

INTERVIEW WITH
Charles Vincent McAdam

by

Thomas F. Soapes
Oral Historian

on

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for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



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Charles Vincent McAdam

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This interview is being conducted with Mr. Charles Vincent McAdam at his home in Bal Harbour, Florida on May 28, 1976. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview, Mr. McAdam and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: First of all, Mr. McAdam, I understand today is your 84th birthday.

MR. McADAM: That is right.

DR. SOAPES: And where were you born?

MR. McADAM: Born in Manhattan.

DR. SOAPES: And your formal education.

MR. McADAM: High school without a diploma, public high school.

DR. SOAPES: Where did you first start to work?

MR. McADAM: Well I started carrying out groceries and we were--I was a poor boy. Born in practically, if you want me to tell you the truth, I was born in Hell's Kitchen, the slums of New York. My father passed away when I was two years old, and my mother worked in Macy's wrapping bundles for eight dollars a week to put me through school. And I worked in the daytime after school and carried out orders,



and so that's where I started, right in Manhattan Island. And the job, the first job I had was, my uncle, my mother's brother asked me what I was going to do when I got out of school, and I said I thought I'd be a bookkeeper. He said, "Oh, no, you won't. You're going to be a secretary. I'm going to send you to night school, the YMCA night school, and take up shorthand and typewriting." And he said, "Then I'll send a typewriter over to the house and you get fast on it, see. And then when you think you're able--." I had a couple of intermediary jobs between that, but the important thing is I answered an ad for the McClure newspaper syndicate, secretary. And I was ushered into the general manager's office on Monday afternoon at two o'clock, and he talked to me for--this is being recorded I hope.

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: And he asked me a lot of questions, which I tried to answer all right, and he said, "Well, let me have your name, address and phone number." Well, we were so poor, we lived in a tenement house--it was about, I'd say, three stories up and no bathroom, pot under the bed, and real poverty.



And when he asked me about a telephone I had to laugh because a telephone was a luxury. Well anyway, in walks the general manager, or the president, and he says, "What does this young man want?"

And he said, "Well he wants to be a secretary, answered our ad."

And the owner or this general manager, said, "You know anything about our business?"

And I said, "I sure do."

He said, "Well, that's great." He said, "Fine." He said, "When could you start?"

And I said, "Right now."

He said, "Nobody ever talked like that." He says, "You're hired. Come in in the morning." So I came in and I started out at sixteen dollars a week, secretary to the guy, the top guy, see. And I got a liberal education, rather than going to college; this man was dictating and educating me. And then a year and a half later--I don't know what year it was--but there was a--your parents will tell you--there was an epidemic, a flu epidemic where they were dropping on the street.



SOAPES: About the end of World War I.

McADAM: Yes. And we had no sulfa; we had no penicillin; and they died. So one of our salesmen died in Pittsburgh. And the boss said to me a week later, he said, "Take a letter; I think I can get a man from the Hearst newspapers." And he said, "Yes, this guy is available."

I said, "What do you want to write the letter for, Mr. Brainard?" His name was Clinton Brainard.

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, what's the matter with me?"

He said, "What did you ever sell?"

I said, "Every Saturday I sell shoes for William L. Douglas."

[Interruption]

McADAM: The last thing I said was about Brainard. I said, "I sold shoes for William L. Douglas every Saturday, from twelve noon till twelve midnight."

He said, "Well do you think you could sell our stuff?"

And I said, "I don't think it; I know it!"



He said, "I give up; you're hired. Give you two weeks' trip and sound you out and see what you can do."

Well to make a long story short, I got to know publishers and editors and it was the beginning of my figuring. I spent two years doing this, and then I got together with another man and we formed the McNaught syndicate. His name was McNitt and we--

SOAPES: How do you spell that?

McADAM: N-i-double t. McNitt. And I wanted to call it General or Universal or National--give it a big name--but he said, "No," he said, "we can put our names together; merge them and call it McNaught." McAdam and McNitt--which I didn't like, because it's not a good name, but it's sixty years old now; so we still survived it. Now what else do you want to know? So that's how I started in the newspaper syndicate business and I had, in those days, daily talks by Mary Pickford, who was "America's Sweetheart" and a lot of other features that you know of. We had Joe Palooka, Flintstones, Yogi Bear, you know.



SOAPES: And you stayed with this business all the way through your career.

McADAM: Oh, all the way. I'm still--I'm chairman of the board right now.

[Interruption]

SOAPES: When was the first time that you met General Eisenhower?

McADAM: Well, Eisenhower had returned from Europe and he came to Key West, but Clifford Roberts and Bill [William E.] Robinson got him to come up to the Augusta National golf club, and I was with him when he quit cigarettes--the doctor told him he'd have to quit cigarettes. And I got very well acquainted with him. In fact, after everybody left, I stayed there and he gave me a bridge lesson or two and we had a wonderful friendship, and that's where it started at the Augusta National golf club in his--he had a cottage there.

SOAPES: This would have been about 1946? .



McADAM: Well I don't know the dates, but it's about--well, the war was over and whenever the war was over. We played a lot of golf together. I went out to Chicago when he was nominated, went out with the gang, and we played at--he joined Blind Brook club. And every Saturday and Sunday we had team things; we had contests. And he loved it. And we'd go to his house in Columbia--he was president of Columbia University--and we'd go to his house and we'd have dinner. He'd have a stew that was sort of a thing that--he made it himself and it would be ready by the time we got home, see. It took a long while to cook it. And then we would play bridge. And some of the fellows that played bridge with us were W. Alton Jones, who was later killed in an airplane; Clifford Roberts; Bill Robinson; that was a foursome. But in golf it usually was Cliff Roberts, Bill Robinson, Ike and myself. That was our regular foursome. And he was wild about golf and bridge both.

One day, I went down to Washington--Truman had sent for him about something--and he said--this is how I got really acquainted with him. He invited my other wife and me to go to Paris, Aix-les-Marnes, a suburb of Paris and I spent



Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, spent all the holidays-- holy days, holidays--and we played St. Germain golf course every other day or so. When we were in Washington, when Truman had sent for him about some private matter, I played bridge with Chief Justice [Fred M.] Vinson and George Allen and Ike. And at midnight he said, "Let's call it a night." And I went to the elevator--it was up in the penthouse of the Statler Hotel--and I went to the elevator and Bob Schulz, his aide, came running out and he said, "Mrs. Eisenhower wants to speak to you."

