

White House Interview Program

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INTERVIEWEE: JON HUNTSMAN

INTERVIEWER: Martha Kumar

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MK: When I went to Washington originally, it was to be associate administrator at Health, Education and Welfare [HEW], which was a position Elliot Richardson had offered me. In essence, my position was Chief Operating Officer of Social Services, Welfare, Medicaid, Rehabilitation, and the Cuban Refugee Program. I'd only been there about six months and had helped institute a program called Management by Objectives. This involved our identification of the objective of each job at HEW, a very difficult thing to do. But the result was that we saved the government about \$100 million. The White House took notice of what we were doing and called me over for an interview for the position of President's Staff Secretary and Special Assistant. After only six months at HEW, I went to the White House.

Meanwhile, I had left behind my business endeavors. I had been president of one of Dow Chemicals' subsidiaries at a very early age. I believe I was their youngest divisional president at the time. I had just left Dow to start my own very small business. My wife and I didn't have anything in the way of start-up capital—my father was a schoolteacher, so we were not people of means. But we mortgaged our home and acquired a small plastics plant. My brother ran it while I was at HEW and the White House. Then, after being at the White House a year, the investors who helped us begin our little venture came to me and said, "You have to come back, Jon. The business is not doing well." So after I had been gone just short of two years to serve in HEW and then the White House, they prevailed upon me to leave the White House in February of 1972.

This early departure seems to have saved my career and saved me from a lot of unpleasant things inasmuch as I left before the last year of President [Richard] Nixon's first term, which was when all the fireworks took place. Our business truly hadn't done well, and I had promised my brother and the investors when I left for Washington that I would not let our newly started business suffer. And they did ask me to return as our CEO and president. I took that business and eventually turned it around 100 per cent. That was the precursor to what, today, is an \$8 billion company, and we have established a significant global presence. We're in 44 countries with over 100 sites. So it keeps me running a lot. In addition, I'm in Washington right now to attend the American Red Cross Board of Governors' meeting. Elizabeth Dole, whom I met in our White House days, asked me to serve on the board when she was president.

MK: The management by objectives that you brought into HEW, did that come from ideas that you had been studying on business that you were implementing in your company, in your start-up company?

JH: The fellow who brought in the team, designed the study, and implemented the process was George Odeom, a Dean at Michigan State, who later became a Dean at the University of Utah. He was a good friend of mine. I could not take full credit for it. It was also implemented by one other individual who was there with me, and we worked on it as a team. I think any success we realized was the result of having bottom-line-driven corporate CEOs

coming into government, with the experience to measure and rate employee performance, as opposed to simply permitting the bureaucracy to be bloated and continue to grow.

MK: Did you bring that in to the White House?

JH: No. My White House dealings were very separate. I was over the White House budget and the ingress and egress of all papers going to the President. My responsibilities included briefing the President before each of his meetings with a one-page briefing paper. We also established and monitored the White House budgets and were involved in determining who got which White House office, who got perks, etc. Also the White House staff were all under my direction. They now have four or five people doing that.

MK: Actually the Office of Management and Administration—

JH: Is that it?

MK: —does a lot of that.

JH: I took the job that General Andrew Goodpaster previously had. He had served under “Ike” [President Dwight D. Eisenhower]. Nixon was very interested to set up a Staff Secretary form of management at the White House. In that position, I served as a “clearinghouse” through which literally every piece of paper passed. The principal duty was to account for the ingress and egress of everything going into and out of the President’s office in written form. The Press Secretary handled the press; Dwight Chapin, the Appointments Secretary, handled the appointment schedule; and I was responsible for the administrative function. So it turned out to be a difficult and complex assignment. As Alex Butterfield testified at the Watergate hearings, the staff secretary’s function was “an administrative nightmare.” I would estimate that I spent twelve to fifteen hours a day there.

After a year, I was literally burned out. I had not seen my family, I had not gone anywhere. The scope of my task at the time is now in the hands of several people. I didn’t realize it at the time, but it was a fairly powerful position, because we determined who got what offices, who got what limos, who got what perks, who got what salaries. As I look back on it, for a young person to come in with no political experience other than HEW, it was a very heady situation, and I’m not sure I was really equipped to handle it. But I worked hard and I think I did a good job. I kept my head down and I was a professional. I wasn’t part of the Nixon campaign team. I was hired as a professional and approached the job as a professional. I think that’s why I stayed out of the Watergate mess, with the exception of a couple of newspaper articles. They seemed to be trying to get everyone involved, but I was never a factor in Watergate, which the history books confirm.

MK: The Office of Management and Administration now—there are seven offices that we’re looking at: Chief of Staff, Staff Secretary, Press, Communications, Counsel, Personnel and Management and Administration. And just the very things you talk about, having control over the slots, office space, salaries, you have to have somebody in there early right off that knows what they’re doing because if you make mistakes, as happened in this administration by getting a political management person in that job, you end up with decisions made that had to be altered. The travel office mess, all of that comes from poor decision-making in that office.

JH: Exactly.

MK: Was it difficult coming into a White House not having had a history in the campaign?

JH: Well, first of all, I wasn't the first one to have this job—that was a fellow named John Brown. He was ill-equipped to do what he was doing and was failing miserably. So that's why, after two years of his ineffectiveness, they brought me into the Administration because of my experience as a CEO [divisional president] at the Dow subsidiary, which was a fairly big plastics business, with an idea of lending some administrative know-how to the job. I think they were more concerned to have a professional running that end of the business than someone with a political history or a history with the President's campaign. I was a Nixon supporter, but I had never met anybody in the White House. I shook hands once with Bob Haldeman when he gave a speech in Los Angeles but, short of that, I didn't know anyone. It seemed to be critical that they have knowledgeable, experienced people.

Later, I was called back under the [Ronald] Reagan years and was asked to spend several days with a fellow by the name of Richard Darman, who at that time had the Staff Secretary position—or a portion of it. The responsibilities of the position, as I had known it, were divided between Craig Fuller and Richard Darman under the Reagan administration. I spent a little time with both of them. I don't know how they eventually ran the Reagan White House. But I explained to them how we were set up and what we had done when we had those responsibilities. It clearly was a job that required the best efforts of a top-level official. I'd hate to see a political appointee in that role. They just couldn't do it.

MK: Did you talk to the President and the Chief of Staff about what kind of paper flow there would be, what the parameters were of memos, what they should include, how they should be parceled out beforehand to people?

