must check up because he is not always telling the truth.

I remember one time when we were getting ready to go to war in Korea they had a Sunday night meeting, emergency meeting, of the Cabinet, and I got a phone call after the Cabinet meeting from Louie Johnson and he said, "I took on Acheson at the Cabinet meeting."

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You remember Acheson had drawn Korea -- oh not Korea, Hanoi, and what not -- not Hanoi...

HESS: It was Korea.

TROHAN: Formosa, outside of our zone of defense in the Communist sphere. He drew a line where we wouldn't let them go. And the *Tribune* was pretty violent about it, the paper was. I thought it was wrong and subsequently of course, so did Acheson. And anyhow, Louie said, "I took him on and I told him what I thought of him and I had him speechless and I left him hanging on the ropes." He gave me the whole story. And I sat down and I was writing the story with whistles, bells, and gongs about this great secret meeting, and what went on, until I suddenly thought: "Just a cotton picking minute, that's Louie Johnson talking and you know to Louie things are the way he believes they are and not as they really are. You had better," and so I said -- in this conversation with myself, I'm very good listening to myself. I called up Link [Lincoln] White and I told Link the situation in confidence. I said, "Now, I get this information and you can guess from who, I'm not going to tell you, but this is the story that I was told." I said, "It doesn't -- the thing

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that bothers me about it is that I know Mr. Acheson, and I have some admiration for him. I don't believe that he is ever left speechless by anybody."

And Link White said, "I don't either, but I'll check on it and call you back."

So, he called Acheson (I couldn't get him), and came back and said, "It didn't happen like that at all." He said, "In fact it was this way," so that story went in the wastebasket and I started out with a more truthful one. I could have got into a lot of trouble. But that, of course, is the secret of Washington. It isn't so difficult to get a story, the business is to put it in focus, because the guy telling you always exaggerates his own role in it for his own view.

HESS: Why did Louie Johnson get the job as Secretary of Defense?

TROHAN: Well, I think Louie had gone out and worked for Truman. He'd been doublecrossed a bit by Roosevelt because Roosevelt promised the job to Louie and Louie wanted War (the Cabinet post), when [Harry Hines] Woodring had it and when Woodring left, instead of giving it to Johnson, Roosevelt gave it to [Henry L.] Stimson. He took Stimson and [Frank] Knox away from

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the Republican Party, put them in. So, Louie went around all the time weeping over this lost job. He did work for Truman in the campaign. He worked with him I think in the committee, and he felt that he had ought to get it. Mr. Truman was very, very good to his friends even when he was President.

HESS: What kind of a Secretary of Defense did he make?

TROHAN: Well, he had Steve Early over there with him and I guess was -- he was no [James V.] Forrestal. I would say he wasn't a great Secretary of Defense, I'd say he was adequate, maybe. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't put him down as...

HESS: In September of 1950 he was replaced by General Marshall.

TROHAN: Yes.

HESS: Why was it found necessary to replace him, do you know?

TROHAN: Well, I think -- I don't know, as I remember...

HESS: Because the Korean war had started?

TROHAN: The Korean war had come on and Johnson was trying to sabotage Acheson, and Acheson was very close to the White House and Johnson just became expendable. I remember that extremely well, because that was one of the great

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personal reportorial disasters of my time. There were stories that Johnson was in trouble, but Steve Early called me -- and he had resigned -- and he called me and said, "The other shoe is going to drop." Well, I knew what that meant. That meant that Johnson was going. So, as I was thinking about that, I had a great story, and then he told me also, "The other shoe is going to drop and the man with the five stars is coming in." That was all I needed to know. He called from the Pentagon.

So, this was fairly early in the morning and the ticker came out, bing, bing, bing, "UP, Johnson is resigning." Steve Early had told Lyle Wilson (UP Bureau Chief), who was another good friend of his and mine. Well, that was all right with me. I figured he gave that to Lyle, I had the Marshall appointment, I was going to write that. So, I'm sitting here writing Marshall is the new Secretary of State and I'm pulling out whistles and bells and I saw a ticker item come through, "Marshall is being mentioned as a possible successor." Knowing UP technique and press service technique, I said, "There goes my story." And in five or ten minutes, wham, wham, "Marshall," so I lost that one.

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I had it in my hand and I was counting it and it went. But I don't think -- partly I think Johnson got into trouble with administration policy and also he wasn't that close in his job to Mr. Truman. Johnson had, as I say, lived in a world that was entirely different from reality. Everything settled around Johnson. And I think Mr. Truman got -- became disenchanted with him.

HESS: What was the basis for his great disagreement with Dean Acheson?

TROHAN: Well, I don't...

HESS: His animosity you could almost say.

TROHAN: I didn't think there was any great -- with Dean -- oh, you mean Johnson.

HESS: Yes, Louis Johnson and Dean Acheson.

TROHAN: Oh, I think his great animosity -- Johnson's with Acheson, was jealousy. Whether you liked him or didn't like him, Mr. Acheson had one of the finest minds of anybody I ever knew. He also had considerable courage. He was in Treasury and broke with Roosevelt and only went back because of the war. They were sympathetic on entering the war and Roosevelt would forgive anybody who would come back to fight with him. And Acheson had

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a mind, oh, that was one of the best organized I've ever seen. Only two men I have known had minds like that, and the other one was Dulles. They would speak in perfectly parsed sentences and paragraphs and beautifully done and well organized -- clean, orderly thinking. Louie Johnson wasn't like that. I think he resented the influence. Now, he made the point to me that [Averell] Harriman was an adviser in the White House run by Acheson. Harriman would go to Truman himself, with an idea, and mention it, according to Johnson. Truman would go to Acheson and say that this is what Harriman is talking about, what do you think of it? Well, I had ought to look into it, Acheson would say. He (Acheson), having given it to (now this is Johnson's story), he, having given it to Harriman to give to Mr. Truman, then it was referred back to him. And then a week later Acheson would come in and say, "Mr. President, your idea on so and so is very good." Well, now it was a little bit too simple and a little hard for me to believe that they had to be that devious but this is a strange city. Well, anyway that kind of a story got back to Acheson.

See, this is a hard place to keep a secret and if

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you say something privately about a guy in which you impugn his honor and integrity as Johnson was doing in this one -- now he didn't do that alone to me, he must have done it to other people who went back and told Acheson what Johnson was saying and Louie was a compulsive talker and I think he just cut his own throat by talking too much.

Mr. Truman had a great love and affection for [George C.] Marshall. He thought Marshall was the greatest man in the world. I didn't.

HESS: Why?

TROHAN: I don't think he was much of a man.

HESS: Why?

TROHAN: Well, he wasn't much of a soldier, he wasn't much of an organizer, he just -- I didn't have any -- he was a military guy and adequate enough, but not what Mr. Truman thought he was. Mr. Truman thought he was the greatest man who lived and made no secret of that. And I

never saw -- I never saw the brilliance in Marshall. I have talked to him, I never found it. You could find it in [Douglas] MacArthur for instance, who really was a bright fellow whether you liked him or not. And I didn't dislike Marshall, let's just say, I wasn't impressed

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by him. I thought there were more able men by far. Curiously enough, Mr. Truman didn't have that affection for [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, I don't know why, although at one time he was thinking of Eisenhower as his successor. At that time Eisenhower didn't know whether he was a Republican or a Democrat. He had been a Democrat, and why he became a Republican I'll never know. I got this -- I've talked to him about it and I never got an explanation from him that satisfied me.

HESS: What did he say?

TROHAN: Oh, he claimed that he always was. He came from Kansas and the GOP was the party of responsibility and we needed change and lot of stuff that somebody fed him, I guess. I don't think he knew what he was talking about. Ike was a very nice fellow and a very personable guy, for a while, but he had no idea what was going on in Government, even as President. As a matter of fact, he was a very fortunate fellow that for eight years things were pretty level and maybe that's what we needed.

It looks like to me one of the great virtues of Dean Rusk was he was in there in a period when you shouldn't rock the boat, and he didn't. He just kept

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on; we needed somebody to go along quietly. I rather liked Rusk. I certainly think he's a much better man than [William Pierce] Rogers who is there now. And Mr. Truman, he often put in friends, like Schwollenbach he put in Labor, a terrible mistake. Schwollenbach didn't know the beginning of that problem. He put in Shay Minton on the Court because they were seatmates. Minton was a nice enough fellow, but no great shakes as a Judge. He put in a succession of guys over in Agriculture that I didn't think much of. I don't think Snyder was a strong fiscal man, but he put in various Cabinet -- well, he put in [W. Stuart] Symington in Air, who was a great disappointment to him. But Symington was with Emerson Electric out in Missouri, and then he got a lot of stock worth a tremendous amount of money. He thought that there was going to be a depression and he wanted to get bailed off of the hook and he got Snyder to ask for him and bring him in to Washington in the Treasury. Then he got playing around with Mr. Truman, and Truman put him over in Air as Secretary and he ran out on Snyder. Snyder was mad at him and turned some of his heat onto Truman finally, but Truman thought he was doing a favor to Snyder's

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buddy. Symington was one of those guys who played poker with Mr. Truman and he once showed me a check that he wrote to Mr. Truman for about \$2,000, \$2,500 in losses. And as I understand the game, you went into the game with no price set on the chips. You'd play, at the end, when the chips were all there, Mr. Truman would decree what they were worth, figuring on about how much anybody should lose or win. It was a very curious, strange game, and I don't -- I

know that B. K. Wheeler once asked Truman to get in it, he was a pretty good poker player, and Mr. Truman said, "No Burt, you can't afford it." He had that coterie, some of whom lost money for advancement -- and I think Stu Symington was one of them -- he got not only the Court -- I mean the Air Force, Secretary of the Air, but he also got into the Senate.

HESS: Do you think he helped to purchase those by his gambling losses?

TROHAN: Well, I'd say that he was smart enough not to win too much.

HESS: Well, that's the same thing.

TROHAN: And I am told, now he told me, I do not know that this is true, when he went in he put up the money to buy

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Mr. Truman his striped pants, and his inaugural outfit. You see, at that time, as you may well know, Mr. Truman was broke and in debt, he was trying to pay off the failure of the haberdashery, and Stu was among those who put up the money to buy those clothes.

So, Mr. Truman was a very strange character. I remember one time Burt Wheeler, then out of the Senate and practicing law, had a fellow come to him, a Jewish gentleman, who said, "If you get the Philippines to vote for Israel we'll give you a fee of \$30,000."

