

Oral History Interview

With

GERALD PAUL PULLEY

Independence, Missouri

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by John Curry, Elizabeth Safly, and Pauline Testerman
Harry S. Truman Library

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PULLEY: At home, in Virginia, I said, "I think I'll sit down and write some thoughts on what I thought you might be interested in."

CURRY: Very good.

SAFLY: Thank you.

PULLEY: And I am a Fellow of the Truman Library Institute, by the way.

As my letter, and your response indicated, I'm here to do an oral interview and give you a little background on my experiences as official photographer to President Harry S. Truman. With that we'll get started, and I hope I don't bore everybody.

SAFLY: Would you start by giving us your name, so that we'll have that at the beginning of the interview.

PULLEY: Yes, I'm Gerald Paul Pulley, and I'll be 71 this year. I was born October 25, 1922, in King City, Missouri, and I don't say "Missouree" either; I say "Missoura," because that's what the President always said.

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I was a Chief Photographer's Mate in the U. S. Navy. I joined the Navy in 1940, prior to World War II. Shortly after I entered the Navy, I worked my way into photography; that was my ambition, to be a Navy photographer. At that time there were only had 92 photographers in the whole Navy. So when the war broke out, I was already what you call a Third Class Photographer's Mate.

I was a photographer all during the war, but it wasn't until the end of the war and after President Roosevelt died, that I became involved with President Truman.

Now, I'll go back a little bit further. I'd like to do on record here, that the Navy has had a history of photographic support to the White House. I can go back as far as President Coolidge. Harry Baudu was a photographer in the Navy; he's deceased. But Harry did a lot of photography as a

Chief Photographer's Mate in Washington, D.C. for Harding, Coolidge, and President Hoover. Joe Bailey Roberts is another photographer. Joe is alive; he's about 90 years old. He's a former *National Geographic* photographer, and retired from the *National Geographic*. He's the senior member of the White House Press Photographer's Association. Joe was in the Navy, but only in Reserve status. Still he did a lot of photography as a Navy photographer of Coolidge and Hoover. So that goes back a little bit before my time.

Then, the late Arthur C. Black was a Chief Photographer's Mate in the Navy, and he was official photographer to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. And following the death of Franklin Roosevelt, there was a lapsed period where President Truman didn't insist on having a personal photographer. For one thing, I think it was because he

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was concerned it might cost the taxpayers some money, and he wasn't about to do that. So it wasn't until late in '47 that they decided they better get a photographer, and they convinced him that they could do like Roosevelt had done and have Navy photographer support him. Primarily, the press gave lots of coverage, but they were thinking more or less of official photography that would be retained in the Government's hands and eventually end up here at this Library.

So, in late '47, they started talking about it, and in early '48, they interviewed candidates. The Navy Photographic Center is located right at the old Naval Air Station, in Anacostia, D.C. right across from the Naval Gun Factory in the Naval Yard. That is why I believe the Navy has played such a big role in photographic support to the White House. Even today, the head of the White House Photographic Services Division is a retired Navy Chief Photographer's Mate named Billie Shaddix. President-Elect Clinton called him in December or early January of this year, and said he understood that he had been the head of the photographic services, that's until Nancy Reagan fired him.

This is a little side story, but that happened. I don't know the background and how it came about, but I got a call and was notified that he [Shaddix] is back in the White House. He did a fine job. Billie Shaddix was the director of White House Photographic Services for 12 to 15 years. He's on this tape that you've heard part of.

SAFLY: I remember the name.

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PULLEY: Well, he was there following the former Chief, Bob Knudsen. Bob Knudsen was LBJ's photographer. He was a former chief photographer, and he was assigned to the Naval Photo Center. At that time, I was head of the Still Picture Department. Now, I'm really getting you mixed up. In 1963, I was a lieutenant commander, and I'd come back to Washington for one of my many tours in Washington as head of the Still Photographic Division. We provided all the coverage for the White House and whatever; you name it. So, he was the chief assigned to take my old job.

This gets a little confusing, but that gives you a feel for Navy photographic support for the White House.

So I interviewed with the Secret Service men primarily, and during the interview there was about a half a dozen of us chief photographer's mates. At the end of World War II, anybody that was in the Navy that had made Chief Petty Officer, liked to stay because they had a pretty good job. And those who were not Chief Petty Officers by that time, they got out of the Navy, because with all those chiefs there and no Indians, they didn't want to hang around. So we had more than an abundance of chiefs -- all chiefs and no Indians as they say.

So there were a half a dozen of us, who knew President Truman wanted a personal photographer, and we thought, "Yeah, it sounds good." I was one of them. I think I had a few things going for me that some of the others didn't. We were all good photographers. I wasn't any great photographer, but I was competent. And one of the things that I think separated me from the pack, so to speak, was the fact I

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was a blue-eyed boy born in Missouri.

The interviewers said, "Oh, you're born in Missouri?" I said, "Yes, I was. I wasn't raised there, but I was born there." Then, the second thing -- and you may find to be interesting -- they said, "Do you belong to any societies?" Now, I knew what they were fishing for was Communists. In '48, they were still hunting for commies.

CURRY: Right.

SAFLY: That was just the beginning.

PULLEY: So I said, "No, I'm not a card-carrying Communist. I'm none of those things. I'm just a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy and I love my job." And they said, "So, you don't belong to any organization?"

I said, "Wait a minute. Yes, I belong to a fraternal organization." They said, "What's that?" I said, "I belong to the Masons. I'm a Mason." And they said, "Do you have a paid up dues card?" I said, "Sure, right in my pocket. Crossroads 696 Lodge, San Diego, California." They said, "Chief, I think you just got yourself a job." I said, "Why is that?" They said, "Well, the President's a Past Grand Master of Missouri." I said, "Well, I knew that." "And they went on, "He sort of likes to have Masons around him because, he can trust them. I don't tell everyone that, but that is the truth. One of the things that President Truman always insisted on was, "Boys, we've got to be honest." And he was, I guess, the most truthful President.

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I know I'm going to get carried away, but in my mind, I've done a lot of things for a lot of other Presidents. I've covered Inaugural events, and LBJ, I've been around Washington a lot. I have a little private collection of tie clasps that I keep, and I have a little fun with it because J.F. Kennedy gave me a PT boat. He sent it to the Naval Agency. He didn't hand it to me personally, but he said, "Give it to the boys that did this good job."

At the Naval Photo Center, we had some wonderful capabilities in motion pictures. Now, you've got to understand that we're talking about the period 1948-49. Even when Kennedy was in, television was not here yet. It was here, but it wasn't here like we know it today. So you had motion picture camera men, and you had still photographers. They called the motion picture "mo pickers," and the still photographers were called "single framers." For the latter, it was one picture at a time.

So, this is a little collection of things I've got. I've got a J.F. Kennedy PT boat, and I've got Jimmy Carter cuff links, and LBJ hats and all kinds of memorabilia that the Presidents would give out. Most of the memorabilia were fountain pens and tie clasps. I've got them from [President] Ford, and [President] Nixon too, and Ike [President Eisenhower] all of them. Friends have said, "Well, you were with Truman, so what did Truman give you? You have all these tie clasps; didn't he give you any?" I said, "No, because Truman didn't believe in spending the taxpayers money for pens and things like that." I have a paper clip which I'm holding up right now. I said, "He

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thought that if the wind was blowing and you needed something to hold your tie to your shirt, he might give you a paper clip to hold your tie. But I'll guarantee you he would have bought the box of paper clips himself. He would have paid for them out of his own pocket, because that's how he was and how he felt."

On the train trip in 1948 he made a comment, about handling money. We drew our advance per diem for this train trip, you know. Per diem for us military guys was only about \$3 a day, \$3.25 or something like that. It was very low and as you can see I brought with me today one of the menus. It doesn't say the price on this one. This is one of the menus I'm going to show you in a minute. On the train trips it would cost more than your \$3 but the statement he made was, "Boys, we're getting ready to start on a long trip. Now, remember you've got your money in this pocket and the government's money over in that pocket; don't get them mixed up." I have never forgotten that. I'll explain about it later.

SAFLY: You can add to that, because we'll type it out and send you a transcript. No problem on that.

PULLEY: I do remember the name of a Secret Service agent who was involved in the interviewing. He was Emery Roberts. He was a Mason and he was one of the Secret Service agents. He and I became very good friends. He was a little older than I, but he was just a fine man. There was another Secret Service agent named Dempsey; I forget his first name. There were others I knew, such as Jim Rowley. He was always

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the head of the Secret Service unit at the White House. Emery Roberts and I just sort of developed a friendship while we worked along on the trips and things like that.

I didn't work out of the White House. I did not go over there as you may have heard some of them do in recent years. I know when President Ford took over, David Kinnerly was a

photographer that roamed the White House, in dungarees no less. I wouldn't have been seen anywhere near the White House in a pair of dungarees. Well, things have relaxed and they've gotten modern I guess.

CURRY: How did you dress, being Navy?

