

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY:
DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN IN
THE NIXON WHITE HOUSE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Video played)

MR. HESS: After that film, I need no introduction. (Laughter) The film has introduced me to you. I'm Steve Hess.

That film, I love that little film. It was produced here at Brookings by our own George Burroughs. And I particularly like Nixon playing "Happy Birthday," but I wish George had been able to include the next scene, which was Duke Ellington kissing the President French-style on both cheeks, Nixon blushing, et cetera.

Now I get to introduce Julie, Julie Hirschfeld Davis. And what interested me, in a sense, was if we had had this event a year ago, when I had written a book called *Whatever Happened to the Washington Reporters?*, I would be interviewing Julie. In the nature of Washington, today she interviews more or less me. Because Julie --

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

MR. HESS: Pardon? You're working on the sound? I'm up and down. Up and down, up and down. (Laughter) I can talk louder, but I don't know that that makes any difference.

Okay, let's try again. Julie, if I been studying her for my book on the Washington reporters, you would see a straight line projection into the stratosphere and it's very interesting because it shows a lot about how one moves in Washington journalism.

Julie went to Yale. That didn't hurt her. And came here in an internship for the *Dallas Morning News*, which is a way young people often get here, and then went to *CQ*, which at that time was the ideal entry-level spot. They actually paid and you could move on from there. And from there, I think went to the *Baltimore Sun*. That's where I first met her. And then the Associated Press, then Bloomberg, and now at the *New York*

Times.

I have followed her career. And by the way, she won a major award when she was covering Congress, the Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for Distinguished Writing. I have followed her career with great interest beyond liking to read her material because we have something else in common: we both went to the same high school. So I'll let her talk about how that may have changed her career. I think it certainly did change mine.

So, Julie, you're now in charge of me and do with it as you will.

MS. DAVIS: Well, thank you for that introduction and for mentioning Fieldston because it's a warm place in my heart. I have also turned to you as a resource a lot during my career just to help me understand sort of the nature of the presidency and the changing nature of how the West Wing works and how the President interacts with Congress. And I found this book to be a fascinating window into that.

MR. HESS: Yeah, I don't know if it'll make it into the *New York Times*, but I think we're going to get a good play in the Fieldston Alumni Bulletin. (Laughter)

MS. DAVIS: The *Fieldston News*?

MR. HESS: Yeah, yeah, I do think so.

MS. DAVIS: Go Eagles. So, yes, thank you for having me.

MR. HESS: Pleasure.

MS. DAVIS: This is a treat for me. And I found the book, like I said, to be fascinating, in part because this is an aspect both of Nixon and Moynihan that people really don't know. So I wonder if we could start out playing off something you talked a little bit about in the video, why they needed and wanted to work together.

And you mentioned how Nixon had won with a very narrow margin. He may have seen himself as vulnerable politically because of that. Moynihan was in the

wilderness a bit among Democrats at the time, if you could talk more about that.

And I wonder, also, whether, you know, in history there are many examples of presidents turning to political rivals, even people who they have policy divisions within their cabinets, as you mentioned. But to put him in the West Wing, do you think in the beginning this was a symbolic move that evolved into something else or did it start out as a real substantive desire for a different point of view?

MR. HESS: You know, I think there was a lot going on here. What I know I write in the book. What I don't know I leave out of the book. The thing about this book is you can really take it to the bank. There are no historical assumptions. That is, I think Thomas Jefferson must have been saying that to John Adams that night.

(Laughter) Everything in this book I know for a fact. If I don't know it, it's not in the book.

And the way I could construct this book, fortunately, was that Pat's opponent in the White House, his name was Arthur Burns, very famous Columbia University conservative economist, kept a little diary, two little spiral books, one he bought for 39 cents and one for 40 cents. They were never published, so they were never cleaned up. His wife -- his widow gave them to the University of Michigan, and he hated everybody. (Laughter) Everything in the book. I know because he said it.