"Well," Wheeler said, "I don't know that I could do that. It's very difficult, I'm not making policy, and I'm not in the Senate," and he turned it down. But he ran into the Philippine Ambassador Mike [Joaquin M.] Elizalde and he told Mike the story. And Mike said, "Well, it's a good thing you turned him down." He said, "We can't recognize them. We got a lot of Moslems and Moros and we would be hurting with our own people, we would be in terrible shape."

About two days later he got a call from Elizalde, who had been called to the White House and told that if the Philippines didn't vote for Israel we would withdraw financial aid, by Mr. Truman. So, he called up Wheeler

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and said, "Go back and get that client of yours and take his money, because we're going to have to vote."

HESS: So, they might as well have the money.

TROHAN: Yeah. He may as well take it. Wheeler refused, he never did. But the pressure was on from the White House to help. And let me say those people never forgot what Mr. Truman did, and I think they played a great part in his '48 victory. At any length, after he got to be President he addressed almost every Jewish organization in the country, and made quite a bit of money on those speaking tours. They paid him back, in a way. Now, I don't say they bought him, to be clear, he was interested in doing it and did it. It wasn't that he was -- he was not a -- not

unaware of his political importance to himself, but he was doing it for special reasons. He believed in the creation of the Israeli state, I think.

HESS: As you know he had a Jewish partner even in his haberdashery after the war.

TROHAN: Yeah, [Eddie] Jacobson. I've met him, he's a nice enough fellow. He was not -- Truman was not bigoted much, he was certainly not anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic, nor was he anti-Catholic in the community where that was

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the kind of a way of life. He never would join the Klan because his friends in politics, and in the Army, were many Catholics.

HESS: Battery D was heavy with graduates from Rockhurst University, a Catholic university in Kansas City.

TROHAN: That's right, he was...

HESS: There were a good many Rockhurst students and graduates.

TROHAN: He was a very...

HESS: Of course, Pendergast was a Catholic.

TROHAN: Well, his old boss was a Catholic, and he was not -- he never was one who made snide remarks. I remember one time at Hyde Park when Lehman came out, the then Governor of New York, Herbert Lehman, came out against the court-packing plan, honestly, and publicly came out and we asked Roosevelt about it at a press conference beside his automobile. And I've never forgotten Roosevelt looked at us and said, "My remarks will have to be off the record."

We said, "All right," what else could you say to the President. "All right, but what is it?"

Roosevelt said, "What else could you expect from a Jew?"

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And the guy who was taking the notes was Henry Kannee, his stenographer who was a Jew, which he never figured. That was a nasty snide remark and you'll remember then when Roosevelt went into Cairo to meet with Ibn Saud -- Saud mentioned something about Jews and Roosevelt said, "I'd like to send you three hundred thousand from New York City."

That wasn't very smart, and it got out and was publicized. And by God, Ben Hecht wrote it in a book, his memoirs. Hecht was violently anti-Roosevelt because of the remark. Well, the Jews made a great deal of that. This was a very anti-Semitic town let me tell you, and it still is, but at that time they used to say, "Sh, sh, he's one," and point, and you'd go to a dinner party, "Sh, sh, he's one." You'd say, "One what?" "Jew," would be whispered, "A Jew." Well, so what? But there was a great deal of anti-Semitic feeling. And it still persists.

HESS: Here in Washington.

TROHAN: Yes, I never heard Truman make any remark and I never heard anyone accuse him of being anti-, anti-anything as a matter of fact, except anti-Republican.

HESS: He was definitely anti-Republican.

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TROHAN: He was anti-Republican, that was a virtue. If he had any religion, that was about it.

HESS: We mentioned General MacArthur, and the month following the replacing of Louie Johnson by General Marshall Mr. Truman took a trip to Wake Island to confer with General MacArthur. I don't believe you went along on that trip did you?

TROHAN: No, a fellow in our office did. A fellow by the name of Phil Warden, and he's still around.

I am the one who is responsible for the midnight firing of MacArthur, however.

HESS: Is that right? Tell me about that.

TROHAN: Well, it's a interesting and curious story. We had a tip from a correspondent in Tokyo saying that MacArthur was going to be fired. So, my editor, a fellow named W. D. Maxwell, called me in to give me the tip and asked me to develop it. So, I got my Pentagon man Norman...

HESS: Who did your tip come from?

TROHAN: From Tokyo, a man in Tokyo, a radio man, who gave it to my editor. And I got my Pentagon man Lloyd Norman to go to General [Omar] Bradley who was then Chief of Staff. I went to Charlie Ross, White House

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Press Secretary, and I said we had this tip; we were going to run it. I had written it and it was on its way. And the next thing I knew, while I was talking to Charlie Ross in came Bradley and he went in to see the President, and I knew that that was my guy -- Norman had talked to him, so I knew he was going to report to the President about this story, and then Charlie went in to report to the President. And about -- well, this was pretty late in the evening, 6, 7 o'clock, and we started the story in Chicago. We had it for about one edition, and then the White House came out to announce the President would have a statement to issue at midnight or 11 o'clock or something.

HESS: The middle of the night anyway.

TROHAN: And that was the firing of MacArthur, but if we hadn't of pushed them, he wouldn't have done it, and he would have done it maybe the next day in a more orderly fashion. And he tells that in his own *Memoirs*, Mr. Truman.

HESS: He sure does.

TROHAN: He doesn't mention me or the paper, but he referred to "a Chicago newspaper."

HESS: I have heard that there was a line open between the

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Chicago *Tribune* and Tokyo. Were you holding a telephone line open for an important announcement?

TROHAN: No. No. No, the fellow had called or sent some message from Tokyo, that's true. No, we had no line open to MacArthur or anyone else.

HESS: If I'm not mistaken, I believe that was the story, that the Chicago *Tribune* was holding a telephone, trans...

TROHAN: No, we were not.

HESS: A trans-Pacific line open.

TROHAN: That is not so. There are a lot of stories, maybe somebody told him that, or maybe he gathered that idea, I don't know, but that wasn't, just wasn't.

You see, I was the guy also who caused Mr. Truman, in his *Memoirs* (again he doesn't mention me), but I broke the story about sending Fred Vinson...

HESS: Oh, to Moscow.

TROHAN: ...to Moscow.

HESS: During the campaign.

TROHAN: During the campaign.

HESS: Tell me about that. What do you recall about that?

TROHAN: Well, I don't like to talk about stories like this because there is no great credit in it, to me.

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We were at that time engaged in a strike. It was a long serious strike, the only strike we had had in ninety-five years with the printer's union. And we were printing by varitype. That is we were

making -- printing up the paper and photographing it, and then running stereotyped copper plates. The stereotypers were not on strike, but the printers were. So, we would go to press at 11 o'clock in the morning to get on the street at night. That's why we made that terrible blunder about the election, "Dewey Elected." We wrote that at 11 o'clock in the morning.

HESS: The "Dewey Defeats Truman" issue.

TROHAN: Yes. We elected Dewey, but the editor was stupid, instead of saying leading or something he got pigheaded and...

HESS: He said, "defeats."

TROHAN: Yeah, he had defeat there. It was a very stupid headline, I thought so at the time. But you can see, he had to put that paper together...

HESS: Early in the morning.

TROHAN: Almost twelve hours before it came out and nobody mentions that when they discuss it. There was some excuse for it, not much. Well, anyway, because of

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that operation we were in great trouble, and a Senator (no reason why I shouldn't mention the name), it was B. K. Wheeler, came to my house, that was about 7 o'clock at night on the way home from the Senate, and said, "I've got a story for you."

And I said, "What is it?"

He said, "Truman's going to send Vinson to Moscow."

I said, "Good God, no!"

He said, "Yes."

And I said, "I got it," he was then -- I think he was out of the Senate, but he was working with radio people because he had been on the Interstate Commerce Commission. And Columbia Broadcasting told him that they had a request from the President for time, that he was going to make a speech, and this was what the speech was about, and there was great secrecy."

So, there I was with a story of a certain -- at 7 o'clock at night, with a morning newspaper, and I couldn't get it in the paper. So, I decided instead of running just a short bulletin I'd hold it for twenty-four hours. I went on and wrote it early the next morning and put it in. My editor who was not a very bright fellow named J. Loy Maloney, put it on page

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three or four or something, even though I called him and explained the importance -- and not until the head of the AP called up and congratulated him on the great scoop did he understand.

So then he took it and put it on page one, but it was not until a Morton -- Allen Gould of the AP called him and told him he had a great story, that he recognized it. I later got an award for it. It always left me very angry, but Maloney didn't recognize it to begin with so I don't like to talk about it.

At that time Mr. Truman was out in the grassroots making campaign speeches. He was a little bit annoyed by my story as it kind of upset the campaign business somewhat. But like all the great stories that I ever got, pretty near, it was handed me without any effort on my part at all, and the ones I worked on and broke my back on, turned out to be duds, but that's life.

HESS: Speaking of General MacArthur, what was your reaction to the firing, or to the dismissal of General MacArthur?

TROHAN: To tell you the truth, I was flabbergasted because I didn't think he would do it. I didn't see how he could do it, because he had in the White House Admiral [William D.] Leahy, his aide and Mr. Roosevelt's top military

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advisor, and Leahy was very high on MacArthur. He said MacArthur was our greatest general, not excepting Robert E. Lee. I didn't see how Truman could fire him. MacArthur was a hell of a guy, because he pulled that Inchon landing, you remember, and got back in behind the enemy and he was running here, there, and every place doing a terrific job. He was doing a great job in Japan and I just couldn't believe that Mr. Truman would fire him. However, Mr. Truman got the idea, rightly or wrongly, that MacArthur was considering himself bigger than he was and he had to remove him. He felt that he must do it. And I will say for him it took courage when he did it. I don't agree with it even to this day.

HESS: You think it was an error?

TROHAN: I think he -- see, I think -- unlike most of my colleagues who think that Mr. Truman's going down as the greatest President of this time -- I do not. And I'll tell you why I do not. One, is the firing of MacArthur which I think is going to be held to be a mistake, they should have left him in there and they should have let him win that one and we wouldn't have this one in Vietnam. Also the other

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one (there's no malice on this on my part), he dropped that pineapple on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and we've got...

HESS: What's your opinion on that?

TROHAN: We've got ourselves a guilt complex about that and always will have and we will not make a great man out of Mr. Truman because of that. I don't think he should have dropped that bomb. Of course, I'm a very curious fellow. I fought our entry into World War II to the last ditch. I was against going to Korea, and I was against going to Vietnam. However, once in, I wanted to

win. I wanted to win all of it. Now in Korea, where Syngman Rhee, the President of Korea, was a very close personal friend, I still didn't want to send American boys over there.

