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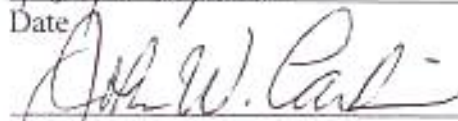
**HENRY LUCE III**

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This is an oral history interview conducted with Mr. Henry Luce III at his office in New York City on Wednesday, July 26th, 2000. The interviewer is Mack Teasley of the Eisenhower Library.

TEASLEY: Did you get the copy of the questions that I faxed? And I don't know if those seemed in line but I thought those would be a good place to start because you were in the White House with the White House press corps for the first year or so of the administration, is that right?

LUCE: No.

Q: No? You were a Time correspondent in Washington?

LUCE: Yes, but not a White House correspondent. I was White House correspondent on one trip that Ike made which was to Pennsylvania and to Texas. Dedicated a bridge over the Rio Grande with the president of Mexico.

Q: Ah. And other than that were you just reporting on national politics for Time?

LUCE: Well, I had several beats in Washington, I sort of got rotated among them. I had the Congress and Pentagon, independent agencies, the State Department, and, briefly, the White House.

Q: So did you come into contact with "Engine" Charlie Wilson when he was secretary of defense?

LUCE: No, it was Lovett.

Q: Lovett? Okay. During the Truman years more.

LUCE: That's right. I was there from '51 to '53 so it was about half Truman and half Eisenhower, or less than half Eisenhower. I left in, I think it was November of '53.

Q: So you were there when Stalin died--he died in March of '53--and that caused kind of a shake-up. Now, did you know Robert, or Chalmers Roberts? He . . .

LUCE: Washington Post. I met him.

Q: He said in an interview in '67 that Eisenhower wasn't approachable to the press in the sense that other presidents had been approachable and that he'd never in his whole time of covering the White House had had a personal conversation with Eisenhower as he had had with other presidents. Do you, did you have a similar experience?

LUCE: Well, I couldn't testify to that. I can say that on that little trip where-- I forget how long it was, it was about a week, maybe ten days, no, it wasn't that long. I didn't have a personal conversation with the president on that trip. But then I'm not aware that any of us in the press bus did. So I don't really know what his manner of handling, of meeting with reporters was. I mean, back at the White House he might well have gotten to know them. I mean, I'm sure that at his press conferences he knew the names when . . . . But I can see that he was probably more aloof than Harry Truman. I remember Harry was an extraordinarily personable character, I guess. One time he was in New York and my small son was walking down Madison Avenue to school, he was maybe ten. And suddenly he encountered the president and said, "Hello, Mr. President," or something. And so Truman asked him his name and asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up. And I think he said he wanted to be president. [Laughter]

Q: A good answer for Harry Truman. It's hard to imagine Eisenhower interacting like that with someone on the street. Probably this was during one of Harry Truman's famous walks, or something. Did you have contact with Secretary of State Dulles at all?

LUCE: Yes, he came to my home once with my father. They had a very high-domed conversation.



Q: And I know that Dulles was a Presbyterian and supposedly got moralistic in the issue of foreign policy and upset when nations were neutral in this struggle between the West and communism. I don't know if you sensed any of that?

LUCE: I'm not sure. You mean he'd rather have a country declare that it's communist rather than neutral? [Laughter]

Q: Probably want them to be honest. I don't know, that's a good point. But he was, he had trouble with India, for example, maintaining its neutrality and not sort of, maybe benefiting from the . . .

LUCE: Well, I think a lot of people have trouble with India. [Laughter]

Q: Yes, that's, for a variety of reasons, probably. Did you attend the . . .

LUCE: I remember attending a lunch, I don't know why I was invited, at the U.N. by the Indian ambassador. He was rather a noted figure. I can't think of the name but maybe you could. A very show-offy figure. Well, there was a conversation about civil rights in India. Oh, it was just after Little Rock and this guy, the ambassador, said something really offensive like, "President Eisenhower had called out the army to beat up on those poor people in Arkansas," or something to that effect. Somebody in the group said, "Of course, you have a very limited human rights system in India, don't you?" He said, "What do you mean? We follow the U.N. declaration of human rights to the last word. We absolutely observe it." And then somebody said, "What about the caste system? You have all these untouchables at the bottom of the caste system." Well, he denied that that was the case and you know, really [unintelligible] on the matter.