So I gave that long introduction because some of what you just asked I don't know. Clearly, you're right, and I said in the film, as well, the election of '68 was very close, you'll recall; a three-person election, George Wallace, as well. And the last time a President came into office with both Houses of Congress against was Zachary Taylor.

Nixon felt he had to do something, as you point out. The usual thing you do, historically, is you put somebody in your cabinet. Then you don't like them, fire them. To put somebody next to you as he did as your chief policy advisor is incredibly high-risk.

Why did he do that? I think there are several reasons, and now we're going into assumption. If anybody has been in transitions -- I have been, one way or another, actually in every transition since 1960, when I was coming out of the White House and the Kennedy people were coming in -- the amount of confusion, the amount of misunderstanding, the amount of time constraints and so forth go in, that in many ways if they had to start all over and think about it, the risk of putting a Moynihan there would have precluded it. It was too high a risk for what they could have gotten from it.

MS. DAVIS: You would not advise a President to do that if you were --

MR. HESS: I would certainly not advise a President to do that. It was plain luck that it turned out to be a brilliant move. And, of course, you always take credit for brilliant moves, and it really worked to his advantage over time. But they were plenty worried about that immediately after they did it, and that enters into the rest of the story, as well.

As you point out, from Moynihan's point of view it was a relatively easy move for a simple reason. He wrote the famous Moynihan report, the report officially called "The Negro Family," when he was assistant secretary of labor in the Kennedy administration, 1965. And it was 75 pages of dense statistics and so forth, although he did call it the pathology of the underclass.

And he was crucified by major elements of the Democratic Party for that. And he, as he said, had Hubert Humphrey been elected, who he supported, he would not have had an opportunity to come back to the White House. And for somebody like Pat Moynihan, who had built his career moving up and up into a political role and then was cut like a guillotine in 1965, to be in the White House was a very important thing. So he had a psychological problem of jumping over the fact that Richard Nixon was the person most despised in Cambridge or on the West Side of New York. But beyond that, it was

not a difficult decision.

MS. DAVIS: You mentioned Arthur Burns and one of the really interesting aspects of this account is the degree to which Nixon sort of set up a little bit of a battle of ideas within the West Wing between Moynihan, who was this liberal whose reputation preceded him, and the conservative economist from Columbia. What were the pros and cons of that as you saw them play out? I mean, did that actually end up yielding a better outcome for Moynihan's proposals?

MR. HESS: Oh, it was a marvelous thing if you know how to deal with that sort of conflict. But that had never been Nixon's way of doing business, either when he was Vice President or his campaign. He was always a person who had an aide in each little box and he related to him and it was never this thing.

So part of what comes through as you read this is the incredible happenstance of history, of administrations, of luck that enters into this thing, including suddenly having this unusual system. And the system was unusual, also, because Nixon never expected it to happen. He never expected it to happen because, as he had said to Teddy White and to others in '67, '68, all you really need a president for is to run foreign policy. Domestic, you have a good cabinet, that takes care of itself. And he believed it because he wanted to believe it because all he was really interested in was foreign policy.

But second, because he had been eight years Eisenhower's vice president he knew the cabinet system as it happened under Eisenhower, and Eisenhower knew how to run a cabinet. He had a run a great war. And he was the only President who was so popular, both in terms of election and in terms of being distinct from his own party, that he could pick anybody he wanted in his cabinet. He's the only President who could say that no one ever turned him down. So he, indeed, did have a

basic cabinet arrangement. The Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Commerce got in trouble. Sherman Adams could put them in a room, lock the door, and say come out when you've decided that.

I guess Nixon expected he could do that. Nixon never ran anything. He could not have run that in the Eisenhower manner anyway. But what actually happened was he created the Urban Affairs Council, Moynihan was going to be the executive secretary. And within moments, days certainly, he couldn't stand his cabinet. He had three ex-governors -- Romney of Michigan, Volpe of Massachusetts, and Hickel of Alaska -- and he said they never shut up. (Laughter) And anybody who knew Nixon, all he wanted to do was get alone in a room, preferably with Henry Kissinger or Bob Haldeman.

