

INTERVIEW WITH
Robert S. Kieve

by

Dr. Thomas Soapes

on

April 10, 1978

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



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This interview is being conducted with Mr. Robert S. Kieve at the Harvard Club in New York City on April 10, 1978. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes. Present for the interview are Mr. Kieve and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: What was your first introduction to the political world? How did you get involved in politics?



MR. KIEVE: In a very curious way in that most people who were involved in the Eisenhower Administration in the early days were involved in it because they worked on the campaign. I did not work on the campaign. I happened to be an old friend of Emmet Hughes who was, beginning in September of 1952, the chief speech writer for the candidate. And as a friend of Emmet's I kind of lived with him the speeches that he was writing. But I was at that time a hack writer for CBS and was not at all involved in politics, and I have to confess that I wasn't even certain whom I was going to vote for. I had an intense feeling of respect and affection for Eisenhower, but I also had a great deal of respect for [Adlai] Stevenson. And I remember having many arguments with Emmet during the period of the campaign about how good Stevenson was. We both decided that Eisenhower was a very worthy candidate, but there was some disagreement about how worthy Stevenson was. I thought he was very worthy. At any rate

I did vote for Eisenhower. And by what can only be called a whim on Emmet Hughes' part, when he was drafted, and that was virtually what it was, to go to Washington as an assistant to the President, he decided that he needed an assistant himself or it was decided for him that he needed one. And by a whim he decided that I should be that assistant.

My experience with Emmet had simply been that we had both spent some very exciting times together in the American Embassy in Madrid during World War II. And he was head of the office-- incidentally head of the office at the age of 22--and I was 21. And we had a really very, very stimulating, exciting time over there and a very close relationship, and we maintained that relationship when we got back to this country.



So that was how I suddenly found myself in an office in the East Wing of the White House having had nothing whatever to do with electing the President, having not done anything at all except to read an occasional draft of an occasional speech by Emmet and to say, "Gee, I think this is a good speech."

[Laughter]

SOAPES: So you didn't make any contribution to Emmet Hughes' speech writing in the '52 campaign?

KIEVE: None.

SOAPES: What kind of writing had you been doing at CBS?

KIEVE: Oh, hack writing. It was promotional writing. I wrote the kind of announcement that said, "The Jack Benny Show is on tomorrow night. Be sure to view it or listen to it." I was working on both radio and television, so there was nothing the least bit creative about it. I had done a lot of writing before that--most of it in Spain, some of it at college--but that job was one from which Emmet actually rescued me.

SOAPES: Now then, when you got to the White House what was your portfolio?



KIEVE: Well, it was whatever Emmet Hughes wanted me to do at the beginning and whatever he wanted me to do was really to help him research speeches. Actually, I'm sorry, that was half of what I had to do, to help him research speeches. If, for example, they were going to have a speech as they did on April 17, of 1953, on the subject of how the United States might use any funds saved from a disarmament venture that it might enter into with the Soviet Union, then it was up to me to decide how many

dollars it would take to construct a hospital, and how the funds saved by not building a destroyer could create a hospital or how the funds saved in not building a fighter plane might be used in paving roads. That sort of thing. And so it was I who had to do the research on that.

The other part of my work was a lot less stimulating than that. It was to draft for the President some of his most utterly unimportant correspondence. A man would celebrate his hundredth birthday in Paducah, North Carolina, and the President would tell him that he was delighted to learn about it. And I would do the drafting of that. Or somebody--a group--would be holding its annual convention in New York City, and they had invited the President to speak before it and the President, of course, could not. So instead he would send a message on that occasion. Now on most of those cases the people themselves would send, presumptuously, a draft of what they would like the President to say in greeting them. And I would then edit that. Presumptuously. [Laughter] And so that was my job.



SOAPES: You mentioned the April, '53, speech on the death of Stalin to the American--

KIEVE: Yes. That's right. That's exactly what it was. It was the first utterance after the death of Stalin. Yes.