Q: Was that Menon, or something? There was maybe . . .

LUCE: Yes. Krishna . . .

Q: Krishna Menon, yes. I was thinking of the name, I think that's it.

LUCE: And then halfway through lunch when he had a group of thirty, maybe, at the table, halfway through lunch he fell asleep. [Laughter]

Q: Not a good host, either. You mentioned that you had seen John Foster Dulles in this informal setting with your father at one point, what was your impression of him as an individual?

LUCE: Well, he was a very self-serious, and you might say dour figure and personality, I would say. But, of course, enormously intellectual. He was always thinking and uttering serious statements.

Q: Now Nelson Rockefeller, another New Yorker, was on the White House staff in the early years. Did you have any contact with him, and maybe not in the White House. What was your impression of him?

LUCE: Well, not in the White House. When was he there?

Q: It was probably '53 and I'm not even sure of his title.

LUCE: With Ike?

Q: It was when Eisenhower was president and he was maybe on some commission or something to do with studying national security readiness.

LUCE: Well, I had been on the staff of the Hoover Commission, the first Hoover Commission, as Joe Kennedy's assistant and as a result of that when Ike was elected there was formed a group to review and sort of summarize the recommendations of the Hoover Commission as a working paper for the new president. And this thing was funded, primarily, as I recall, by Nelson Rockefeller. And it was conducted under the auspices of Temple University in Philadelphia.

The then president of Temple was an early "Time inc.'er" and so he was who I was and I guess I had heard of him. But he had been advertising director in the early days, a guy named Johnson. So we met with him and he was our host, sort of. We holed up in the Bartley Hotel, the old Bartley Hotel in Britain House Square for, you know, like three weeks. We weren't allowed out of the place, we worked around the clock. We took a stroll around the Square in the evening, period. This was a whole group of people recruited from the Hoover Commission, mostly, and some others. And so we did this sort of high-pressured, fast job of re-writing the body of reports from the Hoover Commission which was, you know, a couple of shelves. So in the space of a short period of time we all worked around the clock and got it into a new form for the new president. We didn't see anything much of Nelson in that context, we just knew he was backing it. And so I didn't know him in the White House. You say fifty- . . .

Q: '53, I think.

LUCE: Yes, well, I was there most of '53 but not the White House except for that trip that I mentioned. Anyway, so my encounter with Nelson didn't occur until later in connection with building the Time-Life Building. We were partners with Rockefeller Center, Time Inc. was, and so I saw quite a bit of him in that connection. What was my opinion of him? I learned that he is a tyro. He had these impulsive enthusiasms, where he would go all out whether he was collecting art or building a building or whatever, or wanting to have a lot of cattle in Venezuela, or something. [Laughter] And he would get so enthusiastic that he would go all out but then this often led to errors, ethical errors. I mean, like when he was governor he started paying the state officials out of his own pocket. He thought that would be a good incentive to bring better people into government. But, of course, it's illegal! [Laughter] And so that's why I was struck by this element of tyro which means as I indicated being impetuous and superficial in enthusiasms. And so there was one critical thing about the building. I mean, we went along for, you know, a year or two designing this building working with the architects. They never let on that Nelson had decreed that the window glass of the building was to be green. And finally I found out about this and nobody had let on for the longest time. And when I finally found out about it I said, "Now,



how are the art directors of the magazines who make color corrections on proofs going to work behind green glass?" [Laughter]

Q: Good question!

LUCE: And so, we said we couldn't tolerate that so finally we got rid of the green glass. But Nelson just assumed that would be a nice idea. He never thought, he ought to ask somebody whether it's acceptable.

Q: Used to having it his way, I guess, arbitrary.

LUCE: Yes.

Q: The work you did in coming back and summarizing the earlier findings of the Hoover Commission, that's what you did, right? You came back right on the eve of the, because that was, the first Hoover Commission was during the Truman administration?

LUCE: That was about '48.

Q: But then you came back and . . .

LUCE: It was '48 and '49.