PULLEY: It all depended on the occasion. If we were going to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, or if we were on the *Williamsburg*, the yacht, I was always in uniform, whether in whites, blues, or khakis. On the trip to the Caribbean, on the *Williamsburg*, I wore a khaki uniform. The Admiral down at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba -- he had all of his people in whites, and I thought I was going to be put on report once. I rode with the press plane down to Guantanamo Bay. It landed ahead of the President, so I could be there and photograph him as he got off the plane. I was wearing khaki and the local Admiral saw me running around there in khaki uniform and he sent his aide over and said put that chief on report for being out of uniform. But I had told Admiral [Robert] Dennison, "You know, I can't really run around, and chase the cars in the motorcade and run up the hills with a movie camera and with flash bulbs and film packs and a bag on my shoulder, in a white uniform. I've got my white uniform with

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me, but I'm going to look terrible by the end of the day." He said, "You're authorized to wear khakis." I told the aide that and he went back to the Admiral. He said, "Okay, go ahead." I did wear the uniform of the day, whenever it was possible. But on the train trip and some of the other things I'd travel in civilian clothes.

We're talking about what we wore on the Whistlestop trip in 1948. We were going to be gone a month. Well, I didn't have a month's worth of civilian clothes. You know, during World War II, we wore uniforms 24 hours a day. You didn't ever wear civilian clothes. So I didn't have a big wardrobe. Actually, I had one sport coat and some slacks and I had things like that, but I didn't have a wardrobe to last me a month on a train. So I went to the Chiefs Club at Anacostia and I got up there on the microphone -- I was only 26 years old when I was White House photographer -- and I said, "Hey, Fellows, I'm getting ready to go with the President on a month-long trip and I only have one sport coat and two pairs of slacks." I said, "Do any of you guys have a size 40 sport coat and some slacks, that you would like to have rubbed up against the President every now and then?" I said, "How about letting me borrow them?" So I borrowed clothes to wear on that train trip. That was the way it was.

Okay, I worked out of the Naval Photo Center. My immediate supervisor at the White House was a Lieutenant Commander Bill [William] Rigdon. He was my immediate supervisor. Later, he made the rank of Commander. He's deceased by the way, and I guess you know that. He wrote a book *White House Sailor*; I don't know if you have a copy. I'd love to get a copy of that. I don't know whether his widow

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has it, or if its possible to buy a copy of that anywhere.

SAFLY: I don't know, but I'll take a look.

PULLEY: I don't even have her address or anything where I could write her and ask her.

SAFLY: Is she still living?

PULLEY: I think so, because he passed away I guess only three, four, or five years ago. Not too long ago. But I lost touch with Commander Rigdon. Well, he was my immediate boss; he was the Assistant Naval Aide, to Captain Robert L. Dennison, later Rear Admiral.

The type of photography was all 4 x 5 inch black and white photography, with a Speed Graphic Camera and flash bulbs -- usually number 5s and 25s, Sylvania or GE. On my own initiative I said, "Well, really on some of these things, I should shoot some movie film." So I got a 16mm Filmo camera, and shot 100 foot rolls on various occasions. I don't know if the Library has any of that footage. I turned over everything to Commander Rigdon. At that time they weren't organized to the extent they would have a file cabinet set up for the material. This is that '48 trip. I'd come back and I would take my black and white negatives, and I'd make prints. I'd make about a half dozen albums. One was for Admiral Dennison, another one was for President Truman. I'd make 8 x 10 prints. I remember they were blue and black leather albums.

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CURRY: I think we have some photos from Commander Rigdon. Pauline [Testerman] can tell you. I believe we do have some material from Commander Rigdon.

PULLEY: My original negatives were all turned over to Commander Rigdon. Yeoman Winkler was the Chief Yeoman who worked there; at that time he was First Class I think, but what they did with the negatives I don't know. I just made so many prints up and I kept a set of prints. I sent you a set of original prints from the original negatives, with half-inch borders. I don't know why they wanted big borders on them. The state of the art at the time was strictly flash bulbs, film packs, and cut your own borders.

Today, I've got Nikons. We have 35 mm film, and you get a motorized zoom. You shoot 35 pictures in a few seconds, you know. Back there, timing was everything. You cocked your shutter, and then you pulled the dark slide of your film pack, of your film holder, and you got a piece of film ready to expose. You decided on the right time to make that picture, and then as soon as you took your picture, you put the dark slide back in the holder. You turned around or reversed it, and took another dark slide out, and then you're ready for your second shot. So timing was very critical for the photographers. The press photographers practically always used cut film holders, and they would take their shots. Then when the train stopped there would be an AP [Associated Press] "Indian" as we always called him, who would come up to the train, pick up the film, and away he would be gone. They didn't have

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to worry about it. I had to take my pictures and hold on to them until I got back, where I could develop them. So I shot a lot of film packs, with 12 pictures to a pack, and had a film pack adapter. It was all 4 x 5 black and white.

CURRY: You held them all then until you got back?

PULLEY: Until I came back, and then I'd develop them all.

SAFLY: You had to take all that stuff with you on the train?

PULLEY: Yes. I'd take it all on the train.

SAFLY: Are you talking about an enormous amount of stuff?

PULLEY: Well, quite a bit. I had boxes of flash bulbs; they came twelve to a sleeve. Dewey Long was head of White House transportation, and he was a Mason, by the way. Dewey Long was a wonderful person and I got very close to him. For some reason he liked us photographers. He coordinated a lot of things. He coordinated for example, the motorcades. He was the main coordinator. He would say, "All right, you motion picture photographers have got car six today. You still photographers -- five of us usually -- have got car 22," and that was your assignment. So we were in a motorcade, whatever city we were in, and if the President decided to stop and kiss a baby or something, you would get out of that car 22 and run up there and see what's going on. It kept you slender.

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Speaking of photographers, there was Frank ("Cancy") Cancellare and Tom McAvoy of *Life* magazine. Olie Atkins and "By" Rollins were two others. They were Associated Press. I don't know if you have a list of photographers here, but there were two Muto brothers. One was a still -- one was a still photographer and one was a motion picture cameraman. And they traded back and forth sometimes. I think it was Tony Muto, or Al Muto, one or the other who was the still photographer, and he traveled with us a lot. He made that train trip. It was one of the Muto brothers. I'm talking about 45 years ago, so I can't remember. I'm not sure if what was their first names. But we were the team; we were the so-called "single framers." The *Ferdinand Magellan* train car was the President's car of course.

I know the presidents of the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific railroads, got on the train out west somewhere, on a trip. I think the train was either in Seattle, Washington, or perhaps somewhere else. They both came on board at the same time, on the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific line. So, here we have three Presidents, including the President of the United States. They wanted a picture of "three presidents" back in the President's car. So, they said, "Pool shot." I did all the pool shots. They said, "Get the Chief. Go back, take a couple shots, and pool shot." Usually the Associated Press, AP, they were the biggest and still are the biggest of all press pools. They've got a lot of people. So, I would take a shot and come back and hand the exposed film to the AP, to Ollie Atkins or "By" [Byron} Rollins. Rigdon was very good at making these logs of who the photographers were. I know Muto was

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there, but I can't remember whether Ollie Atkins was, I know Tom McAvoy was with *Life* magazine, and I always admired Tom McAvoy. Does that ring a bell with you, his name?

CURRY: Yes.

PULLEY: He's deceased.

SAFLY: You talked about him at the LBJ conference, too.

PULLEY: Right. Because he had a Rolliflex. You see, the Navy didn't own a Rolliflex by that time.

CURRY: What kind did you have?

PULLEY: Speed Graphic. 4 x 5 Speed Graphic. All the press photographers had Speed Graphics. But he had a Rolliflex. He had a Speed Graphic too, but he had a Rolliflex and I envied him for that, because it was so convenient to hang around your neck, you know. He gave me my first lesson. in "political photograph," I call it. Apparently, he had his orders from *Life* magazine to downplay President Truman. And he was very good at it. So Tom McAvoy, as I say was a great photographer, but he had these orders. I'll tell you about several occasion. There was the event at Aksarben auditorium in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1948. There was a misunderstanding on where the President was supposed to speak. I don't know whether you heard this

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story. We went to Aksarben auditorium and the public had not been informed that they had changed the location for the speech.

SAFLY: That's that famous *Life* photograph, showing so many empty seats.

PULLEY: And he shot the picture. I said, "What are you doing that for?" And he just kept shooting. And I said, "For God's sake, wait until the people get here." I didn't understand what he was doing. I said, "What's he doing that for? Darn it all." So I waited and more people came, and I shot pictures. All my pictures showed more of the people there, and him giving the speech. *Life* magazine showed "Here is the picture at Aksarben auditorium where people should have been but weren't there because they're not interested in [what the President had to say]." I thought, "You lying rascal you, you know."

CURRY: Then, people did show up later?

PULLEY: Sure.

SAFLY: We thought that...

PULLEY: People did show up. But it was a goof-up in the planning. In any event, he made that darn shot.

And then there was another thing he did. We were out at the Presidio in San Francisco, California and as we're going along, he would take a picture. You'd have

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a soldier standing here posting his arms and holding the crowd back, and roped areas of the Presidio, the park we went to, that were roped off. McAvoy would wait until there'd be a gap, and then for some reason there'd be an area where there would be no people, and he'd take a picture of that and show a soldier posting arms, guarding a crowd that didn't show up. But next to it, [not in the picture], there would be lots of people, you know.