SOAPES: Do you remember anything particular about the creation of that speech?

KIEVE: Oh, very much.



SOAPES: About what type of guidance you got as to what Eisenhower's purpose was in that speech.

KIEVE: Well, I remember this only, Tom, because of what Emmet told me about it. I remember that I was with Emmet on one occasion, and he had already gone through quite a few drafts of that speech and wrestled with it with Dulles and with a few other people. Suddenly the phone rang. Ann Whitman, who was the President's secretary, asked him to come down. And Emmet ran downstairs, across to the West Wing. And I remember seeing him go on that occasion, and I remember when he came back--oh, a half hour or so later-- he was a very excited guy. He was then maybe all of 30 years old. A very excited guy. He had--as he told me the story--he'd gone into the Oval Office and had seen the President pacing back and forth, and the President saw him, as I remember his telling me about it, he said, "Sit down, Emmet, I want to

tell you something. I was--just a little while ago--just before I called you--I was standing over there at that window and I heard a noise up above and I looked up and there was a little speck in the sky which I could recognize as a"--and he gave it the letter and number--some kind of fighter plane. He said, "And as I looked at it I thought to myself 'the money from that plane I just wonder how much good it could do in this world if instead of putting that damn thing up in the sky we could build hospitals with it or something of that kind!' And it occurred to me that the one thing we haven't done with the Soviets right now, and that we might do with them now on this occasion of Stalin's passing and somebody elses coming on the scene is let them know that we would like to reduce our armaments and with them to do some good for the world with the money that we save thereby." And he went into this outline which I just went into with you just a moment ago and told Emmet how he would like to build up the speech on that subject, on the subject of how we could make use of funds of this kind for the betterment of mankind. And Emmet came back up to the East Wing and was really all excited about what he'd heard the President say, and sat down and started banging it out.



And it was curious in those days, they would go through a draft on a Monday, and it would be arbitrarily marked "draft four" only because they'd lost count. It was really fourteen, you know. And then two days later there would be a draft, "Draft six," two days later. So you would know that "draft five," if indeed they were keeping track, had been the day in between and it would be curious to see what had happened. And I'm speaking about something very specific because I happen to have both of these drafts, four and six, and they were indeed dated two days apart. The President had taken--are you interested in this, am I going too far afield?

SOAPES: Yes. Yes, sure. No, that's all right.



KIEVE: The President had taken the draft number four that Emmet had written and had simply used the first page as his springboard. He had simply used the paper that was there and had scrawled on it, between lines and in the margins and underneath; all over the place. And two days later that page no longer existed because apparently he had taken it and looked at it again and crumpled it up and thrown it away. And the speech now began on what had

originally been page 2. Really very interesting. And it's symbolic of why I wanted very much to meet with you because I wanted to be able to communicate to you and anybody else the enormous capacity this man had for editing. A capacity that most people simply are totally unaware of. The general public thinks of him as a grandfatherly old man who had no concept of the English language, no interest in it, no feeling for the precision of words, no capacity for determining when a sentence ended and when it began, no knowledge of paragraphing or of organization, and yet in all of these things he had a greater capacity than anybody I've ever known. And I've known Emmet Hughes, and I think Emmet Hughes is an incredible man with the English language. But Eisenhower was about right up there. Absolute pedant with the English language. Insufferable.



SOAPES: Can you describe for me the character of the changes that he would make?

KIEVE: Yes. The best changes that he made were the best changes that editors make. He would shorten and sharpen. That's really what editing is all about--shortening something that somebody else has written and sharpening it in so doing. And he did have

that capacity. He did have the capacity for taking verbosity out of a document. He did have the capacity for finding shorter words. He did have the capacity for finding more precise words. He did have the capacity and the deep desire for taking poetic words and using functional ones instead. He had an enormous impatience with jargon, and there was no jargon he hated worse than military jargon. You're smiling. None of this has been said to you before or all of it has been said before?