JH: Absolutely. John Dean said in his Watergate testimony—I don't remember his exact words—basically, that it was an impeccable system of tracking the President's requests. That was, of course, part of my job. I was allowed forty-eight hours, literally, and oftentimes only six or eight hours, to act on every question or item the President had listed on the big, yellow legal pads he used. He would simply use an initial for each note he made: Haldeman was an H; Kissinger was a K—he would do this in reference to all key people in the Cabinet and senior White House staff. And throughout the day, the President in his meetings would designate items on the yellow pad, and then I would take his yellow sheet(s) and implement all the notes he had made. We had a remarkable follow-up system to make sure that the memos and anything the President wanted done, or needed done, received appropriate follow-up. If we hadn't received a response within a matter of hours to any of the President's questions or action items, I'd send out a second alarm. People knew that you didn't fool around with the White House Staff Secretary. Here was a man who was speaking for and on behalf of the President 100 per cent of the time. I never did anything for or on behalf of myself. I reported to Haldeman, who was the Chief of Staff, but I was there to implement the President's needs as quickly as possible. The Cabinet and the White House staff and many others now have responsibility for the budget, the office assignments, and the personnel, etc., but they were all jobs that were under my stewardship at the time.

Part of my job was to prepare a briefing paper on each appointment on the President's schedule, which was a one-page synopsis of the purpose of the meeting, what his talking points should be, when he last met with the person, and anything to which he should be alerted with respect to each meeting. I was to make that briefing paper available to the President several hours before every meeting.

I also would classify most of the material that was to go before the President into different categories such as, “for your information” or “action required,” which suggested he needed to sign a document or take further action of whatever kind. Other materials were handled differently—I had set up a system of different colored folders that denoted different levels of urgency. For example, the red folders were for items requiring immediate action. They might contain the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] daily file on the progress of the Vietnam War or special messages from Kissinger or Haldeman or others on priority matters. Other colors suggested other levels of urgency or activity. Items would filter to me, and several times a day I would take them up to the President and collect what else he had, and we kept his office going in that way. I know it may sound as though it was unworkable, but it was almost fool-proof and fail-safe.

MK: How many different memos went in during a day?

[Interruption]

JH: I have no idea--it varied. President Nixon was very well organized—an extremely bright, articulate man who expected things to run perfectly. I had no learning curve at all. Haldeman insisted, on the first day I walked in, that I knew how to do this job. To the contrary—I didn’t really know what he was talking about. I had to figure it out in three to four days. Within a week I had figured out a system and was up and running, by myself, with three secretaries. I eventually brought in a deputy, David Hoopes, who stayed five years, by the way, long after I left, into the [Gerald] Ford [Administration]. David was a young Ph.D. who helped implement this quick-moving system. It would be hard to estimate how many memos the President would receive. It sometimes depended on where he was—if he was at San Clemente or down at Key Biscayne. I would send him a few things in the pouch. If he was in Washington, I would give him more documents. A lot of this was determined at my discretion, and I had a lot of individual input as to what kind of workload he would be able to deal with, wherever he was, and what the prioritization should be on the specific memos or documents.

A fellow who had not been trained in prioritizing sensitive items had to be very quick on his feet, because Haldeman was right there to snap at you the minute anything went wrong. Now, Kissinger and [John] Ehrlichman were always very easy for me to work with, but Haldeman was very difficult. Yet, I later became very good friends with Bob. When I left I told him I thought it had been a horrible experience for me, and we had quite an intense two-hour session. He said, “I’d never ask you to run a business like this. I’d never run anything else like this.” He was very apologetic. I said, “Bob, it’s horrible. One man should never do this. It’s been a nightmare. I’ve given it everything I’ve got. I haven’t seen my family in a year. I’ve been totally dedicated. I put ten years’ service in here in a year. I suggest you break up the position. You’re very hard on people. You’re very demanding. You wanted a zero-defect system. It’s impossible to achieve zero-defect, but we’ve come very close to it. You’ve been on my back a couple of times, and almost every time, you’ve been wrong in your criticism—I’ve had the thing in the file or in the hopper and was moving forward.”

It was a fifteen-hour-day undertaking and, by far, the most difficult job in the White House. We were trying to implement the idealism of General Goodpaster in the face of real-world challenges, during a time of constant change and movement in the White House. But we got it done.

MK: So much more came in to a White House by the time that you were there and so many different elements were heard from, in the nature of politics, for example, interest groups. In the memoranda that went up to the President, did you design what bases needed to be touched before a memo could go to the President?

JH: Yes.

MK: What kinds of source material did you have?

JH: Haldeman, I think, had briefed me very well on that. I was in on two key meetings every day. We had the 10:00 a.m. meeting at which the senior staff convened to plan the President's immediate day. We also had a 2:00 p.m. meeting which was where the junior staff would cover other aspects of the President's day, such as the speeches that would come in to him, the appointments on the schedule, or a press conference he might have. I sat in on both meetings and, again, with everything else, I was trying to keep close watch on the moving parts of the White House, because the moving parts were very much reliant on the Staff Secretary's keeping things moving. It might have appeared to be a low-key job to the outside world, but a high profile job inside the inner circle.

I think it took me a few weeks to understand the priorities of what the President wanted to receive. For the first four to six weeks, Haldeman would check everything I took in, or Alex Butterfield, who was a Deputy Chief of Staff, sometimes would do this. Butterfield would help me out sometimes. He recognized what a heavy job it was, and he was in a position to carry part of it for me. His office was adjacent to the President's. After about four or six weeks, I had learned to discern what it was the President would want to see and how quickly he should see it—what should go in immediately and what could wait four hours, or eight hours, and what was coming up at news conferences. Certain things couldn't wait five minutes and other things could wait longer—and then others shouldn't go in at all. Later on, some time after I had left, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] showed me different memos about the [Daniel] Ellsberg break-in and things. I looked at them and offered an opinion about each one, such as, "That wouldn't have even made it to my office nor would I have ever taken things like that to the President." There were just certain things we didn't take to him. Below a certain level, people would be discouraged from sending papers to the Staff Secretary. They knew that I'd be filtering them out. So I was a pretty good filter on the incoming materials, unless someone did an end-run. [Chuck] Colson could do it or Ehrlichman or Haldeman. They could all do end-runs with a piece of paper. But I'd say I monitored 95 to 98 per cent of what got in there. Rose Woods, of course, did his personal letters, and that was a very different situation than the official running of government. But I had great latitude, generally, to determine what went in and what didn't go in.

MK: Did you have any agreement with him that materials that came from somebody else that had bypassed the system going in would not bypass you going out? So if Colson, for example, took a memo to the President, that after he'd taken it to the President, you saw that paper.

JH: No. I had no agreement at all. There were some of those where I did not staff them going in but would see them come out. They were given to him on *Air Force One* or given to him in *Marine One* or maybe Rose had taken him in some things. There weren't many of those, but there were some. And the President was pretty good at designating what he needed, but we had to learn to read his hieroglyphics. His handwriting, honestly, was terrible and he had this initial system down, where he only used the initial letter of the person's last name. After a month or so, I could decipher any code on any little thing and became very good at understanding his intentions.