I was naive; I was 26 years old, and I was a Navy man, and that was my Commander and Chief I was serving. But later on I saw that *Life* magazine photo.

CURRY: Oh yes, that was a famous picture.

PULLEY: I said, "Darn his time anyhow; that's why he was doing that. That's not fair."

SAFLY: I knew there was some kind of a goof-up but I didn't know that more people showed up.

PULLEY: Oh, yes, more people showed up. It wasn't packed, but there were more people that did show up.

Okay, let's see. I'll keep on the train trip. Did I put it on tape yet, about General [Wallace] Graham?

CURRY: No.

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PULLEY: At the beginning of the "Whistlestop train trip," we were told there was going to be a month-long trip, and I told you about the little thing on the clothes, but my wife had been to the doctors at Bethesda Naval Hospital and they had diagnosed her as having a breast tumor. We had one little daughter at the time, and she was only two years old. So they had scheduled my wife for this operation; Dr. Zuska, Commander Zuska, was the surgeon. So when I got on the train to leave that evening, General Graham came into the car. Like I say, the staff was very small; there were just so many of us there, including Commander Rigdon and myself.

General [Doctor] Graham looked at me and he said, "Are you all right, Chief." I said, "Yes, I'm fine General." He said, "Well, you look like you're worried or something." I said, "Well, I'll be honest with you, yes, I'm concerned that my wife is scheduled to have surgery on a breast tumor, right in the middle of the trip, and yes, I am concerned about that. Thank you for asking." He said, "Well, let's not worry about that, and he beckoned to his wife, Vera I think her name was. She came over and he said, "Honey, I want you to call Admiral" -- I don't remember who the admiral was but he was the surgeon general of the Navy at Bethesda Naval Hospital -- "and see if we can't postpone, get Mrs. Pulley's operation postponed until he gets back." So I said, "Wow, that was sure nice of the General, that he shows that much concern." Harry Truman staffed himself with a bunch of people who had a lot of humility and a lot of thoughtfulness.

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So we got up to Philadelphia, I think it was. The train got underway that night and we got off in Philadelphia, and I called home and said, "I just want to know how you're doing?" and she said, "What the world are you up to?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Some Admiral called me." We lived in Navy enlisted housing; they called it "Dogpatch" back there in Washington, DC. They were little tine houses, but at that time it was a place for me and my family. So, she said, "Some Admiral called me and wanted to know how I was feeling, and everything." She said that he said, "Don't worry about your operation; we're going to postpone it until your husband gets back from the trip with the President." She said to me, "So I'm not going to be operated on." I said, "That's good news honey; that's good," and hung up.

To finish that, when the trip was over and we got back, the Naval Hospital called one day from Bethesda they said "We want Mrs. Pulley out here for that operation now." So she had it, and it was benign and everything worked out fine. But that's the kind of consideration I received, and I never forgot General Graham for his thoughtfulness. He didn't need to do that, you know. But that's the kind of people that President Truman staffed himself with, caring people. So, so much for that little story.

You say you saw that little video that we did down there?

SAFLY: You sir, I did. I saw it last night.

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PULLEY: The things that I'm giving you now are in that video, and we can sort of backtrack a bit if I forget something, we can play that back, or let Pauline hear that tape.

There were several stories on that train trip that -- while I'm thinking about them -- I'd like to relate.

SAFLY: Good.

PULLEY: There was a ferry boat trip we took; I think it was from Tacoma to Seattle. At that time -- if you saw the pictures -- at Seattle they had a big flood.

SAFLY: Yes, I did see that.

PULLEY: I took aerial shots of that, and you've got those. That was around June. In any event, we were taking that ferry boat trip, and I told you earlier about the Per Diem problem. I couldn't afford to pay for those dinners and lunches and things on that train. Well, Santiago was Chief Steward. I don't know if you've got his name anywhere.

CURRY: Yes. His name is familiar; I've heard it.

PULLEY: And Batista. Santiago and Batista were both Filipino stewards and they both were on the trip. Santiago in particular was more or less the boss, the head chief of all the stewards. Batista and Santiago were in charge of the stewards at Shangri-La,

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the camp that Eisenhower later made into Camp David. But it was Shangri-La then. They were also on the *Williamsburg*, and they were at the White House. I don't know where all they were. I remember Arthur Prettyman was the valet; he was a Black man. As you may recall, our President Truman was the one that desegregated the Armed Forces. In fact, I had 30 years active duty in the Navy and I gave them 10 more as a civilian. I gave 40 years to Navy photography. In Black History month, I used to tell that story around. I asked the Black employees, "Did you know who was the Desegregator for the Blacks in the Armed Forces? Harry Truman did that, and without him we wouldn't have a General Powell today." So, that's just another of the things I thought so much of.

Well, anyhow -- what was I talking about?

SAFLY: The ferry boat ride.

PULLEY: Yes, that was good; that was a classic story. We got on a ferry boat and they put our motorcade cars aboard. And most of the motorcades consisted of Lincoln Continental convertibles. Apparently all the people that owned Lincoln Continental convertibles were honored to have the President -- usually it was the director of transportation...

SAFLY: Dewey Long...

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PULLEY: Dewey Long would arrange for that through the Democratic Party I guess. I don't know how it was done, but every time we'd get somewhere it would usually be the Lincoln Continental convertibles. I had my equipment, my Speed Graphic and my motion picture camera, and all my flash bulbs and film packs in the car and we got on that ferry boat. They said, "Hey, boy, they've got a little live band up there on the top deck, and they have a seafood spread up there, prawns and all of this good seafood." I said, "Ooh." And they said, the "President's up with the skipper of the ferry boat."

So I just left my camera there and I told the driver, "You watch my cameras; I'm going to get something to eat." So I was up there just having myself a ball. Now, I'd seen Rose Conway [President Truman's personal secretary], and I had this White House staff badge. I said to her, "It's rather awkward for me to have this." The badge had CPHOM (that's Chief Photographers Mate) CPHOM USN GPPulley. I said, "People look at that and they say, 'I can't understand all of that.' So can't you just give me one saying 'Mr. Gerry Pulley, White House Staff?'" So she did.

So I've got this white circular White House staff badge hanging on my lapel. I'm up there and I'm helping myself to all of those prawns and loading up, and this Admiral walks up to me. I'm in civilian clothes, and they had a bar, and he said, "Would you care for a drink?" He looked around and saw my badge and said, "Mr. Pulley, would you care for a drink?" I said, "Oh, I'd be glad." Then, I thought "Oh, lord of mercy." So I had a drink. I forget what it was, a cocktail of some kind. He said, "Now over here we propose to put the Pacific Reserve Fleet, and all these

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ships." You know, at the end of the war they had all these ships. I said, "Oh, I see you need those." And I thought, "Oh, Lord, I hope he never finds out I'm a chief in his Navy."

So about that time Emery Roberts comes over and he says, "Hey Chief, the Boss wants to see you." I said, "Excuse me, Admiral, the President wants to see me." "Oh, by all means. Nice to meet you Mr. Pulley." I got out of there and I thought, "If that Admiral knew he was talking to a Chief Petty Officer in his Navy, he'd have me washing out every glass that was drank out of up there." But he never did know, and of course I went to see the Boss. So I had to go down, get my camera, and take a picture of the ferry boat captain with the President of the United States. That was just one story. These little human stories.

SAFLY: That was funny. I like that.

PULLEY: I brought along a piece of paper here; I won't read it to you now. It came out of the *Washington Times-Herald*, Tuesday, July 6, 1948.

SAFLY: This is part of what you read last night; I'd like to have a copy of this.

PULLEY: You can have that.

CURRY: Okay.

SAFLY: This is a great article.

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PULLEY: This article came out in the *Times-Herald* and when I got to work that morning at the Naval Photo Center, they said, "Oh boy, you're in trouble. The Captain wants to see you." I said, "What am I in trouble for?" He said, "That article in the paper this morning about you and the President." I said, "Oh, what article?" It was this common knowledge that when I took that job with Commander Rigdon, he said, "Look, you're a worker here and we play low key." I said, "I understand what you're saying. I'm just a chief in the Navy and that's my Commander and Chief and I take pictures for him."

So what happened, this writer Warden, or whatever...

CURRY: Warden, Philip Warden [of the *Chicago Tribune*].

PULLEY: Yes. He apparently had observed me on trips taking pictures. He apparently was a staunch Republican, a Dewey lover, and so he took a swipe at me. He swiped at the President really. He called Eastman Kodak and he got the price of the Kodachrome film. Well, I did shoot maybe twenty rolls in the Caribbean, maybe shot twenty 100 foot rolls of color movies, Kodachrome, and came back and had them processed at Eastman Kodak, and then turned them over to Commander Rigdon. I don't know where those films are. I would think they would be here.

CURRY: I don't know.

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PULLEY: Well, I'd be interested to know, because at least I would say on that trip to the Caribbean I shot at least 20 rolls. They said I shot "miles of footage," and it took six men to develop my negatives. It was a lie, the whole thing. My captain was a Commander Jack Eady -- he's alive today -- but Commander Eady, before he talked to me, had received a call from Captain Robert Dennison. Commander Rigdon had pointed it out to him, and said, "Hey, the Chief's going to be in trouble." The article implied I wasted the taxpayers' money by taking too many pictures. Every time he takes a step, I take a picture. That was wrong; I didn't do that.