So within a very short time, he had told Haldeman keep them away from me. (Laughter) And when you did that, we've moved ahead of the story about how Burns came into the White House and was a conflict between a liberal, democratic, Harvard, social scientist and Burns, a conservative, Columbia economist, who were now put -- and that was going to be the way policy was going to be formulated, not the way Nixon planned it, but the way it was going to happen.

Now, if the first mystery of the book, as you point out, is how Moynihan came to the White House and how Nixon picked him, the second is how Burns came to the White House. And again, that's the second mystery that can't be explained.

On the day that Nixon stepped into the Oval Office for the first time, the day after the Inauguration, Arthur Burns came in. Arthur Burns had been put in charge during the transition of the volunteer task forces, and he came in to present them to the President and leave. And at that point, the President said to him, Arthur, you are going to be -- what did he call him -- counselor to the President. You will have top cabinet rank. Your field will be domestic policy and here's your cabinet chairs.

And Burns was flabbergasted. He had turned the President down. His expectation was to go on a sabbatical to California, and, a year later, to come back as the chairman of the Federal Reserve when it became available. And suddenly, we have two people in conflict. And if you play the game of paper covers rocks, scissors cuts paper, and so forth, Burns would have to win. Burns was the Republican, Moynihan was not. Burns was the friend of the President, Moynihan not. Burns was the cabinet, Pat was not, and so forth.

And so the second mystery is how the blazes does Pat win, and he does.

MS. DAVIS: So I want to follow up on that because you use a phrase in the book about Moynihan, where you call him a "brilliant bureaucratic politician."

MR. HESS: Yeah.

MS. DAVIS: And I think that, in my mind, helps explain why it is you say that he won on so many of these issues. Can you talk about what it meant in that White House to be a brilliant bureaucratic politician? And do you think that's changed?

You know, I cover the current White House and I'm always interested in whether you think those strategies are still applicable now the way the West Wing works.

MR. HESS: Well, it involved a lot of things beyond substance. All the White House is not substance. Some of it is style, and Moynihan had the style. He was incredibly funny. And in this great White House he was appreciated.

And more than that, he used -- one of his bureaucratic tricks was just fascinating. I'm not sure I realized it to the extent I did till I started to write the book, was his use of wit. And it was devastating and it could be used very effectively.

There's one point in the book, for example, you may remember, they're in the Cabinet Room. The cabinet is there. They're now talking about the Family Assistance Plan and Marty Anderson, another Columbia professor who was Burns'

assistant, slams the table, which you don't do in a Cabinet Room, and he says let me call a spade, a spade. This is a negative income tax, which is exactly what Moynihan didn't want it to be called because it's exactly what it was. (laughter) And Moynihan smiles that cherubic smile and he says, well, as Oscar Wilde would have said, anyone who calls it a spade, a spade, should have to use one. (Laughter)

The cabinet laughs because they don't know what's going on. (Laughter) Because it's a very serious question between two ideological academics and the meeting ends at that point. That was just one example of the way he did it.

But Burns, on the other hand, was dull. He was just plain dull. By the time -- and brilliant and I rather liked him, but by the time he finished pulling on his pipe, you know, and waiting for the next word to come out. So there they were virtually against (inaudible).

The President actually played it fairly equally. In fact, Burns saw the President, and we can chart minutes with a president because every moment is checked as somebody goes in or out of their office, he actually saw the President more because he also covered economics things. So he wasn't to be shortchanged, but he was also boring the President and, by the way, boring Haldeman and Ehrlichman, who are keeping him out of the Oval Office if they could. So all of this is going on and other things are happening.

The key thing is that Moynihan learned very quickly how to educate the President. When Moynihan was called during the transition to the Hotel Pierre in New York, and he called me and said the President would like to see me. Would you come up to New York and we'll meet?