When I left they offered me the directorship of the Peace Corps and some other things in government. I was just glad to get back to my business. They made me a White House consultant for two years after I left, to bring in people who could be recommended as ambassadors or for sub-cabinet posts. I did that for a couple of years, brought in a few names, and I'd meet with them once every three months after I left. I left on wonderful terms with them, and it was a great experience.

MK: You left just at the right time.

JH: Yes. Somebody was looking over my shoulder.

MK: That's right. You have an angel. So your system was really weighted heavily toward implementation. It was taking what the President wanted, turning it into memoranda, turning it into action that had to be responded to by people within the staff.

JH: That was half the job; 100 per cent of that that was done, I did. But the job did entail other aspects: determining salaries, who got what offices, any appropriate perks, the budgets, and making recommendations for any reductions of the White House staff. Sometimes they had certain people from Defense and other agencies coming in to work at the White House on their department's payroll who wouldn't show up on the White House payroll. I tried to cut out as many of those as we could. Sometimes I'd go to different staff teams and say, "You have sixty days to be down to twelve." They'd say, "Says who?" and I'd say, "Says Haldeman", or, "Says the President." It got to where, after a while, when I would speak, it was never taken as coming from Jon Huntsman, it was assumed I was speaking for and on behalf of the President. I think everyone understood that my job was just to take care of the President in an invisible way.

MK: Did you go to the Hill about the White House budget?

JH: No. I would never leave the White House staff. If someone was going to the Hill, I would prepare either the congressional team or somebody else very thoroughly, but I would never leave the White House.

MK: That person now goes to the Hill and has to testify about the White House budget.

JH: They do that now?

MK: Yes. They have to testify about the budget. During the Nixon Administration—it must have been during the time that you were there because I know it was before 1972—there was the effort to try to make the numbers accurate numbers and to take those people—

JH: On the White House staff?

MK: Yes—and take the people off of detail [employees on other agencies' payrolls] and turn them into real numbers.

JH: Right.

MK: What kinds of discussions did you all have about that?

JH: Not much. We had some discussions with Haldeman at our two o'clock or probably our ten a.m. meeting. It would have been something like, we've got to get the staff down, there's a little pressure to get it down. I can't remember if it was at 540 or what the number was.

MK: They've tended to operate with about 350 that's on the books and then another 300 that would be detailed [from other departments or agencies] and a variety of things.

JH: I always included the group whether they were detailed or not as full-time numbers. And we made a big attempt to keep staffing at a minimum. There was one period of time where we lopped off maybe 10 per cent of the staff, but I think we ran a very efficient White House. We only had five assistants and eleven special assistants. I knew everybody there very well and knew what they did. There were a lot of folks, I think, who said they were on the White House staff but didn't really do anything with the President. They were just kind of there, like the Office of Science and Technology, and some of the guys on the Domestic Council. They may have been on the White House staff, but we never had anything to do with them. They would never interact with me. I'd be interacting with the President so much that, people would say they're there but, other than seeing their names as a detail from some other organization, I wouldn't even know they were on the White House staff.

MK: Did you find that the people who are on detail have a different kind of relationship in that since they're being paid from the Defense Department or the State Department that—

[Pause]

JH: They had a different agenda. Is that your point?

MK: Yes.

JH: No. I'd have to say, with Haldeman as Chief of Staff, it was a very tightly run White House. You either came in and played by the rules or you were out. Whether you were detailed or not, there was no time for horseplay. I think it was very, very efficiently run. I've been on a lot of the major boards, from Campbell's Soup to Banker's Trust and other companies, and have run my own business. I have to say the White House was run with extreme efficiency and expertise. There was no horseplay and it was very, very businesslike—more so than anything I've ever seen in my life. I give a lot of credit to Haldeman. I also give him due credit for forcing people to work in a very businesslike, fast, effective, efficient, thorough manner. It wasn't fun. We were a team of people who were workaholics and who didn't interact socially—at least not with me. There may have been some of that going on. (And, given all the guys who ended up getting involved in Watergate, I'm glad I didn't interact socially because no one asked me to do anything. I wouldn't have done it anyway. It was an honor to be close to the President.) It was a very efficient system. If people tried to break in to the system or circumvent something, we had no time at all. I'd say it was just a very efficient, thorough, highly organized tracking system. John Dean took off one weekend for some place in Europe. I had him tracked down in a number of hours to get a memo I had been after for the President. I told him I didn't care where he was, I had a job to do and the President wanted his response and that's it. As far as I was concerned, it doesn't matter where you go or what you do, if you're on this team, you play by the rules, and the rules are that the President comes first. It was a tough team.

MK: When you say it's efficient, what are the values that are represented in that? In what ways was it efficient? What did it produce?

JH: It produced organized information for the President that I think allowed him to invest a minimal amount of study to gain an understanding of a maximum amount of materials. It provided timely and accurate information and cut out a lot of non-essential filler that a president didn't need to see. I think it allocated to the proper areas of government their respective and rightful roles of responsibility. From the perspective of ethics, I never saw anything when I was there that didn't comport with the highest sense of ethics and honor. I never remember there being anything that was in any way off color, or that was misleading, or that was not honest or straightforward or that was cowardly or prejudicial. If I were President of the United States, it's a system that I would be proud to have operate around me. Even though many years have passed and I've aged almost thirty years and have seen many ways to do things, I still have to say it was a remarkable system and for that, as I say, I give Haldeman a lot of credit.

Haldeman ran the White House. The President didn't, Haldeman did. The President had very little input as to how the White House operated. He turned it over to Haldeman. He gave him the broad parameters and Haldeman implemented the strategy. I think it led to people trying desperately hard to maybe get attention in a world that was very effective and very efficient. It was hard for anyone to get his head above the crowd unless he did something unusual. Therefore, the format may have stimulated people to do things a little out of the ordinary to get attention because it wasn't one of these things where somebody could bring the President an idea or a suggestion without it being properly staffed. It certainly wasn't a White House that gave notoriety to many individuals unless they went through the system.

I've often wondered why certain people did what they did in the Watergate affair. I came to the conclusion—it may be wrong but at least it's my conclusion—that there never was a “deep throat.” There couldn't have been. Nobody knew all that much information. I knew as much as anybody during the time I was there. You have to, because you're right at the hub and would see everything that goes in to the President, everything that comes out of his office, everybody's salary, everybody's office. You're just the hub, that's the way it is. As Staff Secretary, everything sparks out from that. To me, the President was very businesslike and the President was a wonderful man to work for. He took a lot of time with me on the side. He always thanked me, he always saw my children. He was kind of my hero. He knew I had a horrible job in terms of keeping him going. He was always very grateful. Haldeman wasn't, but the President was. I also worked closely with Kissinger. Al Haig, of course, did for Kissinger what I did for the President, so Al and I worked very closely together. That's about as best I can describe it.