SOAPES: I have heard occasionally some of this, but I was amused at your admission that he was impatient with military jargon because the military is just loaded with it. You can't function in the Army unless you use it. And here was the career military man not liking the military jargon.

KIEVE: Precisely.



SOAPES: Do you remember seeing anything coming over from the Pentagon for instance as drafts that he would work?

KIEVE: No. I don't remember specifically. I know that there were. I know that there were and I know that he hacked the hell

out of them, but I really don't have anything specific to tell you about that, unfortunately.

I made a list which maybe I can send to you--you may be interested in it--of do's and don'ts that I collected over the two years that I was writing for him.


SOAPES: That would be very interesting.



KIEVE: For example, don't ever start two consecutive paragraphs with the vertical pronoun. [Laughter] That was a cliché he liked, "the vertical pronoun." So somehow or other you could never do that, you could never start two consecutive--you'd have to bury the second one somewhere. Secondly, I remember that--this is not so much stylistic--but you must never assume that he knows something. For example, if he's sending a message to a group in national convention, he must never assume that he knows that they've done all kinds of great things. The Lions Club--he must never assume that he knows that the Lions Club has done so and so much for the blind. He must always be allowed to say "I understand that" or "I am told that." A mark of the man's overall modesty and intellectual integrity, really, I think, I remember once I used the word, "noble," and it had to do with something the Boy

Scouts were doing and back came a note from Ann Whitman saying the President wants you to know that the word, "noble," is one that should really never be attached to any enterprise whose scope is smaller than that of the Normandy landings. [Laughter]

What else did I have... Interesting thing, a dispute that I had going on for a long time with the word, "appreciation." I had the feeling, which I have with a little less fervor today; I had it then, that there were two uses of appreciation. You have appreciation for something and of something. In one case it's appreciation of art and in another case an appreciation for something that somebody has done. And it would depend--the preposition that followed would determine what it was. Not so Eisenhower, everything was "appreciation of" and whenever I said a "for" he would change it to "of." Incidentally, his changes were on the most idiotically unimportant messages. He didn't give a damn. If his name was on it, he was going to change it to be the way he wanted it to be. And finally, after this change had taken place, after he had made this change maybe five or six or seven times, I got a telephone call from Ann Whitman saying, "Bob, the President's getting a little sick of having to change this word. He doesn't like to have you using the word 'for' following the word 'appreciation'."



I said, "Ann, you know, I've noticed that, and I was going to talk to you about that because I really thing he's wrong about this and I just...."

And she just cut me short, and she said, "Bob?"

"Yes."

"I'm looking at the President's calendar and he has an opening at about 2:00 this afternoon. Would you like to come down here and tell him all about it?" [Laughter]

I said, "Okay, Ann, I got your message." [Laughter]

I remember also that I had a capacity for writing the crap I used to write because frankly it was just one step above the crap I wrote at CBS in most cases. I had a capacity for saying--gee, what was it. There was a construction that I used-- I'll have to send this to you. It was a "not only, but also" construction or something of what kind, and again, I got a note from Ann saying, "The President feels that once a week this would be okay, but do you have to use this in every damn one of your messages?" So again I didn't. But, you know, again it's an example of his sensitivity to style, a sensitivity that the vast majority of people who think they know what Eisenhower was and what he stood for would not believe. They believe exactly the



opposite. They believe on the basis of the transcripts of his press conferences that he had a very dismal capacity with the English language. And I have a theory on that too. Can I-- have you got room on the tape?

SOAPES: Okay, sure.