And he went in to see the President, the President-elect and the President-elect told him all the things he was going to do for him. And Moynihan came

down just hopping along. He was just full of excitement over this and his first impressions of Nixon.

Remember, these people never even knew each other. We had a young guy on our staff on the campaign named Chris Demuth, who had gone to Harvard. And Nixon says to him is he called Daniel or Dan? He didn't even know how to call Pat Moynihan.

Okay. Moynihan comes down from seeing the President-elect and he says, he's ignorant, meaning he doesn't know anything about domestic policy. And this is an incredible statement for somebody who has spent the last 20 years thirsting after the presidency, but he is totally consumed by foreign policy.

And I, who had been Nixon's speechwriter when he ran for governor of California, said I can explain that to you. It's Election Day in California. Nixon is going to lose. I'm about to go back home to Washington. He calls me to say goodbye. I say, Dick, do you still think you're going to lose? He says, yes, but I'm never going to have to talk about crap like dope addiction again. (Laughter)

It was really -- so what did this mean? It meant that Pat Moynihan was going in with a blank slate. Here was this great professor, educator, who could work without working against -- as anybody else, you go -- when a President gets elected, he's got a whole slate. He's been running for office for years. He's had a campaign. This was blank.

And Moynihan does something I guess you could call it bureaucratic, but it was just instinct, it wasn't bureaucratic. The minute he gets the appointment in December, he starts sending Nixon memoranda.

Well, I know something about memoranda to the President. I've been a staff member and (inaudible) are short, punchy. Bang, bang, bang, you're busy, he's

busy, move on to the next. These Moynihan to Nixon were long and convoluted, complex, literary, often about things that a president had nothing to do with, but that Moynihan thought, gee, the President should be interested in that. I'm interested in that.

They were not expert to president/CEO or anything like that. They were clear, as you read them, that they were intellectual to intellectual. And no one had ever treated Richard Nixon that way before and Richard Nixon loved it.

Unfortunately for Pat, he loved it so much that he started to send these memoranda around to other people and, before you know it, they were going to leak and he was going to get in trouble. (Laughter) But that's the future.

So he knew how to educate him. He knew how to entertain him. And before long, by this time Nixon had moved out of the Oval Office, which was just for ceremonial purposes and his wife had redesigned it like an MGM set, anyway. And so he moved across the street to the Executive Office Building. Bob Haldeman, who understood his need for being alone, blanked out all -- Wednesday you didn't see the President.

And very soon, Bill Safire, who understood the President and had been there a long time -- the President would fall in love with people. They were short intellectual love affairs. Earlier on they had been with John Mitchell, they could be with Pete Peterson. His love affair with Pat Moynihan came at exactly the right time, April 1969. And they would sit there for hours talking. And the President would say, Pat, what books should I read? What political biographies? And the President [*sic*] would give him a list. In fact, the book has Pat's list of all the books he recommends to the President.

And look what happens. The President wakes up in the middle of the night, generally 3 in the morning, and starts to read, and he read all the books. And what were the books? Well, they were Blake on Disraeli. They were books on Melbourne.

And the President is soon sort of comparing himself with a 19th century British Prime Minister, Disraeli, a conservative with progressive notions. And this is exactly right because this is Pat Moynihan's doing because it fits all of these strange things that the President is doing, suddenly becoming a liberal in certain areas within some sort of framework that the President can understand.

And in terms of being a bureaucrat, there's more to it, too. Nixon called himself a moderate conservative. He was a moderate by averaging. He would move far to the right -- Haynsworth and Carswell -- then he would move far to the left, and that was the average you get back to the middle.

My job, which was a strange job because I'm not an urban affairs expert and there I was deputy assistant to the President for urban affairs, it really had three roles with Pat. With myself, we had -- there were five of us. And Pat was a Roman candle, shooting off. So the first role was somehow to keep everybody in line, knowing what everybody else was doing.