So I went back and Mamie said, "Charlie, how about you and Peg coming over and spending the holidays with us?" This was about November 10th.

And I said, "Well it's fine with me, but I'll see what Peg says."

Well anyway, when I asked her she said, "When do we leave?"

So we got over there about three days before Thanksgiving, and one of the first things--we were going out to play golf one day--and in the car he said, "Tell you why I wanted you to come over, Charlie," he said, "a lot of people are wanting me to run for President." And he said, "I'm getting cables;



I'm getting phone calls; I'm getting letters," and he said, "I'd like your opinion. What is your opinion about me running for President?"

I said, "Well I think you'd be very foolish. My vote is no. Please don't run."

He said, "Well, that's funny. My brother, Edgar, from Tacoma talks like you. He doesn't want me to run either. But that's all; everybody else wants me to run."

I said, "Well you got my answer."

And he said, "Well I'll have Alfred Gruenther over some night, and" he said, "we'll get in the library and we'll discuss this."

[Interruption]

McADAM: So we met at his library, Gruenther came over, and Ike said, "I told Al about this and he wants to ask you questions." So he asked me a lot of questions and finally Gruenther says, "Well what is your main reason?"

I said, "Well that's very simple. Eisenhower has never been in politics." I said, "It's a tough job and my main



reason is, he might lose his health. And I'm against it; he's not young; and he's been through a terrific war."

"Well," he said, "what do you suggest? You don't want him to run, what do you suggest?"

I said, "Well, when I was in the Statler in Washington I didn't think that this would be a business visit. I thought it would be social. So as long as you brought it up, I'll tell you what he should do. He should write one column a week for my newspaper syndicate; I'll pay him a hundred thousand dollars a year; we can go back to the States; he can be president of Columbia again; we'll have our golf and bridge; and he'll make the salary of the President of the United States without being President. Now what's wrong with that?"

They looked at one another. "Well, that's interesting. We have to think about that."

Well there wasn't any decision. I was over there quite a bit, you see. Well I left and went to different places, you know, with my wife and came back. But anyway, we were on the Queen Mary coming back and under the door they give you a bulletin, news bulletin. We picked up the news



bulletin and "Eisenhower Decides to run for President."
Well I thought I sold him, but anyway now he ran for President. You know the story there. And he was playing golf with Governor Love [Dan Thornton?] and two other men in Denver, Colorado and got a coronary while he was President.

SOAPES: Right, that was 1955.

McADAM: And he returns to Gettysburg to recuperate and I have a telegram, which I have here, asking my son and me to come over for the weekend to Gettysburg. See I lived in the Westchester Country Club then, I wasn't in the--I got out of the slums as fast I could. And so we came over and Howard Snyder, his personal physician, came and gave him some treatment, and nobody there but Mamie and my son and me. See, my son and I, as I told you, played golf together. We played at Washington; we played Gettysburg; we played any number of places. So he says--we're there overnight--and he says, "I don't know," he says, "I wanted to tell you how much, why I didn't follow your advice." He says, "Here I am with a coronary, not knowing whether I'm going to come out of this thing or not." He says, "I'll never forget you, Charlie McAdam," he said, "I should have followed your advice."



I said, "Well your doctor's taking care of you and you've just got to wait it out and see." And the whole United States was wondering is Eisenhower going to run again. Now you're old enough to remember this.

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: So my son and I got in the car on Monday and we started for Philadelphia. We sold the Bulletin all of our features and comic strips and columns, and I thought I was going to talk to the editor. So I walked in with my son and there's six executives in this big director's room. And they talked about golf--I played a lot of golf with Major McLean the owner and his editor, had them up to my club in Blind Brook, Westchester County, New York. And finally they got to the point. They said, "Well, now, what we want to know, we want to know is Eisenhower going to run again?"

I said, "Well I don't know why you ask me."

"Well, Charlie, we're in the newspaper business and weren't you and your son over there for the weekend?"

"That's right. Well," I said, "it didn't come up about whether he'd run again." And that's true; it didn't.



But I said, "If he runs again, he's really making a bad mistake. But I wasn't asked. I begged him not to run the first time and he thanked me in Gettysburg and wished he had followed my advice. Now nothing came up about running again." Now I leave--my son and I start, we go south calling on newspapers. And we get to Augusta National golf club and I get a long distance call from Clifford Roberts. The name familiar?

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: And he said, "Hey," he said, "Charlie, what the hell do you mean, Eisenhower isn't going to run again?"

"Well," I said, "I don't know what you're talking about. Where did you find that out?"

He said, "The Philadelphia Bulletin had a front page, big blown-up story about Eisenhower won't run again, and quoted a Charles V. McAdam, president of McNaught Syndicate, was there for the weekend and he came up with this decision."

I said, "It never came up, but," I said, "if he runs again, he's foolish."

He said, "Well," he said, "he hasn't made up his mind



and you probably didn't get it out of him, but it wasn't discussed, but" he said, "you don't know what he's going to do; so don't say it again, please."

I said, "I won't say it again." And as I say, when we got on the boat under the door is this thing, "Eisenhower Decides to Run." Well it broke my heart because I loved the guy so much and I knew what--listen, it takes a hell of a lot out of you to have so much pressure on you, and that's what he had, he had so much pressure. Now I can go on, but what else do you want me to--

SOAPES: Okay, I'd like to back up just a bit to the first few times that you--

McADAM: That's all recorded now.

SOAPES: Oh, yes. The personal qualities in the man that stood out. What attracted you to him?

McADAM: Well, I don't know what it was, but I have some letters here I could read that would answer your question.

SOAPES: Sure.



McADAM: Now, this is a 1968--I have been threatening to write my autobiography but I want to wait until I get old, because I don't need the money. So I said to Eisenhower--this'll give you a kick--and it'll be recorded?

SOAPES: Sure.

McADAM: I called Western Union and I said, "I want to send a telegram to General Dwight D. Eisenhower."

The girl said, "How do you spell it?"

So I said, "Are you kidding?"

And she said, "Please don't fool with me, I'm busy."

So I spelled Eisenhower and I said, "Gettysburg, Pennsylvania."