MK: It would seem that the system, as efficient as it was, it certainly had the seeds of its trouble in it but usually a staff reflects a president. Just as you could say there were many fine goals that Nixon had and sharp as he was, he also had a dark side. So, in effect, that was reflected in some of the actions of the staff operations.

JH: I think that a guy like me would not have seen that side because I was so busy keeping up with the operations and the White House day-to-day details, small details, and wasn't involved in policy. There could have been all kinds of things – and there obviously were – going on and I wouldn't have been aware. I was just running very fast to keep the machinery of the Oval Office moving and the President's paperwork flowing and his follow-up efficiently handled. What went on outside of that was beyond me. You only had so many hours in a day to cover your bases and it was not likely you'd see anything beyond that.

MK: You look at the people who have been successful in the chief of staff's job and one of the things that comes out in somebody like a Jim Baker and a Howard Baker, they are people who had been in Washington and had been in Washington for some while and had a sense of what worked and what didn't work. Then if you take somebody like Haldeman who didn't have the experience of the political aspects of the presidency or of President Nixon's tenure, of looking at it just in terms of Nixon and the political environment in terms of people just perhaps being his opponent so, that if he had had a different experience—? It may have been that Nixon wouldn't have chosen somebody with different kind of experience but a broad experience builds in lot of radar and you know when trouble is coming and that was something that Haldeman didn't have.

JH: I didn't get along well with Haldeman. I didn't respect him at all in those days. I was young and I had a couple of run-ins and told him twice to let me go. I wouldn't do what he wanted me to do. He knew I was my own guy but he also knew I was very, very efficient, and very capable of accomplishing what they hired me to do. But he also knew I wasn't a guy who would tolerate anything less than the highest of ethics and the highest sense of purpose. I really did not enjoy working for Haldeman. We were exact opposites when it came to the way we handled people and to extending gratitude and appreciation and treating people the right way.

There was obviously a dark side to Nixon. History has proven that. I didn't see it. His behavior didn't suggest it. I was treated extremely well by the President. I loved him. My children were, too. I loved him. I worked very, very hard because of my admiration and respect for him. I remember the Fourth of July of 1971, he called my office about three-thirty and he said, "Jon, tell the staff to go on home. It's a holiday. They deserve to be with their families." It was already three-thirty in the afternoon. That was, for us, a big deal. We got to go home early that day.

MK: See the fireworks. Actually you can see the fireworks from the lawn. Come back and see the fireworks.

JH: We have nine children now, but I had seven of them then. One was born the day I started [at] the White House. When Haldeman pulled me over from HEW, he didn't give me any time at all. I said, "It's going to take me a few days to train someone here." He said, "Absolutely not. You get over here tomorrow." I was one of fourteen they were considering, apparently, and I seemed to fit the mold that they wanted. It was a great honor for me. It was a great honor.

But I didn't have small talk with the President. I didn't have small talk with Haldeman. I wasn't part of the inner circle of people who worked in the campaign, like Colson. But I was very close in other ways—I was extremely close with Ehrlichman. I had a great relationship with Ehrlichman, a great relationship with Al Haig, very close. He and I were as close friends as you could be. I had a close relationship with Clark McGregor, who was our White House congressional liaison then. They had to work with me closely every day. And Alex Butterfield and I were, and to this day we are still, very close. We talk quite often. I did what I could for Haldeman and kept my head down and was ready to leave at a moment's notice if he insulted me anymore. I'm a strong personality myself or I couldn't have built a business like I built. But I was honored to be working for the President and I was taking an enormous pay cut to do it.

I think none of the Watergate events would have happened to Richard Nixon if there had been a different chief of staff. There's no question at all. It wasn't Ehrlichman and

Haldeman, it was Haldeman. Ehrlichman was a very decent guy. Ehrlichman was a guy who was easy to work with and a fair man. He treated people with a lot of integrity and openness. You could communicate back and forth with him. [He] was a very, very different man from Haldeman. And John Dean was nothing. He saw the President maybe once every two or three weeks. History has put him in a much different place. I took the President everything he read and saw. John Dean was way down the list of guys. And Colson was a guy in whom the President, unfortunately, had a lot of confidence. He replaced a remarkable guy, a fellow by the name of Herb Klein, who is still alive today. Herb was one of Nixon's old guard from California. He's a dear friend of mine today. He is on the board of trustees at USC [University of Southern California], which recently gave me an honorary doctorate.

MK: I haven't interviewed him yet but I did talk to Jerry Warren.

JH: Jerry's another very, very fine man of high integrity, high honor. I think you'll see the Nixon guys broken into two kind of camps. On one hand, you had professionals, who were there to really benefit America and the President and who were not guys likely to suffer the least lapses in ethics or integrity. I think Jerry Warren and Herb are two of those guys who, to me, were always straight down the line—straight answers, straight guys. Then you had the kind of twist-and-turn guys who you never quite figured out why they were there or what they were doing or what their mission was. They turned out to be the fellows that have made history. The only one that surprised me was Ehrlichman. I still think Ehrlichman was quite a remarkable guy. He was just a lawyer from Seattle trying to do a job and he was thrust all of a sudden into the role of Domestic Affairs Chief, way over his head and way over his ability. But it all kind of emanated from Haldeman. He set the tone. The President had little patience for staff. He had little patience for the domestic cabinet offices. He loved Kissinger to run State and Defense. He loved [John] Mitchell, while Mitchell was AG [Attorney General] and then he loved [John] Connally, when Connally came into Treasury. Short of that, very few people ever got in. Cabinet meetings were a necessary evil and they were held very infrequently. The Cabinet didn't have any influence at all with the President.

MK: Say somebody like [Walter] Hickel, who would he be dealing with?

JH: Hickel left just before I got there. The guy who helped bring me over there was a guy by the name of Fred Malek and Fred was with me at HEW. Fred went to the White House—

MK: I've interviewed him for this project.

JH: Fred let the Hickel team go and then brought me in right after that. Fred is a very straight-shooting guy, I think. Fred, again, would be one of those guys I would list as a top-flight professional. There were some political guys, but the men I mentioned were not really political. They were top-flight administrators. I think Herb Klein was as straight a shooter as you'll ever get, and Fred Malek was a very straight shooter.

MK: Most of them came in for their expertise in one area or another. It wasn't for anything to do with their political background. Is it difficult in a White House for people who have been brought in who did not work in the campaign to blend in?