The second was Pat was a guy who was always accepting invitations. He meant well, but he could never get there. And it was always, Steve, you got to get up to Boston and talk to the AFL-CIO, you know, that sort of thing. Or, my god, I made a speech in Hong Kong. Can you get to Hong Kong on Thursday? So that was the second one.

And the third, if you're a baseball fan, as I am, I was his bench coach. This was particularly true because partly I think he picked me, besides we were friends, I was probably the only Republican he knew, was that I could guide him. I could say, okay, he's gone right. Now is the time that he's going to go left, move now, and so forth.

So these are things, they're all bureaucratic things. They're not things that specifically have to do with policy or even with people. They are all what we are

played.

Now, obviously, this goes on in every administration. I don't know it in other administrations. I know the Eisenhower administration was an entirely different thing. We could talk about the difference from then and now. But that was -- two things were happening here that also fit into this bureaucratic question.

Obviously, Nixon was very worried initially about Pat's loyalty. Pat had made a commitment. He was opposed to the war, he was for a lot of the Johnson programs. He was not going to say publicly anything about these things. He would keep his word. But still, if he were to resign in some way, that was a major thing. So initially, he had certain advantages because they weren't quite sure of how steady he was.

The one I cite in this has to do with an early question of the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia was a very small piece of our portfolio, but a very important piece if you happen to live in the District of Columbia. And in the first week of the administration, the President saw an editorial in a local paper on the crime rate. And he said I want to give a speech next week on the crime rate.

And this, of course, was John Mitchell's business. And as the bench coach what I would say to Pat is the one person to keep away from John Mitchell.

MS. DAVIS: "Keep away from" as in don't get on his turf?

MR. HESS: Keep away from him. Don't get between him and the President because you're going to lose.

But on this particular thing, we had the District of Columbia. We actually got a lot. Eleanor Holmes Norton is there today because Pat put it in the legislation, a non-voting member. He had proposed a voting member, but that's all we got at that time. So at first, Pat could get some things because he was in good shape.

Ultimately, when the President really began to trust him, this was a

wonderful thing because Nixon was paranoid. Most presidents are, but he was excessively paranoid and he didn't trust many people. And when it got to the point that he really trusted Pat, that was probably more in his favor than anything else. So there's a chapter in the book which says, in effect, as if the President says you can do anything you want, Pat, as long as it doesn't cost much money or get me in trouble. So there a whole bunch of little things that he does.

For example, the statistical systems of the United States at that time were actually set up for white and non-white. And Pat went to the President and said this is horrible, you can't call people non-white. The President said, yeah, okay, do something about it. So he does, he changes the statistics. So there are a lot of little things like that.

But when he's ready for the big thing, what we call his White House family, he is now really quite committed to Pat. So all of these things are going on at the same time, and they're really quite fascinating.

I mean, your question is, was there other people like that? I don't know if there's ever really been two people who are that dissimilar at the White House at the same time in history.

MS. DAVIS: I just have to pause one moment and I'll open it up for questions soon, but to remark on how much things have changed since then. The transition was headquartered at the Pierre Hotel in New York. Can you imagine that happening now? I certainly can't imagine that happening, Republican or Democrat.
(Laughter)

I do want to follow up, though, on what you mentioned about how he was kind of a blank slate. You quote Ehrlichman, I think it is, at some point in the book saying that on domestic policy the President has no philosophy. And I wonder whether you think

that changed and was Moynihan able to change that. And can you talk about -- you know, so the Family Assistance Plan gets proposed and it doesn't go all the way through and it's not the way Moynihan envisioned it.

MR. HESS: Yeah, yeah.

MS. DAVIS: But was he able to plant the seeds for something that you would consider a Nixonian domestic policy? And what would that have been?

MR. HESS: This is a fascinating question because there is a review in the *National Journal* this week by James Rosen and it's a generally favorable review. He's a dear friend and was a student of mine. But he goes on from what happened to what he expected would have happened. And he believes, based on the conversations between Haldeman and Nixon that Nixon would have repudiated this if he had had -- or this approach if he had had a full two years.