She said, "What's the street address?" And I hung up.

Now at that time, in connection with this letter that I'm about to read, "During his fifty-five years in the newspaper business," now that's 1968 so you see how much longer, "my good friend, Charlie McAdam has published the works of so many writers that it seems only fitting that he should now make public in a book of his own, the story of his remarkably successful career. A score of years ago I first



met him at the Augusta National Golf Club and, while there, became involved with him in a group of men who became my close friends in a routine of golf and bridge. In golf he could always beat me handily; at bridge he didn't show much except enthusiasm and a cheerful readiness to laugh at his losses. When any of us playing as partners were fortunate enough to get as opponents, Charlie, and another pigeon of his rollicking characteristics, we were normally in for a prosperous evening, marred only by the feeling that he would get our winnings back at golf the next day. He usually did.

Whether at golf, bridge, or a chin-fest he never tired of telling stories about the stable of writers he corralled in his McNaught Syndicate. Of all of them, his favorites were Will Rogers and O.O. McIntyre, two who long published their writings under his auspices. While I never met either of these, I have the feeling, knowing Charlie's exuberant nature, that the three of them must have had as much fun in their companionship as they together contributed to the enlightenment and amusement of the public.

He loved to bet. No game had for him much fun unless



accompanied by a wager of some kind. Once when he was visiting me in France we played an afternoon of golf at St. Germain course. I had a wild day off the tee but was putting well and doing all right with my wedge." This will interest a lot of golfers. "On a short par three, of which the green was practically hidden by surrounding knolls and bunkers, I shanked my ball while Charlie hit his to the green. While I was dolefully considering what to do on the next shot, he on the green and completely hidden from me, shouted, 'Give you six to one in hundred franc notes you don't get down in two.'" You play golf?

SOAPES: No, I don't.

McADAM: "Because francs were at the time very cheap, I called back my acceptance. I used my trusty wedge and the next thing I heard was a gale of laughter and, 'Why you lucky stiff; come over here; you are three inches from the hole.' He was more pleased for me than if I had turned loose another shank. In recent years our paths have diverged. He spends his time in New York and Florida while I live in Gettysburg and California. I shall never forget him, a man who, when it was time for



play seemed born for fun and frolic, but who always possessed a keen eye for writing talent and a great ability to put his products before the American public. I hope he lives long; I know he will live happily. Dwight D. Eisenhower" And he accompanied the foreward with a letter:

Dear Charlie: I scarcely know how to go about writing a "Foreward." I have on two or three occasions written something of the kind for authors of military books, in which field I felt some competence, but otherwise I have habitually declined.

The enclosed, therefore, will probably not be suitable for your purpose, but it is the best I could do, even for such an old and good friend as you. So, if you so desire, you can throw the attached in the wastebasket --without loss to the world.

With warm regard. [January 25, 1968]

Now you can look this all over and see that--

SOAPES: He signed it simply "Ike."

McADAM: Well, when he was President he signed "DE", see?

Like this.

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: "DE." I've got fifty letters there on White House stationery. I know you don't want to be bothered looking at them.



SOAPES: Some of them I think we have at the Library--the copies.

McADAM: Well, they wouldn't be written to me I don't think, would they?

SOAPES: Yes, yes.

McADAM: Oh, do you have letters that he wrote to me?

SOAPES: Yes, we have some, in fact, I think that you wrote to him.

McADAM: Oh. Here is a thing in Miami I'll show you, I'll get the--. Joe Kennedy wanted me to run Jack's campaign; here's Ike over here, but there's something in this story about Ike. See this is Charlie McAdam, the horse, that's up on the wall there. Won the Flamingo Stakes, see. Biggest race in Florida. He's called Charlie McAdam. See this will give you an idea what this is all--

SOAPES: What we're reading from is a supplement to the Miami Herald of August 9--

McADAM: Every Sunday.



SOAPES: Every Sunday.

McADAM: Yes, yes.

SOAPES: --of August 9, 1970 titled "Tropic." The article is titled "The Man Who Said 'No' to a Million Dollars." And the--

McADAM: Yes. Joe Kennedy wanted me to run Jack's campaign for President, and you want to know why?

SOAPES: Why?

McADAM: He said--is this being taped?

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: I said, "Why are you so persistent; you asked me in New York to do it and then you asked me at the Hialeah Race Track to be campaign manager," and I said, "why are you so insistent, Joe?"

He said, "Well," he said, "I might just as well tell you. You're a very close friend of Eisenhower, and wouldn't it be great for the United Press and the Associated Press to cover a story, Charles V. McAdam, president of McNaught Syndicate, intimate friend of President Eisenhower is now



campaign manager for Jack Kennedy? Don't you think that would sound great?" Smart guy.

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: So I just brought that out to give you an idea. Now let's see. And I never wanted to get in politics--never.

SOAPES: You never did participate at any time?

McADAM: I wouldn't be in any--because nobody could buy me, and that's what they do in politics. One million dollars, it wouldn't mean a damn thing to me--it would be phony, because I've got to live with myself.

SOAPES: Did Eisenhower ever talk to you about that problem? Did he ever bring it up, the problem of the pressures of people trying to use him?

McADAM: Well he said, "I get out to play golf as much as I can because of the pressure of my job." One day my son and I went down there and he said, "Charlie, I've got a surprise for you; I got Jock Whitney, ambassador to Great Britain," and he said, "he's here for a short stay and we're going to



have a golf game." So we went out and Whitney had no clothes to speak of, see; so we got what he could, but he bought a pair of shoes. And we get out on the golf course and the shoes hurt. And he's riding with my son and I'm riding with Ike, golf carts, of course. And he said to my son, "I don't know, these shoes don't fit right."

My son said, "Why don't you take it off and look and see what's wrong." And what do you call those things that you put in the sole--those metal things? It was a metal thing in Whitney's shoe.

SOAPES: Cleats?

McADAM: Cleats, yes, that's right. So we've had some interesting games, I mean, with different people. In France, we had a great time--but I was going to see if I had anything else here. See I've been on the board of Storer Broadcasting Company here eighteen years and he said, "I'd give anything to play with the President." I got so damned much stuff here that I don't know where to put--here's the thing here. See this.



SOAPES: What he's just shown me is a photograph of Dwight Eisenhower and Mamie Eisenhower; it's inscribed with "Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Mamie Doud Eisenhower. 1956."