HESS: Why?

TROHAN: I didn't think it was the right place to go to war. But now, once we went in, I wanted us to win and get out. I think had we won in Korea we wouldn't have had Vietnam. I don't like Vietnam, but I'm not a dove, I want to win with honor. And I didn't like this stalemate in Korea and I think that Mr. Acheson is more in agreement with me now than he was then, although he still

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justifies the firing of MacArthur in his memoirs, or chose to from his light. But Mr. Acheson has become more anti-Commie as I am, and more anti-U.N. than I might be. And I will say he is honest enough to change his mind.

HESS: Why were you opposed to our entry into World War II?

TROHAN: Well, to me World War II was only going to do one thing and that was to build up Russia. I could only see one victor in there -- Russia. I thought that the British shouldn't have gone in there. I had no quarrel with the Germans and the Russians beating each other over the head and I would beat them both.

HESS: What if the Germans had won?

TROHAN: I don't think they could have run the world. I didn't go for that story. There weren't enough of them, and they certainly didn't have any great philosophy like the Communists have to sell to everybody. I thought if we would let them exhaust one another, we would be better off. I really was quite fed up with that because I could see nobody winning in that but the Russians, and whatever the Russians did, compared to what they were after, was a victory anyhow. That was my quarrel with our entry in the war. I hated to see some

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of the things that were going on under the Nazis. I was over there before the war and I didn't like Germany. And I liked Italy less than some. You know, a great many of our guys were all for [Benito] Mussolini. He was cleaning things up with public works projects and everything else. I didn't care for Mr. Mussolini. I didn't like the -- I didn't care for Hitler, just as I didn't care for Stalin. I just don't like totalitarians. But my views are more or less minor, just that I happen to be an observer of history and I saw some of these things, possibly from a different point of vantage than most. I don't claim to be a king-maker and I didn't claim to have much influence. I knew a lot of these boys and I liked some of them. I knew for example, Matt Connelly, very well, He was always most kind to me which made me somewhat suspicious. I didn't like the way he was chasing gals. He'd see me in various restaurants, always wave and call attention to the gal that was with him. I knew his wife and liked her. And I didn't like some of the things that were going on in this government. But I mean to tell you these things go on in every government. There is -- you know there is no politics for the greedy. There is no Republican and there is

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no Democrat, when you're greedy, it's just a chance to profit. That will happen under any administration and at any time. It's just -- now Mr. Truman for example wouldn't tolerate it, if he could stop it. No President would. No President likes to be made an idiot of, and no President likes the cheapness of the thing as a matter of fact. Look what happened to Sherman Adams. He got murdered over a moth-eaten Oriental rug and a few hotel bills. Now, he could have paid that himself. Why in God's world they do it, I don't know. And there in Adams is a fellow who wanted to be president of his alma mater, Dartmouth College, and he sure picked the wrong way to get to it. Now he doesn't amount to anything. He wrote a book; nobody read it, he's a discredited, unhappy fellow.

HESS: Did you ever go to Matthew Connelly for any inside news tips?

TROHAN: No, I'd go in and check some wild stories I might get. There's little in this business -- the news business -- around the White House, there's very little inside news -- it's all handed out.

HESS: By the press office?

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TROHAN: By the press office. There are almost no scoops in the White House and they don't encourage scoops. By the very nature of the thing, they can't very well. Roosevelt once gave an exclusive interview to Arthur Krock, but that was because Krock was correspondent on his hometown paper, the *New York Times*.

HESS: I recall Mr. Truman also gave an interview to Arthur Krock.

TROHAN: Yes, he did. And Krock was -- in my time there have been many, many reporters, and very many fellows who considered themselves king-makers and important men; there was only one that really fit the bill and that was Krock. Krock handled that position with great discretion and great good sense and great taste. It never went to his head and he never boasted around. Mr. Truman wrote many, many letters to Krock. He took him into confidence, and Krock preserved it.

Incidentally in explanation of this, let me say, that I knew a gentleman who is a great credit to the profession, Frank Kent, who wrote a column in the Baltimore *Sun*. Mr. Truman sent him a nasty letter, a real nasty letter, that would make the one he wrote that music critic sound...

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HESS: Paul Hume.

TROHAN: ...sound like a baby-talk lullaby.

HESS: What was the occasion?

TROHAN: He had written a column that Mr. Truman disagreed with and took as violently personal. He was very angry. He wrote a letter (he took a couple of drinks in the late afternoon when he wrote those letters), and he wrote this letter to Kent and sent it to him. Frank Kent got it, put on his hat, got on the train, brought it over to the White House, gave it to Charlie Ross and said: "The President has written me this letter," and showed it to him. He said, "That letter should not be around to haunt the White House occupant of any administration. Any man who has been in the Presidency, shouldn't have a letter like that to haunt him in the future. I want you to burn this up right now in my presence and tell the President you've done so." Ross did and Frank said, "Thank you very much," and went back.

I was annoyed I might say, because I wanted the letter. I would have loved to...

HESS: Did he tell you about this incident?

TROHAN: He told me about the episode, but I think I heard about it from Charlie Ross.

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HESS: What was the subject?

TROHAN: I don't remember. I never saw the letter. I don't know what the...

HESS: Did he tell you what was in the letter? Or did he just tell you that he...

TROHAN: No. It was just a violent letter worse than the one he sent Hume.

HESS: He just told you the nature of the letter, not necessarily what was in it?

TROHAN: The Hume one was, you remember, threatening to knee him. This Kent letter was even -- the language was very rough the way I understood and very tough. But what it was I do not know. Frank was -- I asked Frank about it and he wouldn't tell me.

HESS: All right, speaking of the White House press officer: The first press officer who was there for any length of time was Charles Ross. What do you recall about Mr. Ross?

TROHAN: Oh, I knew Charlie very well for a long time. He was one of the ornaments of the profession, and a very scholarly and very nice gentleman, a very good reporter. Editorial writer at one time, too. And he went in because he had gone to school with Mr. Truman, but I

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don't think they knew each other very well in school. I liked Charlie very much, he was a very agreeable fellow and they say he killed himself in the White House. That's just strictly for the birds, because nobody ever enjoyed the White House press office as much as Charlie. Charlie had a fondness for a couple of drinks, not an excessive drinker, but he liked the sociability of the glass.

His wife was definitely against liquor, and in the interest of promoting the President he could claim that he had to drink, of course. His wife, who had an abhorrence for alcohol, a very nice person, but violent on liquor, too violent. When Charlie died he had no religion particularly, but she was a Catholic, and I think she brought some of the clergy around to say a couple of words at the home while I was there. Then she subsequently married an old childhood sweetheart, Roy Roberts, the editor of the *Kansas City Star*. She went after Roy who was really a drinker and she got him on the wagon. She added about ten years to his life. But Charlie was followed by -- Charlie I liked very much. We were fellow members of the Gridiron Club and I knew Charlie quite well.

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HESS: Before we move on, what about his assistant Eben Ayers?

TROHAN: Well, Ayers is a very nice, pleasant guy. He wasn't the journalist that Mr. Ross was. I don't know how he got in there, as a matter of fact, except that he maybe -- Ross took a shine -- no he was nice and pleasant and decent. I liked him very much, but he wasn't -- let's say he was a topflight -- Charlie was a topflight newspaperman there is no question about it. And then Joe Short went in there and died very young.

Joe was a very nice fellow, but he was more closely related to Mr. Truman. He was a little violent politically in his views. The administration was a holy crusade with him and he got himself all tense and took every criticism personally. I think frankly that brought on his death.

HESS: As a reporter for an opposition newspaper, for a conservative newspaper, did the men ever hold it against you, were there times when they seemed to favor the reporters of newspapers who were more favorable to the administration?

TROHAN: Oh, they did that naturally enough. They all -- it wasn't -- that wasn't personal so much, as they favored

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for example, the *New York Times*. The *New York Times* always had it easier. It's easier to work for the *New York Times* because if a guy is going to tell a story, when you call him up and say you're from the *Times* he'll tell you. If he's not going to tell the story then you don't have to worry about it. But if he told me that he wasn't going to give a story, I'd have to worry about it because then he might give it to the *Times*. So, I had problems in all of these cases. I had friends -- I'm a gregarious fellow and I like people, and with very few exceptions -- there's only three or four people that I don't talk to. Sooner or later if I get talking to them I find something about them I like, and in some cases I keep away from people because I don't want to find something about them that I like.

On your question, under Roosevelt when things were more bitter than they were even under Mr. Truman, because this war was the holy and the new crusade to so many, and the Grail was around the corner -- the Holy Grail. Steve Early was very decent to me. He liked me. I was tough, and Roosevelt, according to Mike [Michael F.] Reilly in his book, said that Roosevelt said at one time, "Well, one thing about Walter Trohan, he will

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look you right in the eyes and spit at you, but he won't go behind you and say nice things to your face and stab you in the back. He'll look right at you and tell you."

Well, that was true, I had that reputation and then I had a reputation for being something of a wit, so I was generally treated very pleasantly. Steve came to my wife one time at a party and said, "Your husband is a son of a bitch, but we know he's a son of a bitch, and he won't tell anybody that he is anything else and he doesn't protect any favorites and he's the kind of a son of a bitch I like."

No, I didn't suffer from being in the opposition. Generally they liked me personally. They may not have liked the paper. They used to say they liked to read me because it was like sucking a lemon and cleaning out your mouth. Now there were people during the war who were afraid to be seen with me because it might go back to the White House that they were telling stories. There are -- there was some advantages, you know, in being in the opposition, many.

HESS: What are the advantages?

TROHAN: Well, people would tell you stories that others

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wouldn't print.

I remember during the war under Roosevelt, for example, they called me to tell me about Roosevelt giving Harry Hopkins a raise at the time when there was a freeze. Well, other people had that story, but they gave it to me because they wouldn't print it themselves, knowing that I would. And I got the story about the party that Mr. Barney [Bernard] Baruch threw for Harry Hopkins with forty-eight kinds of meat and caviar and what not, during rationing, which story created a hell of a stink. That kind of thing. You might have been a stinker and difficult, but it was pleasant and it was a lot of fun and I enjoyed it and I managed to keep, with most of them, very pleasant relations. It was a case in Chicago, if we caught a political doing something wrong, he never got personally angry, he'd figure he wasn't smart enough to hide it.

I operated with that same idea here. And I think that all reporters should hold themselves above any party. They shouldn't join one side on the other; try to tell the news and watch people for their own good. As a matter of fact, they'd help the President. Most

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Presidents wouldn't welcome it.