I think James is wrong -- I'd love to debate him on this -- for at least two reasons. The trajectory that Moynihan put in place was picked up by John Ehrlichman, who had a very large staff in the White House, very good people, and they were doing a lot of things on environmental protection, health care, and so forth, well beyond what we could possibly have done in that first year. That was in place, so it's very hard to have rejected that.

But the more important thing is a president doesn't turn their back on things that they accomplish and that they are being praised for. You know, you can't suddenly say I was wrong. And so it's very hard for any president to say it. The obvious example to me, because I knew it so well and it was so wrong, was why the hell he didn't get rid of Agnew. He knew how bad Agnew was. He didn't know he was a crook, but he knew how bad he was and he couldn't bring himself to say I made a mistake. So I don't think that would have -- I think that would have gone on more or less as it was going on

when we left the White House.

But, again, the book was meant to stop at the end of 1969 because the end of 1969, Arthur Burns becomes the chairman of the Fed, Pat is moved up to the Burns position as counselor to the President, and I become the national chairman of the White House Conference on Children and Youth. So I'm out of there. It seems like a very good place to stop and it's a marvelous place if you're going to do a Capra movie because it's like Pat coming in like Jimmy Stewart and he goes out, he's turned everything around.

The problem is I couldn't do that, ultimately, because Pat's commitment to the administration from Harvard was two years. And so he should have been on a victory lap that second year and instead, everything went wrong: Cambodia, Kent State, the leaking of the memo, and the loss of a Family Assistance Plan by one vote in the Senate Finance Committee. Everything is going wrong and this is life. So we have to continue on till we get to another conclusion of the book.

MS. DAVIS: You mentioned your time in the Eisenhower White House. And it seems like the way you've described the way domestic policy got made in that White House is so different than how you saw it play out under Nixon. Can you talk a little bit about that? And were those born of the differences politically between the two or their leadership styles? How much did Moynihan have to do with that and how much of that was Eisenhower versus --

MR. HESS: So much of it was born of the times. I mean, we were still in a time when what did the federal government do? They gave out Social Security checks or they built bridges and dams, you know. We started to move into the century with Eisenhower and the road system of the United States, the interstate highway system, but they were moving slowly in that direction. In that direction we finally had the *Brown*

decision and what was happening with race. So a lot of it really had to do with a different world.

But on the specific question of a different White House, when I got to the Eisenhower White House in the fall of 1958, it was tiny. It was tiny. We could all have lunch together in the White House mess, which is a room not nearly as big as this room. By the time I came -- just to illustrate it in this way -- by the time I came back to the White House eight years later, you could all sit in the White House mess, but you had two shifts. In other words, I as a young person would not have had the experience eight years later to sit there and listen to Andy Goodpaster or Jim Hagerty or anything. They were a second shift.

By the time I left the Nixon White House they now not only had two shifts, but two dining rooms. The White House had become a bureaucracy in and of itself. And we start to see this very clearly with Nixon, with an increase in the number of cabinet offices even. I'm trying to think how many if there were 12 cabinets at that time when we left the Eisenhower -- the growth of the government, for lots of reasons, some very good reasons, is what changed the nature of it.

The other really had to do with Eisenhower. You know, every time something happens, like Sherman Adams fails or John Regan fails or whoever fails, the press will write about the changes in the White House. But, you know, it's still the President's White House. The difference between the Eisenhower White House, whether it was Sherman Adams, a guy named Jerry Persons, who were totally different people, there was no difference. The same with the Reagan White House, the same with the Clinton White House. The White House really does belong to the President.

MS. DAVIS: Why don't we open it up for some questions? Right here. We have a microphone coming to you.

SPEAKER: (inaudible; microphone malfunction)

MS. DAVIS: Do you want to try shouting?

SPEAKER: Yeah, I'll go ahead.

