QUESTION: Have you done all this for yourself?
ANSWER: No, but I can remember trying to get started --

QUESTION: Check my tape. This is an interview with Mary Finch Hoyt on December 16, 1980, in Mrs. Hoyt's office in East Wing. The interviewer is Marie Allen.

I'd like to start first by asking you about some of your associations before the White House, this White House period. You were associated with Jane Muskie and Eleanor McGovern, weren't you?

ANSWER: Yes. I served as the press secretary to --

started off with Eleanor McGovern at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and that was for a very, very brief period of time when Senator McGovern had gone to the convention to hold together Bobby Kennedy's delegates.

I went -- would you like to know how I got that job?

QUESTION: Yes.

ANSWER: I'm not quite sure why I was called, one
evening in the middle of supper, and asked if I'd like to

go to the convention, which was a few weeks off, and if I

would like to serve as Mrs. McGovern's press secretary

because Senator McGovern had just announced that he was

going to run for president. It was through my previous

association as director of radio of television of the

Peace Corp., someone had given my name as having dealt

with the press.

So I was dying to go to the convention, and I said

"yes" and got right in the car that very -- stopped dinner

and went right out to see Mrs. McGovern and worked for her

through that very short period of time. I had quit the

Peace Corp. and was in the process of writing a book.

QUESTION: May I ask on what?

ANSWER: Well, on the psychology of color. It was a

book that I had had in my mind for a long time. And I had

a contract with McGraw-Hill, and I was pulling it

together. And I had all of my papers out and I was

working very hard on it.

QUESTION: Color in the racial sense or in the
different color sense?

ANSWER: Color in all sense. It all came out of a

very personal idea I had that if people could visualize

themselves in terms of color, everyone would have a
different portrait of themselves. So I started asking
people “What would you do if you had nothing but color? I mean you could put your color in any form or shape or quantity or quality.” And I found that everybody, after thinking about it, people were rather caught on with this idea of what their own self-portrait would look like.

So this I was going to -- I don’t really -- I still haven’t written the book because it’s kind of been -- as a matter of fact, I told somebody I should probably dig it out again, because whenever I’m in a period in between here and there and not knowing what I’m going to do next, I go back to that book, and the minute I get involved in it -- and it is a fascinating subject -- the phone rings and something else comes along.

But -- so after I was -- I was working on the book. They called and asked if I’d like go to the convention.

QUESTION: And you drove over to meet Eleanor McGovern?

ANSWER: I did.

QUESTION: For the first time?

ANSWER: Yes (unintelligible).

QUESTION: What was your -- she’s a very petite lady, isn’t she?

ANSWER: She’s a tiny, little lady. It was just getting dark. Her daughter let me in, and she said her mother was out walking the dog. And I went and sat in
this very tiny, little living room that the McGoverns had out in Chevy Chase. I had a friend of mine over for dinner and he sat in the car and waited because I didn’t think it was appropriate for him to go in.

Mrs. McGovern came in and we sat and simply talked. We had children about the same ages. I had had experience with the press. The phone was ringing off the hook, and I finally said, "Could I answer the phone for you?" And, of course, it was the press trying to find out about her. They had had a problem with one of their daughters who had been caught smoking marijuana, and, of course, that made everything much more interesting to the press. We had a great rapport and I just started to work for her right then and there.

I did not know what a press secretary was supposed to do, but I had served in a similar to Jack Vaughn, who was the head of the Peace Corp. when I was there, which was basically to deal with the media and have interviews for him. And I had done quite a bit of work either as a writer, a professional writer or at the Peace Corp.

So when I came back from the convention, I got the book out again and I think I only had it out about a week when Mrs. McGovern told me Mrs. Muskie, that she needed somebody like me. So Mrs. Muskie called me up and said would I go out to meet her.
And so I got in the car right away and drove out to her house in Maryland, and the same thing was happening. It was almost a replay, the phone was ringing. And I can remember the one thing that was different about it was that Mrs. McGovern and I talked a great deal about our children and a great deal about being in the eye of the storm, so to speak. But with Mrs. Muskie, she had heard all of that from Mrs. McGovern.

I answered the phone there too. I can remember that the phone was ringing, and I said, "Well, why don’t you just let me answer it. I know it’s the press," and it was. And I just sort of kind of calmed things down out there.

But I can remember Mrs. Muskie saying -- and I just thought of this this very minute, and I have to tell her. I saw her last night at the party for the cabinet that’s being staffed -- she said when it was all over, "Well, I think I would like for you to come and work for me, but there’s one thing you haven’t told me yet and that is what do you think of my husband?"

And, of course, at that point, he was not all that well-known. I mean he was the senator from Maine. And I said, "Well, I’m a democrat, and I think he’s wonderful and I’m also the Humphrey Muskie ticket." So I went to work for Jane Muskie.
Of course I kept my friendship with Mrs. McGovern and with Mrs. Muskie when both of those campaigns were over. Then I became Washington editor in the *Ladies Home Journal*, which that came about because I was doing some ghostwriting for Senator Muskie. And the editor of *Ladies Home Journal*, who was also the editor of *American Home Magazine*, came down to the Muskies to meet the senator and take the pictures that went with the article that I had ghosted, and he wanted me there. So I gave her a ride back to her hotel, and she said that we should talk. And so one thing led to another, and I became the Washington Bureau chief for *Ladies Home Journal*.

And that was interesting because the only other person on the -- I mean I was the bureau chief of a bureau of two, and the only other person was Lynda Bird Johnson at that point, who was breaking into writing and was on the masthead of the magazine too.

In 19 --

**QUESTION:** Were you writing primarily or were you --

**ANSWER:** Doing a great deal. I was doing a lot of writing at that point. I had written a book called *American Women of the Space Age*, which was some sort of a book about women who were involved in the space -- behind the scenes in the space field of all kinds, the dieticians of the astronauts and the women who -- the physicists and
the engineers, women.

So, let’s see, where was I?

QUESTION: You were working in the Washington Bureau in the *Journal*?