Now, under Roosevelt, for example,. Steve Early would come to me and use me as a means of whipping some recalcitrant character. They'd give me the story, I'd be happy to print it. He called me in one time and said, "Would you write a nasty story about Joe [Joseph, Sr.] Kennedy?"

I said, "Anytime I can write a nasty piece about a New Dealer I would be happy to do it."

And he showed me a file of letters that Kennedy had written to Mr. Welles at the State Department which were sent to the White House. Then he showed me letters that Kennedy had written Arthur Krock which were a 180° the other way. Krock, in his innocence sent them over to the White House saying, "Here's some letters from Mr. Kennedy I thought you'd be interested in."

To me Steve said, "The guy's running for President."

Well, I knew he had ambitions that way, so I wrote this story about this, and Kennedy tried to get me fired.

HESS: What was the nature of the letter?

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TROHAN: Well, it was a letter which was anti-war, and anti-British. At the time Roosevelt was on the other side, and he was...

HESS: That was the letter to Krock?

TROHAN: At the time -- yeah, that's the one. Kennedy was violently against getting in the war, to Krock. The other letters were not so violent.

HESS: Back to the State Department?

TROHAN: Yes. Joe was playing both sides of the street, a not uncommon business.

HESS: Did he have ideas about getting to be President?

TROHAN: Yes, he had ideas, but he couldn't make it. That's why he was grooming his oldest boy, young Joe, who was a fine lad, I think really the best of the Kennedys. Now, I knew Jack very well, I knew Bobby very well. I don't know Teddy, I've met him and that's all, but I knew Jack and the older one Joe, and I was quite impressed with him. Jack I liked, but Jack was lazy. I envy guys that can be lazy; I never could be, I had to work for a living. But he was awful lazy really; a very charming fellow, but he didn't do his work. Bobby was a hard worker. Bobby was mean, where Jack wasn't. But the other fellow

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had the charm and he had the brains, too.

HESS: When did you meet Joe, Jr.?

TROHAN: When he was -- when I first came here in '34 I knew the whole family out here and they had a place on Marwood on River Road and I used to go out there and have dinner and watch the movies and things of that sort. Joe was a very curious fellow and he played Arthur Krock, and then he played with me, because I represented the opposition. And he worked -- he'd

get Krock's viewpoint and then he'd get mine. He was smart. Another fellow used to do that was Jesse Jones. He didn't want to hear it all from one side, he wanted the other side. And then Farley did that. Farley was smart enough to try to get different aims, different points of view.

HESS: All right.

TROHAN: Roosevelt didn't like it and I don't think any President really likes the opposition much. I know Roosevelt didn't care for it at all. Ike didn't like it. I'll tell you who did to a certain extent, which rather surprised me, Lyndon Johnson.

HESS: You say he liked opposition?

TROHAN: He even liked the opposition.

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HESS: Really?

TROHAN: Yeah. He was a very curious fellow.

HESS: Could you give me an illustration of that?

TROHAN: Well, I would go in there and he'd call up and say, "Would you like to have a hamburger, you and Carol?"

I'd say, "Why not." We'd go and be all alone with him and talk over this thing, that thing, the other thing. I had closer relationship with him than I have with Nixon who I have known much longer. Not much longer, but I think more intimately. I knew Johnson from '37, but he, Johnson, would go around, like he'd go to Dick [Richard J.] Daley in Chicago and say, "Do you know Walter Trohan?"

And Dick would say, "Yes, I know Walter."

"Well," he said, "I've got to tell you," he said, "he's a tough fellow. He tells exactly what he thinks and not pull any punches."

Well, Johnson really liked that, a certain amount of that. You see, his guys weren't telling him the truth and I will say Johnson impressed the hell out of me when he refused to run because he knew he probably would get licked. He didn't believe those around him who said he was going to have a walk-in. Now, that takes

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pretty good thinking. In the case of Truman it was entirely different. Everybody told him he was going to lose, but it was a fight with him, and by God, he wasn't going to quit. Between the two I would take the Truman approach. I think a guy ought to go down swinging, if he's going down.

HESS: What do you think about 1952, do you think that Mr. Truman could have won in 1952 had he decided to run?

TROHAN: I don't think he could have won against Eisenhower because Eisenhower had a hero image. His own party was in a bit of trouble and he would have been sniped at by members of the party who wanted to go on ahead. He'd of given a better fight than Adlai, he might have won, but I think it was a pretty hard thing. But I don't think he ever had any idea of running. I think Truman believed, like I believe, that two terms is enough.

As a matter of fact, I think you ought to have one term of six years like the Mexicans do and quit it. Except for this thing, we have that limitation system in some Governors, and unfortunately, in most American states, when a guy is elected Governor, there is a big to-do and then everybody tries to gut him. So, the limitation system doesn't work and I suppose if a President couldn't

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be re-elected for six years, they'd start hammering at him the first week he went in and try to build themselves up. So I don't know. I don't like the system that these young fellows are trying to pull off now about direct election of the people.

HESS: Why?

TROHAN: Well, we got a system that's worked pretty good and produces pretty good men, and what's the use of tinkering with it? And I'm afraid if you go in for direct elections we may get into a situation sometime where a vast population complex and concentration from Boston to Washington might dominate the country at the expense of other areas. I don't like that, I think it's a little dangerous. I like that separation. I like limitation of power. Of course, I consider myself a true liberal. A true liberal believes the less government is the best government. Now, the liberals are the ones who are screaming strong government.

HESS: What would be your definition of a conservative?

TROHAN: Well, I would say a conservative is a fellow who believes in learning from the lessons of the past and applying the past today. I don't think -- I'm not a howling conservative. I can't stand some of them

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and I've been ridden out of the conservative movement more than I'm in it, because, I don't know about liberals, but I know conservatives and I know every conservative nut in America, and let me tell you there's plenty of them. And if you don't go all the way with them for this, that and the other, they will ride you out of the movement immediately.

HESS: Isn't it about the same thing with the liberals?

TROHAN: I guess so. I don't know that side of the street.

HESS: Maybe even moderates would run you out.

TROHAN: But I don't like a great many of the conservatives. I don't like -- well, I don't disagree with many of the Birchers, they are pretty decent people, but I don't like some of the things that they have come for. They went against [General Charles] De Gaulle, called him a Communist, and of course, they called Eisenhower a Communist, absolutely nuts. Stupid, yes; Communist, no. And they are impossible characters, absolutely. I think Barry Goldwater is right, and says extremists of both kinds are dangerous.

HESS: In 1952 when Mr. Truman took himself out of the political picture that year, when did you first become aware that he did not intend to run for re-election?

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TROHAN: Well, I never thought he intended to run for re-election.

HESS: You didn't think so.

TROHAN: No. I never thought...

HESS: Did you hear any inside dope before he made his announcement at the National Guard Armory on March the 29th of '52?

TROHAN: I don't know, I think, and as nearly as I remember I discussed this, like everybody else was doing, but I had discussed it with Farley, and Farley and Truman were close. Farley was sure Truman wasn't going to do it and got that impression from him and so I never gave it any thought at all. I was in Chicago listening to that speech and I said, "He isn't going to run. That's what the speech is about." And that's what it turned out to be. I never thought he would run. Mr. Truman, just to be truthful, had no delusions of grandeur; Mr. Roosevelt did. Mr. Roosevelt thought he was the greatest President of all time and the people -- he was a Pied Piper. He thought the people would do anything he said. He believed his own myth. Truman was too down to earth to go for that nonsense and I think if he had had any high delusions in that way, Mrs. Truman would

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have kidded him out of them, or talked him out of it. I don't know (now I don't know, I don't pretend to know), I never thought that he was going to run. I don't think he ever thought seriously of running. I think he may have thought seriously of it after the fact, say if that group had nominated Estes Kefauver, he might have thought of going as a third candidate to keep Kefauver out of it. He was a little annoyed with Mr. Kefauver and rightfully so because actually Mr. Kefauver was lighter than a cork. He was a con man in his own -- I knew Kefauver extremely well.

HESS: You did? When?

TROHAN: He went to Yale with one of my best friends who was the head of the class, and edited the *Yale Law Review* and Kefauver spent all of his time rubbing up against him because he was the smartest guy in the class. At that time Kefauver was to the right of Louie the XIV

because he thought he was going to make his money out of corporations. He went back down to Tennessee, and he told me this story himself, he looked out the window and he saw people going into a factory. It occurred, he said, this building across the way, that more people were working there than running it, so he

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became a one thousand percent liberal. His voting record was absolutely perfect over the six, eight years.

HESS: Estes Kefauver told you that himself?

TROHAN: Oh, he told it, yes. And he acknowledged that was his conversion. Well, as you remember, the liberals never really accepted Estes because they didn't quite believe him.

That was my quarrel with Jack Kennedy, but he was very nice to me, he never tried to win me over. Jack was way to the right of me, and there ain't much room there. Until he began running for President he was anti-labor, he was on that labor committee, and he was with [Senator Joseph R.] McCarthy, and he did this, that, and the other thing, things that I didn't feel that I knew everything about or had the final answer. But then suddenly I find that he was way over on the other side of the street and then he started a great deal of our trouble, in my estimation. When he got elected by an eyelash, he realized that he had to get more votes and the way to get the votes was to take up the issue of integration and he did it too fast. Now maybe it needed doing, but it should have been done

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on the basis of education and slower I think. This thing now has made us an unhappy country and I don't like it.

HESS: When Mr. Truman took himself out of the picture in 1952 who did you see as the best and most likely candidate for Democratic standard-bearer that year?

TROHAN: Well now, I'm glad you asked me as this is the one time in my life that I can boast about being a predictor. That question was asked to me by Pete Edson of Scripps-Howard and he went around and he polled the whole newspaper corps.

HESS: At that time?

TROHAN: At the time, I think along about January of that year right after Mr. Truman withdrew, and I picked both tickets.

HESS: Did you now?

TROHAN: And I say -- and I got the -- and that was published. Four of us got the tickets.

HESS: Representing an Illinois newspaper, you would know more about Adlai Stevenson, perhaps, than some of the other newspapermen, correct?

TROHAN: Well, I -- see Adlai was Governor, I knew him. I knew they had to turn toward the Midwest and here was

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a fellow who was highly vocal, had some experience around here, had won pretty handsomely. And it seemed to me that he was the logical candidate and it turned out -- I don't know who told me, now I don't remember, but somebody told me that Truman was talking about him. Truman liked him. Of course, he got annoyed with him a little subsequently when Stevenson spoke about the "mess in Washington." But Mr. Truman was for Adlai. He seemed to be a logical candidate, now we don't seem to have any logical candidates. It isn't that simple.