KIEVE: People forget that the first press conferences on which any President allowed verbatim direct quotation were Eisenhower's. Before Eisenhower, press conferences were always reported in the third person, and the President could weasel out of any damn thing he wanted. But Eisenhower decided that he would risk it, that he would, as a matter of fact, not only risk that but that he would allow himself to be broadcast live, that he'd allow himself to be broadcast live on television. No President before that had ever permitted that. So when the New York Times came out with their transcripts of press conferences, this was suddenly something terribly new to the American public and to all the egg-heads who were all dying for Stevenson anyhow--and who knew that Stevenson was an absolute wizzard with words and that Eisenhower was a dumb military man. And so they read these transcripts with glee, because obviously Eisenhower in responding to questions

and speaking extemporaneously had the same damn problems that you and I would have in speaking extemporaneously. The only difference is that he was more conscious of his problems in this area. I once heard him say, "Look, this speech we're about to give, for god's sake, don't let me give it extemporaneously, because I have a capacity for starting a sentence on something that's happened in my backyard and before I put a period on the sentence I'm talking about the Normandy landing." Interesting isn't it how frequently the Normandy landings kept cropping up. But he realized that he had run-on sentences, just as most of us do. But he was conscious of it and he was uptight about it. But the press in its infinite superiority--with everyone of those little career journalists there feeling superior to the President of the United States because they sat down at a typewriter occasionally and wrote--gleefully picked up every little grammatical error and every little awkward construction and every run-on sentence. They somehow or other never did that with Kennedy. I did. The same goddamn result; Kennedy's press conferences read no better than Eisenhower's. He had the same problems as anybody would have, no matter how articulate. But here were two exceedingly articulate men. Kennedy, verbally, I guess, was more articulate



than Eisenhower. With a pencil, I don't think he was. I don't think he was one bit sharper, one bit better. I got off the subject.

SOAPES: You mentioned Eisenhower's sensitivity to style. The other half of the coin is the substance of what's said. You mentioned you were involved in doing some of the background research of some of the details. Who else was involved in getting the substance of a speech ready?



KIEVE: Well, that would depend, of course, on the speech. Speeches in those days, and I suspect that that is the same thing now, would originate at whatever department had the responsibility for that area. If it was, for example, a message to Congress on the subject of agriculture, it would start with [Donald] Paarlberg over in the Department of Agriculture. Paarlberg later became a member of the staff. A great guy. If it had to do with foreign policy, while Emmet Hughes was there, he would generally draft that. But later on it probably would come over from Dulles' office, and then we would work on it. We would try to reshape it. The "we" in this case generally meant Emmet or later on Bryce Harlow, and Kevin McCann whom I did not work under. But the

drafts generally came from there. Now there were some drafts originated with us. I even did one once. But the raw material would generally be provided by the department that was involved.

SOAPES: Did you see Eisenhower altering the substance as much as he did the style?

KIEVE: Boy, I sure did. I remember once, one of the most impressive experiences that I had with Eisenhower came in the early days of 1954, and he was in the process then or we were in the process of sending up to the Hill a variety of messages, the agriculture message, the foreign trade message, you know. And since really and truly there hadn't been a great deal of that done in the early days--that is 1953, because really the Administration kind of stumbled into its Presidency, you know--but by 1954 the ducks had been pretty much put in place, and there was a whole series of messages going up. And we, members of the writing group, which at that time may also have included Bill Ewald--he may have come on board by that time--were just spending literally 24 hours a day. There were times when we would sleep on couches or on the floor putting these things together. Too long an introduction to the answer to the question you posed!

I remember on one such occasion during this period that we



were working on the agriculture message. Now the agriculture message involved parities and things like that that I confess I didn't know the first damn thing about, and I was simply trying to find ways of simplifying. That was what I thought I could do, but I didn't do it very well. Bryce did it very well. And I remember the work was being done in the Cabinet Room. Secretary of Agriculture Benson was involved in it. Sherman Adams was involved in it. This session dragged on one whole Sunday, and it was all on the agriculture message. Toward the end of the day I left and went to get a cup of coffee or left the room and when I came back there was somebody else sitting at a chair at the table--at the head of the table actually--in the Cabinet Room, and it was the President dressed very informally, very casually. And he was talking like this--without any document in front of him, "Bryce, up there on page, I think it's page 3 about the top of page 3, you'll see this reference to soybeans. Now I think the way you've got that there we might change that just a little bit because it seems to me the way we have said it there might be just a little bit offensive to Congressman So-and-So. Let us change it to read such and such."