ANSWER: Right, the *Ladies Home Journal*.

QUESTION: And you were doing a lot of writing.

ANSWER: And I was doing a lot of writing. And then it became apparent that Senator Muskie was going to run for president. I took two trips with the Muskies. One trip that the *Ladies Home Journal* sent me on was with a small group of reporters to Moscow and the Middle East with the Muskies, which was fascinating. And I wrote a long report, they did not publish it, but I wrote a long report to the editors. And I think probably in retrospect they were really hedging their bets at that point thinking that Muskie would probably be president and I would probably be in the administration at some point and it would be good public relations for them.

That was all very interesting, but when it became time for Muskie to run, I quit the *Journal* and I did go to work as Jane’s sort of executive -- I don’t know what I’d call myself, but it was press secretary and I did sort of everything and got her little staff together and a bunch of volunteers. And I did that until Muskie bowed out. As a matter of fact, I flew home, just the senator and Jane
and myself and the security agent, in a little, tiny one-engine plane from the night he quit, dropped out of the race. And I went back to the book again and --

QUESTION: Can I ask you about the incident with Candy Stroud and what you --

ANSWER: Yeah. Well, that was -- what happened then was a series of things that added up to what was really a very disastrous situation, which I think was probably not the reason that Senator Muskie was not elected -- I mean was not nominated, but I think it probably contributed highly to a lot of other things. We had a small group, I don't remember how many, maybe eight reporters, who were going to go to New Hampshire with us to travel and to follow Mrs. Muskie on her campaign trip, Candy being one of the reporters. It was kind of a crazy, kind of wonderful trip, and we were all very -- I suppose in retrospect I was much too naïve and trusting, but these were women I had dealt with before over the years. I had traveled with them. I traveled with Mrs. Nixon as a reporter with the same group of people when I worked for the Journal.

So we all climbed on a commercial plane together to go to New York. I can remember that Mrs. Muskie had a problem with her legs, had on Sup-hose, and she made some remark about them, and that became a part of the story, a
very -- kind of very unattractive the way it was written.

We all got on a bus, because it seemed to me it was very regal and much too queenly to campaign in a big limousine in New Hampshire and having a long, long motorcade behind. So we all got on a bus together and, of course, it was snowing and it was cold. We didn’t have -- we had terrible advance people. We were all chewing gum like crazy because we were so thirsty and we couldn’t stop to get anything to drink. So we were chewing gum, which was also a part of the story about Mrs. Muskie snapping her gum while she talked.

We got off finally and found a place where we could each -- where we could get a Coke. And we got a newspaper and the whole front page of the newspaper was a picture of Senator Muskie, I mean just the whole page. And Jane was sitting on the bus, and somebody came back and I took it and I handed it to her, and I said, “Look at this.” And she said, “Well, there’s Big Daddy.” “Big Daddy,” “Daddy” is what they called him because he had all of those children. And I mean it was a big picture. And that came out as calling him “Big Daddy.”

We then had -- we had lost our very inefficient advance people who ended up putting us up in a motel without telephones. We had, you know, no place for the press to fall out, no room service, no way for them to
eat. And so we decided that it would be very foolish for
us to all try -- for us to try to have special
arrangements. And so we all ate together. At that time
we all had a glass of wine or a drink, I don't remember
which. And Jane made some remark about how she just never
had a drink or a glass of wine because it gave her a
headache. All of these things that were in Candy's story
were factual, but they were pulled together in such a way
that it was devastating.

And without knowing anything about it, we went back
to the motel in Manchester, met the senator, and someone
called -- we flew home thinking it had been a very
successful trip. Jane had had a wonderful crowd. She had
gotten up and had been a real sport and had spoken to
high school students and gone into (unintelligible), and
it had been a very hard trip.

And that night, it was a -- I believe it was a Friday
night, I don't remember, I got home and Newsweek called
me. A reporter who's no longer around, and I don't know
whether this had anything to do with it or not, but she
called me and she said, "I want to verify the quotes in
Women's Wear Daily," at which point she took out just
those damaging, out of context completely -- it was the
most -- one of the most damaging and unfair pieces of
journalism I have ever seen.
So basically it was Candy Stroud's piece, but it was
digested by *Newsweek*, which subsequently the publisher of
*Newsweek* wrote to the senator and to Mrs. Muskie. And
everybody afterwards said this was very unfair. That was
the genesis of that story. Whether or not Ed Muskie cried
in the snow about it or not, I don't know. I remember at
the time that probably he was very angry, probably very
moved when he said "She's a good woman," because she is
such a good woman.

I remember saying then to them "Someday, because of
his emotions, that will be" -- I remember as well as
anything saying "Instead of damaging him for showing his
emotions or his feelings, that in a few years those kind
of feelings that men will show will be a plus instead of a
minus," which I think is true. So that was that story.

But when -- after that was over, right away, as soon
as McGovern -- Eleanor called me, and we've -- you know, I
think that's one thing that's important about this job,
and I tried to explain to Mrs. (unintelligible) secretary
the other day, before she was hired, that you have to
have -- it's a unique relationship, a press secretary and
a principal, as Pat Nixon used to call her press
secretary -- her press secretary used to call her the
"principal" instead of, you know, "Pat" or "Mrs. Nixon."
She would call her the "principal," which I always thought
was a little bit, you know, chilly. But I had kept
friendships all along with all of these women.

When Eleanor called and asked me if I would go to the
convention with her in '72, and so I went back; I didn't
have anything to do at the time (unintelligible). And so
I went back. I did go through the whole campaign with
her. When that was over, I wrote a book and wrote
speeches for her for about six months, which she went on
the lecture circuit. So I was -- and, of course, after
each one of these, the first one, I mean after each one I
said I would never do another campaign again because it's
very debilitating and it's very hard and it's just too
unnatural. So I said I would never do that again and I'd
never be involved in democratic politics except at a
certain level.