SAFLY: That's what they do now.

PULLEY: Now, they have ten guys there. So, in any event, I wanted you to know I did shoot a lot of motion picture footage, and it would be interesting to know where that film is, because that type film was Kodachrome and the roll of film I sent you earlier was shot by Pete Kalian, a Hollywood photographer, of me in the back of the car. That was my own personal film, because it wasn't Navy footage. Anything I shot Navy, that's Government property. So that was all turned over.

CURRY: Did you ever shoot any other movie footage?

PULLEY: Oh yes, I did take other films. It was my number two thing. I had a 16 mm Filmo camera. It was spring wound. When things looked important enough, I'd take movies with it too. I'd bring them back and have them developed by Eastman Kodak.

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Then I'd just send the reel right over to Commander Rigdon, and say, "Here are the motion pictures of it." Later on, you know, they made a big thing about making motion pictures for Kennedy, for example. They even had a motion picture crew document his activities. I'll give you an example.

Haille Selassie from Ethiopia came to visit the USA. Now this shows the kind of capability that existed back to the J.F. Kennedy administration; this may be of interest to a future historian. The Naval Photo Center had a motion picture camera crew over at the White House, and when the plane with Haille Selassie arrived from Ethiopia, they started covering him. There were Defense Language Institute people in Washington, D.C., and they Ethiopian translators. So when we knew that Selassie was coming over, our writers and directors got together, and they got the Ethiopian national anthem recorded. There was a translator there, so when Selassie gave his speech, and J.F. Kennedy gave his speech in the Rose Garden, the translator would put Kennedy's speech in Ethiopian. This was done in a 24-hour period.

I'm talking about the capability that we had. We don't have that any longer, because it's all video. They can do the same thing in video, but they couldn't do it in film today, because each one would have to get into the act. The motorcyclists would have to take the film over to the lab, have it developed, and bring back a one-light print, and then all this sound track would have to be put on it, and all that. But we did that in 24 hours for Haille Selassie's visit. Then we edited in

about a ten minute 400 foot reel of his visit in Ethiopian, with both national anthems. It was done, and

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then Kennedy would show it to Haille Selassie in the White House projection room.

His gift was a Kodak Pagent 16mm sound projector with the film in it. He showed it to the Emperor and said, "As my present farewell to you, take this back and show it to your countrymen." Nice, huh.?

SAFLY: Yes.

PULLEY: Now that's the kind of capability they did have. Today, Billy Shaddix is at the White House and they have a crew, I'd say, of eight Navy photographers, some civilian and some military, and they do everything. They accompany President Clinton around, and they've been doing this for years. They do all of it on video; so that's the state of the art today. But back then, in my day and that's what we're talking about, I was the movie crew; there was no TV. The motion picture cameramen that were on the trips were from RKO, Pathe, and MGM or whatever; they were the ones that you see in the movie theaters. The footage was all shot in 35mm; there was an IMO usually, an IMO camera, and it was all done in black and white, and shown before the cartoons at the theater. That's how the country knew what was going on with the President on this trip, because you didn't have television. There was some television in the research stages, and a few people had it, but the country as a whole didn't have it.

That explains that. So I did take movies, and I would be interested to know whatever happened to them. Perhaps, it's a possibility that the Navy turned them

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over to the Naval Historical Center, and I will try to find that out when I go back.

SAFLY: Where is the Navy Historical Center?

PULLEY: It's at the Washington Navy Yard. Henry Vадnais is the curator, and your curator that I met this morning...

CURRY: Bauske, Clay Bauske.

PULLEY: Yes, Clay. He knows Henry Vадnais; he's met him on several occasions. It might be that he could ask him. I know they have the still picture archives there. Much of the motion pictures that I shot were given to the White House, and maybe they sent them to the National Archives. I don't know.

CURRY: I don't think we have them here.

SAFLY: We could find out.

CURRY: But we certainly would like to have them. And it is good to know that you did all this.

PULLEY: Well, they were taken, and they were 16mm film, and the quality of that Kodachrome is as good as the roll I sent you. That's original Kodachrome and you can see the dyes held up beautifully, and the quality is there.

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CURRY: I have some old home movies too.

PULLEY: So there's another thing on that Whistlestop trip that I was going to ask you. We had had a real busy time in Los Angeles. Several million people turned out. It may be disputed by people that really know what the count was, but it was said that there several million people. All I know is that I was in car three; I can tell you that. I recall that among the photographers, there was Frank Cancellare ("Cancy"), and either Ollie Atkins or Rowley, or By Rollins and the Muto boy and myself, and McAvoy. We had a busy time in Los Angeles. Afterward, we were on a train going, I think, between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and it was night time. If the train stopped, it would sound an alarm before starting again. The train had an alarm system built in. It was a wailing sound. You had a minute to get back on that train, if you were off making a phone call or something and you heard that sort of a siren sound. That meant the train's getting ready to leave again, and you should get back on board, if you were Secret Service, or press, or whatever.

This happened late at night. I don't know how late, but I know the boys had a couple of bottles of Canadian Club, and they passed them around. They had been doing a little drinking, and they were worn out from Los Angeles. I wasn't much of a drinker, but some of these boys could hold their own. So it was about, oh, the middle of the night, and the train stopped. Always -- you know -- they'd say, "Pulley have you got your camera with you?" I said, "I've got my pants on haven't I? If I've got my pants on I've got my Camera."

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So, I grabbed my camera and my cut film holders and my bag and I ran to the back of the platform to see if the President had come out. He came out and the guys were still sleeping; they sort of had a few too many and were sleeping. So the President asked me, "Where are the boys?" He knew us because we were everywhere he went. "I said, 'Mr. President, they've had a rough few days and some of them are sort of sleeping right now. But I'm back here, and with your permission I'll shoot enough pictures for all of them,' for AP, and UPI, and myself as well. I wasn't doing any for McAvoy, but I was doing for the press photographers. The President was very nice. He said, 'Oh, go ahead, Chief.'" So I took these from different angles and he was wonderful. The photographers loved him, because we had the "One More Club;" you know he called them that, and he'd say, "Did you get enough pictures boys?" So thoughtful. We loved him, all photographers loved him.

There was an Indian papoose and a squaw and an Indian chief; they had the headdress, and I remember shooting the pictures. I went back in and took the film holders, and I put one in for AP and one for UPI and on for United Press -- whatever, the three main press guys. I put one in their bags.

Anyhow, the next morning I think the AP guy came by and I gave him the AP's pictures. I handed them to him and I said, "Here's your shot." So the next day there was a print, and they said, "Did anything happen last night?" I said, "No, not a thing, except for when that Indian chief and squaw and papoose came to the back." They said, "What do you mean? What do you mean?" "Who was back there?" I said, I

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was back there." they said, "Pool shot, pool shot." I said, "No, it wasn't a pool shot." "I made enough to give each of you guys one." They said, "There weren't any locals there?" I said, "No locals," and then they relaxed, because they knew they had a responsibility, and they were sleeping.

CURRY: Right.

PULLEY: So they said, "Hey Chief, you're all right. When we hit Kansas City the Associated Press is taking you to dinner." In Kansas City, we stayed at the Muehlebach Hotel.

SAFLY: Oh sure.

PULLEY: He liked that Muehlebach.

CURRY: Yes.

PULLEY: I recall them saying, "Hey, Chief, you don't need to pay for your dinner; we're buying it, after that picture you took." Well, I've never seen the picture...

CURRY: Is that right?

PULLEY: Have you ever seen picture of that?

SAFLY: No.

PULLEY: Well, I wonder what ever happened? You see, what troubles me sometimes is I don't know what your relationship is with the press. With the Associated Press, the UPI and those people. Have they given you pictures?

CURRY: You see, they gave a lot of pictures to the White House. And everything they gave to the White House, at least we think everything, did come to us. It was turned over to us. I mean that's what makes up the core of our photo collection.

PULLEY: Yes.

CURRY: But we were dependent on them, the White House.

When you were in Los Angeles, was that when he appeared at Gilmore Stadium, and do you remember anything about that?

PULLEY: I was in Berkeley. When he appeared in Berkeley he got a degree (an honorary degree), from the University of California.

SAFLY: This is the non-political trip, right?

PULLEY: Right. Well, they called this non-political.

SAFLY: But it was pretty darn political.

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PULLEY: That's right.

I was criticized. There was some question about having me along on the Whistlestop trip, but he was visiting Government installations and things like that.

This article as written -- this was written...

SAFLY: In July.

PULLEY: Yes, this was written after the train trip, because that was in June.

Because I don't have a copy. Whatever I shot, I don't recall. I must have given them all to them, like a pool shot. There were pictures that I shot at times, that I didn't get to take back and develop for the White House because it was a pool shot and it went to the press. But I wonder about the Associated Press and their files in June '48, if you have a point of contact with the Associated Press and their archives.

CURRY: We've asked the Associated Press for permission to use pictures that they have. But I don't know that we've ever gotten any pictures directly from the Associated Press or not.

PULLEY: For instance if you look through some of the papers for the month of June '48, and see --

SAFLY: I'll do that.