HESS: What could Mr. Stevenson have done to have won that year and defeated General Eisenhower? What could he have done that he did not do?

TROHAN: Well, his situation was a difficult one. You're running against a hero of a winning war. Eisenhower was a hard candidate to defeat. He could have won on either ticket, just put it that way. Now, Mr. Truman won in 1948 largely because Mr. Dewey blew the farm vote and the farmers were in trouble, Mr. Truman was aware of it. The Republicans never made any pitch for that farm vote. Maybe Adlai should have paid more attention to that farm vote than he did. I don't think he did. I don't think Ike did. He might have done something

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there I don't know. But if you look at this last election which nobody paid much attention to except that Nixon won, he got the farm vote. The farm vote was disgruntled and annoyed; that elected him more than anything else. He may think of other things, but it was the farmers in 1968. Now whether they will stay with him or not I do not know. Whether he'll run or not I do not know. He's told me that he is going to run, but he may decide...

HESS: Nixon has?

TROHAN: Yes, because he said to me the last time I saw him, he said, "Well, in 1968, if elected -- I mean in 1972, if elected I'm going to do so and so -- re-elected," that's enough for me, but that's...

HESS: It's almost a common reaction anymore though isn't it for a man to want to run for two terms?

TROHAN: Oh, sure. I think he feels he ought to, and in the case of Johnson he had a piece of the other term, so it was a different situation. I was against, in a sense, although I was -- thought he was going to get the nomination and favored him against the rest of them, which wasn't much. I didn't like the election of Nixon in a sense because from now on everybody who's once

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defeated thinks he's got another chance coming. I think if a guy runs and gets licked he ought to get out and we can forget him. But we never will. It happened with [William Jennings] Bryan, it

happened with Dewey and happens here, there and the other place. But I prefer not to have a guy repeat. Now, I like Hubert [Humphrey], we are quite chummy. He works as -- was a wild man when I came, but he got to be more conservative.

HESS: Do you really think Mr. Humphrey is conservative?

TROHAN: Well, compared to what he was to begin with. And he's pretty vocal and personable. I like him anyhow. Everybody's got to have his favorite liberal. Every conservative has got to have his favorite liberal and Hubert happens to be mine. I like his sense of humor and I like everything about him pretty much except his ideas, and we argue about that in a pleasant way, but I hate to see him run again. I'd rather see something else, but I don't see much in that Democratic Party. The guy I'd like to see run hasn't got a chance in hell.

HESS: Who's that?

TROHAN: "Scoop" [Henry M.] Jackson. I think a pretty fine fellow, but his state is the wrong state, nobody pays

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too much attention to him. It's unfortunate because I think [Eugene] McCarthy is out and [George S.] McGovern never was in, he's the only one who thinks he's in. Teddy's [Edward M. Kennedy] gone, Birch Bayh is running like crazy and so is young Clark, Ramsey, I don't think they'll get anywhere. It's a very difficult one to pick. However, Jackson, who is more liberal than most voters recognize, has labor support which is important.

HESS: We spoke a few minutes ago about the farm vote, and in 1948 as you will recall, it went heavily for Mr. Truman. What do you recall as tipping the scales in that way in 1948? Even Iowa, an old Republican state such as Iowa, went Democratic in 1948.

TROHAN : Well, I think it was the fact that he went in there and recognized that the farmer was getting the short end of the stick and said so, and he blamed it all on the Republican Congress.

HESS: The "Do-nothing 80th Congress."

TROHAN: He sold that idea, the "Do-nothing Congress"...he sold it and he sold it very well. Whereas Mr. Dewey knew nothing about farming. And picked Mr....

HESS: [Earl] Warren.

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TROHAN: Warren, who also knew nothing about farming. They neglected that issue. Whereas Dewey kind of promised the job to [Charles A.] Halleck. At least Halleck thought he had promised it and Halleck came from a farming community. Halleck was aware of that problem and would have made it an issue.

HESS: Do you recall anything about the failure of Congress when they rewrote the Charter for the Commodity Credit Corporation in 1948 to provide for the storage of grain storage, and there was a bumper crop that year of corn, particular, corn in particular.

TROHAN: Corn in particular, yes. Well, that, of course, I don't remember that in detail. In this last campaign we had a couple of guys, the Packard brothers, who were, and another fellow in the Department of Agriculture now off with some kind of an agency, who were writing about famine and saying the world was in the death throes of famine and that we all were going to starve to death, and nothing could be done about it, the gloomiest, darkest stuff. I wrote a couple of pieces on it because they impressed me. And I talked with this fellow Brown, I think he was in the Department of Agriculture, and on the basis of that, Mr. [Orville]

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Freeman put about fifteen million acres into production, wheat land that had been retired with the result we got a bumper crop. Suddenly the rains came in India and the crop, rice crop came in, and the rains came in Egypt and the crops came in. Meanwhile, the Rockefeller Foundation and another one developed a new strain of corn and wheat for tropical countries. The crops went up and suddenly we are confronted with low prices and things are in...

HESS: Surplus.

TROHAN: A surplus. The farmer's are mad and they voted with Nixon. And in the situation, again with a bumper crop, Mr. Truman instead of taking blame for himself was able to pass on to Congress and he won. I think that he ran a very good campaign, and besides people like a fighter, which he was. He was the last one to take that campaign trail with the back platform appearance and he did very well.

HESS: Did you travel in 1948?

TROHAN: No I did not. I didn't go with either candidate again in '48. I didn't take '48 or I didn't take '44. But in both of those years I did go around to key areas, not with the candidate, I went around to the key areas

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and talked to various people and wrote situation stories and wrote how I thought they were going to go. And, incidentally in that '48 campaign I said earlier that Paul Shafer called me and -- well, we met, and he told me that Truman was going to win. That was about five days or a week before the election. I respected him and he had very good judgment. And another fellow who told me that this was not going to be a walkaway was Robert A. Taft.

HESS: Before the election?

TROHAN: Before the election.

HESS: What in the world did he have to say about it?

TROHAN: Well, he had a mind like a computer, and if you fed figures into it and one thing and another; it would go round and round, and come out just like a computer with the answer. I discounted what Taft had to say, because after all Dewey had licked him in the convention.

So, I had...

HESS: But he did think Mr. Truman would win.

TROHAN: Well, he said -- he didn't go that far, he said it's not going to be what they say it is. It's not going to be that easy because he said, "Dewey's not that popular in Ohio and if he's not popular in Ohio, he's not that

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popular in Indiana and Illinois. Election night, about 9 o'clock, when I was writing this story and the editor was holding up my stories -- I was writing that the Democrats had won the Senate and House -- they were throwing my stories away because it disagreed with the Dewey wins headline. The editor was carrying my story saying the Republicans were leading in the races, early returns, which was true because the early returns were from New Hampshire. And about 9 o'clock that night, even before New York was in, Taft called me from Ohio.

HESS: Where were you at this time?

TROHAN: In Chicago at the *Tribune*.

HESS: At the *Tribune*.

TROHAN: And Taft said, "Dewey's elected." He said, "What's the situation in Illinois," and we had some returns and some projections. We had teams of accountants who were showing Truman carrying Illinois. Taft said, "Well, if that's the projection you've got, and the projection we've got in Ohio, he's licked."

HESS: That's what Taft said.

TROHAN: Yes, and I went to my editor and said, "My God, Taft said it..."

HESS: At 9 o'clock at night.

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TROHAN: At 9 o'clock, and we didn't change that headline until 3 o'clock in the morning. We had to get the editor out of there and put another. I had to rewrite the story with Truman winning. See, that was then written by my predecessor, Arthur Sears Henning, who was a man in his seventies and why he got stubborn I do not know, but I guess age. And that night it was terrible, about 10 o'clock, before -- we were still carrying the headline, I was called to go on TV to discuss the congressional election. And I went up and there was Henning, and there was the wife of the publisher, and some very important people, a dozen people or so. The announcer was a fellow with a charming voice, but no sense, in a very nice pearl-shaped tone, said, "Well,

Walter," and I had never met him before in my life, "how is Mr. Dewey going to get along with majority Congress?"

I said, "He isn't going to have a majority Congress, the Democrats have won the Congress."

He said, "You mean that Dewey will have to work with a hostile Congress?"

And I said, "No, I don't mean anything of the kind. Mr. Dewey ain't going to be there either."

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Well, I didn't realize that only minutes before Henning was on the air telling them that Dewey had won, and I hadn't heard his report. If I had I would have softened mine.

HESS: Toned it down somewhat.

TROHAN: I ran all the way and the Colonel (Colonel R. R. McCormick, editor and publisher of the *Tribune*), was listening to this. I was electing Truman all over the place, and the Democratic Congress and what not. The next day they told my predecessor that I was taking over the Bureau. And he begged that they let him go until Mr. Truman was inaugurated. I was running it anyhow, it didn't make any difference to me, there would be no change, but I let him go on for the two months, it didn't make any difference to me. I thought that was part of the system. But I was always very embarrassed about it because I wouldn't have hurt his feelings for the world and I hadn't intended to.

HESS: Did Colonel McCormick ever talk to you about listening to you that night?

TROHAN: Oh yes, he told me that he heard me and that I was the only one who was right and I said, "Well, I wasn't so right. I thought Truman was going to lose

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too." I said, "Up until the last few days, when a couple of friends of mine saw it differently." I said, "Taft was one and Shafer was the other, and then the people that I had talked to where I voted in Chicago, it was all going Truman." Of course I voted in a Democratic neighborhood, but my congressional district was a curious one. It would go Democratic in the presidential elections and Republican in the off years, so it teetered back and forth. It was a pretty good district, you'd call it sort of a silk-stockings area. But predominately, oh, a very heavy slice of Irish, of Poles, some racial groups, but it was mostly run -- oh, let's see now, it's represented by [William T.] Murphy, Democrats who've been in there a number of times, but it's gradually gotten more Democratic. Of course, it began, at the time that I'm talking about it was pretty white. Now, it has become quite black, which made it Democratic.

HESS: The Chicago *Tribune* has always had the reputation of being one of the most conservative and isolationist newspapers in the United States. Do you think that's a fair appraisal? Is it a fair thing to say?

TROHAN: Yes, it's a fair thing to say of those days but

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now it is changing markedly. The Colonel was an isolationist. We opposed World War I very much so that when the war came he ran off and got into uniform right away to show that he wasn't opposing it, both he and Captain Patterson, to show they weren't opposing it because they were afraid.

HESS: Once the war started they were -- hey...