But Jody called me, I guess because -- I laughingly
say I must have had a corner on the market; how many other
people had been press secretary to lots of democratic
candidates, you know, over and over again. So I think
that a couple of people had told Jody what I had done for
the other women. And then during -- I think during -- he
called me up one day and, you know, my heart just stopped
because I was so -- I was writing, I had a little public
relations firm of my own, and I as happy as I could be and
on the verge of making more money than I had made in a
long time, and he asked me if I’d like to come down and meet Mrs. Carter.

QUESTION: Had you met Jody before?

ANSWER: No, no. I didn’t know anything about any of the Carters. I hadn’t been involved in the primary at all in any way. I was so out of it. I was, you know, interested, but I mean I’m avid as I can be as a good democrat, but I knew nothing at all about it.

So I said, “Well, when?” And he said, “Tomorrow. If we prepay a ticket, will you come down to Atlanta? She’s going to be in Atlanta during some interviews tomorrow.”

So it was really -- I mean it was a question of my saying “No, I really can’t do this again.” But there was just something about it. Because if you know that you can do something and it’s a unique thing, then, you know, you just --

QUESTION: It’s hard . . .

ANSWER: It’s hard to say no. And I met Rosalynn and Madeline and McBean and Jody. They were all there at the headquarters. And I talked to Rosalynn for a very brief time. And then Jody said, “Well” -- he walked her out to her car. It was all a very strange meeting. She said, “Well, what would you do if you were me and you knew that you were going to be going through another campaign?”

And so I felt quite free to tell her at that point what I
would do, which would be to run my own campaign. I mean
not let the, you know, the presidential people do it, to
be independent to do whatever she wanted to do and to just
do what she was comfortable doing.

So after that conversation, she said, “Well, that’s
kind of the way I look at it.” And she said, “Thank you
for coming down to meet me.” And so then Jody walked out
to the parking lot with her, and he came back and he said,
“Well, she’s just so concerned about a lot of other
things.” He said, “Thank you for coming.” And so I just
got back on the plane. And I thought “Well, that was a,”
you know, “I don’t know that that was useful or what it
was.” We didn’t talk about the job or anything. And --

QUESTION: And I can come back -- if this afternoon
gets too busy, I can come back.

ANSWER: Okay.

QUESTION: We were just --

ANSWER: Well, I mean then

QUESTION: -- talking about the meeting with Rosalynn.

ANSWER: Right. Then I know that -- then Jody
called and asked me if I would come to work for the
convention and the campaign. It was always "come for the
whole time," it wasn’t just the convention. And there
was -- we had quite a few conversations. I wasn’t quite
sure, having been used to being kind of in charge of
things, I wasn’t quite sure how I’d fit in with Madeline. I wasn’t quite sure I wanted to -- I wanted to be sure that I wasn’t going to lose money because I had just started making money. So we had a lot of conversations and I decided to do it. And so then I mean (unintelligible).

QUESTION: Did you decide based on conversations with Jody, or did you have another conversation with Mrs. Carter?

ANSWER: It was more -- I did talk to Jody, but -- and I never could talk to Mrs. Carter in detail. I talked to Madeline a little more, and we finally -- I mean, you know, Madeline -- I guess I did talk to Jody, because I said, “Jody, I’m having a problem figuring out -- I’m used to being in charge and I’m not, you know, I just cannot go through anybody,” which I think is a very important thing for historical pur -- this is what I was saying to Robyn Orr (phonetic) the other night and what everybody, I think, should know if anybody ever cares about this kind of a job, you cannot -- you have to have total access to the person that you’re dealing with. It’s just like Jody and the president: You have to be able to pick up the phone at any time and ask any question and feel comfortable doing so. And the person for whom your working has to understand that and wants you to do it.
So I will say that for a couple of weeks, I wasn’t quite sure, I had some feelings that I was getting involved with something that the train was already going and I was sort of running and catching on the train, which is not the way that I ever worked. It’s usually been the other way around. And I wanted to be quite sure that I spelled out my own role, for which I’m very grateful I took the time to be very assured, I mean even to the point of Madeline calling up and saying “Now, look, I’m in charge of this and you’re in charge of that.” And we talked back and forth. And I think it probably took us maybe the better part of two years or maybe a year and a half to work that out. And now, you know, we did work it out.

QUESTION: How did you split it up? How did you divide the responsibilities?

ANSWER: Well, everything person -- I mean personal -- well, it seemed to divide itself up. Because Rosalynn, if Rosalynn had done a lot of personal and a lot of social things and had not been a working first lady, it probably would have been different. But Madeline took all the personal, all of the very, very personal things and the family things and all of that, and anything that took -- anything that had to do with the campaign, the speeches, the substance, that kind of thing just sort of
fell into -- that was sort of what I did. So that was
kind of the way it worked out.

QUESTION: And it carried over into the administration
in some ways.

ANSWER: It did, it carried out in the transition.
I hired the staff. I think -- it's interesting to see
what's happened now with the next administration. My
title was "press secretary to the first lady and East Wing
coordinator," which basically meant that Rosalynn -- there
would be no staff director and that Rosalynn would be her
own staff director. And it worked -- it was probably -- I
still have mixed feelings. That's always the way it's
secretary has sort of been the staff director, because
been here, that the person who has been the press
otherwise -- you have to know everything that's going on,
because if you don't know what's going on, you can't serve
either the first lady or the press.

That remained that way, with some range of success,
until Kit Dobelle came in. It was a great deal of hassle,
a great deal of work, very, very difficult to do both jobs
and try to be, you know -- as a matter of fact, it's like
raising children: You can't, you know, do what has to be
done and be loved. I mean it's not the most popular kind
of thing. But being probably more experienced and a hell
of a lot older than everybody else, that didn't bother me
so much.

I think one of the big problems for me, and, of course, a very personal one, I lost my youngest son two years ago. And at that point, I just sort of took out all my -- everything on my job, I think for a while. I probably would have died without the job. But on the other hand, I think my job suffered.