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PULLEY: That always bothered me, not knowing what happened after making their shots. You know, they're interested in tomorrow morning's paper. Once they shot it and sent it off, they'd go to the next picture.

Now, let's see. I told you about who the photographers were. There was Ollie Atkins or By Rollins of AP; there was Tom McAvoy of *Life* a magazine; Al or Tony Muto, I can't remember for whom; and Frankie "Cancy" Cancellare of UPI, and myself. I did have a one-on-one with the President.

CURRY: Oh, is that right.

PULLEY: Yes. That was on the train, and I believe it was about the middle of the trip. There was an evening event that had happened. I had taken pictures of Santiago, the Filipino steward, and given him prints, serving the President, you know. We call it in the Navy, "Cumshaw." I'd picture him serving the President or with the President, whatever. And then I'd make an extra print and give it to Sonny Albo. And then he'd in turn say, "Hey, the President's got some left-over roast beef tonight." So, sometimes, I ate what the President did. It was Navy Cumshaw, they call them.

CURRY: Is that right?

PULLEY: He'd come usually at night time, in the evening, after dinner. The President was served and everything, and if the President had anything left over, he'd [Santiago] would come back and bring me a sandwich or something. Pretty nice.

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SAFLY: Very nice.

PULLEY: So there is a knock on the door of this little room I've got; it's got a bed, just a single room, a little pullman type thing, with all these cases of flash bulbs. There is a knock on my door, and I said, "Come on in." I thought it was Santiago bringing me a sandwich, you know. There was another knock. I opened the door. Here was the President, standing right there. I said, "Good evening, Mr. President." Well, it stunned me, you know. He said, "Well, may I come in?" I said, "Well, of course. Of course, Mr. President." He stepped in. I was just flabbergasted you know. He said, "Well, can I sit down?" I said, "Well, of course, let me get my camera out of the way." We talked for, I guess twenty or thirty minutes, and he was just walking through the train talking to different people, I guess. He just thought he'd talk to me. He was just mainly asking if I was getting a lot of good pictures; was there anything that he could do to improve; was he holding his hat out long enough; and all this kind of thing, you know. Before the President left my room -- he got very serious looking -- and looked me straight in the eyes -- and said, "I am about to sign an Executive Order desegregating all of the armed forces, I'd like you to tell me what you think about it." It sort of shocked me at the moment. But I recently had a young black sailor that had become the first black to complete the Naval School of Photography in Pensacola, report to work for me in the Naval Photo Center and I immediately replied to the President that I had a seaman second class named Curley Mosley recently report to

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our command and that he was an excellent photographer and I was certain there were other black sailors that would be great photographers. So he smiled and said, "I'm glad to hear you say that" and our one on one was over. Later, on July 26, 1948, the President signed Executive Order 9981 and I was proud I had a small part of that important presidential Executive Order. Oh yes, Curley Mosley, advanced as a photographer and retired as a Chief Photographer Mate USN. But it just dumbfounded me. I'll never forget it. I said, "Gosh."

When he left, I said, "Wow." You know I thought, "The President of the United States came in; I was a Chief Petty Officer in his Navy, and he was Commander-in-Chief and talking to me like that." He asked me whereabouts in Missouri I grew up. He knew I was from Missouri, and I told him King City. He asked about my mother's family of "Sealeys," etc. It was a wonderful discussion. It was one of the most special moments of my life. So, I wanted to let you know about that.

CURRY: Well, thank you.

PULLEY: He was anxious to know, whether he was doing anything that I wanted him to do different, or anything like that, for the pictures.

I said, "No."

Okay, and you know about the LA [motorcade].

SAFLY: You've got that on the video.

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PULLEY: Yes, on the video.

CURRY: But you haven't told us about it on tape, yet, have you?

SAFLY: No, he hasn't told us on tape, and we don't want to transcribe from the video.

PULLEY: This happened in Los Angeles. The train pulled into Los Angeles before we went to this luncheon. Dewey Long came back into the press car where I was, and usually all the photographers were all there together, and he looked at his list and said, "You still photographers, you've got car three today." "Oh, wow, great," I said. I looked around and where were the rest of the guys. I couldn't find Muto, and I couldn't find Cancellare, I couldn't find McAvoy. I didn't know where they went. I was loaded down with my cameras, my movie camera. He said, "Car three." I said, "Wow." So I ran out and jumped into car three. I'm in the rear seat of this Lincoln, and no one else shows up.

Well, the driver and a Secret Service man are in the front seat and I've got the whole back seat to myself. I said, "Wow, this is it," and so I laid all my gear back, and then a motorcycle started up and away we went. I could see them [the other photographers]; they had commandeered a Jeep and they were sort of skirting around the side, moving around different places in that jeep. And here I'm riding in that car number three. Well, car "zero" was Secret Service I think. Car number one was Governor Warren, as I recall, and the President. In car 2 were Bess and Margaret, I think, and I believe Governor Warren's wife was in there. Then car 3 was me, and it

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had a big sign "3," you know. And they [the onlookers] would say, "Hey, give 'em hell, Harry. Give 'em hell Harry." And they'd say, "Hey Margaret, sing us a song." And when they saw me they'd say, "Who's that?" Of course, I'm taking pictures.

Admiral [Robert] Dennison, I think he was car 27; it was way back behind me. My boss, an Admiral, was way back there. You see, I was raised in North Hollywood, California, and I graduated from High school there. So I came from that part of the country and graduated from North Hollywood High School, and then joined the Navy. I was working my way through high school you might say. I didn't come from a big money family. So, every time the car would turn a corner, I'd say, "The Admiral's back there, and darn, I'm never going to get in another parade like this in my lifetime. I might as well take advantage of it, and have a little fun." So, every now and then I'd just put my cameras down, and I'd just wave to them. I was having a good old-time, when all of a sudden this voice came out of nowhere, it was my WWII shipmate, Pete Kallian, "Hey, Pulley, what are you doing up there?" I thought, "Oh, Lord, I've got caught." I picked up my camera, took a picture, and then I stopped my foolishness and got back to business. I got caught. But that film is the film I sent you. So it was a fun thing, and I got a kick out of it.

SAFLY: That was great, it really is.

CURRY: As far as taking pictures, since you're riding in a car in a parade, normally you wouldn't get any pictures until the parade would stop then, right?

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No. But I would take pictures of nurses throwing confetti out of the hospital window, and crowd reactions, and I could stand up and shoot his car ahead of me.

CURRY: I see.

PULLEY: As in Berkeley. For some reason I had a good seat and I got "Berkeley, California welcomes Harry S. Truman." Things like that. I don't know what car I had in Berkeley, but I was pretty close. I got good shots of his car in Berkeley, California. He got the honorary degree from the University of California there. He didn't have a degree of his own. I point that out to most people. I say, "Look, I don't have a college degree, but neither did the President."

Okay, how I got relieved -- I want to tell you about that. When the election was over, and the President came back to Washington from Independence, I was over to the office of the Naval Aide, Admiral Dennison. He said, "Well, Chief, you've got another four years in the White House." I said, "Well, I really appreciate that offer Admiral, but there is a program in the Navy called the LDO (Limited Duty Officer) program, and I'm a career Navy man. I've served my time at sea, but I have to go back to sea. That's what you call "get your ticket punched" in the Navy. It was a wonderful experience and a wonderful job, and you couldn't ask for a better job than to be the official White House photographer. But to enhance my own career, I had to leave and go back to sea duty, because I was a career Navy man. So he understood that. Admiral Dennison had been the skipper of the battle *Missouri*, of course, one

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time, and he had been quite a decorated World War II hero. He understood that, and it was a new program for the Navy, where the Chief Petty Officer could advance to a commissioned officer

status. I was told there was a mile of those Chief Petty Officers; 5200-some odd applied for the program and they selected 188 and only one photographer out of all of those.

CURRY: Is that right?

PULLEY: I said before I can apply for that, I've got to go to sea. And Admiral Dennison said, "Oh, you've got to find me a good, a qualified relief to take your job." (So I got a temporary relief, but he didn't do too good, Kenneth McAfee). Admiral Dennison wanted to know where I was going. He said, "Now, if you're leaving me, tell me where you are going?" I said, "Well, I'm going to the Pacific Fleet, and I'll get on an aircraft carrier, the USS *Princeton*, and its my understanding Air Group 13 is going into Tsingtao, China. At that time the Commies were moving into Shinkow, China and so I went to China on an aircraft carrier. We did photo reconnaissance before the Commies took over that area. And so it was a very important mission. (Later, I was on the USS *Princeton*, CV37). So he understood that, and he said, "Well, if you're going to sea, that's fine. Now, if you're unhappy when you get out there, and you want to come back, you call Commander Rigdon and we'll get you right back."

So, in 1949 I went out for two years of sea duty, which is normal. When I got to San Diego, I found Chief photographer Paul Begley, and Paul was a single-sheet

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photographer. He was a little older than I was, and Paul had better cameras than the Navy had. He had Roliflexes; Leicas; he had his own. Paul Begley was a very unique person. Regretfully, Paul died a year or so ago in a nursing home. Paul was older than I was. He never had been married, and he never owned a car. He was an unusual person, but a very gifted photographer. His whole life was centered around his cameras. He was single, no wife, no family, no responsibilities, and he didn't own a car, and he didn't own a house. All he wanted to do was take pictures, and he was very good. So I found him in San Diego, and I called Commander Rigdon, and said, "I've got my relief. Tell Admiral Dennison, I've got a good relief. He doesn't have a family, he can travel as much as is possible, and he'll do a good job."