TROHAN: They went right in. And the same way with World War II. Once they were in it they went all the way. I have always said that Mr. Roosevelt made a tremendous mistake. When the war came he should have taken Colonel McCormick and put him in a uniform, given him a couple of stars, or more, make him a major general, after all he had been a colonel, and Patterson had been a captain, give them stars, send them around making inspections doing nothing, nothing whatsoever, but make inspections, and naturally, drag them into the effort. And by doing that they then had to support -- we did support, of course we were for victory, but they might have softened their attack on him and on the party.

HESS: But he didn't do that.

TROHAN: No, they didn't do that. Instead he chose to lecture them. By that time Mr. Roosevelt got to be -- have

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a very high opinion of himself. And I said, "He began believing in his own myth." Of course, now Mr. Truman didn't go for him -- he didn't go for the Colonel -- because the Colonel was a Republican, it was going to be hard for him to take that any time.

HESS: Do you think that some of the isolationist sentiment might have been just a part of the Midwestern viewpoint?

TROHAN: Well, if you remember, according (now I shouldn't quote this because I don't believe in polls implicitly), but the Gallup Poll just before the war showed seventy some percent of the people were against the war. So that was a popular feeling around the country, and there was a traditional feeling not to get entangled in foreign affairs. Now we are hopelessly entangled in foreign affairs and practically nobody likes us wherever we've gone. We're not like the British, we're not equipped to rule. We haven't got the temperament to rule.

It reminds me a great deal, to put it in a simpler way, of the Catholic church. The Catholic church has been run by Italian Cardinals many, many years. Well, the Italians have a view of the church as a worldwide institution. Those over here, the Cardinals, are Americans, and for the most part they are men who were

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picked because of their financial ability to raise money and not necessarily as scholars as they often are in Europe and they certainly don't see the worldwide. picture, they see the local picture.

So, it's sometimes better, as far as the Church is concerned, to have those fellows with a worldly viewpoint in charge, and the same way with running the world. The British were equipped and they used to send their satraps out of school, all over the world. And they, curiously enough, after World War I, they were bled white of their best blood, because the British were not draft dodgers by any sense. The young men who went into the Army were often brutally killed and then in World War II more of them got killed. Subsequently they lost most of the satrap class, and they lost the will to govern and it's gone. But we never had it. We somehow -- we don't have it -- we don't know what's wrong, but it isn't that way. The American goes abroad and he goes into a country, he begins to try to think like a Frenchman or whatever. Well, now what the British did was figure what was best for Britain was also best for whatever country they were in. And often that would turn out to be the case.

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Take for example when they were fighting Napoleon. The British went in to Spain and figured what was best for Britain, and they sent [Arthur Wellesley] Wellington over there with a few troops and they ran up and down, way off from the front in Portugal, and rode to the hounds and had a hell of a nice time as English gentlemen. But the fact Wellington was there represented to Spaniards they had support and encouraged the guerrillas to harass the French and ultimately they drove them out. Those less than five thousand British troops did a great job for Britain; they also did a great job for Spain, because they knew they were going to have a final day of reckoning with Napoleon one way or another and they had to save their strength. Well, I think that's what we should do, everywhere, we should figure out what's best for us will also be best for them and I think that's true. And I think that's the weakness of our State Department, they don't see it.

You see, I think in our relations, Mr. Truman's one great fault -- he thought after the war that the Russians were going to reform and that his big problem was the British and French. But I will say he realized in time that this big problem was the Russians. I

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don't think anyone has ever approached the Russian problem right. I don't know if I've got the solution, but I know some Russians. The Embassy has always had a guy assigned to me, to cultivate me. They chased around with me in '64 because they thought under some miracle Goldwater might win and they wanted a guy close to Goldwater. They're very clever. They found out that I liked little girls, so they got a guy with a four year old girl, pretty as she could be, and then they found out I liked pictures and his wife was an artist, and they found out I liked records and they would bring me by Tchaikovsky and longhair music. They worked me over good.

HESS: They were working on you.

TROHAN: Oh, yes. But I got very chummy with this character, and so chummy in fact, that he said to me one time, "It must be a great thing to believe, to know that that isn't going to die," pointing to his daughter. He was hungry for our idea of immortality. It's all right to talk about this is to be-all and end-all, but when it comes close to the be-all and end-all, you begin to wonder.

HESS: What did you tell him then?

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TROHAN: Well, I told him that we would welcome him, be very happy to have him in the Church.

HESS: If he wanted to join the Church.

TROHAN: Oh, yes. Scared the hell out of him because he didn't want that to get back to Moscow.

HESS: No, I guess not.

TROHAN: Say, could I get you a glass of tea or anything?

HESS: Fine, that would be very good.

All right, we mentioned earlier that you had attended the press conferences, or some of the press conferences, in Roosevelt's administration. Did you also attend press conferences during Truman's administration?

TROHAN: Oh yes, I attended them regularly. Roosevelt had them twice a week, one for the morning papers and one for the afternoon papers, Tuesday and...

HESS: Friday.

TROHAN: Friday. I've forgotten which was the morning and which was the afternoon now. And Roosevelt was a very curious fellow because as Turner Catledge of the *New York Times* said that his first instinct was to lie and then he would suddenly say to himself, "Well, I can tell the truth on this one," and he'd turn it around in the middle of it and change it. And he made

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a great to-do. I've heard him tell people, "I had to watch myself, these are real sharp fellows, and you have to keep on your toes and this is a terrific thing and I can't put out the right answers because if I do I might put on the wrong word and it could lead to a war or a disaster or famine or something." He was just for the birds.

Well, Mr. Truman changed that a bit, and he put press conferences on radio, editing them somewhat. And then Mr. Eisenhower came out and put them live on television without any editing whatsoever. It didn't make any difference.

And in the case of Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Roosevelt didn't work at his press conference, so that they were pretty sloppy and that's why he wandered all over. Mr. Truman did a little work. He knew pretty much what was going to be asked. It's no trick to know what the questions are going to be. I never liked to ask questions and show myself off because I wanted to listen to the way the

President answered. There was more in that than there was in the words themselves, very often, and you knew whether he liked the question or didn't like the question.

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In the case of Mr. Truman, he had one *bête noire* who drove him crazy, and it was May Craig. He could not stand that woman and I've seen him clasp his hand and shake them as though he had them around her throat. And I think had he had it around her throat we would have had murder in the White House because he was not very fond of her, the same way Sarah McClendon drove Mr. Kennedy crazy.

But Truman went in -- I remember his first conference right after he went in and he handled it very, very well. He was not -- he charged right into the thing. He met conferences half way on, which was his nature. He wasn't a shrinker, and he managed conferences very well. He realized what could be done with them, and he was very regular and quite faithful about them as a matter of fact, whereas, Mr. Johnson didn't like them. Kennedy really didn't like them, he didn't have them any more often than he could. But Kennedy was lazy as I said, and he didn't like to do the work. Now, the first couple were magnificent, but after that he got to be as disjointed as Ike. You know, it was a terrible thing to cover Eisenhower's press conferences because he had the transcript and you would send editors the transcript.

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Then the desk would say to you, "Well, what -- this don't make sense."

"Well, that's right from the transcript, that's what he said," you would answer. "You make some sense out of it. I don't know what he was saying. But this is an important question and this is his answer."

And Mr. Nixon works at his conferences, being that kind of a mind. That's why he doesn't have them so much, because it is hard work. You see they -- each one of the Cabinet sends in possible questions and answers about problems that relate to them and you're supposed to read them, digest them, and be able to know what you're going to say, particularly about State. You can figure out pretty much what the questions are going to be. It takes a little bit of doing and sometimes that much stuff means a hell of a lot of work for the staff and a hell of a lot of work for the President himself. He often hasn't got the time, which is the reason I'm sure why Mr. Nixon doesn't choose to have them -- as many as he did. Now, Mr. Johnson never liked the press conference. I don't think Mr. Truman really liked them either, but Mr. Johnson hated them.

Johnson's idea of the way a thing should run was

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to call in six of his friends in the press, who would listen while he talked. He did that up at the Capitol when he was Majority Leader and he had a meeting every Saturday and he'd sit around and boast about the unanimous votes he got the week before. That's the way he counted success. But Mr. Johnson had a good system as Majority Leader. He worked with Eisenhower and he tried to go along with the President as much as he could. Actually, I don't know of any man who had a greater respect, even admiration, for the Presidency than Johnson. He was really quite

serious about it, and so he did work with Mr. Eisenhower better than most, better than anyone else could have done, certainly better than Mr. [Mike] Mansfield is doing with...

HESS: Nixon.

TROHAN: Nixon.

HESS: In Mr. Truman's press conferences did you feel that he tried to give an honest forthright answer to the

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questions he was asked?

TROHAN: No. No. I think he looked on every question as a political twist and he would look at any question to see if that was aimed against him, because you remember he was in there at the time -- first the Republicans went into power in '46 , and they were riding high, wide, and handsome in both houses, and Joe Martin had made that very famous remark that they would open every session with a prayer and then with a probe. Well, actually they didn't. They didn't do a damned thing, particularly. But the probe started with the Democratic Congress in '48. And there were a lot of things going on there, the deep freezes, the hams and fur coats and this and that, and a great many of the questions necessarily had to be quite nasty and more pointed than what they were at any other time. But all that, what everybody forgets, that while the culprits were Democrats in that period, naturally, they were in the office, so were many of the investigators, Democrats. The Republicans were given very little in that business. One or two did something, but not many, so that Mr. Truman, by the force of the nature of the news at the time, was on the defensive pretty much.

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You remember he went into that conference in which he called Hiss a "Red Herring." Now, he had less use for Hiss than I did. He'd of cheerfully strangled him, but he felt that he had to protect him. He had said to some fellow before he went into the conference what a louse Hiss was and when they came back he, the same fellow, said to him, "Well, why did you protect him?"

"Oh," he said, "they weren't after Hiss, they were after me." So he felt he had to defend himself.

HESS: How skillful was Mr. Truman at fielding the questions?

TROHAN: Well, in all cases, the President -- the odds favor the President. It isn't very difficult, you can't really ask a very nasty question, nor can you pursue a subject. You ask one question and somebody else wants to go. You can't cross-examine the President.

HESS: If he points to somebody else.