McADAM: Here's a picture of the horse.

SOAPES: Oh, yes.

McADAM: You can have that if you want. I always say I tried to be a success in life and I wound up being a race horse. Now these guys that are calling me, they all think I ought to go to the track. Well you might ask me more questions, because they can't see these things that I got here.

[Interruption]

McADAM: Here's a letter--"It seems much too long since I've heard from you."

SOAPES: "So this note, in addition to bringing you my felicitations of good wishes on your birthday anniversary also serves as a welcome opportunity to be in touch again. I hope that all goes well with you and that somehow or other I shall have



a chance to see you one of these days. With warm personal regard and happy birthday, DE"

--that's 1961.

McADAM: Now here, you might read that.

SOAPES: This is dated July 31, 1958, personal,

"Dear Charlie: By now you must know that the defense reorganization plan has passed, happily very much in the form I proposed it to the Congress. The law assures a stronger, more effective and more economical defense for our country. My grateful thanks for your help and support. I feel that you have rendered a real service to our country. With warm regard, as ever, DE."

It's July 31, 1958. What was he referring to there in terms of your support?

McADAM: Well, it was after the war, naturally.

SOAPES: Right.

McADAM: What?

SOAPES: Your wife has just given me some notes I think.

Okay, we'll get into those.

McADAM: If I can--oh, yes. Yes. Well this was in connection with the defense. [Ronald] Reagan is into that



damned thing we're second in military, you know, and all that. I had a letter here and I don't know where the second page is. See I've been on the board, as I told you, the broadcasting company, and he said, "I'd give anything to play with the President." So he wrote this letter--you don't have to read it all. Just look at the first paragraph or so. We went and played and he had a marvelous time.

SOAPES: That was in 1951.

McADAM: Old Storer died a year ago. George Storer.

SOAPES: George Storer, yes. These notes that your wife has just passed to me--

McADAM: Yes.

SOAPES: --one of them says about playing your harmonica with Mrs. Doud.

McADAM: Yes, you see I belong to the society of magicians and I do tricks and I play the harmonica. And Mrs. Doud said, "Oh," she said (in the White House), "Let me have that harmonica; I'll play it for you." She played it like



nobody's business; so I bought her a harmonica and then we played together. Mamie's mother! Think of that. It was a great thrill.

SOAPES: What can you tell me about her? She's someone I don't know very much about and I don't think--

McADAM: About Mamie?

SOAPES: About Mrs. Doud.

McADAM: Well I don't know much about her.

SOAPES: You don't know her very well.

McADAM: No, she was pretty old. Here's Mamie hanging on, see. See, my other wife and Mamie had rheumatic fever when they were young and they were about the same age and they had so much in common, see, about their ailments, you know.

SOAPES: Another note here is about Ike's quitting smoking. Is there a story about that?

McADAM: Yes. Well, that happened in Augusta, Georgia. He had been given a complete physical and he said, "Charlie, there's my last cigarette." Think of that.



SOAPES: He just quit cold turkey.

McADAM: Never smoked one cigarette ever after. Which might have some impression on people who hear this. Well he lived a very, very normal life. He never drank much and, as I say, he quit smoking. He was a great guy. You can use the word "lovable" character.

SOAPES: You mentioned, of course, that you did play some bridge with him. That's one game I do play; I don't play golf; I do play bridge. I was wondering, what kind of a bridge player was he?

McADAM: Well, Alfred Gruenther was tops and he and Gruenther had played a lot of golf together and bridge--not golf, Alfred never played golf--he played a lot of bridge. But he would say to me, "We're going to be alone one night," and he got the Augusta Chronicle newspaper, and Culbertson's bridge column was in the paper. And he said, "Now, I want to know what you would do with this hand here, see, because I'm going to give you instructions on bridge tonight." We had dinner in the room and he gave me instructions on how to



improve my bridge game, which is very funny. And I listened attentively, and I think he helped me. I don't lose too much playing bridge now when I do, but we don't play for stakes that amount to much, you know. Friendly game. But that bridge and golf--that was his life, as much as I knew of him.

SOAPES: These bridge games were for stakes; they weren't--.

McADAM: Yes.

SOAPES: Was he a, I suppose what they call a cut-throat bridge player?

McADAM: No, he never got disturbed. He just went along, and if somebody made a mistake he'd tell them, "You should have done this," or something. But he never argued, never got in any--to my knowledge--and I had plenty of chances in the various places that we went, spending a weekend at Camp David--it couldn't be much closer because we were away from business, we were away from the White House.

SOAPES: I've just gotten another note. Keep going.

McADAM: Let's see what she's got here. Oh, yes. Mamie and



Ike had their thirty-third wedding anniversary at Columbia University, and I was the only person there in civilian clothes. Everyone was an officer with his wife. And he said, "Well, what happened to Peg?"

And I said, "Well, she went abroad; she's gone over to France and all on the continent."

And he said, "Well, you take a telegram to General Maxwell Taylor," and he said, "I'll see that she has everything."

So I took it and I have the telegram in his handwriting still; I got it, if I can find it. And he put her on [Hermann] Goering's car, pullman car, my daughter and another woman and the three of them, they went all over and they went up to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's home up in the mountain. And they had a marvelous time just because Ike wired Maxwell Taylor. And I don't know what else my wife wants me to say here, but--

SOAPES: This tendency of his to do things for people, that was something that you thought of as a natural thing--'

McADAM: Oh, when my wife wasn't at the thirty-third anniversary,



that was his answer--what could he do? So he sent a telegram right there.

SOAPES: You said earlier you were with him and other friends of his.

McADAM: Oh, plenty.

SOAPES: Could you give me some idea of the types of people that Ike was attracted to, what types of people?

McADAM: Well he was attracted to the guys--the Blind Brook club was our club, and [Richard] Nixon belonged to it, by the way, and Thomas E. Dewey belonged to it. And we fellows that belonged to Blind Brook in Westchester County belonged to the Augusta National in Augusta, Georgia. So it was a continual golf and bridge, or dinner and bridge --that's his life, as far as I knew. Now if he had other --well he liked to paint, yes. I visited him in Palm Springs long after the presidency, and in his home he had wonderful paintings. He loved to paint. That was another, as he got a little older, he started painting moe. And that was his hobby when he was not with anybody, painting. And they



were very good. And I sent him stuff about Winston Churchill --you know he painted too, you see. I don't know how he painted, he drank so much. But anyway, as we go along, you see, these things come up and I remember. So now there, that finishes his hobbies; golf, bridge and painting.