JH: Yes. Pat Buchanan and Haldeman and Ehrlichman and a number of others were all campaign workers. They all had easy access to the President because they were campaign guys. We professionals, even compared to Nixon supporters way down to the grassroots level, were second-class citizens. Not in the sense that we didn't have full openness to

everything, it was just that the Attorney General, John Mitchell, and those who had been part of the early campaign seemed always to have a leg up on the professionals. But we meshed quite well. You had certain prima donnas there, like Kissinger and Buchanan, who were a little hard to work with, but that was because of their grating personalities. They did an excellent job in their fields. Bill Safire, I found, was a first-rate guy. Ray Price, the head speechwriter, was a brilliant, capable, fine man, absolutely first rate. They really had a lot of first-rate people who stayed in other administrations all the way up to Reagan's. Some of the guys outside over at OMB [Office of Management and Budget], like [Caspar] Cap Weinberger and George Shultz, they were just first-rate guys and honest and straightforward. So the problems were the Jeb Magruders and the people right around the President who were politically motivated. But history can debate that forever.

MK: What was a typical day for you? When did you get there and what would you have read by the time you got there?

JH: I'd get there between seven and seven-fifteen every morning. By the time the President came in at eight o'clock, I would have the briefing papers on his desk, including Mort Allen's recap of all of the news. (I didn't allocate myself a White House car because I didn't ever want to give myself something that I didn't think I deserved. Furthermore, I wanted to keep my position low-key. I could have qualified for a White House limo because of my role as a special assistant, but I just drove myself to work.)

MK: The news summary.

JH: I'd have the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] briefing on Vietnam, the "red book" we called it, and the problems of the first twenty-four hours, any emergency concerns that had cropped up overnight. If they were really serious, they would go right to the President. But information on hot spots, in general, I would gather from the National Security Council—mainly Haig's office—or, on any domestic problems, from Ehrlichman's office. He had a guy named Cole—I can't remember his first name—Tom Cole, something Cole, who was his deputy and he fed me that stuff. By eight o'clock, I would have his first round of things on his desk [and] the President would arrive about eight-fifteen. So, when he arrived over in the Oval Office, he would have whatever had happened during the night and any key briefing papers for his meetings that morning—who he was meeting with, the purpose, the talking points, the last time he met with them, whether it was a sit-down or stand-up—

MK: Where did you get that information?

JH: I would just have to call different people. That's why I brought in a deputy. He eventually did a lot of that legwork for me. Without computers in those days, it took a lot of time. But the President also had a rule that he never liked to read more than one piece of paper. So if there were major documents that came that were congressional bills or that were position papers from the Cabinet or something, I would summarize them in one to one and a half pages, just the highlights. I'd do it in a very neat, orderly way. I always used a ruler when I wrote. Everything was done with extreme precision and neatness and thoroughness. Most guys would have been in an institution after a year, literally, because it was a very exacting, difficult position. But I understood it and it was great training for me. I didn't have time to really socialize or do the things that would have eventually gotten me into trouble. I think people respected my professionalism and, to this day, the Dick Allens we brought in and the Pete Petersens have all been good friends over the years and good guys. We brought Pete in from Bell and Howell. When guys came on the staff, I'd help them get oriented. I interviewed Elizabeth Dole, Elizabeth Hanford then, when she became Virginia Knauer's

deputy, and got them offices over in the new EOB [Executive Office Building]. I had that office space plus offices in the Old EOB plus the White House. I would designate offices and salaries and how many staff they could have. I'd always send Haldeman a memo at the end of the day and let him know everything I'd done. He never let me operate on my own. But we operated through the exception principle. If he didn't like it, then he would make a note of it. After about six weeks, he didn't change anything. Maybe once a month he changed something small. He pretty well gave me full rein.

After one year, I was totally burnt out. I let him know that, and he said, "Just stay through the election." I said, "Bob, I just can't do it. My business needs me and I'm worn out. I just can't do anymore. I've got a lot of children in my family and I haven't seen them for a year." I left a year to the day after I started.

MK: Were there a lot of other people suffering from the same kind of burnout?

JH: No. My life has always been a high activity life or I wouldn't have built this great business from scratch and wouldn't travel all over the world constantly. I was in the right slot for me. There were some folks over there—I never did figure out what they did. Colson had several deputies. I kept asking Haldeman, "Why do we even have these guys? We're supposed to be cutting back. Let's cut back on Colson's shop." He was the one I had the most trouble figuring out. Of course, the domestic staff and national security staff, you pretty well have to go with the two chiefs. Those aren't really White House staffs. Those are under the discretion of the respective heads and most of them are detailed in anyway. You don't quite know what they do and they don't often bubble up to the level of the President. Whatever goes to the President comes from their heads. Colson had a couple of thugs over there, one was a guy named Caufield. He just sat around with nothing to do. There were a few of those guys around who didn't have real jobs. But, every time I would bring up a suggestion to get rid of them, somebody would say, "They're supposed to be here for security," or something.

MK: In going back to your day, you came in and put together those briefing papers for the President for his normal morning reading. What would you do after that?

JH: Then I would—

MK: What time would it be when that was together?

JH: Eight-thirty. Then from eight-thirty until about a quarter to ten I would get everything ready for the Haldeman meeting at ten. By then, the President was in his office. Things were operating. We would work to prepare for the rest of the day and the night and any events that may happen, and discuss any special papers or meetings or anything the President had. Haldeman would have another meeting for just the very senior, senior guys at, say, seven-thirty. Then our meeting at ten was with John Dean and Malek and Dwight Chapin and [Ron] Ziegler and myself—just the guys who kind of kept the President's office going. I would have everything ready for that meeting including any recommended changes in salaries or any changes in offices or in perks. I did a lot of my administrative work then and would give a brief report every day to Haldeman and the team around me. If there were any ambassadors or sub-cabinet people, one of them would bring that up. Malek would usually bring that up. Chapin would bring up all the meetings the President had and ask whether proper preparations had been made, whether I'd given him briefing papers, etc., and I'd check off yes—it's all done. Dean would bring up any special legal matters as legal counsel

with the President. He spoke very rarely. Len Garment did some of the legal stuff for the President.

MK: What was the difference between what they did, Garment and Dean?

JH: I don't know. Neither one of them had any visibility. I know now they both surfaced as guys close to the President. All I did was deal with the people who made the White House run and neither one of them were really in that circle. I would get a memo once a week maybe from them. You really got to know who did what, and the guys who made the White House run were basically Kissinger and Ehrlichman. The Office of White House Visitors didn't do anything. That was over there on the other side. Malek's shop was pretty active with appointments and government matters. Colson was always active in some kind of deal. Pete Flanigan, another guy who was there, was a type of ambassador—he did the ambassadorial appointments but he was never regarded as a heavyweight.