TROHAN: And he points to somebody else and he dismisses it and besides you don't hit -- can't hit too hard, so it isn't difficult -- for the President -- but I will say for a man of his background,

Mr. Truman wasn't a lawyer, but he had learned up in the Senate how to take care of himself. He knew how to ask the questions. He also knew about the answers. He learned, he wasn't a

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stupid fellow, by any matter of means. So I think on a whole he did a better job in my opinion than Roosevelt, because Roosevelt would wander and as Turner says, he was constantly not telling the truth. Truman tried to give the impression of meeting everything fairly and frankly. Of course, he could ignore the question somewhat or ignore what he wanted on the question, too. But he was shorter, more to the point, easier to cover. Ike was absolutely impossible because you didn't know what he was saying half of the time, and it was very difficult to figure out what he was saying. You had to get it by osmosis pretty much.

HESS: Did you ever take any of those walks around the White House grounds with President Johnson?

TROHAN: No. My man at the White House did that. I wasn't there at the time, so I never -- I never went around, but I've been in the White House with him at dinner, and lunch, alone, and in his office. And Mr. Johnson could be a very, very persuasive fellow, much more so than Mr. Truman in my estimation.

Johnson, alone, is quite an effective fellow and he could put the country on the line and wave the flag and he would do some remarkable things. I knew

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that he did, to me, one of the greatest things I've ever seen done in Washington when he appointed the Warren Commission. He got Dick [Senator Richard B.] Russell to serve on that commission with Warren and they were two men that despised one another, at least Russell despised Warren. Russell was a gentleman and a fine fellow. But when I saw that commission, I got on my bicycle and went up to the Hill, saw Russell and said, "Look, I don't want to print it, but just for my own sake, I want to know how you consented to serve on this commission."

And then I went to Warren and asked him, "How did you serve with Russell?"

Well, of course, Warren said he had no quarrel with Russell; that the Senator was a fine fellow.

I said, "You know, he's not overly fond of you."

Well, he recognized that. But Russell told me that Johnson got him on the phone for two hours and worked him over. Russell said, "No." Then he brought him down in person to the White House and said, "Well, the country needs you, the country so and so."

And Russell finally said, "Well, if you get Warren to serve knowing that I'm on there, okay."

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Russell thought Warren wouldn't take it with him on the commission. LBJ got Warren the same way and put the heat under him. He had run for Vice President, he was on the high court, and the

country has been good to him Johnson said. This is something that we need, and this commission was of national and paramount importance to the American people to get the facts in this case, and he had him. But he could do it on a smaller scale. He would do it with almost anyone. He was very skillful. He was a dangerous man to go see, because you didn't know what he'd talk you into.

HESS: That's right. Do you think that Richard Russell would have made a good presidential candidate say in 1952 , for the Democrats?

TROHAN: Well, I think -- you're asking me now -- I was at that convention that was run by a group of what I thought strange characters.

HESS: Who's that?

TROHAN: Well, "Soapy" [G. Mennen] Williams, Blair Moody of Michigan and [Andrew J.] Biemiller and they were running up and down and yelling and they were getting on that black question and what not and the southerners were in there.

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HESS: Now is this '48 or '52?

TROHAN: '48.

HESS '48.

TROHAN: And the southerners in there were Dick Russell, Governor Battle, Jimmy Byrnes. They would talk, and they looked like statesmen, and they looked as though they knew they were talking about. These other guys looked quite nuts, to say anything, like the kooks around Dupont Circle. I was very impressed by that and I think that Dick Russell could have served as President without being sectional, and the same way that I thought Johnson could.

Johnson was disliked by the liberals very much. As a matter of fact, they never liked him even up to the day he left. Yet he put over every one of their programs, programs that Kennedy couldn't put over himself. They didn't trust him, but Johnson was not a sectionalist, and I don't think Dick Russell would have been. As a matter of fact, I don't think Mr. Truman was.

Mr. Truman was just as international-minded as Roosevelt. As a matter of fact, I preferred Mr. Truman in there to Roosevelt, because Roosevelt was

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being run by Mrs. Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins and other people, and in his last year or so, several years, he was not himself. If he ever was much. You know he never had earned a living until he got with that insurance company. He was not too successful as a lawyer, not a very good lawyer. At least in Mr. Truman's case, he had had some experience making a living. And Nixon has made a living, and Johnson had made a pretty good living.

HESS: Did you ever travel with the President, with President Truman on any of the campaign trains, or on any of the trips to Key West, or any...

TROHAN: No, I never went. By that time he had -- during the war there was no traveling. When the war ended and Mr. Truman went in and went South, I was then running the Bureau and had been all during the war. From the beginning of the war I stayed in Washington pretty much because my predecessor was in his seventies and he didn't know what was going on, he didn't pay much attention to it. He would come and write the big story, but he would rewrite it largely from what handouts came out, and I was trying to direct a dozen or fourteen men. So, I sent my White House man with

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Mr. Truman and I never went. I did go to the press conferences, but I didn't have the time to go down to Key West and just blow around with him. There wasn't much news there. And besides, don't forget that I did it under Roosevelt, from 1934 to the time we went into war in '41, and I had had a bellyful of it. I had seen every railroad station in the country. Traveling with the President isn't much fun and there isn't a great deal of news. Now I did go abroad in the foreign travel with Presidents, but only because my editor insisted on it. I didn't want to go, there was no use -- with the crowd and the schedule of courtesy exchanges making almost all the news.

HESS: What trips were those?

TROHAN: Well, going to Paris and to London and to Rome and those places. It's pretty ridiculous because they do like we do, we bring the visitor in at the noon hour when everybody's on the street, or at the time they are going home from work so there will be a crowd and the whole thing is salted. It just annoys me. Mr. Nixon the other day, was all set up because he got a bigger crowd in Rome than Kennedy did; he had a bigger crowd in Madrid than Ike did -- he got bigger crowds

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here and there -- but it doesn't mean a thing. Nothing. You're only kidding yourself if you think it does.

HESS: Now, one general question, just on reporters themselves: It's sometimes said that a majority of the working press is inclined toward the Democratic Party. What do you think of that?

TROHAN: Yes, that's true.

HESS: Why?

TROHAN: Well, I think when they, when Roosevelt came in this was a whole new picture. Under Hoover things had been rather reserved and Mr. Hoover kept to himself in a small group. Mark Sullivan, the columnist, was a great friend of his, but Mr. Hoover didn't care much for the press. Then when the depression came, he was so bothered and beset and bewildered. Many in the press blamed it onto him, when it was a worldwide sort of thing. He became suspicious of the

press. But here came Roosevelt in with a magnificent voice, mellifluous accents and the fine face. Although he couldn't walk, he had the face of a fellow who could march. He brought a whole group of enthusiasts in. They were going to remake the Government; it was a Holy Crusade. There was nothing like it until Kennedy

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brought the same attitude. And the result was that the press joined that group and they stayed with it. That was the way to go.

I think *Time* magazine once said that eighty-five percent of the press was administration oriented. This was back in Mr. Truman's time. I would have said that was -- even that was a conservative estimate. I didn't know but a few more conservative-minded fellows under FDR. Now I don't know hardly any. Lyle Wilson in the UP was, but he has been succeeded by a guy who is not. And in our own papers, we've got the *Daily News* in New York -- the *Daily News* Bureau head was a Democrat and in my own office most of the fellows were, outside of me. That's the way they were brought up. And they -- I think that it's a great mistake. I think we should have an independent fourth estate to check on the others, but politics is the nature of the animal. You can't stop a guy from being politically-minded. And most young people today are Democratically oriented. I think they've got the idea this is a crusade. They don't like the way the world is, nobody likes the way the world is.

HESS: What do you think that idea stems from? That

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most of the people, the young people, seem to be liberally oriented Democrats, reformed oriented?

TROHAN: Well, it comes from the past -- yes, it's a natural thing to want to remake the world. To think that this is how to...

HESS: Dissatisfaction in the way things are.

TROHAN: I think that Democrats managed to sell the story, the liberals have, that they want Government with a heart. We've got a Government that's going to take care of your social security, we're going to do this, we're going to do that. Medicare, that's what we need, and they got every one of those programs and the programs are going to bring us complete happiness. Well, it doesn't. Then they find something new to bellyache about.

Now, look what we've got, where everybody is absolutely nutty on ecology. I went to a meeting not long ago, just out of curiosity, and I walked in the room and sat down and said, "Well, I've had it." I said, "Here you are, gathering together to fight pollution." I said, "Look at the room blue with smoke, I'm through."

And I walked out and they said, "Oh, stop."

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I said, "I've had it!"

I don't smoke and I don't like smoke, it irritates me and it makes me cough and it isn't pleasant anyhow, so I just -- and I didn't think they were getting anywhere. Well, now you know, you find people get hysterical about these things.

A woman wrote in the *Post* the other day, she said, "Now I'm an expert on ecology. I've just driven up to Boston and back, and I see the factories belching smoke." Well, if they weren't belching smoke, we'd be in a very heavy depression and she'd have something to complain about. I'm not against the aims of ecology, and I think we have to do greater things. Some of it's necessary and I'm a little bit fed up on it when I go around here like I did today, trying to get to this funeral. I had a devil of a time. Got into traffic snarls with parking at the Embassy, doubled and tripled, and running, and the roads are lousy and then it took us fifteen minutes to get up to the Cathedral. Fortunately, they were a little late. But if these people would walk instead of taking their cars, every time you ride that automobile you're polluting. Every time you ride the bus, you're polluting, and every

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minute of the day we're polluting, like drinking the tea. So, some of that ecology talk ought to be taken with a grain of sand. I think these kids going into college and yelping about pollution -- that's for the birds.

Now, I do say, and this is an interesting thing in this campaign. The professors have voted in some institutions to give the students a week off to campaign. They think that's going to help the Democratic Party, most of them are Democrats. There is a growing realization now, as Albert Gore said the other day, he's afraid that if he has some young college kids running around, he'd drive away more votes than they will ever gain. That's possible.

HESS: Isn't that also supposed to be in the nature of a safety valve? They're saying to these kids, "Don't burn the building down. We are giving you a week off to express yourself and to work within the system."

TROHAN: That's part of the theory, but it doesn't work that way because the kids naturally enough don't want to. They don't want to vote particularly, they want to complain. In Chicago when they put this

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eighteen year old vote over, they made preparations to register three hundred thousand. They put on extra staff and you know how many showed up? Four thousand. They didn't want to vote. They rather, much rather complain, they'd much rather break in a plate glass window or something. It isn't -- I'm in favor -- I like the young people, and I think they're -- I've talked to them at all the universities here within the last -- at the opening of the new year. I get along with them, they don't stone me, or they don't protest like they did with [James B.] Reston, because I am quite candid and I tell them what I think and I tell them to begin with, "Now this is what I think." And I say, "When I was young like you I didn't like the way the world was and I don't like it now. And I'm trying to change it back to my way which is the conservative way." And I

say, "Let me tell you there are a very few people can stand to the right of me, but I'm a Greek culturally. When I went to college I said I had to learn Greek and Latin, I am fascinated with classical thinking and I don't think we've improved on it a bit,." When you go around and speak like that with the kids you find them quite responsive. Some of them

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will be difficult, but not much, but I find when I get through to them they always give me a hand and some come around and talk some more later.