QUESTION: Did you have other children? Did you --

ANSWER: I have one other son. I had two sons. I had an adopted son and a natural son. And my -- I mean not that that makes any difference, but it was my natural son, my youngest son who went to sea and didn’t come back. And I was sitting right here when I heard about it, and nobody’s ever known what happened. He and five other young men -- the boat, they were on a huge boat, and he was captain of the boat, and it was struck probably by another -- a freighter or something. So it was a terrible shock and a terrible blow.

QUESTION: How old was he at that time?

ANSWER: Twenty-seven.

QUESTION: And this was a pleasure craft? It wasn’t a (unintelligible)?

ANSWER: No, no, no. He was -- oh, no. He was the captain. I mean it was a lobster (unintelligible).

So that was a -- you know, I think back now, I think
it’s taken me maybe -- that was in ’78, September of ’78,
I just don’t know what -- I can’t even remember too much
about, you know, I mean -- I just worked like a fiend. It
saved my life, my work. But I’m sure that I was
destructive as heck at the same time. So . . .

QUESTION: Grief is quite a difficult thing to handle.
ANSWER: It’s a very hard thing to handle. But
that --

QUESTION: You had worked out the arrangements, and
Kit Dobelle, she assumed the staff director
function --

ANSWER: Right.

QUESTION: -- and you then were able to focus on the
press.

ANSWER: I thought that was going to work. I mean,
you know, I thought that would work out fine, because that
would take away all of those personal relationships. And
I also was traveling with Mrs. Carter and trying to keep
everything going here, and I had it all and I didn’t -- I
was not at all happy about giving it all up.

And, as a matter of fact, when we had gone to the
Middle East, I had mapped out what I thought was a rather
logical way that I should turn over more of my work to my
deputy and that I should, you know, let loose more. I
realized what I was doing, which was I was being very
destructive to myself and to everybody else. And we had
worked with the little senior staff of five of us. And
that meant that one person always had to come down -- I
mean, you know, we could -- there was always a "yes" or a
"no" that way. And I think it would have -- it could have
worked, and I don’t think that, except for personal
feelings, I don’t think it really made any difference
when, you know, Kit Dobelle came. I mean it just
kind -- it's -- I don’t know, with last year so much going
on, I just don’t know.

QUESTION: Have you been traveling, continuing to
travel with the first lady?

ANSWER: Mm-mm.

QUESTION: So all -- during this entire administration
and during the campaign, you’ve always traveled with the
first lady and you’ve always handled the press.

ANSWER: I’ve always handled the press. I’ve done
most of her speeches. Our role here in this office is to
disseminate information about the White House and its
grounds; to be sure that all the social events are
covered; to see that all of her educational and cultural
activities are covered; to worry about publications,
magazines; set up interviews. It’s a big job because it’s
more than just the first lady. It’s got a lot to do with
the house, it’s got a lot to do with the social life of
the White House. And it also has a lot to do with, you
know, what is a good idea and what's a bad idea. If
somebody wants her to be the head of something or wants
her to fly to Cambodia or to be the chairman of the heart
fund or to take on the project, it takes a lot of research
and a lot of figuring out how is that going to be
perceived, how much can she really do, how much can she
follow up, how much can the staff do. It's really been --
I mean the volume here is so much more than I ever
anticipated. For a first lady, I don't think anybody
really understands that.

QUESTION: Each first lady leaves a special imprint
from -- on the job. In the area of the social events,
what do you think Mrs. Carter's special imprint has been?

ANSWER: I think that's what happening now will --
which has been very negative in the last month about the
social imprint of the Carter administration, will probably
turn around 45 degrees within another month. I think that
there are already signs of this. And we've already had a
couple of -- well, quite a few articles written and there
are others in the works, because that was a very unfair
perception that this has been kind of an Andrew Jackson
kind of administration.

I think the imprint of the Carter administration will
go down as having thoughts to why this variety of culture,
art, music, the brilliance of the performances here, I

don’t think will be matched in the next administration and

it has not been matched. I think the historian or the

armchair historians who covered the White House will say

that this has been an administration perhaps noted for the

breadth and variety of arts and cultures highlighted here.

And also it’s been probably a much more open -- open

to the average person than ever before. I mean I don’t

know how many other administrations have really invited

people who wrote and said they wanted to come to the White

House. I think we’ve had people from all walks of life.

In that way it hasn’t been as glamorous as a lot of other

administrations, and I think that’s what they’re talking

about now. I mean we have not had the Frank Sinatras and

the very well-known Hollywood people here except on very

special Hollywood occasions. It’s been kind of a people,

people White House.

QUESTION: So the first -- and this was some of the

first lady’s own ideas as far as having a (unintelligible)

with coming in and a (unintelligible) of art and

cultural --

ANSWER: Open, friendly, warm, very hospitable and I

think in many cases extremely elegant and comfortable.

But I think that arts and the culture, the American -- the

Americana -- I don’t know how to say that other than arts
and culture. I think in retrospect they set a standard that's going to be almost impossible -- I mean those Sunday afternoons, Horowitz and Rostropovich and Baryshnikov, were historic. And to open that up on public television for the whole country to see was a wonderful thing to do.

QUESTION: (Unintelligible) we enjoyed it. What about the -- this first lady's imprint on press relations. How do you think she interacts with the press?

ANSWER: Well, I think the press had to take -- she's gone from the press -- from no image, which they started saying after about a year, to too much image and too much influence to now I think probably she has more solid -- people admire her in a more solid -- she has solid respect of the press. She has been extremely accessible to them, probably more than -- Helen Thomas told me she thought she was the most successful first lady she's ever covered. And she rarely has passed by a reporter without answering, which is -- it's quite unusual.

I don't know how I would grade it on a scale from 1 to 10. I think she's respected by the press, and that's what counts, I think.

QUESTION: Okay. What about projects the first lady's been involved in (unintelligible) any special projects?
ANSWER: Well, I do think her mental health legislation -- perish the thought that anything should happen to funding it -- will be something. I mean it's a legacy that I think is known world-wide, actually, because every play we go -- I mean we've been to Canada twice to talk about it, and every place we've gone, she has -- people have known about this.