SOAPES: Did you ever watch him paint, or did he always do this alone?

McADAM: Oh, sure. But not in any--he'd show me a painting and he'd take a brush and say, "Now I think I'll put a little--." I gave him some kind of a magazine that came with Winston Churchill's painting and I sent it to him. And he said that was very nice. He used the background material for the--. I didn't know much about Churchill as a painter. I thought he was a big cigar smoker and a drinker. Now what else did my wife write?

SOAPES: She's given me another note here that says, "Did Ike remark about people who were friends who asked for something?"

McADAM: Well, he said, "You're the only guy that I really



know that doesn't want anything from me." See. If that's what Joanne meant, I don't know.

SOAPES: But he did express this concern that people around him were--

McADAM: Well somebody always had their--they'd write him a note and want something, want something all the time. And that's why I never got in politics, because if you take something you're obligated to do something.

SOAPES: Another note that your wife has given me here is about the testimonial dinner after Ike was out of office.

McADAM: Oh, yes. Well, all right. After he's ex-President by two weeks, fifty-two men gave him a testimonial dinner at Blind Brook club, Port Chester, New York. And seated at the table were, you might say, who's who in America. I had W. Alton Jones on my right; I had Barry Leithead on my left, President of Cluett, Peabody and Company; and all around the table were the heads of big companies. And I was asked to be master of ceremonies. Well, Will Rogers told me-- incidentally Will Rogers wrote for me--and he told me



whenever you get on your feet, never tell a joke, because fifty percent of your audience have already heard it. You know, stop me if you've heard that one? You've heard that, see. So I never told a joke. So I got up and I said, "Gentlemen, this is a great opportunity for a young man coming from Hell's Kitchen, the slums of New York, to get up here and address such a distinguished body of typhoons-- I mean tycoons, gentlemen." Then right away they're all laughing, see. And that's not a joke. That's not a joke. And I said, "All my life I tried to amount to something. So I read a book, How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. So I called Mr. Carnegie up and I said, 'I read your book and I wonder if you'd write a newspaper column for me.'" I'm telling this on my feet at dinner.

"And he said, 'I'd love to write one. Come on over to my house tomorrow night and have dinner.'"

"So within two hours I had him verbally agree to write and I told him I'd mail him the contract. But I said--you remember the name of the book now--How to Win Friends and Influence People--I said, 'By the way, Mr. Carnegie, where is Mrs. Carnegie?'"



"He said, 'Oh, hell we couldn't get along; we got divorced.'"

So I went right along and entertained the best I could and they whistled and clapped and I did a very good job if I must say so. And I won't tell you what happened to me at the end of the dinner. I got a little can on because they praised me so much. That's what she meant by that testimonial dinner.

Oh, before I finished, I said, "I think we ought to all drink a toast to Bill Robinson. Bill Robinson is the man who brought Eisenhower into our midst. When Bill Robinson"--he was publisher of the New York Tribune--"when he got back from Paris, he said, 'Charlie, I met a general over there that could be President of the United States.'" I'm telling this on my feet. And I said, "Let's all drink to Bill Robinson." And Bill Robinson had tears in his eyes. We all stood up and drank to Bill Robinson. Well I mean, that was an event. I've been master of ceremonies and all that kind of stuff.

SOAPES: Bill Robinson is a personality that I'm interested in.



McADAM: He died.

SOAPES: Yes. He gave us a good collection of his papers, and I was interested in what you might be able to tell me about him as a person, what qualities stand out in your mind.

McADAM: Well, Bill, he was an advertising salesman first and he was really a smart guy, and he worked his way to publisher of the New York Herald Tribune. And the night that Eisenhower was elected President of the United States, we were up in the Commodore suite on the top, up at the top floor of the Commodore getting the returns and, let's see --I can't think of the name of the president of Coca-Cola.

MRS. McADAM: [Robert W.] Woodruff?

McADAM: Yes, Woodruff. Mr. Woodruff, president of Coca-Cola was there; Bill Robinson was there; all of his friends were there, celebrating the election. So not long after, Bill Robinson came to me and he said, "I'm offered a job, head of Coca-Cola. But I promised Mrs. Reed, earlier, that I would do the best I could for her." He said, "Now what advice will you give me?"



I said, "If you don't take that Coca-Cola job, you're foolish." New York Tribune went out of business.

Well he took the job and he just made good, made good at everything he touched. He was a terrific guy. But died too young.

SOAPES: You mentioned you were with Eisenhower on the night of the election in '52.

McADAM: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes.

SOAPES: Was there an expectancy of a big win? Were they surprised at the size of the victory, or--

McADAM: Well everybody thought he'd win, sure, sure. In the polls, he was picked. It was not like Alfred Landon or when Truman ran against Dewey, the Chicago Tribune had a--

SOAPES: Right, that famous headline.

McADAM: "Dewey Elected." It was not that way, no. He looked like he was a cinch. So we celebrated up there. About, oh I'd say, twenty or thirty friends in the suite. Big, very big suite we had, you know.



SOAPES: Were wives present, or was this just a stag affair?

McADAM: Oh, yes, wives too.

SOAPES: How was Mrs. Eisenhower reacting to this?

McADAM: Well, she was not too sick, but she did have a bad heart right along--rheumatic, like my wife, my wife had a bad heart. And she had fibrillating, you know, it would jump. But she was having a ball, really.

I forgot to tell you one thing. Getting back to being in Paris. Ike and I were on our way out to play golf and Mamie was sitting with my wife, Mrs. Gruenther and Mrs. Howard Snyder, Grace Snyder and Grace Gruenther. And Mamie got up from the table--they were playing canasta--Mamie got up and she said, "Charlie, come on out in the kitchen, I want to talk to you." She said, "Now Ike told me in bed last night that you don't want him to run for President." And she said, "I want to ask you to do me a favor."

And I said, "What's that?"

She said, "Well, don't--he thinks the world of you--and he might not run. And I want him to do anything his country wants him to do."



I said, "Okay, Mamie, I will not, I will not say it again."