So Paul went out there, and was his photographer for Truman's full term. He died recently, or a year or so ago, in a nursing home, back here in Missouri somewhere. He never married, never had any children, of course. He had some nephews; I think they brought him back to a nursing home and he died of Alzheimer disease.

CURRY: Was he originally from Missouri too?

PULLEY: I think he was from Kansas City.

CURRY: His name shows up on some of our photos downstairs.

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PULLEY: Yes, Paul Begley, and he stayed on for Eisenhower. So, he stayed on with Eisenhower, and then I think Bob Knudsen, I think came to relieve him. Bob Knudsen did too.

I'm sorry to report that most of my predecessors are no longer with us. So, that's why I had to get out here and get this all recorded.

SAFLY: We're very grateful that you're doing this.

PULLEY: So, that was Paul Begley. And that's how I got relieved.

I will tell another little incident. I've read this book by David McCullough, [*Truman*] and one thing, if you read that book, is that Truman stressed being truthful. He wanted to tell the truth, and he told the truth. It may have hurt him politically sometimes, but he would tell the truth anyhow.

So, there was an incident that happened after I was relieved on my way to catch that ship in San Diego. There were some pictures. One was a portrait that I had made many copies of, of the President, and I have one autographed from him to me. Commander Rigdon wanted fifty copies made or something like that; I forget what it was. So, I took the negative and made the copies, a portrait similar to what you see. It was a portrait he liked. His hand was showing on the desk. If I see it here, I'll show you. Now, I made these prints, and I went to Captain [Charles L.] Freeman at the time. At that time Captain Freeman was the skipper of the *Williamsburg*. I'd get onto the *Williamsburg*, because I had made numerous trips, short trips, sometimes just out down the Potomac with a head of State or something. The President liked to

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get away. And he's get away from the press. So he loved to get on that *Williamsburg* and go down. There was a compliment of about 175 men. The captain was Captain Freeman at the time, and then Captain McDonald was also a captain of the *Williamsburg*.

Well, at this particular, at this time, I think it was Captain Freeman. I had these prints and every time I went on the *Williamsburg*, there's a Chief Pharmacist mate named "Doc" [Preston] Taylor. Now, all Chief Pharmacists Mates are called "Doc," because they are Pharmacist Mates. They're not doctors, but they're in the medical business. Well, Doc Taylor was a Chief Pharmacist mate, and he and I were very good friends. Doc Taylor, is deceased. The *Williamsburg* used to have a reunion every now and then.

Well, Doc Taylor, HMC, was a rub-down man, masseur.

CURRY: Oh, is that right.

PULLEY: So he would rub-down the President. And he gave the President a rub-down. One of the things that I would do was to take pictures.

Well, I was telling you about the picture, the portrait we had.

CURRY: Yes, okay.

PULLEY: If you have one here, I can immediately pick it out and show you which one I'm talking about. I didn't take it; it wasn't a picture I took, but they had the negative,

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and they said they wanted more prints of it made. Apparently, whoever shot the portrait gave the White House permission to use it. So, anyhow, I made up about 50 prints.

On the *Williamsburg*, along with Doc Taylor, who was the Pharmacist Mate, there were ten Chief Petty Officers, who had Chief's quarters, their own little section on the ship. They were a great bunch. At home I have pictures -- and you probably haven't seen these. I can show you some of those pictures that I took of the chiefs and their surroundings and things like that, that you probably don't have. I could send them to you and you could copy them and send them back to me like you did before. I can't remember all their names, but you've got a list of them there.

So, in any event, knowing that I was going out to San Diego, I went aboard the *Williamsburg* to see Captain Freeman. I said, "Captain, you have been so kind to me and different people on this ship have bent over backwards every time I went out on the ship that I'd like to leave some of these prints with you. They are extra prints that I have made up for Commander Rigdon. I told Commander Rigdon that I was doing this." I said, "So, here's about 25 copies or something like that." I said, "Certain people on the ship, the doctor, the navigator, this and that, you can give them to them." That was my farewell with the Captain.

Well, by the time I got out to San Francisco there was a message to the Naval Investigative Service to contact me, at my mother's address, and interview me to see about these pictures. Had I sold any? Well, that's a cardinal crime in the Navy to

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ever sell a picture or anything like that. So, they came over and talked to me. A Lieutenant and a Marine Master Sergeant. I said, "Look, I've never sold a picture in my life and I'm not about to tell you that I have. That's a no-no. There's two things a Navy Photographer never did, was to take nude or pornographic pictures, or sell anything Government property."

Anyhow, the investigators said, "Well, you've got to give us a statement." So I gave them a statement. And as soon as they left, I called Commander Rigdon. I said, "Hey, Commander Rigdon, I just had Naval Investigative Service people talk to me, and I'm on my way down to catch this ship." He said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "Well, I'm here with my mother and my wife and my kid and they want to know what this is all about." I said, "What is it all about anyhow?" I've never sold any pictures." He said, "No, we found out what happened." He said, "Santiago got one of those pictures; he took it over and had some prints copies and he and some of the stewards were selling them. All of a sudden here's this picture showing up all over the Navy gun factory and Navy yard in Washington. So they looked, and saw a picture of the chief, of Captain Freeman, and all of that. Well, Captain Freeman said, 'No, he just gave them to me. He didn't charge anything for those pictures.'" So Commander Rigdon said, "Just go to sleep and forget it. You're as clear as a bell. He said, "Santiago is in deep trouble." So, Santiago was a Filipino steward, and they sent him either to Alaska or Iceland. That's the worst thing you can do to a Filipino, is send them to cold country. So, that's the last I heard of Santiago.

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SAFLY: Poor guy.

PULLEY: Well, they should send him to Leavenworth if he did it, you know. So much for that, but that was a little story that I wanted to make sure I covered for the record.

Okay, let's see, we're getting to the end of this thing.

I've just about covered the highlights of my experience with the President. That's how I got relieved.

CURRY: But you did come back later didn't you?

PULLEY: Yes, I came back later, in '51. I came back to the Naval Photo Center or another tour, and that's when I covered Churchill, Dean Acheson, Anthony Edwin. I don't know if I gave you this picture -- that's a stern view -- and this one here, I don't think I gave you that one. I sent you a close-up shot of the two of them standing there, but did I give you the one -- or can you recall?

TESTERMAN: We have one like that, but I'm not sure.

PULLEY: I made a shot from here, just the two of them standing there with that in the background. I'm not sure you had the rest of the people, Admiral Leahy's here.

TESTERMAN: Are these what they call the Negro photographers or Negro Newsmen?

PULLEY: You see this is down...

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SAFLY: Is this where he went to see Governor [William] Hastie?

PULLEY: That's Governor Hastie there, in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

SAFLY: That's good.

PULLEY: In any event, that's an original print because it's got that crazy half inch border that we made back there. They always wanted them to be that way.

SAFLY: They've both got great hats on, don't they.

TESTERMAN: In Key West, were you the only photographer, or did you have a group that worked with you?

PULLEY: During this period of time, well, that's indefinite.

TESTERMAN: Was this like '47 ...

PULLEY: '48.

TESTERMAN: You were there in '47 too, weren't you?

PULLEY: Yes, late '47. But these were given in '48 I think. These are passes that I had. It was on a submarine base. Yes, these passes were issued to me on the submarine base, at one of the chiefs mess I think. The President liked to go to Key West, because of security for one thing.

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Another thing, he got to relax down there. He didn't like the "big white prison" back in Washington. And so he liked to relax down at Key West.

Oh, I've got to show you this. When I got down to Key West, we landed by Navy plane at Boca Chica, which is the Naval air station. I usually would fly with Commander Rigdon, and he'd take the Navy pouches. We'd land and they would transport us over to the Marine base. Well, I had a room over at the sub base, chief's quarters. I had my camera equipment and everything with me. But there was no photo lab there. With that particular Speed Graphic, you had to keep checking every now and then on your shutter -- so I could do that in a bathroom. I could mix up some chemistry: developer and hypo, and I could make it. Just take a picture of anything and develop it; fix it okay in the sink, so I knew my pictures would all be coming out. I did that every night. I'd run a test there somewhere. But so far as developing the pictures I took, I'd have to get transportation and go over to Boca Chica to the photo lab, Navy photo lab, at the Naval air station.

Well, I went to the transportation office at the sub base and talked to the chief, and I said, "I'd like to get transportation of any kind, a jeep, pickup truck, anything to run back and forth in, to take my film over and develop it at night time and come back." He said, "No can do. We're tight on transportation; we don't have anything," and blah, blah, blah. So, about the second day there was this picture I took of the President leaning over a little doll carriage, with three little children in it. He was taking his morning walk down to the submarine base, and I stopped and took a

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picture. He was very good; he liked to do over and kiss the baby, whatever. So I took a picture. I asked the mother if I could take a picture of her children with the President. She should have stayed in it, but she didn't. I forgot her name. I said, "Where does your husband work on the base?" She said, "He's transportation officer." I said, "That's good."