Q: Came back and did a . . .

LUCE: So this was January of '53.

Q: And see what was applicable or what the new administration might, what instruction it might take from that. Because I know there was a pretty good effort at, I think, reorganizing the federal government.

LUCE: Yes, right, that's what it was about. Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch was its name.

Q: And there was a second Hoover Commission.

LUCE: There was a second one a few years later, a couple years later, I guess. Hoover did both, which was amazing!

Q: And we actually have the records of one of them, of the second one at the Library. So that was an interesting experience it sounds.

LUCE: Oh, it was. It was the equivalent to a MBA education in government.

Q: So was Herbert Hoover actively involved in that then?

LUCE: Oh, absolutely. Much too much. He didn't know how to let go. I mean, he'd have reports on the various subjects. Each part of the government was divided up into different reports and he'd make them go through version after version of these reports. I mean, up into the twenties.

Q: Micro-managing as I guess we would call it today or something.

LUCE: It always amused me. Some version would leak out to Scotty Reston of the New York Times and you'd pick up the Times and you'd read that the Hoover Commission is going to recommend such and such. Well, we were now looking at version number twenty-three and Scotty Reston was writing from version sixteen so he was already way out of date. [Laughter]

Q: A leak overtaken by events. I don't know whether you had a personal interest in Asia but I think some people have criticized the Eisenhower administration for being Euro-centric and, you



know, Dulles was maybe that way, and Eisenhower had only served in Europe, except for the experience in the Philippines, but . . .

LUCE: Yes, he worked for MacArthur.

Q: Yes. Whether in, some people even theorize that we backed into Vietnam because of concessions we made to France over German participation . . .

LUCE: I never, I read your point about that, I'm unfamiliar with that. Was the idea being that we would take over Indochina from the French as a favor to them?

Q: That we made concessions to them, they didn't, they were reluctant to give up their colonial grasp of Indochina and we acquiesced in turn for their concession of allowing the rearmament of Germany in Europe, which sounds like an academic conspiracy theory. But I think that . . .

LUCE: Well, I don't remember knowing about any such connection. Not that it didn't happen, I don't know.

Q: Yes. Did you . . .

LUCE: I remember thinking, I mean, the Vietnam problem started at the time of the Korean War. And I remember thinking, "Well, we ought to put the two together and while we're cleaning up Korea, clean up Indochina at the same time." But that didn't happen.

Q: It is kind of ironic that it would come back to haunt us, fifteen years later probably. It's an interesting lesson for America, I think. Were you present at any of Eisenhower's press conferences and experiencing his supposed convoluted syntax?

LUCE: I remember about the syntax, of course, I read it. But, no, I did not attend his press conferences. I mean, other than whatever there may have been on that one-week trip.

Q: One trip, yes. Eisenhower, as a matter of fact, was a fairly good writer and editor when he did his books. He'd talk about the twentieth version. He would draft a speech and go over it and over it and over it. Which, of course, isn't always good but he viewed himself as a pretty good writer and I think that the people around him thought he was too. Did you have much contact . . .

LUCE: But you're absolutely right. His oral statements, the grammar, got very confused.

Q: I don't know how apocryphal it is, the story that he told Hagerty, if the press asked this question about nuclear weapons he'd just go out and confuse them, which he preceded to do when he went out there and answered the question. But if he did it intentionally that's really intriguing. Did you have much contact with Jim Hagerty?

LUCE: No.

Q: The press secretary. I think he's viewed by historians as one of the better press secretaries we've had since that job has come around.

LUCE: I think that's probably right.

Q: He was in radio or TV here in New York. Maybe he was with one of the networks, I think, at one point. Did you come into contact with Sherman Adams at all?

LUCE: No.

Q: The chief of staff. No?

LUCE: I just have the impression that he was a man of intelligence and integrity and that the problem with the fur coat was some kind of an accident or something he hadn't paid attention to. And it seemed a little unfair to nail him on that.

Q: I think it was a, maybe, not an innocent lapse in judgment, but I think he was such a straight arrow in every facet of his life that this was just a little . . . . He had a blind spot to this and didn't realize this vicuna coat incident was a minor sin but was enough to get him when the time came. I don't know if you have a sense or not of whether you think the press was fair to Eisenhower during his administration, in writing and reporting about him? You were there for . . .