[Interruption]

McADAM: The fact that I didn't want him to run for President, I think, is an important thing.

SOAPES: Right.

McADAM: I think he would have lived long after he died had he not been President.

SOAPES: You always found him before he was President to be in very good health.

McADAM: Very healthy man, very healthy man. Sure.

SOAPES: After he had had the heart attacks and after, of course, he had the ileitis affair, did you notice a marked impact on his efficiency or his personality or anything like that?

McADAM: He wasn't the same. No. He slowed up in his ways, yes.



SOAPES: In terms of his golfing for example?

McADAM: Well out in Denver when he was playing golf, as I understand it, he played twenty-seven holes, which was the most he'd played in years. And he overtaxed his heart with all the pressure of the job too.

SOAPES: So there was a marked slowing up in his golf playing and bridge and also the way in which he conducted his office.

McADAM: I thought so, yes.

SOAPES: Did it show in terms of his color, his physical coordination?

McADAM: No, he always looked pretty well. But back of it all there was a kind of a sadness, you know, that he--I don't want to take any credit, but I think if he had never been President he'd have been, may be alive yet. And all these fellows that are fighting to be President, I don't know--. They'll be worn out before they get nominated.

SOAPES: Yes, that's possible. You knew his son, John.



McADAM: Very well. Sure.

SOAPES: What can you tell me about--

McADAM: Well I don't know what he's doing or anything. I never kept up with him. And you see there's a difference in our ages and he has his own friends and then his son is trying to be a newspaper man I understand. He worked in some Pennsylvania paper.

SOAPES: It was the Philadelphia Inquirer, I think.

McADAM: Some paper, I don't know.

SOAPES: I think you showed me a photograph earlier where you were with John and Ike on a golf course, I think.

McADAM: Oh, sure. That was a foursome we had, sure.

SOAPES: In terms of communication between father and son--

McADAM: This was when he was President, I mean, sure.

SOAPES: Right. In terms of communication between father and son, was it an easy communication between the two of them?



McADAM: Wonderful, wonderful. But he said, "You're not playing with your son; I'm playing with your son." My son was almost a scratch golfer, terrific golfer. He said, "You're going to play with John." John's game was like his father's--and my game, I was down to three handicap. And my son was better than me and that's pretty--. So he wanted a good player and he said, "You take John." That's the foursome. We played one game in Gettysburg and I'll never forget it. The hole was a par four--the Gettysburg Country Club--and the hole was about three hundred and ten yards, or something like that. Par four. Now if you know anything about what I'm saying, and Mr. President said to my son, he said, "I had Arnold Palmer here a couple of months ago and he hit the green--I mean he hit the trap right by that green on his tee shot." And my son winked at me. He put his tee shot on the green three hundred and ten yards and was putting for a two. And going down in the cart he said, "Mr. President, who is Arnold Palmer?" [Laughter]

SOAPES: That's a good story.

McADAM: Well, that's timely. I mean, Arnold Palmer's still



doing his stuff. He's . What was it he
flew someplace, he flew around the world the other day.

SOAPES: Did Eisenhower ever discuss when you were with him,
while he was President, various crises or problems that he
was involved in or--

McADAM: Well I have so much mail here that will answer your
question. Jeez, I don't know. I don't know where the hell
the second page of that--I got so damned many letters here.
Read this P.S.

SOAPES: This is from December 22, '54.

McADAM: Read that P.S.

SOAPES: "I am writing this on the supposition that you are
still above ground. For a long time you have given me no
positive evidence to the contrary."

McADAM: Now, did he like me?

SOAPES: I think he did.

McADAM: Sure. I think that's priceless. Look at all this



stuff; these are all letters, see. White House, White House-- I put them back in the envelopes. Let's see if I have any here that are already open. Yes, he's talking about Bill's luncheon. This is on his way over before he was President, when he went over to head NATO.

SOAPES: Right, February '51. Indicating in the letter the importance of your friendship to him. Did you work with him in helping raising funds for the American Assembly?

McADAM: Well I contributed and I helped, too. He's got some letters thanking me for helping him get funds. Isn't that the letter?

SOAPES: I think so. He's talking about getting some money and looking at the books.

McADAM: Yes, I helped. I got all kinds of guys working for me. This guy here, the astrologer--Carroll Righter.

SOAPES: Carroll Righter, yes.

McADAM: I should have sorted these things out before you came, but I didn't.



SOAPES: It's all right. We have--

McADAM: Showed you that one, a real service to our country--

SOAPES: Right.

McADAM: This one here--. But the tone of his letters, you know. "It's so long since I've heard," you know. It wasn't long--maybe a month, you know.

SOAPES: But he was the type of man who really showed what he felt towards you and--

McADAM: Oh, yes. I tried to get him to write for me as I told you earlier, and later after he was out of the White House I tried to get him. But he didn't feel like doing it. He had all the money--he didn't need any money or anything.

SOAPES: Yes, I remember seeing some communications between you concerning that. He did do some writing, wasn't it for the Reader's Digest?

McADAM: For some magazine, occasional article.

SOAPES: Right, but he indicated that he didn't want to do



something on a regular basis.

McADAM: He didn't want to be pinned down, see. Now here's stuff from the White House when we go to dinner.

SOAPES: You attended some of those stag affairs that he gave?

McADAM: Oh, sure. I don't know where the hell that thing is. My name is listed in that--oh, I wish I could find it.

SOAPES: Could you tell me something about those stag affairs and what--

McADAM: Howard Snyder.

SOAPES: I see, a postcard.

McADAM: I made them all laugh, see. I used to--

SOAPES: "Too long since we've seen you. Come up and give us a laugh."

McADAM: Sure. I used to make them laugh; that was my whole--. Now here's a--we had a thing up at the Blind Brook club, and,



see, I was president of this group. See here he's got Ike
, but there were the guys you see. You see--I think
there's Bill Robinson.

SOAPES: Bill Robinson; Slater, Slats Slater, I think is--

McADAM: And Cliff Roberts.

SOAPES: Yes. There's Bob Woodruff.

McADAM: Cliff wrote it.

SOAPES: Right. This is May, 1948.

McADAM: Every Saturday I took charge of the golf tournament.
See I've had any number of dinners at the White House.

SOAPES: Right, this is June, 1960.