Her other projects have not been -- you know, the kinds of projects that have been begun, they're not dramatic projects -- the elderly, the problems of the elderly, ERA, trying to help people in communities to help each other, (unintelligible), and these are just not very -- she calls them "sexy" projects -- so that they're not covered as well as they could be.

But I don't know whether you saw the editorial in the Washington Post this week as well as the excerpts from her speech all on one page, paying tribute to what she's done in the city here in a quiet way. I think that all of her accomplishments are being recognized, not in a dramatic way, which is the way it ought to be, I mean I think.

QUESTION: In talking with her, what do you -- what do you think were the things she wanted most to do here as first lady?

ANSWER: I think she is a very contemporary woman in many ways. And I could never venture to say what would
interest her most. In fact, you know, someone told her about the terrible problem in Cambodia, and she called up and said, "What'll we do about it?" And we worked all weekend, and within three days we were on our way to go over there. And she helped raise six billion dollars and helped save a race.

I don't think that you could ever pin her down. She defies labels. One thing leads to another. I mean the mental health would probably led her into -- which it did, I think, led her into the fact that if we don't take care of the mentally ill in your own community, you're not going to get any (unintelligible). Start worrying about your community. And it's the same way with the elderly. And I think she just -- there's a sort of a serendipity the way she kind of approaches her projects. But they're all kind of tied together with people helping people. She used to say in her speeches over and over again that it sounds a little grandiose, but what she hoped was to be her legacy was to help build a more caring society. And I think that's -- I think she made great strides. I've very proud of her.

QUESTION: Do you get the impression that -- well, I get the impression this first lady has been interested in the whole variety of administration (unintelligible) as well as in her particular personal projects. Is this
accurate do you think?

ANSWER: I think it is. I think that the stories about her being involved in administration policy are very over-blown. I think the president and she are very good friends as well as very close and I know they talk about everything. And I know that she is very forthcoming with her opinion. But the fact that she is involved in policy about the budget or some of the other things that people think she’s involved in . . .

I’ve never known a person who was more interested in being fully informed. She -- it’s like life is a continuing education for her. I think that’s one thing where I really relate to her so much, because she doesn’t want to know a little bit about something; she wants to know it, and once she learns it, she knows it and she will either go on further with it or she tucks it away in the back of her mind someplace and it comes in handy.

She is a very curious, very intelligent woman who wants to know about these government programs, wants to know why they aren’t working, and if they’re not working, why. And I’ve seen her greatest frustration, I think, has been about bureaucracy that she’s had to deal with herself. When people say "Well, we can’t do that because . . ." And she’ll say "Well, I don’t know why. I mean I had a good idea. Why wouldn’t it work?" Kind of a
disgust with bureaucracy is (unintelligible).

QUESTION: And what other frustrations do you think she’s felt?

ANSWER: Well, I think she’s felt a lack -- the difficulty of communicating not only what the president’s done, but perhaps sometimes how she -- her own projects.

QUESTION: Then --

ANSWER: I mean I suppose that communication, not being able to communicate what the president did or wanted to do is something that will always be a frustration to a lot of us.

QUESTION: It seems to me a first lady is in an awkward stage in this age in which we have a women’s movement, and yet again we don’t have one, in which, you know, there’s some areas -- a first lady gets caught between not being enough of an independent, not being enough of a feminist; on the other hand, being so much of a feminist that she’s running the president, being charged on both sides.

ANSWER: Well, but that’s just because the press has to have a neat label. I mean it’s because of the way you can’t (unintelligible). I keep saying to Rosalynn “You are like a renaissance woman. I mean you have a wonderful extended family, a good marriage. You are a great mother. You are a hard worker. You like the sports.” I mean
across the board she's -- there's some of us who can do
some of those things and some of us who . . . But she's
fortunate in that she has these many aspects of life as a
woman where she has a chance to excel just because of the
circumstances of her life.

But people don't want that. They want a career woman
to be, you know, this way, and they want a mother to be
this way. They want a first lady -- I don't know what
they want about a first lady. I think most people want a
first lady who's really -- they want kind of a surrogate
mother. People expect a first lady to be emphatic to
anything. The letters she gets, they are indigent, they
are pleading, they are "listen to me." She belongs to
everybody.

But, of course, the press wants somebody very easy to
describe, and Rosalynn is not easy to describe. Rosalynn
is -- some people say she's so shy that she, you know,
used to throw up before she'd give a speech. Other people
say she's very cold. They're looking at the same woman.
It's the same way I've said over and over again, she has
not changed a thing from having no image to the image of
having too much influence, you know, and back again

QUESTION: You can't see any reason for that changing
perception other than the media creating it themselves?

ANSWER: Well, one or two stories can take a life of
their own. And that's why this is a very -- I find it takes a little while till you realize how important it is to take very, very seriously every story that is written because it can be so damaging and it can be so inaccurate. You know, you just have to -- you have to be more aggressive than I ever dreamed in terms of calling up somebody and saying, you know, "Why didn't you call and check that with me first, because these are the facts. Wouldn't you rather . . ." Reporters want the facts, but sometimes they don't have time or sometimes it's just easier to think that they know some -- you know, to just sort of fill in a blank.

So I have felt a responsibility about all of this, probably more so, you know -- in any case, it's more than I really needed to feel that it was my responsibility. But you do.

QUESTION: Do you have primarily women reporters who are writing about the first lady these days?

ANSWER: That's all changed. When I used to travel with Mrs. Nixon, there was this sort of group of women and they were all the same women. And we got little invitations to go with Mrs. Nixon and then we got "thank you" letters afterwards. And not it's across the board.

QUESTION: Excuse me.

[Side 2]
ANSWER: -- question because there are no more
women's pages in the newspapers. And that has changed the
way first ladies are covered. I just was going over the
list of people who want to cover Mrs. Carter before she
leaves: You know, Mike Wallace, Bob Schaefer (phonetic),
Meg Greenfield. You know, we're not talk -- it can be --
there are really only a couple of sort of social people,
social reporters left.

QUESTION: And why do you think that's happened just
in the last --

ANSWER: There's no place for them, I mean because
of the newspaper, the way the media has changed.