LUCE: Well, I think there was a limited amount of reporting about how he seemed not to be decisive and should be more so. And I think it was not known but became apparent later when historians went to work on the record that he would often get things done behind the scenes that were not visible publicly. And as a result he got a lot more done than at the time the press or people were aware of. That is certainly the conclusion arrived at by our former Henry R. Luce Professor at Princeton, Fred Greenstein, who made himself a specialist on the modern presidents. And he did a fairly extensive re-evaluation of Ike, Ike's presidency, in a positive direction.

Q: And he wrote that book called The Hidden-Hand Presidency, which he did research at the Library in Abilene for that. Are you familiar with his new book on presidents and emotional intelligence? Have you heard of the emotional intelligence movement? It's a book that came out a few years ago by, I think it's a psychologist named Goldman [Daniel P. Goleman] or something. His theory being your I.Q. is one thing, but your emotional intelligence will often mean more to determine your success or failure in endeavors; whether you control your temper, various self-control issues, and it's called your emotional intelligence quotient. And so Greenstein has taken this and looked at recent presidents and rated them. Maybe JFK rated lower in emotional intelligence in his personal life and Eisenhower, the straight arrow, ranks pretty high. I haven't read the book but it would be an interesting study, I think, pretty subjective probably. It would be hard to measure.

LUCE: You'd rank Kennedy low on that?



Q: Well, I'm just supposing that if we talk about reckless behavior, you know, that sort of thing.

LUCE: Oh, that! Yes. [Laughter]

Q: I haven't read the book so I'm not, I'm just guessing that he might have . . .

LUCE: Clinton? [Laughter]

Q: Clinton, off the scale I suppose. I think at Time that you wrote on Vice President Nixon too, didn't you, on some of your work?

LUCE: Well, I did a cover story on him.

Q: And so was that during the Eisenhower period, or was that after that? I'm wondering what your impression was of Richard Nixon.

LUCE: Well, it was as vice president and the judgment in the story, I think, is that he might well be counted as the most effective vice president we'd had up to that time. It was very positive.

Q: Now did you interview him . . .

LUCE: And there was some detailing of that, of course, about his trips abroad where, his diplomatic missions and so on. That he got things done.

Q: So did you follow him around for a while, or interview him, or how did you gather the material for the story?

LUCE: Well, I knew him, of course. I had known him as a reporter. When I did the cover story I'm a writer in New York under the Time system that the two are well separated and that the

writer works from dispatches sent in by the reporters. So I don't think I interviewed him for that story. It would have been some of the Washington correspondents.

Q: Did you have social contact with him earlier or since?

LUCE: Well, I remember meeting him at the '52 convention in Chicago and there he was standing in the lobby of the Conrad Hilton Hotel under a palm tree and one had a few chats with him.

Q: And what was your impression of him as an individual?

LUCE: Well, he was a very strong personality. I remember other occasions later where I was able to hear his conversation about significant matters and it was very powerful talk. I mean, he had very firm opinions and articulated them with great conviction. No, you couldn't miss it. My recollection of those occasions is so in contrast to what one heard on the tape in the Watergate time when his voice would be meandering around and worrying and reflecting a lot of puzzlement and indecisiveness. He somehow seemed like a different person then.

Q: He must have had a very public persona that he projected, an image that he projected. I got to meet him one time when he came to Mamie's funeral in Abilene and he was very impressive in person. A very complex person, I'm sure.

LUCE: Oh, yes.

Q: Have you met Julie? Julie Eisenhower?

LUCE: Patricia I know.

Q: Patricia lives in New York.

LUCE: I am on the board of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships and David is on that but doesn't show up much.

Q: David lives down in Philadelphia and I think he and Julie are living the suburban family life of driving the kids to games in a station wagon and things like that, although I think their older daughter just graduated from college. The middle son is a freshman at the University of Colorado so they get out to Abilene periodically. Did you know Emmet John Hughes?

LUCE: Yes, very well.

Q: He wrote a couple of books on the Eisenhower administration, The Ordeal of Power and America the Invincible.