McADAM: You think of anything else, Joanne?

MRS. McADAM: Yes.

McADAM: What?

MRS. McADAM: That story of the night that you played bridge
at Columbia when you were winning before dinner.



McADAM: Oh.

MRS. McADAM: That's a great story.

McADAM: An interesting story. Eight of us played golf,--we played Blind Brook--then we went to Columbia for dinner, to have his wonderful soup or whatever he called it. And we cut cards to see who'd play two games, see. Four over there, and four over here. So I cut and I was playing with W. Alton Jones and Slats Slater and Ike, that was our foursome. And we get going and Pete Jones said, "I'll bet you a hundred dollars," he said, "that you lose money tonight," to me.

And Ike says, "Wait a minute," he said. "Pete," he said, "make it ten dollars a man. Ten dollars a man, everybody in the room, instead of a hundred dollars for you."

I was the worst player. So anyway, everybody agreed that if I showed a loss at the end of the evening I'd have to give them ten each; that'd be seventy dollars. So we're going along and when we got the call for dinner--see, we got back from golf around five and we played until dinnertime. So when we went down for dinner--now I can't remember the exact amount, but I was something well ahead.



[Interruption]

SOAPES: You said you were about eighty or ninety dollars ahead and you went down to dinner.

McADAM: So now we get a call for dinner. Come down to dinner. So we went down to the table and I sat next to Mamie. And I said, "Mamie, if you can delay serving this," I said, "I'm a way ahead and they all bet me ten dollars that I'd lose. Everybody here bet me ten dollars that I'd lose money tonight, so delay the dinner as much as you can." So anyhow Ike was at one end of the table and Mamie at the other, you see, and I was on Mamie's right-hand side.

And Ike said, "Mamie, what's delaying the dinner?" He said, "We got to get back at the game. Charlie's way ahead and we got a little bet going," and he said, "hurry up the dinner."

And Mamie said, "Okay." And she didn't hurry it up at all.

I said, "Mamie, I don't know how to thank you."

But anyway we got back up at the table and I won again! And I went home with a nice hunk of dough and threw it on the



bed to my wife and I said, "Here, fifty-fifty. Take half of this money." And it was a lot of fun. But that's what he liked; that was his outlet. As I said two or three times before, it's his outlet. Bridge. And he was an excellent bridge player. Now I don't know what else to talk about.

SOAPES: I want to talk about Mamie for a minute.

McADAM: Well, if my wife had lived she would be able to tell you more about Mamie than me, but with rheumatic fever, and it's been two years since I talked to her in Gettysburg. But I've been out to Palm Springs with them. And Mamie, I don't know, Mamie was not a well woman for many years. And the heart thing is--my other wife, who died, and she would always discuss their ailments and what are you doing about that? And I never got to be with Mamie as much--like for instance when I was over there in Paris and Thanksgiving night we had--Ike knew me so well he'd say, "Do you want the Pope's nose?" You know what that is?

SOAPES: No, I don't.

McADAM: Of the turkey?



SOAPES: Oh, the tail?

McADAM: The tail.

SOAPES: Right.

McADAM: Pope's nose. And we had a fellow named Black, Cupie Black's brother, the football player's brother, and his wife and Harriman, Averell Harriman and his wife, eight of us. The four men, we four men--Harriman, Black, Ike and me played cards and the four women played cards; so we never played like Mamie and Ike and Peg and me. We never played--we always played men games. So I never got to know Mamie in a card game. Never played with her. And they played mostly canasta. So all I can about Mamie is that she was so sweet to me and nice. She couldn't do enough as a hostess. On Christmas Eve my wife and I went to midnight mass, being Catholic, and in Aix-les-Marnes church and we went with another girl whose father was a--he was a Catholic but he was not there--we went with her. And when we got back around one o'clock, Ike and Mamie were sitting up waiting for us. And I said, is this all right to say?



SOAPES: Sure.

McADAM: I said, "Ike," I said, "don't you go to church at all?"

And he said, "Well," he said, "over in wartime I'd insist that the Jews went to their services and the Catholics went to their mass and the Protestants went to their whatever-it-was," and he said, "I didn't go to anything." He said, "I didn't belong to a church." But, in fairness to him, when he became President, he became a member of a church, because he wanted to set a good example as President.

SOAPES: You think that was his prime motive in joining the church was example?

McADAM: I won't say what I know.

SOAPES: Okay. You mentioned that you were with Averell Harriman and the two of them--how did Ike and Averell Harriman get along?

McADAM: Well, we were not together too long. He wasn't staying there; he was just visiting. And he was invited,



he and his wife, well he was quite a political factor in New York state. And Black was getting a in the bridge game, and Harriman was, oh, was a sour person, very, you know. And Black says, "Why the hell don't you laugh once in a while?" [Laughter] Averell Harriman. That happened, so I mean, I'm not making this up. But anyway we had a nice time for the holidays and was something I'll never forget.

SOAPES: How do you think that Ike adjusted to the post-Presidency?

McADAM: You mean after he got out?

SOAPES: Yes. Yes, the decompression of going from the most important job in the world to private citizen.



McADAM: Well, he went out to Palm Springs for quite a while. They gave him a home on the Eldorado golf course, which was his until he died. And I played out there at the Eldorado club with him and played cards with him. He was trying to live a nice, quiet life doing those things that I said were his hobbies, and painting.

SOAPES: Painting much more now.

McADAM: Oh, he painted much more than ever. He took me into his room where he was painting and he was proud of what he was doing. And he had a guy that was on "Amos and Andy," I don't know which one of the two, was in the foursome one day with us. You can find out. [Freeman Gosden, who portrayed "Amos."]

SOAPES: Yes, we can insert that.

McADAM: What the hell his name was I don't know.

SOAPES: Continuing on this adjustment to the post-Presidential period, he never expressed any sort of, "What do I do with myself now?"

McADAM: Well I think the effects of the heart attack when he was President in Denver, I don't think he ever got his heart back to normalcy so that he could, you know, step out and do what he wanted to do. I think he had to go easy. And I think the fact that he was President with worries and cares, I think it had a lot to do with his--see, he was trying to get away by playing golf, but he played too much in Denver. But he was trying to go along and ease up, and finally his heart got him.



SOAPES: He did have a series of heart attacks I think starting about 1963, '64 again.