QUESTION: You said because women are now reading or
expected to read the substantive parts of the paper;
they're not supposed to be limited to the women's pages?

ANSWER: Well, I had someone call -- I couldn't
believe one of those reporters saying to me "Now, I really
want to talk about politics in the role of the first lady.
None of this fuzzy-wuzzy lady stuff." I mean here's a
woman telling me that, I mean which shows me that she's
not very, you know, modern herself in thinking. I mean
it's a female chauvinism.

But there -- I would say it's 50/50. It's right down
the middle whether it's men or women covering or on the
other end of the phone. Once in a while people will call
and say "You know, I really don’t usually do this, but so-and-so’s on vacation and I have to ask about the first lady.” And I say “Oh, that’s all right. Don’t be embarrassed about it. You know, most of the people who cover are men. So you don’t have to worry.”

QUESTION: What is the difference, primary difference between the coverage of the president and the coverage of the first lady?

ANSWER: Very little, very little. As a matter of fact, the other night when one of the reporters had this little party with former press secretaries for Robin Orr, the day before she was fired, and they both, the UP, Helen Thomas and Marine Santeeny (phonetic), who are the White House press correspondents here, said -- told her that they covered both and they covered them in exactly the same way. There is no difference anymore. There used to be when I covered. There used to me. I mean I used to write down “Mrs. Nixon had on white pumps and she wore white pumps and she wore pearl earrings,” you know, and what we had and how she kept her lingerie drawer which she showed us. Well, I can’t imagine a first lady showing a reporter how she kept her lingerie drawer now. It’s just a whole different thing.

QUESTION: With Mrs. Muskie and Mrs. McGovern, were you still in the primarily female reporter stage there, or
had that begun to change?

ANSWER: With Mrs. -- I remember with Jane in '68, yes. But a vice-president’s wife doesn’t get all that much coverage anyway. But it was mostly going in and having local women’s talk shows, but mostly women’s page reporters, yes.

With Eleanor, Eleanor was a little bit different because Eleanor gave speeches and she would get up and she was, I think, more popular than George was a lot of the time. So that she was covered a little bit both ways.

As far as Rosalynn’s concerned, she’s always been -- there haven’t -- but that’s been, again, because of the change in the media, I mean the change in newspapers from going from the women’s section to -- I mean the society page to style or portfolio that has a little bit of everything, I think that’s the basic reason for it. I would say that Eleanor was kind of on the cutting edge of the new period where they were writing editorials now and then about her. There’s been no difference with Rosalynn.

I mean that’s one of the problems: If it’s not a political year or if you’re not talking about politics, what a first lady does, is it national? Is it local? Is it style?

And very often one of the most shocking things that’s happened to me in this administration was when the
President’s Commission on Mental Health was announced in the Eastern -- by the president and Mrs. Carter was made the honorary chairperson, it was not in the Washington Post. They didn’t know where to put it. It was not national news, it was not local news, and it was not style news. So none of the reporters picked it up. I mean this is something -- a significant piece. You know, you’re talking about millions of people being affected by this. So that -- that is a lot of reason for a, quote, unquote, “fuzzy image.” I mean you don’t know whether to report or (unintelligible).

Now, the minute you get into a political campaign and certainly the minute that you’re out being a surrogate for your husband, you’re on the national and you’re on the news and then you have a different image.

So all of these factors are . . .

QUESTION: This pressure on the first lady is also transmitted to the first lady’s press secretary. I would think you’ve got to be much more substantive in your information these days.

ANSWER: Oh, yes, I can tell you that the last year, I mean I have sitting over there a box of issues that, I mean, that I don’t care -- I mean at any moment Rosalynn would say “Now, exactly what is bio-mass or what did you say the unemployment figure in Lancing, Michigan is?”
mean, you know, it’s always a question of trying to keep up with her or keep ahead of her so that you can be helpful or saying -- I mean finally at the end, you know, I would say "Oh, I don’t know." I just carried everything with me, my head with me. It’s a great deal of pressure if you have a first lady who feels the necessity to answer all those questions.

In the past I would say that, in both Eleanor and Jane’s case, they would say “I don’t know.” But Rosalynn said over and over again, “I went out in ’76 and I promised people, I told people what Jimmy Carter would do. I cannot go back and say ‘I don’t know what he’s done.’” So she took a great deal of responsibility to keep informed and to be briefed.

QUESTION: You mentioned the mental health thing as being one of the greatest frustrations in this four years. What -- pick out one or two of your greatest triumphs in the press relations area, things you’re proudest of, events or image effect.

ANSWER: Well, one thing I was proud of is when we did an hour documentary with BBC, which somehow or other you sort of feel like you’re, you know, kind of a producer behind there because you’re picking out the kinds of things that you think that you’d like to -- the showcase that was for a series called “The Americans.” It’s still
being shown all over the world. They sold it to Time Life here. Those kinds of things. Some of the television things that we did that were sort of, you know, I felt that I had a great deal to do with that. Some of the speeches that I wrote for her, which she and the president both liked and maybe changed a word or two and the (unintelligible).

QUESTION: Pick out one or two, one or two that we'll have in the library, and we need to know they came from your (unintelligible).

ANSWER: Well, one that was sort of an answer to the (unintelligible), and it's in the National Press Club speech, and the Morehouse College speech and the speech she gave for the Mental Health Association dinner about courage. You know, just (unintelligible).

But then on the other hand, there are a lot of speeches I was very proud of, the one she gave the other day that was in the paper. That's -- to me, the idea of saying "I would like you to give a speech and write (unintelligible)," it would be wonderful to give a speech that we could get up in that little corner next to Herb Block's (phonetic) cartoon and get somehow or other on the editorial pages of the Washington Post, and then to pick up the paper and see the speech and see an editorial about her accomplishments in the city is about as satisfying
as -- in this job.