Excuse me, Tom, because actually I'm still not answering



your question about substance. That still has to do with style.

His discussions of parity during that same session, his discussions about what soybeans and peanuts and so forth were all about, just absolutely amazed me. I was just totally aghast by the knowledge that this man had of this subject about which I knew absolutely nothing and about which he as the General of the Army presumably wouldn't have known very much. And I do remember his making specific changes in substance at that time. Not just commenting on it. And always in this curious way of saying, "take page 5, about half way down it you'll see this and this reference, can't we change it to such and such." He just went through the whole damn message in that amazing way. He had a total grasp for what was in it.



SOAPES: Were you involved in the Atoms for Peace Speech?

KIEVE: No, I was not. That was almost entirely--wasn't that C.D. Jackson--

SOAPES: C.D. Jackson had most of that.

KIEVE: No, I had nothing to do with that.

SOAPES: And you did not work with Jackson at any time?

KIEVE: No, I did not work with him, and therefore what I can add to this I guess is unimportant. But I understand that was Eisenhower's idea. That was not C.D.'s idea, but that was Eisenhower's idea.

SOAPES: According to C.D.'s diary, it did originate with Eisenhower about August or September. Eisenhower, Jackson, and Lewis Strauss were the first ones to discuss it apparently. You've mentioned both Harlow and Emmet Hughes now as writers--

KIEVE: Yes.



SOAPES: Can you compare and contrast the two for me?

KIEVE: Oh, very easily. Yes. Love to. Harlow was not a brilliant writer. Harlow was a very thorough worker who had an amazing--I'm using hyperbole I realize--I always lapse into that when I talk about that period--had a great capacity for ameliorating, for making fifteen different people happy. And that was really a very important thing for a man to do in those circumstances because he would take a draft, and it would be

draft six, and he would send it out to all corners of Washington. When it hit the desks he would then be besieged by any number of telephone calls from furious people all very unhappy because their language had been changed. And he would try, therefore, to make each of these people happy with the draft so that it really and truly did represent their combined attitudes and he could then present it to the President. Which was interesting, because then the President would change it. But that was okay. [Laughter] You know, the President changed it. Then, of course, it would make it necessary for Bryce to go back to each of these people with still another draft, and this time he might say that these had been the President's changes and that might--.



Bryce is an enormously thorough worker who had great respect for the opinions of everybody else, who worked very hard and very effectively in keeping people happy--keeping people up on the Hill happy, keeping people in the departments happy, keeping other members of the White House staff happy--and in administering the speech so that it came out without making too many people dissatisfied.

Emmet was precisely the opposite. Emmet's attitude was "I

know what's best, and I'm going to do it. And I'm going to send this damn thing to as few people as I possibly can, and I'm going to get it done. And I sure hope the President will buy it."

[Interruption]



And so the difference in the way in which the two men worked, quite aside from their styles as writers, was this very significant difference. One was a loner to the extent possible, and the other wanted to bring everybody into it to the extent possible. As far as writers go, I don't think that Bryce really fancies himself in Emmet's class as a writer. He's got a lot of other wonderful qualities, but I don't think that--it's my feeling probably Eisenhower never had a writer quite like Emmet, although I really don't think that speech writing was one of Emmet's strengths. In other words he didn't write speeches in such a way as to make a speech reader like Eisenhower get many applause lines. But he sure expressed himself in a way that made reading of the speeches very good.

SOAPES: Did Hughes's loner tendency create frictions?