MK: He dealt with business too, didn't he? He dealt with the business community.

JH: Yes. He had the role of a chief lobbyist, I guess. But, in terms of the internal workings of the White House, I mostly worked with the hard, nuts-and-bolts guys who kept the President going. I worked a lot with Ziegler, Chapin, and Haldeman. The inside guys kept the President informed and kept him organized during the day. I was an organization guy. So I wasn't privy to what people did on the outside. I was, I suppose, but I didn't pay any attention to it.

MK: Was there a senior staff meeting that brought together all the shops?

JH: No.

MK: So the meeting you all had was the senior staff meeting?

JH: No. There was a senior staff meeting at seven-thirty for the assistants to the President just to talk about anything that happened overnight before the President got there. That was among the senior, senior people. I think Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Kissinger, maybe [Clark] MacGregor, and maybe Flanigan came to that and one or two others. I think probably the Press Secretary came.

Then our ten o'clock meeting was the first real meeting of substance concerning the President's day and we'd review for any voids we might have had. Then the two o'clock meeting was more to be sure that the next twenty-four hours was considered—for instance, we would have the head of the speechwriters join us—Dave Gergen was the executive assistant to the speechwriters. It was a lower level than the ten o'clock meeting—the next lower level. Chapin's guy, Steven Bull, right under Chapin, who planned the President's appointments, would come in to discuss any last little details. It was the big-picture guys at seven-thirty, the operational guys at ten and the detail guys at two. And Butterfield chaired the meeting with the detail guys at two. Haldeman chaired the seven-thirty and the ten o'clock meetings.

MK: Was there an effort to look out at a two-week period or a one-month period and when was that done?

JH: Yes. At the ten o'clock meeting and the two o'clock meeting, part of each meeting was looking out over the next three to five days. Sometimes at the two o'clock meeting the head

of the advance team, Ron Walker, would come and report that the advance work had all been done for a trip to New York or a trip to Key Biscayne. So there was some of that. Maybe 25 per cent, or 30 per cent, of the time was looking beyond twenty-four hours. The bulk of it was to be sure that we had done everything that we were supposed to do for the moment at hand.

MK: Was there any effort before a year began, maybe simultaneously with the preparations for the State of the Union, looking at what kind of year, what kind of goals there would be for the year, whether there was going to be a particular legislative initiative, foreign policy initiative?

JH: I'm sure there were but I wouldn't have been included in that. There must have been some type of policy planning going on because you had Bob Finch over there and Donny Rumsfeld who had come over from OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity]. They were kind of policy-planner, consultant-type guys. We had several of them who looked ahead and who planned the President's policy. They weren't day-to-day guys. Their jobs were not really well-defined. And I think certain members of both the domestic council and Kissinger's staff were longer-term planning people.

So that went on. There was no question that it was my job to make sure the President was taken care of on a minute-to-minute basis. So I didn't get the privilege of handling anything beyond the here-and-now.

MK: Was there any looking backwards, anything built in where people could look back and say this initiative really worked well, let's try it again in some other way or this really crashed, it didn't work as we thought?

JH: No. I think Haldeman scared people so much. Our meetings started at ten o'clock and Haldeman would be sitting in there in the office that used to be the Vice President's. We moved the Vice President over to the second floor of the EOB and Haldeman was in that corner office. He had a built-in desk facing the wall, and he'd be in his chair facing the wall, and he had a table there, and six or seven of us would come in and sit around the table. Right at ten o'clock, right smack on the button, he'd spin around and go, "Shoot." The first guy would either speak or forever hold his breath. The next guy would speak or forever hold his breath. If you said anything that was silly or inappropriate or out of character, Haldeman would either call you a name or belittle you. So you said what you absolutely had to, and, if you didn't have anything to say, you'd say, "check" and go on to the next guy. Some of those meetings lasted fifteen minutes and some of them lasted an hour, but you had better be prepared. It wasn't a place where you discussed anything. We turned in and reported—it was turn-in-a-report meeting. Butterfield's meeting—the detail guys at two—had more group interaction. Gergen could talk about the kind of speech the President would want so he could go back to Ray and Bill and Pat and talk about it. But the ten o'clock meetings were very—what's the word I'd like to use?

MK: Besides terrible.

JH: Well, they were abbreviated.

MK: In a sense it doesn't sound efficient because in efficiency you need to bring up all the different kinds of points of view and you need to stimulate discussion. Just to have it be a streamlined, quick reporting operation doesn't seem to do well in the long run.

JH: It did with Haldeman's style. I think that, had it not been for Watergate Haldeman would have gotten a lot higher marks. He was a very efficient administrator. As it turned out he was more of a PR [public relations] guy, and this was the first time around for him. He was pretty young. Looking back, from my perspective now, at twenty years older than he was when he had the office: If I went back as chief of staff today, I could really run a very efficient White House, knowing what I have learned in government and business and my life, and the other administrations where I've been. (I was very close to the Reagan people and they offered me a senior position in the Reagan Administration. I didn't ever want to go back to government again.)

MK: What is the impact of working in a White House? What is the good part of it? What does one get out of it? In looking back, what were the benefits?

JH: Well, the team that Haldeman assembled for Nixon was really America's bright young superstars. They sent out 100,000 questionnaires when Nixon first went in to get the best and brightest CEOs. That's how I got into government to begin with—one of the top attorneys who was a great friend of Nixon's, a great jurist out in Los Angeles, had sent my name in. That's the only way I got into the mix. As Haldeman said every year, we wanted our staff guys to be among the outstanding young men in America. The junior chamber of commerce or chamber of commerce named ten outstanding men each year. And every year, one of them had to be a White House assistant. Ziegler got that slot one year. Chapin got it one year. I think the year I left it was either Malek or me. But we were all out of the same cookie cutter. We were bright, young, early thirties, late twenties, fairly good looking, guys of some accomplishment, at least. Jeb Magruder, John Dean, we're all out of the same cookie mold. No women. No older guys in those positions. It was very much a star-studded lineup. I didn't realize it at the time. I didn't realize what I was involved in until years later when I looked back and thought of this remarkable team. It was a group of clean cut, wholesome, workaholics, who represented the best of America, in Haldeman's eyes and Nixon's eyes. But looking back at it, it was probably more of a Fifties' team than it was a Seventies' team, more of an Eisenhower-era type team. We'd been through the Sixties and everyone thought that was a necessary evil. I'd go over to the Ellipse with Al Haig and see the demonstrators and the bomb throwers, hundreds of thousands on some days. They were the antithesis to everything we stood for.