LUCE: Well, he had been a Democrat, in the campaign he came out and was made a sort of a symbol of a Democrat for Eisenhower and he supported him. And I think went into the administration, didn't he?

Q: Yes, he was a speechwriter and really was there for . . .

LUCE: And then at some point turned on him in a later book. And I remember being very out of sorts with him. I saw him once and made some nasty comment to him about his behavior and he was obviously taken aback by that. I was a little embarrassed, on reflection, of having said it. [Laughter] But I think he never spoke to me again.

Q: He didn't share his motivation, I mean, it must have been out of conviction, I suppose. Today there are a lot of so-called "kiss and tell" books . . .

LUCE: I cast an aspersion on him. [Laughter]

Q: I see.



LUCE: I was quite, I don't know why, why should I be upset that somebody changes his political view, but anyway, I was.

Q: And your contact with him before that had been at Time, Inc. as a colleague?

LUCE: Yes, and socially. I knew his wife, Eileen, and his daughter, Kate. I mean, his wife, Kate, his second wife, who is Edmund Nouri's daughter.

Q: Did you ever discuss your views on Eisenhower with him other than that one little conflict, confrontation?

LUCE: I don't remember particularly doing that.

Q: But he was a known Democrat, I guess, in the administration. Democrats for Eisenhower.

LUCE: Well, that's how he was labeled in the '52 campaign. He made a speech at the convention. But then you assume he'd become a republican.

Q: C.D. Jackson is another Time man, did you know C.D.?

LUCE: Oh, yes.

Q: His fingerprints are all over the materials in the library and we have a lot of people studying psychological warfare during the early Cold War years. How did you know him and what was your assessment of C.D.?

LUCE: Well, how did I know him? He was in the company. C.D. had a reputation for being a consummate character assassin of a lot of other people.

Q: Internecine warfare?

LUCE: And when I was in London I met up with a man who was then majority leader in the House of Commons and had been in the Cabinet. He was Richard, I can't think of the last name, [Richard Grossman] but he and C.D. were partners in North Africa in the intelligence service during the war, Richard representing Britain, and C.D. representing America. And they did all this spook stuff in North Africa during that campaign together. So when I met up with this man I asked him about C.D. And he proceeded--he'd been partners, friends [Laughter]--and he proceeded to assassinate C.D.'s character like nobody I ever heard before. So he was the past master at it.

Q: So he was famous for his character assassination, not just on behalf of his country, but in the business world too.

LUCE: Yes. Well, he liked to knock heads together, rather irrationally and often. And he did that to me with colleagues, so I didn't appreciate it particularly.

Q: Sort of confrontational, or just . . .

LUCE: Yes.

Q: Before I forget it, I'm supposed to say hello to you from Marie McCrum, do you remember her?

LUCE: Really?

Q: I just saw her yesterday. She's given us a few things for the Library that she had. She was C.D.'s secretary.

LUCE: Oh, yes.

Q: And she lives in New York over on 42nd Street. I told her I was coming to see you and she said, oh, she said, "I think he'll probably remember me so please say hello."

LUCE: I actually do. I have a very favorable memory of her, unlike her boss.

Q: I had met her for the first time and she seemed like a very, very nice lady. Did C.D. come back to Time then after his . . .

LUCE: Oh, yes. He had many senior, very senior jobs. In fact, he got to be, well, one of three or four in management. He was very close to my father.

Q: How had they met? They weren't college chums or something, were they?

LUCE: I don't know how it originated.

Q: I guess your father must have either tolerated him or didn't share the . . .

LUCE: He saw him as a troubleshooter. That's what he was, I guess, except that sometimes he made trouble as much as he fixed it. But anyway, I think, I'm sure Dad saw him as a troubleshooter and expected him to get things fixed. So he depended on him a lot.

Q: Well, Time, Inc. loaned several people to the Eisenhower administration and they would come and go because I think C.D. was there twice maybe and Emmet Hughes. I don't know whether Time had done that for previous administrations, or whether it was just this one was the right party, I suppose?

LUCE: I only know of those two unless, well, I suppose you can count Charlie Murphy too. He was with the Air Force.