So I developed that film, and I went in. I got wheels -- someone had to go over to Boca Chica -- and I went and I made a 11x14 print and I went back and gave it to Doc Taylor. I said, "Doc, when you're rubbing down the boss tomorrow morning, at rub-down time, will you please show him this? I just put a little note with it, a little piece of paper. It said, "Kind regards. Warm wishes to Lieutenant -- whatever his name was -- Harry S. Truman." He was good about signing that stuff.

Well, when Doc Taylor was giving a rub-down, that was an ideal time. He'd just sign these things. He was wonderful about that. So the next morning I walked in I said "Chief [no name]," I'm back to get that transportation." He said, "I told you before I don't have anything to give you." "Well," I said, "let me talk to your transportation officer." He said, "He's going to tell you the same thing." "Well, let me just talk to him." I had the 11x14 signed. I walked in and said, "Before we get started, I wonder if you will tell me the same thing that the Chief told me." I said, "Do you recognize these kids?" Those were his kids, signed to him. He reached in his pocket and said, "Take that car out there." I said, "I don't want the keys to your car. I don't want that, I just need..." He said, "No, you take my car." I said, "I don't

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want your car. Just give me a jeep or anything that I can get back and forth." He said, "No, I've got another car." "My car is your car." I said, "I don't want that, but I'll keep mileage on it for you." He said, "No, when you leave the airport, when you take off, just leave the keys in it and don't worry about it." Well, that's how I got my transportation. That's a cute story.

CURRY: That is.

SAFLY: That's a great story.

TESTERMAN: Did you know a photographer named Simon Glass from Miami Beach? He has done some portraits of the Trumans.

PULLEY: I know his name only.

TESTERMAN: Paul Begley was one of your associates. He died just recently didn't he? I've come across his name.

SAFLY: He talked about Paul Begley.

PULLEY: I got Paul his job. He was my relief.

TESTERMAN: I remember hearing that from the tape.

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PULLEY: Well, now back to photos. I do want to tell you this. In 1948, the Navy shot Kodachrome. They didn't shoot Ektachrome, which you could develop yourself. Ektachrome was a new kind of film. So I bought a pack, and I took some pictures. I know they [the Trumans] were on the train trip, and you can look at them. I found these the other day. They're color, and I don't think you have many color prints.

TESTERMAN: These are wonderful.

SAFLY: These are great.

These would also be the California trip in June of '48?

PULLEY: Yes. I don't think its at Berkeley; he doesn't have his cap and gown on. It looks like a football score thing behind there. He's back there on the platform.

SAFLY: Oh, these are wonderful. Lovely.

PULLEY: I want you to have those.

TESTERMAN: Thank you. We don't have many color photographs.

PULLEY: They're original Ektachrome. And they weren't Navy. I bought that myself because I was interested in this new film that came out, Ektachrome. It just came out about that time.

TESTERMAN: So you're the one who filmed that June trip?

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PULLEY: Yes.

TESTERMAN: We have a film and silent footage of...

PULLEY: That was the 16mm.

TESTERMAN: Yes, we have a 16mm film. We have two, a black and white, which I've had a long time, and then from the National Archives around '77 they sent us a color version of the June trip in 1948, starting, I guess with whatever he started from, going through Nebraska and all the way.

PULLEY: We started from Union Station in Washington.

I shot motion pictures, but I never knew whatever happened to them. I never really saw them. I shot a lot of 16mm color movies.

TESTERMAN: Perhaps it was under Admiral Dennison's name at the National Archives.

PULLEY: Yes.

TESTERMAN: It says, "credit the U.S. Navy," but you're probably ...

PULLEY: I'm the U.S. Navy, yes.

TESTERMAN: And also of a trip to Annapolis.

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PULLEY: We went to Annapolis. It was a boating, a regatta thing, with the Commandant of Midshipmen. We were on a boat, and I was in uniform. I wanted to get in the bow of the boat to

shoot the President and the Commandant of Midshipmen. It was during this big regatta, it was a specialty thing they have in Annapolis, and the Admiral was yelling at me, "Don't you dare fall over." I said, "I won't fall overboard, Admiral." He was an Admiral and he was a little nervous about me being up there. But I had to be back there to get pictures of him with the President. I shot pictures of that. I shot that in Annapolis. I know there was rowing going on over there; it was a big regatta of some sort. I'd do things like that, yes. Glad you reminded me. I'd forgotten that, to be honest with you.

TESTERMAN: Film producers are very much interested in making this public.

PULLEY: Just like that 100-foot that I sent of myself in that parade. That was shot not by the Navy; that was shot by a commercial photographer that was a buddy of mine in World War II. He worked for me then, but he's a Hollywood cameraman. That wasn't Navy, and he sent it to me. I had it all those years. I had planned on having it just for my kids, but then I thought I wanted to give it back to where it belongs.

TESTERMAN: You've probably covered this already, but who were some of the wire service photographers that covered Truman?

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PULLEY: Yes, Frank Cancellare, By Rollins, and one of the Muto boys, I can't remember which...

TESTERMAN: Al [Alfonso] Muto, we have a lot of pictures by him.

PULLEY: Yes, Al was -- you see there was two Muto boys. One of them I think is this one right here. But the other one was a still photographer.

TESTERMAN: ACME or UPI?

PULLEY: It could have been ACME. ACME was -- UPI was Frank Cancellare, and he is a very -- he's deceased.

TESTERMAN: You know, I just see their names on the back but Al Muto I know was...

PULLEY: Cancellare, and Muto, myself, By Rollins, Ollie Atkins did a lot from AP.

TESTERMAN: Yes, he did that great photo of Truman with the hat. It's a nice photo.

Did you tend to stand like with the other photographers, or did you get a special place?

PULLEY: Those of us that were White House crew -- the locals, the Secret Service kept them back. We got ourselves and the motion picture types. There was always a conflict between motion picture guys and us, because they always wanted to get in for a tight close-up, and we wanted to get the overall shot. They'd cut in front of us, and get in

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the picture. And so it got to be a war. They [still photographers] would bring their Speed Graphic and bring it them right down on the shoulders, and that would teach them a lesson. Then they'd go back, get out of the way.

TESTERMAN: Well, we have some film footage of Truman at Key West. Would that probably have been shot by you, or was there maybe somebody who did stills and someone also who did...

PULLEY: That would have been me.

TESTERMAN: You did them both?

PULLEY: Yes. I did them both. I don't know how much motion picture stuff that Paul Begley shot, because he wasn't a movie man. He spent more...

TESTERMAN: I just ran across his name on photos, and not all of the Navy photos will tell who shot the picture, but we have a certain album of them that does have the names printed. There's his name and then there was another man's name. I think I jotted it down, but ...

CURRY: Oh, yes you did, you put it on the back ...

TESTERMAN: Connelly, R.L. Connelly. He must have worked for Begley, because it always had Begley; most of them had Begley's name from '52.

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PULLEY: Maybe, if it was a big thing they had four or five photographers. I run into photographers all the time. Guy said, "Oh, so and so was President Eisenhower's personal photographer." I said, "What?" And then they'd give me his name and I'd say, "He was 3rd class; he may have been there during the inaugural thing and been in the stands, been one of the many photographers that took it, but no, he wasn't Eisenhower's." Paul Begley was there for four years of Truman and Eisenhower. Of course, he's gone too.

TESTERMAN: Did you ever hear of an incident where some of the photographers were going to take a blimp and try to float over where Truman was sunbathing or something?

PULLEY: No.

SAFLY: Was the Key West?

TESTERMAN: That was in Key West.

PULLEY: No, the commercial guys would do that. That's the "paparazzi" guys you know. They'd move in on anybody. The Secret Service would probably have put a bullet thought he blimp, if he didn't want to be covered. He didn't like to be bothered at Key West.

Now there's another one. I shot on Ektachrome, a group photo. I was working at the photo center and this Ektachrome just came out. I said, "You know they wear

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those loud shirts down there." Have you got anywhere in your archives a color picture of them sitting in the living room at Key West. Have you? The color?

TESTERMAN: We have several color photos of group shots, and they are autographed by all of them.

PULLEY: And they're all seated or standing.

TESTERMAN: I'm sure we do of the living room, although many were outside.

PULLEY: This is a group photo, and I have a black and white print back home. Did I send you a print of a group photo. They were all sort of sour puss in the black and white, but I did a color one and I said, something like "cheese" or whatever it was, and they all smiled. I did a real nice color one, but I don't have a print of that in my shop.

TESTERMAN: I might have a print of that; I'm not sure.

PULLEY: They're all flowered shirts, blue, yellow, and all the loud Hawaii type shirts.

TESTERMAN: Some of the color has really stayed well in the photos, and some have faded.

PULLEY: I'm surprised that held up.

TESTERMAN: I don't know about the original negatives; they must be in there.

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PULLEY: Those are original transparencies.

TESTERMAN: Yes, we don't get too many with originals.

PULLEY: I was just curious if you ever did find that. Now, I want you to have this too. I don't know where this picture came from, but this is on the Santa Fe Railroad, maybe they ...