It's easy to look back on it and be a little critical, but I really think Richard Nixon gets very high marks for running a very efficient, effective White House. The lapse of ethics that overtook Haldeman, and some of his band of characters that he brought in, and Nixon—I can't speak to that subject because I wasn't part of it. But, concerning the efficient, thorough, absolutely well-managed White House, I have to say it was top flight. I knew a lot of the Reagan guys. I went back from time to time when Reagan was in office, when Al Haig was chief of staff, and I spent a fair amount of time with Al. I went back when a congressman from Wyoming was chief of staff who was a good friend—

MK: Dick Cheney.

JH: —when Dick Cheney was there. He was during Ford's administration, and when I saw him, he had a green shirt on. Everybody had to wear a *white* shirt with Nixon. And the White House was laid back. I wish I had had the time in that kind of a White House, but I think Nixon was extremely well-served. He was a no-nonsense guy himself and a little hard to get close to.

MK: What kinds of things did you learn in a White House that you take out for the rest of your life in terms of whether it's a network of friends you deal with in business or that you know in government or whether it's a way of operating things that you learn that's useful in business?

JH: When I left the White House, the President was at an all-time high. It was February of 1972. I didn't take—

MK: Had he already gone to China?

JH: He went to China in 1971. It was made public a little later. We went through the whole China initiative, we went through the whole Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. I was the only one the President had sit in with him in the meetings with Harold Wilson in the private residence. Haldeman was ill that day so the President had me sit in. I sat in on several really nice meetings, and was honored to be there, that I normally wouldn't have attended.

You asked me what I took out. I didn't take anything but fear out. It took me years to get over the fear of Haldeman, the fear of my work not being perfect, and the need to please the President with every little letter in place, every word in place, everything done with a ruler and every briefing paper exactly right. What did I learn? I didn't learn anything that's helped me productively. I learned a lot of things that I would not implement in a business. Like Haldeman told me in my exit interview, you can't run a business like this. I have to agree with him 100 per cent. I guess I have learned the elements of efficiency but I knew them going in—that's why I was there. I didn't stay close to any of the people in the White House. There weren't many of them—a lot of them have called me wanting work or wanting loans, or to see if I know how they can get jobs or help them with legal fees. I was a little bit of a loner in the White House. I stayed around a couple years afterward as a consultant, as I said. I probably got more acquainted with them socially helping the President. But I didn't take anything away from there that I really wanted to institute in my businesses.

I think I knew coming in how to run a business because I had been president of a business. Since then I treat people very well. I'm very fair. My handshake is my bond. I was just terribly disappointed. Spiro Agnew was a great friend to me and he went down the drain. Nixon was my hero and my kids' hero. My son at age thirty-two was the youngest ambassador in the history of this century, the twentieth century. He was U.S. ambassador to Singapore. My son has obviously learned a lot. [President George H. W.] Bush appointed him in 1991. So I think my family had a good feel for what we were doing. But Haldeman made it a very difficult experience, a terrorizing time in my life. I had a much better and more effective tenure at HEW with Eliot Richardson. I stayed close with Eliot and, as I say, ran the U.S. operations of welfare, Medicaid and social services, and got out to all ten of the [Federal] regions. I enjoyed that much more. That was more of a people-type job and I'm more of a people person.

You asked what I learned: I learned I didn't want to serve in government anymore. I learned that, even though some of my sons are effective, if I was going to get ahead in life, I'd better carry things on my shoulders and not depend on anyone else who was part of a staff. A lot of staff members can either be traitors or can do a lot of things. You've got to set the right tone and temperament in a corporation. It comes from the top. And if you don't establish the appropriate ethical climate all the way, filtering down through the system, there will be a lapse of good judgment and proper conduct. I've seen to it in my corporations that our handshake is our bond, our word is our bond, that when I promise people a pay raise, they

get it ahead of schedule; when they're promised a bonus, they get more than they're promised. I kind of learned from Haldeman how not to treat people. I probably learned something about efficiency, but not much. It was a pretty terrorizing time in my life.

MK: Can you give me some of the specifics of Haldeman and the way he would deal with people?

JH: Well, I'd see him every morning pretty early and I'd always say, "Good morning, Bob. How are you?" And he'd never say a word. He might nod his head a little bit. Our first encounter came about five days after I'd started there. I didn't realize that everybody had this alphabetical system—"H" for Haldeman, "K" for Kissinger, "E" for Ehrlichman, "Z" for Ziegler, "C" for Chapin. I sent a memo to somebody and I signed it "H" for Huntsman. He roared into my office. The door flew open and Haldeman was there screaming at the top of his voice, "If you think H stands for Huntsman and not Haldeman, you're one dumb son of a bitch." I didn't even know what he was talking about. So they designated me "J" for Jon. So I became "J" from then on out.

Then we had an experience where the President was down in Key Biscayne to speak to the American Legion in, I think, late June. The White House calendar would have it. It may have been May 1971. Haldeman had called me a couple times to get a speech down with the courier. (We had an Air Force courier that always went back and forth to Key Biscayne and out to San Clemente.) And the speechwriters weren't through with the speech. So he called and said, "Tell them to get through. Tell them that they better do it. I'm here with the President." I said, "Bob, the speech isn't for three more days. They're working on it. They're doing the best they can. I've called them three or four times."

Anyway, the courier left without it and Haldeman called and chewed me up one side and down another. I'd taken enough of it and I said, "Bob, I've been yelled at enough. I've done everything in my power to do this job right. I haven't seen my family in six months. Why don't you just take this job and shove it? I'm through." Wham. I took the speech when it came—I had a White House driver take me out to National Airport. I went aboard an Eastern Airlines jet that was headed for Miami. I went right up to the cockpit with my White House pass and said, "This speech is for the President of the United States. I've got somebody meeting this plane. I don't want this to leave your hand. Give me your name as the pilot." He gave me his name. And I said, "There will be an FBI man or a White House security man to meet you for the speech." I had a driver lined up to take it right to the President. By the time the courier had arrived down there, the Eastern Airlines guy had arrived and the speech was over to Haldeman. I'd done it my way. Haldeman never said a word. I kept waiting to find out if I was fired or not fired. About three days after they got back from Key Biscayne, Larry Higby, who I found to be quite an obnoxious young guy trying to be like Haldeman, walked in to my office. (Higby has done a nice job, I think, at the *L.A. Times* or whomever he works for today. But I had seen him treat people shoddy and without kindness or graciousness.) Higby said, "Bob wants me to tell you how much he respects you and he wants you to start coming to the ten a.m. meetings." The ten a.m. meeting was a very big thing in the White House. It shows that you've moved up in the ranks. And that was his way of telling me that I had done it right, to the extent possible. It was his way of apologizing.