But on the other hand, there were so many things where I would send her an idea and she’d diddle with it and then send it back, and then I would fool with it or somebody would have a lot of input into it or, you know, we’d send it . . . I guess it’s the things that -- oh, and when she went up to see the Pope, to meet -- greet the Pope, and there were a lot of people who wrote a lot of different things. And I guess really, basically, I take some credit. And she and I sort of together wrote what she said. I mean I feel very -- we can talk about those things, but those things are satisfying.

QUESTION: Did you advise the first lady on how she should -- what kind of image she should try to put forward or what here appearance should be? Did you ever give her specific advice?

ANSWER: Only when asked, when she would ask me if that would be -- oh, sometimes when we went on -- I remember when she went on the Phil Donahue show, I said “Wear that great white suit and that blue thing because it’s just perfect,” sometimes like that. Or I’d say “What are you going to wear?,” and she’d say “I don’t know. What should I wear?” when something was very important.

“Image” is a word I just hate. I mean, you know, you are what you are and you make the best out of that. And
as far as her image is concerned, I’ve always thought that
the very aspects of her life, the various phases of her
life, she should just be very proud of them and just let
them all -- be as candid about them as she can be.

QUESTION: Was the first lady a person who did try to
run her own staff and spoke frequently with each of the
major office heads, or was she someone who preferred to be
a little removed?

ANSWER: Nobody ever knew when -- when the phone
rings -- and I mean she’s the most (unintelligible), I’m
sure. In picking up the phone, someone would say “Well,
have you talked to her today?”

“No. Have you talked to her?”

“Well, she just called me three times” or “She just
talked to me.” Or we’ll say “She’s really upset about
this” and she talks to a lot of different people.

She’s not the most organized person in the world.
And she’s very much, I think, like the president in terms
of -- but -- when I say “but,” being very, very meticulous
about everything. I mean a lot of times we’ve all said,
“If she’d just turn that over to us and not worry about
it. Why does she spend her time worrying about that,
because we’ve all worried about it and we can handle it.”
And I think that she probably learned to work from the
president. I think that’s the way the president works,
from what I understand.

QUESTION: You've had close associations with three very important women in this time and age. How would you compare them on intelligence, on personality, on initiative, on substance, the degree to which they're interested in substantive issues, and on their relationship to their husband and his work? How would you -- 25 words or less.

ANSWER: Well, that's a tough one. Yeah, that's a tough one. I mean I think that I couldn't compare them and I wouldn't because they're so different. I mean they're all of them very, very loyal, unswervingly loyal. I mean, my gosh, I think all three of them would tie themselves to a railroad track to help their husbands. Their personal relationships have ranged from practically non-existence to -- I think the Carters probably have one of the closest marriages I've ever seen. I mean it is something that I think perhaps has caused a lot of bad press from maybe cynical women reporters or male reporters who see this and really say "Oh, that's too good to be true" are maybe a little jealous of them.

I think that in terms of intelligence, they've all had this great innate intelligence. Jane was kind of what I -- is a very open kind of person, but at the same time she kind of covers up how much she knows. Eleanor would,
you know, has an endlessly seeking mind. And George once said to me, "She's totally enamored at the last person she talked to." But it was wonderful, she had books and she had sayings and she had quotations. And I spent most of time trying to write this book really for her, figuring out which one of her quotations she really like the most. She loved ideas.

Rosalynn is by far the most driving, pragmatic, I suppose. I don't know. I certainly (unintelligible) in terms of intelligence, I think a lot of it has to do with what you're opportunity is. I think maybe that's the word, "opportunity," is seeing an opportunity and making the most out of it. Rosalynn, by all counts, probably took advantage of opportunities more than anybody else I've ever worked for, whether the other two women and other people as well.

But I would never really compare them. They're all -- I don't see much of Eleanor anymore because Eleanor is a very -- she's in (unintelligible). Her politics and the president's politics are obviously at such variance that she felt that we could not be close. But I'll see her again when this is all over. You know, we'll be friends.

QUESTION: Are there any other things that you'd like to talk about I haven't brought up about the last four
years in the job and the things you’ve done?

ANSWER: I can’t think of any. I have to take time to sort it all out. I mean I don’t know what’s been the most satisfying and what has been the most difficult. It’s been all those things together.

QUESTION: And --

ANSWER: It’s been a very -- I wouldn’t have missed it. Really, I wouldn’t have missed it. I think you probably could only take it so long at the pace we’ve been going, even at any stage in life, that the volume is tremendous.

QUESTION: Yeah, and the hours, I would imagine.

ANSWER: Yeah.

QUESTION: Could you say just you or staff director -- and you’ve been here and worked with people in the East Wing, of course, the whole four years. Could you say a little bit about how the job has been broken down and just a brief bit about the personalities of each of the persons here?

ANSWER: Well, Gretchen Posten is the social secretary. And Gretchen, as we laughingly call her, our Cecil B. DeMille. She’s a very creative, very driving person who is, I think, probably difficult to work for, but people seem to follow her with great -- with great enthusiasm. And I think her ideas that she presents to
the president and Mrs. Carter about want she wants to have
done here have been extraordinarily creative in many way
if you really go back and look over them.

She has a key role, because, of course, she not only
has to worry about what Mrs. Carter wants but what the
president wants and what the senior staff of the West Wing
wants. So her job is very, very important. I mean I told
Mrs. Reagan’s people that they had to have a press
secretary and a social secretary by inauguration day.
They didn’t need all these other people until they got
that settled because those two things . . . And the press
secretary and the social secretary have to work very well
together. And Gretchen and I have had a good
relationship; I mean ideas that just, you know, spring off
each other. I mean she’s very good at taking somebody’s
else suggestions and saying "That’s a fabulous idea." And
we work well together, I think.

Kathy Cade, who is Mrs. Carter’s projects director,
is a very bright young woman who’s more probably -- she’s
a pragmatic person. I think she probably -- she’s very
smart. She has gone into the substance of the mental
health legislation. She is very careful about follow-
through. I have a very good relationship with Kathy, I
think. We’ve -- this is kind of a healthy competition
over here, I think.
Mrs. Carter's scheduler, Jane Fenderson, is someone I've know for a long time. She worked with Senator Muskie. Her job -- I don't know. That's a different kind of a job. The scheduler can do either -- be the person who kind of tells the first lady what to do or she can just be the person that puts the schedule together. I have probably the least -- even though she's been my friend the longest, I have the least relationship with her.