TESTERMAN: Oh, that portrait you mean. That's a U. S. Army standard photograph. We're about to wear that out, that's our most popular selling one.

PULLEY: Okay.

You can have this. I want a copy of that. You can have this too. Oh, it's Sun Valley, and Peter Ustinov, the pianist. He entertained that night, we spent the night.

SAFLY: Some of this food is pretty expensive -- \$3.75 for dinner.

PULLEY: This was more than the per diem I had, so if it hadn't been for Sonny [?], I wouldn't have eaten very well.

SAFLY: Besides, this was all ala carte.

PULLEY: Yes, and if you're on per diem that wasn't very much.

SAFLY: You would have gotten like half of one meal.

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PULLEY: You can make a copy of this if you want; I'd like to keep my original.

CURRY: Okay.

SAFLY: There's something I would like to ask a photographer, and that's about Mrs. Truman. Why did she always look so grouchy?

PULLEY: She didn't like to have her picture taken; you can tell it.

SAFLY: I mean it's pretty obvious. Otherwise, she was a gracious person.

PULLEY: But every time I was around, she always scowled. She didn't like it. A lot of people don't like to have their picture taken.

SAFLY: A lot of people think that she was a grouch. And mean.

PULLEY: And Margaret, she didn't like to be bothered with it either. But I got that one nice shot of her in the press car with all the reporters around.

SAFLY: Yes, that's nice.

PULLEY: Yes, she looks good in that picture because she would smile. Someone cracked a joke or something to her. Do you have any other questions that I can answer?

CURRY: What was the story you were talking about earlier, that you wondered...

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SAFLY: Oh, the fact that you all were in the shower down at Key West; some of the photographers and George Tames talked about it.

PULLEY: George Tames; I hadn't mentioned his name until just now, of the *New York Times*. Oh, he's a fantastic guy, and he was at Key West a lot. George, I think he made part of the trip; I don't think he made the whole trip. I think he was on part of the trip. George Tames was a dynamite of a guy and we hit it off real good. I see him every now and then at the White House press photographers annual ball. He just wrote a book.

CURRY: That's right.

SAFLY: Yes.

PULLEY: I forget what the title of it is.

CURRY: *Eye on Washington.*

PULLEY: Someone told me it was going to be *The Presidents That Knew Me*. I laughed, and said, "Oh, that sounds like George Tames."

SAFLY: No, no, somebody already wrote a book by that title.

PULLEY: Is that right?

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SAFLY: A guy named George Allen, who was a friend of the Truman's.

PULLEY: Who was that?

SAFLY: A friend of the Truman's. *Presidents Who Have Known Me*.

PULLEY: Oh, I thought Tames was calling his book that. What's the name of Tames book?

CURRY: *Eye on Washington.*

PULLEY: I was trying to find that book.

SAFLY: He's the one who tells the story about newsmen, I guess photographers, getting a burro someplace and putting it in the place where President Truman changed into his bathing suit. So when he opened the door, he walks in and here's this mule and everything that happened during the night, of course. Truman evidently thought it was very funny.

PULLEY: Tames was a character. Anyhow, He was a dynamite guy. We got along very well, George Tames and I did.

And there were perhaps pranks like that. I didn't know about that one. But it doesn't surprise me.

SAFLY: In asking about Mrs. Truman, I always thought that Truman was probably the most photogenic guy I've ever seen. I've never seen a bad picture of him.

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PULLEY: You know the glasses are what we always tried to watch.

SAFLY: But I mean his personality really comes through.

PULLEY: He was wonderful. Photographers loved him. He would actually take his hat off on a wave and say, "Did you get that boys?" "Well, one more please, Mr. President," and we'd come back and do it again. He'd give you a take two, you know. Well, other Presidents just don't do that. They haven't got the time to do that. But they loved him. Cancellare who had been there before; he was with Roosevelt. Later on, every time I'd see Frank Cancellare -- we called him "Cancy," -- he'd say, "Chief you were there in the good old days." He'd say, "These guys today, are not the same." He said, "When you were there it was the golden era with Truman; he was the best to photographers, because he was so cooperative and so just down-to-earth. He would do anything for you."

CURRY: When you came back in '51, were you an officer then?

PULLEY: No. But I had applied. This is when I applied. Then I got commissioned in '52 -- right after the picture I took of Truman and Churchill, Dean Acheson, and all those guys. That's when I got commissioned, the next month. Then I became a photographic officer, and over the years I have had the responsibility, for having a photographer over there. That's how I got Bob Knudsen. Bob was a great photographer. He was there mainly with LBJ and he did Lucy's and Linda's

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weddings in the White House and things like that. When I went on that tape, you'll hear that I choked up before I got through that. I looked down and I saw Lucy down there. That's a little unseen story of when we went down to do the thing at the LBJ Library. We got everything set. Of course, I was the oldest one there, the earliest administration, Truman's. Bob Knudsen had died just a year earlier, died from angioplasty. I had that twice, but he had it and it didn't work. The balloon broke and he lost it all. I gave then a little bit of the background also about Coolidge, and about Harry Baudu and Joe Baylor Roberts, early Navy photographers. Then I brought in Bob Knudsen, who was there with LBJ, and also Mr. Begley, who was at that time in a nursing home.

When I got Bob Knudsen, who worked with me at the time, I was a Lieutenant Commander in charge of the picture department of the Navy Photo Center, and he worked for me. We were using our payroll, but he worked still for the White House. And when I looked down and saw Lucy and I saw Bob shooting her wedding, and he was the one that should have been there. Especially in the LBJ Library talking to the LBJ people, because he was there and did the girls weddings, I just -- it stuck -- you know. You know, I talk pretty fast, long, but I just choked up, and then I thought, "Whoops, hey, stick together, get going again."

Lady Bird [Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson], when she came in they put the photographers on the stage. The three of us had our wives there: Billy Shaddix and his wife, Lucy, and Cecil Stoughten had his wife -- he was with JFK, I had mine, and

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sat in the front row. We were all the stage and I was on the front row. We were all on the stage and I was on the extreme left because my administration was the oldest, and then came Lady

Bird and Lucy, her daughter, and Lucy's daughter. She's got a full grown daughter. So Lady Bird walked over and she looks at my wife Ginny sitting there, and says, "May I sit next to you?" My wife said, "Oh, of course, Mrs. Johnson," and then laughed. Then, after that thing was over they escorted us to the elevator and we all went up to the sixth floor, the top floor, where we had dinner with Lady Bird and Lucy and her daughter.

SAFLY: How nice.

PULLEY: Also there were the Library's director, Mr. Middleton, Harry Middleton, and my friend Frank Wolf. He was the one who coordinated the whole thing. Do you know Frank?

TESTERMAN: I've met him.

PULLEY: I just left him in Austin. I'll tell you this other little story.

I can't authenticate this story I'm about to tell you. Its about Billy Shaddix, who I told you earlier was the White House chief photographer, and he was director of photographic services in the White House for a number of years. He was terminated for some reason, I won't go into that, by Nancy Reagan. Nancy Reagan was the hatchet lady for a lot of people. She'd get rid of them. Billy was terminated

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suddenly; everything was taken off his desk and he was gone. Someone put some bad words to Nancy; we think it was one of the photographers who put in bad words for Billy Shaddix. Anyway, Shaddix goes down there, and you've heard a lot of things.

SAFLY: I didn't go that far, but I know he's...

PULLEY: He just talks on and on. He makes me look just like a mummy. Anyhow, Billy Shaddix received a phone call around late December of this past year, from the President-elect Bill Clinton. Clinton said, "Are you Billy Shaddix, who use to run the White House Photographic service?"

He said, "that's me." He said, "This is President-elect Bill Clinton. It's my understanding that you did a wonderful job as a GS-15. I'm wondering if you would be interested in coming back and working for me?" He said, "In a heartbeat, Mr. President-elect. When do you want me?" "Just as soon as you can get here." Shaddix said, "I'll be there tomorrow morning." So they went over to the White House the next day, and walked in. They said, "Mr. Shaddix, what are you doing here?" He said, "This is my office."

SAFLY: By the way.

PULLEY: By the way.

SAFLY: That's a great story.

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PULLEY: Well, that's as it came to me. He hasn't called me and told me, but I sent him a little card of congratulations, so he's back in. So, today, Billy Shaddix photographic head in the White House.

TESTERMAN: Were you ever acquainted with Abbie Rowe?

PULLEY: Oh, I knew him.

TESTERMAN: Oh, we have a lot of pictures by him.

PULLEY: Oh, yes, a great photographer. Dynamite. Cancy Cancellare was one of my favorites. I was a good photographer; I wasn't a great photographer. But I passed. I mean I got the pictures done. I got the standard stuff. Like I was saying earlier, it was so important that the photographer's timing was the thing. When I talk to young photographers, when I talk to groups and things like that, I say timing. We had a piece of film in there and we pulled a dark slide and shutters when it was the right time. Get it just at the right time. Whatever is taking place. Today's guys have motorized Nikons you know. They can't miss.

Anything else? Did we leave out anything?

You have my name and address and everything and if something comes up you can always write me and I'll be happy to ...

SAFLY: Well, I'm going to copy this for you and I'm going to copy this and give you back the original. Thank you, Mr. Pulley.

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