McADAM: Well he had that ileitis or whatever you call it.

SOAPES: That's in '56. Yes. These attacks that he had after he was President, did he not really come back again from those?

McADAM: Frankly, I don't think he ever did.

SOAPES: It was a steady deterioration.

McADAM: He used to play up at our club. Of course he used to go down to Augusta with his home there. He had a home; he didn't have a room he had a building which the club took back over. Eisenhower Cottage they called it. Well through him I met a hell of a lot of great people.

SOAPES: Did you ever meet Floyd Odlum, out in Palm Springs?

McADAM: He was head of--he married that flier.

SOAPES: Right.

McADAM: Yes. Oh, yes, he was an arthritic case.



SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: Yes. Her name--

SOAPES: Jackie Cochran.

McADAM: Cochran.

SOAPES: She's given us a huge collection of all of her papers.

McADAM: I got off the board of Storer Broadcasting Company and they put Jackie Cochran on the board of Storer. I liked her very much. She was a golfer too.

SOAPES: Was she?

McADAM: Sure. What was your question?

SOAPES: Because we do have papers of hers, and she's a good friend of our director, too, and I was wondering if you could give me some character sketch on her about--

McADAM: Well I don't know too much about her. No, I don't. She got fame; she was well-known. And of course, Odium, he, oh, he donated millions to this arthritic foundation.



SOAPES: In the times that you saw Eisenhower in the 1960s, did he continue to show an active interest in the political scene? Or did that subject ever come up between you?

MCADAM: Not to my knowledge, no. No. I don't know whether I should say this or not, but I was with Eisenhower two weeks before the Kennedy-Nixon election. And he said, "Charlie, what do you hear about Nixon?"

And I said, "Well, Mr. President, I don't hear much about him. Why do you ask?"

He said, "Well," he said, "we nominated the wrong man."

SOAPES: You can seal this from use if you like.

MCADAM: And I said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

He said, "You know, he's been my vice-president, and he never--," and he said, "now don't quote me." And I never quoted him in his lifetime. "Please, Charlie, don't quote me." And he never made one campaign speech for Nixon.



And Joseph Kennedy was pretty smart. If I was campaign manager for Jack because I would know this, see. But I said to Joe Kennedy, I said, "Look, I'm a great friend of Eisenhower and I will not switch." But that's what he told me. But you see there's a family thing now; Julie and Ike Eisenhower's-- but that's factual; so I'm giving it to you.

SOAPES: We appreciate that. Did you know Nixon? You mentioned he was a member of the club.

McADAM: Oh, of course I did. I played golf with him.

SOAPES: Oh, yes. During the time he was vice-president and later?



McADAM: Before he was elected. Do you want this?

SOAPES: Yes.

McADAM: My wife was sitting in the New York office on 42nd Street and the phone rang and the girl came in and she said, "Richard Nixon's on the phone." He belonged to Blind Brook, I told you earlier.

SOAPES: Yes. This is about 1968?

McADAM: Before he was elected the first time.

SOAPES: I see.

McADAM: And he said, "Charlie, how about having lunch with me tomorrow?"

And I said, "Well, no, Dick, I'd rather not." I said, "I don't see eye-to-eye with you and let's forget it."

He said, "Oh, come on. I can take it."

I said, "No, Dick, I'm sorry. Forget it." I turned down Mr. Richard Nixon for lunch. Now what else do you want me to say about him? This is before--

SOAPES: This is before he's vice-president?

McADAM: I never voted for him, but now my--it's a funny world--my son is trying to get Nixon's book when it comes out to be serialized through the newspapers, which is a business deal, see. Not me. He's trying to get it.

SOAPES: Would you mind telling me what it was about Nixon that caused you not to want to be with him?



McADAM: Well, I tell you, I don't think I'm qualified to-- enough has been said and done about the man and I would rather refrain from making any comments. The fact that I didn't want to have lunch with him, I think, is self-explanatory.

SOAPES: Okay, fine. Getting back to Eisenhower, when was the last time that you saw him?

McADAM: The last time I saw Eisenhower was in Palm Springs, California. I never saw him after that.

SOAPES: That was the last time he was out there?

McADAM: Well, yes, he was making that his place, you know.

MRS. McADAM: That was in 1965.

McADAM: '65?

MRS. McADAM: Yes.

SOAPES: And what would you say was the state of his health at that point?



McADAM: Well he seemed all right, but he was not the same active guy. I played golf with him but we rode in carts, you know. As a matter of fact I think ever since he had the real trouble, that's when he started riding in carts.

SOAPES: We've covered quite a bit of ground, and I just wondered if there's some sort of--

McADAM: Can you think of anything, Joanne?

MRS. McADAM: No.

SOAPES: If there's some sort of summarizing comment that you'd like to make about Eisenhower or your relationship with him that would sort of wrap this up.

McADAM: I don't know how to wrap this up. I was extremely fond of him, as he was of me; it was a mutual relationship. And with all the celebrities that I have handled in my lifetime, I've been asked, "Who was the greatest person that I ever liked?" And aside from my great love for Eisenhower, I was very fond of Alfred E. Smith, who wrote for my syndicate, and to whom I paid fifty thousand a year, although he was



only getting fifteen thousand as governor. But those were the two men that I really loved. I admired Will Rogers tremendously, but never was with him very much. I never visited his home--I mean to stay--I was in his home in Beverly Hills, California. But Will Rogers probably was as great a human being as lived in my time. When he was killed, the whole world, not the United States, the whole world were heartbroken. So my summary is that I had great love and admiration for Ike. We hit it off when we met in Augusta National and it lasted. Trying to think of what he might have asked me to do--. Sure he'd write me and ask me about this and that and what do I think. He wrote back and he'd give me credit for--. We would never be in the mess we're in today if Eisenhower had lived and was President because he avoided all those troublesome things. He avoided them. He'd been in war and he had enough of that; he didn't want any of that anymore.

SOAPES: Did he speak often of the horrors of war, was that something that came up frequently with him?

McADAM: Well, he'd say, he had enough. And then when he



was talking about the religion, he said, "I made everybody go to their respective churches or services." Well, I wish we had more Presidents like Eisenhower. That's a good summation, and I'm sorry that a man like Nixon didn't take a leaf out of Eisenhower's book.