Q: So I assume that was because of the organization's favorable--being pleased that there was a new administration in town.



LUCE: I think Ike asked my father to give him some talent to help him out.

Q: I don't know if you're familiar with the ranking of historians, that they've done of Eisenhower? When he left office he was the 34th president and he was ranked 23rd by Arthur Schlesinger and some other historians, which of course, put him in about the bottom quarter. He was below average according to these people. The mumbling, grandfatherly, golf-playing type and then gradually his reputation has seemed to have gone up. I don't know if you have any views on that?

LUCE: Well, I thought I'd already expressed some of that, particularly with Greenstein.

Q: Yes, I guess the historical record has been reviewed. Historians have traditionally ranked Harry Truman above Eisenhower too.

LUCE: Well, and Truman has risen in that estimation since being in office. I see that you had a reference to his popularity with the press, which may be, but there were a lot of us in Washington who were mostly concerned with the five-percenters and the cronies and what we saw as a corrupt administration. The all-night poker games and whatever. I think it mostly was later when his foreign policy initiatives became better appreciated. The Greece-Turkey initiative and the Point Four technical advice and I forget what all the others were. I suppose the Marshall Plan to a great extent. So he did a lot in foreign policy which became better appreciated later, I think.

Q: Something you mentioned before too, you talked about the view of Eisenhower not being decisive. I think Truman was viewed as being decisive.

LUCE: Yes, yes.

Q: Rightly or wrongly he was decisive.

LUCE: Oh, yes. Dropped the atom bomb which a lot of people still argue as to its appropriateness. Well, you had a question in there about Joe McCarthy and I covered a lot of the Joe McCarthy period, including a cover story and my impression is that Ike was far too passive about McCarthy. Particularly--throwing out names of alleged communists was one thing, but when he attacked the army and his secretary of the army, for God knows what, I can't remember. He shouldn't have stood still for that a moment. It seemed to me he waited a long time on that. And the secretary of the army, who was that business man who came out of the textile company [Robert T. Stevens], he was a patsy for Joe. I mean, on TV you could see him sort of just shrinking. I mean, he wasn't strong at all. And Ike didn't help him out, it seemed to me, adequately and tolerated this attack from McCarthy.

Q: And historians have criticized him for that, obviously, and most people probably think rightly so. And Greenstein talked about the hidden-hand approach to undermining McCarthy but some people still think it was too little, too late.

LUCE: Yes. Well, I don't know about too late. I mean, he got his comeuppance and he died and so it didn't last all that long. [Laughter] Strange man.

Q: Yes, Tail-gunner Joe. One last thing, what was your view of the Chiang Kai-shek and the so-called "China Lobby" and how strong was it and do you have any views on the . . .

LUCE: I don't know how to measure the strength of the China Lobby actually. I mean, it always appeared to me that it was an invention of the left-wing press. There were four or five characters around who would make statements on supporting Chiang and the Kuomintang and in many cases they had very little, near as I could tell, they had very little contact with each other. But they were labeled the "China Lobby." It seemed to me it was mostly mythical. My father was identified as a member of it. I can't think of the man's name who was probably the most vocal on the subject but my father had, as far as I'm aware, no contact with him. He did have contact with

Walter Judd, whom I knew well, and was a marvelous man. A member of Congress, and he was, obviously, a leading member if there was such a thing as a China Lobby.

Q: But you had a very good opinion of him?

LUCE: Oh, yes. Dedicated man and wonderful orator and a China missionary so he can't be all bad. [Laughter]

Q: Well, I think that was all the questions I have.

LUCE: Really? Well, we covered a lot of ground. What other topic is of interest?

Q: Maybe Eisenhower's place in history. That's pretty . . .

LUCE: Well, we've sort of covered some of that.

Q: Yes.

LUCE: Well, I think his place in history will be quite high. And as we've discussed the historians have been for bringing him higher since his term. The decade of the '50s was an extraordinary one of peace after the war and prosperity in rebuilding after the war and very little in the way of ideological movements, I mean in this country, other than a little bit of communism, which were a small minority. And so there was the saying that "Ike's in his White House and all's well with the world." And I kind of love that as a thumbnail description of the decade.

Q: Good.