KIEVE: I don't think so. He had enormous respect in the White

House and in the Administration. Now I've got to be careful about this because as his assistant I probably wouldn't have heard about it. There may have been all kinds of people resenting the hell out of him without my knowing about it. But my feeling is that that the greatest resentment he got was from Eisenhower himself. I think that the two of them didn't work together too damned well. And I get that simply through some impatience that Emmet seemed to have at times, not because he had any lack of respect for Eisenhower, but damn it, because he wrote things and that was the way he wanted to write it. [Laughter]

SOAPES: The pride of authorship came through and was--



KIEVE: Well, yes, but that's a phrase really that I don't think you could quite apply to Emmet. It was not quite a pride of authorship, because as a guy who was always editing the works of other people, he'd been the editor at Life magazine, the articles editor, and you know had worked on manuscripts by people like Steinbeck so that he really recognized that changing what one person writes is the reasonable function of another person. But it went a little farther than he wanted it to, I think. I may

be wrong about this, but I think that's true.

SOAPES: Another person you've mentioned frequently in our conversation here has been Ann Whitman. Did you have much personal contact with her?

KIEVE: Yes.



SOAPES: Could you tell me something about her major traits that you remember?

KIEVE: Enormous efficiency. Enormous dedication to Eisenhower. Great capacity for reducing the load on him through such things, for example, as calling a little third string assistant in the East Wing and telling him to stop doing what he'd been doing, you know. [Laughter] Great sense of humor, warmth. I think that's all I can say.

SOAPES: In her position as the confidential secretary to the President, did she then become in any way a shield between him and members of his staff?

KIEVE: I don't think so. I think that was, in my time, Sherman Adams who did that, and I don't think that Ann really very often got to be a shield. If she did, I wouldn't know. I was a person

who when I got to see the President, it was a hell of an occasion. I didn't get to see him very frequently.

We used to have a little game that we played up in the East Wing--those of us who didn't get to see him very often. We use to make fun of people who would come in from the outside and then go back to New York and tell their friends, "Well, as I said to the President today..." So we played a little game called "What I said to the President today." I would come back from one of my sessions in the Oval Office, and I would say to the secretarial staff, "Well, I'll tell you what I said to the President today. He was sitting there in his office and I was standing there on the carpet, and I said 'Yes, Sir.'" [Laughter] Which, of course, was the nature of my dialog with the man. When it was that much, I was very happy.



SOAPES: Were there other people in the White House that you worked with closely besides the three that we have mentioned?

KIEVE: Oh, yes. I had quite a lot of contact with Jim Hagerty and a lot with Sherman Adams. I have a very emotional feeling about Sherman Adams.

SOAPES: Could you go into that for me?

KIEVE: Sure. I love Sherman Adams. He is--was--an extraordinary human being. How he ever got hooked on that damned coat with that damned guy [Bernard Goldfine] I just find it impossible to understand. So totally foreign to his personality. I loved his capacity for cutting to the core of issues. I loved his abruptness that, of course, got him into a lot of trouble with a lot of people. I loved the fact that when you got a telephone call saying, "Governor Adams on the phone for you," he didn't bother to say, "hello." I really liked that. He would say: "Such and such a draft, will you bring it to me please." Bang. And that would be it. [Laughter]

SOAPES: Did he say, "please?"

KIEVE: I think so. Yes. Or if he didn't I somehow or other feel that he did because I felt very warm toward him. I had one exceedingly exciting incident that involved Adams and that I think tells me a lot about that man. On some occasion the national committee, the Republican National Committee, was going to have a--I guess it was a birthday party for President Eisenhower--and they were going to stage manage it. They came over, and we had a meeting in what was then called the Fish Room, which is now called



the Roosevelt Room. And we met with Hagerty and Jerry Morgan and Sherman Adams and two or three people from the National Committee. Since Emmet was not available or Bryce was not available--I've forgotten which one I was assistant to at the time--I had to go to the meeting as the speech writer.

And it was decided at that meeting that the President would say a few words and they were patently phoney. You know, they were the kind of words that somebody who'd worked for CBS would be likely to come up with. But I'd worked for CBS and I knew it didn't make any sense, that he wouldn't say them well, that they weren't his words, that they weren't real, and that we were creating a real monster.