HESS: Well, today we've mentioned a good many of the leading lights of the Democratic political party, but one name that hasn't come up is a Chicago resident and quite a leading figure in the Democratic Party, and that's Jacob M. Arvey. Did you ever have any relationships or any dealings with Colonel Arvey?

TROHAN: I knew Colonel Arvey when he was known as "Jake."

HESS: Back before he changed it to Jack, is that right?

TROHAN: That's before he changed it to Jack. When I was a young lad on the City News Bureau in Chicago in 1927 there was a big scandal in town in which they indicted most of the administration of "Big Bill" [William Hale] Thompson, through the *Tribune* incidentally, and we were accused of persecuting a nice, lovely fellow like Big Bill, who died and had two million dollars in a safety deposit box in bills, stole it, it would seem.

HESS: He was saving wasn't he?

TROHAN: Frugal fellow. Well, in those days, Jake was on the Finance Committee of the City Hall. Let me tell you he was no help to me whatsoever. Everybody

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was suspicious of the press in those days because they were digging up the scandal, and to this day Jake comes to me, he says -- he's asked me to call him Jack, so I call him Jack, and he says, "Remember the good old days on the City Finance Committee?"

And I say, "Yes, Jack, I remember them, but you really weren't helpful to me in those days. You were helpful to yourself."

But he's a very astute, practical politician and he was raised in a very tough school and he's a very important figure. Now, he always came down here at the inaugurals for Mr. Truman or various functions, like the State of the Union address. He was always able to get Mr. Truman to come to the Illinois party. He was very adept, personable, made a tremendous fortune in the law business by his political associations. See, he came under Ed [Edward Joseph] Kelly, Tony Cermak, Dick Daley, [Patrick A.] Nash. He knows Illinois very well. Illinois politics was played pretty rough; it's a machine organization, and let me say that although I'm a conservative, I believe in machine politics.

HESS: Why?

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TROHAN: Because I believe in the spoils system. Well, I'll tell you my reason for liking machine politics as better, maybe not the holiest system, but the bosses give better government at less cost, even including graft and stealing. They are satisfied with maybe six percent. The liberals will waste five times that much so that your organization and machine is not a bad thing. It wasn't a bad thing in Cleveland, it wasn't a bad thing in Chicago. Actually it wasn't a bad thing in Tammany Hall, but Mr. Roosevelt broke Tammany Hall. They put in Fiorello LaGuardia, the fusion candidate, and he wrecked his own party and the Democratic Party. New York State has been in horrible shape for many years, largely through him.

HESS: Do you recall in 1948, in the summer thereof, Mr. Arvey was one of those who tried to get General Eisenhower to run on the Democratic ticket in place of Mr. Truman?

TROHAN: Yes, he was. But a lot of people -- I was at that convention and it was a most curious thing. Strangest -- one of the strangest things I've seen politically. The Democratic convention was dead. It was dead on its feet nobody paid any attention to it. The hotels were empty.

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You could ride in an elevator. The convention was a gloom and doom thing. And the Republican convention at that time was fantastic. Everybody was -- victory was in the air -- it was all over. My God, you couldn't -- I had some seats, and they would have sold for gold. You could have sold them if you wanted to. People fighting to get in.

At that time Mr. Arvey was extremely interested in victory. Mr. Arvey's only interest in a national ticket, I'm sorry to say, is to get some coattails to ride on and he wants to pull this machine through and win in Illinois for the state organization. He wants a pair of broad coattails, and they had had Mr. Franklin Roosevelt who was just designed for riding in on and they didn't - - they remembered Mr. Truman had lost Congress in '46, so they were willing to throw him to the wolves, to the dogs. And that's why he was looking around and the first guy they find was a war hero. And that's why they wanted to get rid of -- a matter of cold-blooded survival.

HESS: Did you ever talk to him about that?

TROHAN: Oh, I've kidded him about it because when he came down to our rooms in the working press area -- and I kidded

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him about it then. Actually I was not for Eisenhower on a Republican ticket, nor was I for Eisenhower on the Democratic ticket. I don't believe in soldier Presidents, and I wasn't for MacArthur as far as that goes.

HESS: You mentioned though in 1952 you did pick him to be on the ticket, is that right?

TROHAN: Pick...

HESS: Eisenhower.

TROHAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: You thought that he would be in there in 1952.

TROHAN: Oh, I came to think he would be. I thought he was going to win and there was nothing you could do about it because they were working that way.

HESS: Well, the big fight in '52 in the Republican Party was between Taft and Eisenhower. What led you to believe that Eisenhower would be victorious there?

TROHAN: The Eastern establishment. They were in power. It was forecast all the way, but I thought that...

HESS: A true conservative more or less.

TROHAN: I thought they'd cut him. Taft was -- Taft was really a very fine gentleman. He's not - - he's conservative, but he was extremely practical. They used to call him

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the great compromiser. What it was: Taft would get up and state his position and then you would state yours and he would assume that you had stated yours as honestly as he stated his and then he would say, "All right. We agree here, if we can agree here," and then he would start compromising. Well, I am a little different, of course, I'm not in the business of politics. My idea would be to nail your flag to the mast and go down with the ship. Well, it wouldn't work then.

HESS: You think Taft would have made a pretty good President?

TROHAN: I think he would have. See, he wasn't as hard-nosed as he was credited with being. I think he would have made a better President than Mr. Eisenhower because he knew politics.

HESS: Well, if you recall Mr. Taft was one of the three men, Taft, [Allen J.] Ellender and [Robert F.] Wagner, for the -- on the housing bill.

TROHAN: Yes.

HESS: You know they were liberal things that Mr. Taft promoted.

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TROHAN: Oh, many things. His labor legislation, Taft-Hartley, which has got a terrible name, actually was designed to protect labor. The union men voted for the individual items in it, they favored them, but they didn't like the package. It's one of those things. But we got out -- in this country we get into a point where we want to say a fellow is tabbed. So, we said of Taft he was

anti-labor, and that answered everything. You didn't need to go any further. And somebody else is pro-something, well it isn't so in many cases.

HESS: Did you ever have very many occasions to speak personally with President Truman?

TROHAN: No. President Truman was not very fond of me and he is -- of all the Presidents in my time, I saw less of him personally than any, including Roosevelt. Although he did invite me to the White House. I was at various functions. He knew I was a great friend of James A. Farley. I was at his victory dinner, for example, in the Mayflower where he did that magnificent take-off of [H.V.] Kaltenborn.

HESS: You were there that night were you?

TROHAN: Oh yes. I've got a picture of that somewhere around here and I'm right in front of the camera. And I laughed

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as loudly as anybody else. He did a very good job at that. He could be quite funny, and he got in that, clipped Kaltenborn effect quite good. Actually I liked Mr. Truman personally, after Roosevelt, because of the fine relationship with Mrs. Truman. And I admired his defense of his daughter when he went after Hume. I didn't approve of the letter particularly, but I approved of most. I think Hume was very unkind, unnecessarily critical, and being a frustrated singer himself, who hadn't made a success of it, he had no business to take after her.

HESS: What would you see as Mr. Truman's major accomplishments during his administration? We've mentioned some of the shortcomings such as the dropping of the atomic bomb, but what were some of the major accomplishments?

TROHAN: Well, I would think just, while he didn't follow it all the way through, that his stand against Communism in Korea was very sensible. I think that his domestic programs in the sense where he tried to move into the giving up wage and hour and food control very rapidly were very sensible. I think the fact that we ended the war without a surplus scandal was partly due to him and partly due to that committee.

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World War I had a terrible scandal and I expected one after World War II. He got through with that. I think he was aware of the farm situation as much as any. He knew his -- he knew politics, he knew government. I was in favor of him in the sense that he wasn't a college man and I think that there is entirely too much stress on college education. There are some people that shouldn't go to college, most of them, and he showed that a fellow that didn't go to college but read books, and studied books now and then, is just as smart as the fellow that goes. And I say that having gone, myself. I can speak freely. I think today we've got altogether too many students in college who ought to be plumbers, or barbers or something. But I think his international program was...

HESS: What's your opinion of such actions as the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall plan?

TROHAN: I was thinking of the Truman Doctrine; his action in Greece. I would suppose when the British pulled out somebody had to go in. I'm not so sure about Israel because we got committed to that for political reasons and we set it up, maybe we should have also -- maybe we should have made a smaller area something like

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the Vatican State, give them a homeland of sorts. But the trouble is when we were creating that, which I said at the time and I still believe, that naturally the Russians would look on this as a Western idea and fight it and resist it all the way and work among the Arabs, fish in discontented waters. And though I don't know whether that was wise or not, I'm not anti-Israeli, but I wonder if you can't make the state itself when you got any right to have others impose it for you. I don't know. I'm a little concerned. I think his action in Greece was good. He stopped the Commies. I think he started out being quite sympathetic to Russia. God knows he went to Potsdam and confirmed everything Roosevelt did at Yalta, but it didn't take him too long to see that the Russians weren't to be trusted, and then he acted. Well, he wasn't hidebound or impossible. He wasn't a difficult, hard-header except politically. He just didn't like Republicans, that was kind of a weakness with him, a strange sort of a weakness, but others had the same thing. My friend Farley, for example, I like Harry Byrd and I admire Harry Byrd for pulling out of the Democratic Party, but not going into the Republican Party.

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HESS: The present Senator.

TROHAN: Yes, and Harry came to me and said, "What do you think?"

I said, "I wouldn't join that outfit either."

And I always claimed to belong to one party and that's the Harry Byrd, Sr. party, and I was sometimes a little suspicious of that for being liberal in some places, but I like fiscal responsibility and...

HESS: You thought Harry Byrd, Sr. was liberal?

TROHAN: Well, I would kid him about it. No, my idea -- I suppose if I'm anything, I'm really a Jeffersonian Democrat, and I believe the least government is the best in my opinion, a very much of a letdown. I don't care much for the Republicans. I think sometimes when you admit you're a Republican you're confessing stupidity to a certain extent, at least it gives me that idea.

HESS: Okay, coming down towards the end of the reel, do you have anything else to add on Mr. Truman?

TROHAN: No, I'm unending. I've already talked too much and said too much and wandered too far.

HESS: Well, we thank you very much for your cooperation, sir.

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