We didn't really have any words from then on out. One time, we were trying to clear a gal by the name of Juanita Banellos to be Treasurer of the United States in our ten a.m. meeting. She lived out in Los Angeles where I had started my plastics business. Haldeman had understood that she might be disqualified because she had some Mexican nationals at that time working in her plant who weren't authorized immigrants. He said around the table,

“Huntsman, you have a plant down in Los Angeles.” I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “It’s in East L.A., isn’t it?” I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “Have your people go over there and do something on checking out this plant over here and get back to me tomorrow morning.” I said, “Yes, sir.”

I got to thinking about it and I didn’t ever call our people and didn’t get my personal team involved because I just didn’t think it had anything to do with my job as the White House staff secretary. So the next morning when Haldeman asked me to return a report, he said, “What did you find out about all those Mexican nationals?” I said, “Bob, I didn’t ask my people to do it because they work for me privately and I didn’t want to get them involved in anything in the White House. I’m very sorry. I have to report that I haven’t done anything with it because it’s not part of my job description.” It just burned him up and he didn’t say a word. We’d already had the thing the month before and he knew he couldn’t push me. I think he knew that.

I think that’s why at the end he took two hours, which for Bob was a long time, to try to tell me how much he appreciated what I’d done and how effective I’d been and how he could never run a business the way he ran a White House. He was trying to apologize for the way he treated people and the way he treated me. He knew that I had given night and day and every ounce of energy and everything I could give. That one year to me was the worst—it doesn’t sound like a long time, but when you’re talking about fifteen, sixteen hours a day and Saturday and Sunday all day—I lived there. I told him how I thought they should divide the position into two or three positions, and how it could work more effectively. They had to ask me if I would be the Director of the Peace Corps and I very nicely said no. Then they asked me if I would be the Assistant Secretary of Interior over in the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which was a western job, since I’m a western guy. I said, “I don’t want anything to do with the government. I’ll be a consultant. I’ll recommend people for positions. I know we’re always looking for good people. But I don’t ever want to get involved in this thing again.”

That was about it. I learned a lot. It was a valuable experience. I really liked Eliot Richardson and I really liked HEW. I liked the policy and the implementation of government at a macro level, as opposed to an inside White House level.

MK: Thanks very much.

[Interruption]

JH: When Pat Nixon died, we all went to the funeral with the President. It was a bit awkward because we were all there except John Dean and John Ehrlichman and Alex Butterfield. They always were kind of outside the Nixon camp after Watergate. But the rest were all there—Pat Buchanan, Chuck Colson, Haldeman, Higby, quite a team. It was nice to see everybody. It had been probably close to twenty years since I had seen some of those folks. I just became close to Haldeman. I didn’t see him for eighteen years and then we met again when [Mikhail] Gorbachev came over in 1990 and they invited the forty-five outstanding businessmen who did business in Russia to have dinner with Gorbachev. Haldeman was a consultant to Kirk Carlson for the Radisson Hotels and had built a hotel over in Moscow. I had a business in Moscow, in the Ukraine and a number of other places. Dr. Armand Hammer and I had become dear friends over the years. Hammer had taken me into the Soviet Union. Since then, I have spent at least \$50 million in humanitarian aid to rebuild Armenia after the earthquake of 1989. The Soviet government was very respectful to me for what I’ve done for the country and the help I’ve given them.

Anyway, we had this dinner for Gorbachev. There were only forty-five Americans who did business in Russia, and I was one and Haldeman was one. We hadn't seen each other since the meeting we had as I was leaving. He had been in jail in the meantime. Our [Huntsman's] businesses had escalated and I had done very well, financially. Haldeman had struggled. We spent about two to three hours together. And he said, "You never came to see me in jail." I said, "I know, Bob. I really didn't want to—you and I didn't leave as the best of friends. You know that better than I do." He said, "I understand, Jon." We warmed up a bit and exchanged some phone calls. Eventually I came to see a different side of Haldeman, quite a mellow side, a side I really did like. I quite respected Bob in his later years. We talked through some of the problems and challenges we had at the White House. And then we all met at Pat's funeral. Bob was particularly close to me. We kind of went arm and arm and walked around and had pictures taken with some of our grandchildren who were there and their son who was there and who told how much his father meant to him and how close they were. It was a little bit of reversal of the roles. But Nixon called us all together after the funeral. He said, "I'd like just my former staff to stay." Maybe you've heard this story.

MK: No.

JH: Everyone else had left. The speakers had left. Billy Graham had left. The other former presidents had left. There we were again—*déjà vu*. It was hard to believe these guys had had this interesting history. Some had gone to prison. I think without question I had done better financially than anybody. Of course, at the time I was in the White House I was terribly understated and I was glad I was. I never abused anything. I never took advantage of anything. I just was doing my job and kept my head down and worked hard. I think it was very surprising to the guys that we'd done so well. But Nixon stood up when just the staff was there, right after the funeral, and he called us around him. He said, "This is a very momentous time in my life. My wife's funeral has been held today and I'm surrounded by the men and women"—there were a couple of gals there—"who served me loyally and the best during my happy years in the White House." He said, "I just want to tell you all one story." He said, "When Tricia and Julie were having their little babies, little children, they came to me and we held a family council to see what they should call me, Grandpa or what. And we agreed that they would call Pat 'Ma' because she was Grandma. The little children should call her Ma. And the kids said, 'Dad, what would you like the grandchildren to call you?'" And he said, "You can call me anything because I've been called everything."

It just broke up the staff. Here was the old Nixon with his fingers up—the victory sign. It was a fabulous story and everyone broke into laughter. Nixon went around to each of us and gave us a big hug, had his picture taken with us, and remembered us by name. It was a very wonderful side of the President. We all left kind of remembering that moment more than our time at the White House. Then, of course, he died, himself, shortly thereafter.

MK: Do you think he had that in mind?

JH: I think so. I think he didn't have an occasion before then, since 1974, to ever meet with the team. Of course, the ones who turned against him weren't there, the three of them, but everyone else was. It was a sweet moment. I had been with the President on several occasions because he couldn't get his memoirs, his papers, because they were confiscated by the Department of Justice. As Staff Secretary, at least during the period of time I was there, I kept very good files. Those that weren't classified or just classified as confidential but not as secret or top secret, I kept. I had kept several boxes of them for my own purposes. So I went over and met with the President on several occasions in San Clemente right after he

left office and helped him and Frank Gannon put their book together. The President was very grateful. I took all the kids over one time because he hadn't seen any children. I spent the whole day with all these little kids and the President. He walked along the beach and had them in his office. He gave us some of his collection of elephants. He was really sweet to us. The President was always very, very good to us.

I wanted to just comment on the Haldeman thing and stress that, before he died, we came to enjoy quite a warm and mutually respectful friendship.

Just a little p.s.—not that it mattered for government purposes.

[End of Disc 1 of 1 and Interview I]