And Sherman Adams was leading the meeting and went around the table asking people what they thought of this suggestion from the National Committee. To my horror Jim Hagerty saw nothing wrong with it, and Jerry Morgan didn't either, and I had my mouth open. But Governor Adams never called on me. So I didn't say anything. [Laughter] And I left the meeting and fumed, just fumed, fumed, fumed, fumed. And about twelve hours later, a day later, I called up his secretary and said I had to see him. And I went in to see him and the words just came out of me in a flood



and I said that this was a terrible mistake, that the one thing that the President had was his honesty and his integrity and his sincerity, and now some people from the National Committee were trying to steal that from him by trying to get him to become some kind of fool actor and he was not going to do it well, and it was going to be totally negative, the result of this work. Adams said, "Gee, you know, you're right. I never thought of that. Why the hell didn't you say that at the meeting?"

And I said, "Well, Governor, I wanted to desperately but, you know, you didn't call on me."

He said, "Damn-it-to-hell, you're paid to do this, you know. That's what you're here for, and if nobody calls on you, you speak up if you have some feelings like that."

I said, "Well, all right, Governor, but I just--I don't know."

He said, "We're going to look into this. I think you're right."

And he did and the whole thing was reversed. The whole idea was reversed. There was another meeting then. And at this other meeting, while it was in the process of reversal, he discussed a few things and talked about a few things and it was still very much a possibility, but I had a feeling it was being killed.



Incidentally, Nixon was one of those who agreed that it should be killed. And Adams with a twinkle in his eye turned to me and said, "Kieve, what do you think of this?" In other words he was giving me an opportunity now that I'd lost the first time, and they did kill it. They did kill it.

Hagerty, I found--I don't know why I keep coming back to this, but so many of these people strike me as being unusual human beings. Hagerty, I thought, was very selfless, very hard working, very short-tempered, very effective, and obviously there hasn't been--I say obviously but I think there has not been a press secretary like Jim Hagerty since then.

SOAPES: Did you work with any of the people who were in the Staff Secretariat?

KIEVE: Oh, yes.



SOAPES: --Art Minnich?

KIEVE: Well, Minnich and Max Rabb. As a matter of fact, when Kevin McCann took over from Bryce as speech writer, Kevin didn't want me as his assistant. And Max Rabb for whom I had been doing-- incidentally that was the beauty of that White House, you know, a

lot of us did a lot of different things. I did a lot of work for Bryce that had nothing to do--excuse me--for Max--that had nothing to do with Bryce. Max would just occasionally call up and ask Bryce if he could borrow me for awhile. And I would draft things for him.

Max wanted me as his assistant. Max was then the Secretary of the Cabinet. And that didn't quite get through Adams. Adams said, "Well, what the hell, there's no budget for this. Where do you get off taking Kieve and just deciding you're going to have him as your assistant, Rabb?" Well, Rabb had no answer for that. [Laughter] So on that occasion I left. I came back again in 1956 in the campaign and then I left for good.

SOAPES: You were speech writing for the campaign?



KIEVE: Yes, I was working again. Emmet Hughes was back in the '56 campaign and I was working for him.

SOAPES: Do you remember any special episodes or problems associated with that campaign?

KIEVE: Yes. I remember a couple of things. I remember one thing, for example, which was the disintegration of Adlai Stevenson

in my view. He had remained something of a hero for me, but in that campaign he played around with atomic bombs and played around with all kinds of issues in such a totally irresponsible way that the man lost everything that I'd had for him, and I'd had a lot. I guess it's the other way around--he'd had for me. I remember that. I remember also the crisis, of course, of the Suez Canal which took place right in the middle of that. I can't, however, tell you very much about it. I just remember that they were very exciting days.

SOAPES: You don't remember any special--of course, the President's health was a major concern to a number of people. Do you remember having to address that issue in any way?



KIEVE: Isn't that interesting. I'd forgotten about that, and of course, that's quite true because the President suffered his heart attack before that.

SOAPES: Fall of '55 and then he'd had the ileitis in the summer of '56.

KIEVE: Yes. No, I don't remember it. I don't remember meeting that problem in any way.