Madeline has become really a close friend 'cause we've traveled, the three -- Madeline and Rosalynn and Mary have been on those planes everyplace. I mean every place Rosalynn goes, Madeline goes as a personal assistant and I go as her press secretary. So over the years we've worked out a very good relationship there. We're very, very different, but I respect her for what she does and I think that . . .

QUESTION: How are you different?

ANSWER: Well, we're just very, very different. I mean Madeline is a very kind of bureaucratic person. She knows -- she's very proprietary about the first lady. She really takes care of her. She really protects her. We're just very different, that's all. But I respect her for what she does and for being very tough when she has to be and saying "no" to a lot of things. And that's a problem
that, you know, some people can't say "no." The people that I've probably had the least -- I mean I have very little tolerance for people who are not able to say "I'm sorry, that's not right for the first lady" and to just really handle it for it, to turn things down. That's one thing you have to do. That's just (unintelligible).

QUESTION: I would think so.

ANSWER: So that's about it. I have no relationship with Kit Dobelle, and very few people here do. She's a nice person, but I just don't know what she does.

QUESTION: She's officially staff director?

ANSWER: Right.

QUESTION: Are there regular staff meetings or...

ANSWER: No. We've only had one since she's one. We had one.

QUESTION: This is crossing the line a little bit in administrations, but you made a reference to a party in which Robin Orr attending, a party for Robin Orr, past first lady's press secretaries. According to the Post, the Washington Post, there was a story that developed that evening about supposedly Nancy Reagan had suggested that the Carters might move out of the White House early. What do you know about that story?

ANSWER: I don't know whether it did or not. That story, Helen Thomas was at that party, Helen Thomas and
Marine Santeeny, Mrs. Nixon's press secretary was there, Liz Carpenter was there, I was there, a couple of other reporters. Unfortunately, I got lost and I was late and I had a dinner date and I had to leave early. The story was that everybody left and Helen stayed behind and Robin told her this. That has been denied, so I don't know that that was the case or not. It was very clear to me the day that I met Robin with Mrs. Reagan and Mrs. Reagan (unintelligible) to Mrs. Carter. Kit and I were there and Robin and Nancy Reynolds were there, the (unintelligible) of us. And it was clear that this was -- was not the right choice.

She came over the next day to see me too. And I feel very -- I think it's a human tragedy what happened to her, that she was not hired. It's a very good example of not hiring somebody in advance, I mean before you see them or talk to them. And she should never have taken the job without talking to Mrs. Reagan. I mean if you cannot -- if you have to go through somebody, which now they just this afternoon said that Peter. McCoy, the staff director, will be working -- will be a deputy assistant to the president, which means that they're going to go back again. I don't think the East Wing, as we have seen it and as it is now will ever be the same -- will be the same in this administration. It will now be back the way it
was when Erlichman and Halderman ran it, really, and told people what to do. So if that’s the way Mrs. Reagan wants it, it will probably work out fine. It will be just intolerable for me and I know Mrs. Carter. I’ve heard Mrs. Carter say, you know, several times when I’d say “Well, so-and-so said that,” and she’d say “Well, so-and-so is not my staff. He works for Jimmy.” I mean -- you know.

QUESTION: She treasured her independence?

ANSWER: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

QUESTION: Was Robin -- Robin Orr has described herself as a chatty-Kathy kind of person. Was that the problem --

ANSWER: Oh (unintelligible) is what I call her. I mean she just walked right in in front of -- Helen Thomas is really the dean, I suppose you would say, of the reporters. She’s been around and she’s been No. 2 and No. 1, I guess. She walked in and said, “Well, I’m sorry that” -- she said, “I’ve had” -- “let me tell you two things that have happened.” She said, “I have just had two hours with the dean of all women reporters in Washington, Betty Beal.” [sp?] And, of course, at that point everyone -- you know, Betty is a social columnist, and here she was with very hard -- serious, hardcore reporters. And I think she simply was naïve. She had not
been to Washington. She had no idea what she was getting in for. She just was wrong for the job. So I think it's just such a shame. She worked for 30 years and gave up her job. It must be humilitating for her.

QUESTION: Yes.

ANSWER: I'm going to write to her and tell her I saw (unintelligible).

QUESTION: Especially played out in a national stage.

ANSWER: And then she -- well, yes, but then she came here and she asked me all of these questions about how -- who should Mrs. Reagan be interviewed by and who I -- I mean the naivete of coming in and expecting somebody to tell you how to run your job, I mean I was more than -- I mean people the people who have been here, I cannot tell you how much time I've spent on this transition trying to help people fill this job, which is fine, I'm happy to do it, but it reaches a point where ..

QUESTION: What do you plan to do now? Are you going back to your public relations firm or ..

ANSWER: No, I'll be doing -- I'm going to write and I'll probably do some speaking and I don't know. I'm not going to write about my four years at the White House, but I am a writer, I am a writer and that's what I do and that's what I love to do. And I look forward to a less public life. I mean I've been in and out and in and out,
you know, I mean back and forth and it's time now to take
in instead of give out so much.

QUESTION: You will not write about the first
lady's -- the first lady or about your Carter years?

ANSWER: Oh, in a context of an overall story about
my own life, I will. But not just a book about my four
years, never. And I've already told Rosalynn that -- I
mean I've been asked if I would write a book about
Rosalynn. As long as Rosalynn's going to write a book
about Rosalynn, then nobody else should write a book about
her.

QUESTION: And she is definitely going to do that?

ANSWER: I think so. She's talked about it.

QUESTION: Thank you.

ANSWER: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Anything else you'd like to say?

ANSWER: No, no.

QUESTION: Hope you'll come to the Carter Presidential
Library and see some of your contributions there.

ANSWER: Well, thank you.

[End of Recorded Material]