SOAPES: That in itself might be significant as to how the staff did not feel that it was some significance.

KIEVE: They might have, Tom. I don't know. But I don't remember addressing myself to the problem at all.

SOAPES: Then you did not come back in the second term to the White House staff?

KIEVE: Not at all. As a matter of fact I was assistant to the Deputy Director of U.S.I.A., Abbott Washburn, and had been that since--. Well, I served two full years on the White House staff and then went over for about a year and a half and served with Abbott. I then served the last four or five months or whatever it was at the White House and then left and went to run radio stations again.

SOAPES: What did you do under Abbott Washburn?



KIEVE: I was his special assistant. So I did a little of everything, including, curiously, writing some of the things for the State of the Union speech that were--let me back up a step. The State of the Union speech was a compendium of what every other

department of the government wanted to have written in the speech, and I provided a couple of paragraphs for what I thought--for what Abbott thought--the U.S. Information Agency wanted to get into the speech. And we can never remember, but the phrase "waging peace"--this is not a terribly good phrase anyhow, but in those days was a little better than it is today--is one that I don't remember whether it was mine or whether it was Abbott's. It was probably Abbott's because it was pretty good. It was used. [Laughter]

SOAPES: One of the things I think the U.S.I.A. was doing--at least some of the information agency work was involved with promoting Eisenhower's Atoms-for-Peace proposal. Did you work on that?

KIEVE: No, I did not. Abbott Washburn worked on it very hard. For example, he was responsible for a big exhibit, an Atoms-for-Peace exhibit. He was involved in quite a few things of that kind that I didn't get involved in to any notable extent.

SOAPES: Okay.

KIEVE: My big--let me--have we time for one more?



SOAPES: Sure.

KIEVE: My big fun was in the fall of 1953 when the President took a swing around the southern part of the country to dedicate a dam with the President of Mexico and was going to be down there and was going to make all kinds of speeches down around the border in a quick swing down there. And there were maybe five or six speeches that had to be prepared in an awful hurry. Emmet was then still the speech writer, and he couldn't handle them all, so he farmed out a couple of them. And he farmed out one of them to me on the subject of foreign trade. I got as much information as I could from the State Department but, of course, we had all kinds of background information, and I put together a speech. And I looked at it after I'd written it and I thought that was pretty good but I rewrote it. Got a second draft and thought that was pretty good and was happy with it. Passed it on to Emmet and Emmet cut it up pretty badly, but it stayed pretty much as I had written it. And then we sent it down to the President and I thought well it'd be interesting to see if anything survives. Well, the President had so many different speeches to work on at that time to say nothing about running the country at the same time, that he virtually left that draft alone.



This was now the third draft. The first two drafts were mine and the third draft was Emmet's reworking of it, and the President really changed a few words and sent it back.

And I was very excited, because my speech was obviously going to make the front page of the New York Times and it was going to be a great occasion. The day came and I opened the New York Times, and there was a headline, and it said, "President declares that tourists are our most important export." And that was a good headline, except that there wasn't anything in my speech that had said anything like that. There wasn't a single word about tourists in my talk, in my draft, or in Emmet's draft or in the draft that had come back from the President. So I thought somebody has really done some terrible things here. Somebody has really played around.

Well, it turned out that what Eisenhower had done was that he had worked his way laboriously through my draft and then finally had come to the point separating the two last paragraphs and at that point had taken off his glasses, as he frequently did, and had spoken these words about the importance of tourists recognizing that they are our most important export and put his glasses back on and worked his way through my final laborious paragraph and



finished it. The only thing that survived from that entire speech was what he extemporized between the last two paragraphs. Indeed it not only survived in the headlines but for years was sent out everytime somebody got a passport. It was enclosed in that passport. So here was a speech I had written but that which was remember from it had been extemporized by Eisenhower. [Laughter] Typical.

SOAPES: Well, thank you so much for your time.



KIEVE: You're so welcome.