MR. HESS: Yeah, you've got a great voice. Give it to me again.

SPEAKER: At any rate, having just said that I'm unbiased on this having known Steve for a while, having had the pleasure of reading the book, which I think was best described by a wonderful (inaudible) haven't read it, this one you got to read and you can't say it's too long. (Laughter) It is a wonderful story.

And I want to ask a question that is not about Moynihan (inaudible). You were an Eisenhower Republican. You came back to being a Nixon Republican.

MR. HESS: Yeah.

SPEAKER: And you worked with this (inaudible) one-of-a-kind fellow, Moynihan, who became your friend. How did that experience of (inaudible) White House and working for (inaudible) Democratic, West Side New York, Harvard Pat Moynihan affect the way you thought about (inaudible)?

MR. HESS: Well, first of all, I'm sorry you asked that question because I (inaudible) honor it and answer it as best I can. By the way, I should say several things that one learns about Washington, the review in *The Economist*, which was very rare because *The Economist* doesn't have much space for review, I got more calls and emails on the review than on the book. My god, how did it get that review? Nobody would -- (Laughter)

The second question is, you're right, the book can be read, as I think maybe you told me, on a Sunday afternoon or one flight from Dulles to LAX. So it's there to be read.

My relation with Nixon was totally destroyed by Watergate. He was a

very smart man and I had considerable respect for him. And he was also a man who if you had asked any of the economists, any of the scientists, any of the policy people, probably never even cursed in their presence, all of the expletives deleted that you saw in the transcript. We would go into his office, we would have a very serious conversation, we would come out, and the Haldemans or the Colsons would come in and it was a different world with the apparatchiks, a world that I did not know, frankly. So that was the first thing.

As the Senate hearings came up, they created a team which became Jim Lehrer and Robin MacNeil, and ultimately became *The NewsHour*. And there were two others: there was me, who did the politics, sitting on one end and a lawyer, who we rotated, on the other end. And I sat there day after day listening to what was being described about people that I knew. And one day, I said at the end of the program, I'm sorry, but I'm not coming back tomorrow. I can't stand this anymore. I'm having nightmares.

I never again spoke to Richard Nixon. He sent me a book once in which I think he meant to open the relationship and I was rude enough not to do it. Pat said you have to go and go with me, we'll go up to New Jersey. You have to have closure.

Oh, you're right. And then Nixon's memoirs came out and, of course, he regretted and confessed nothing. The whole Robert Frost thing is a farce. That's nothing. There's really no confession in there.

And I didn't even go to his funeral. Instead of that, I was the C-SPAN commentator. And this book was written as a tribute to Pat Moynihan, something I had to write because I'm getting on in years. But, you know, as I wrote it -- it wasn't for Nixon, it was for Moynihan -- I did start to create my closure with Richard Nixon. I did see things he did and moments, and I tell, obviously, things that you know because you read the

book, but others about the Nixon I know. And that's where we've left it.

As far as what sort of a Republican I was, when I left the Eisenhower administration, for a very short time I went up to the Hill, became the assistant to Tom Kuchel, a senator from California, who was the deputy leader. We were comfortably, that is moderate Republicans, we were comfortably a third of the party, and we were important. We were not the majority of our party, but we were big enough to be listened to.

Well, I know we're not today. And in a strange way, fortunately, I'm not longer in active politics. Will we ever come back to that? Well, there are people I see in the audience who know a lot more about that than I do.

MS. DAVIS: I see someone in the back there with their hand raised.

MR. BOSCO: Hi. Joe Bosco, another alumnus of the Nixon administration. Great to see you, Steve, and --

MR. HESS: Forgive me what I said about John Volpe.

MR. BOSCO: No, I can --

MR. HESS: You know, Volpe, he was his boss. He was Volpe's chief assistant.

MR. BOSCO: Right, and I can attest the --

MR. HESS: And Volpe was different than the other two I mentioned because Volpe, of those three, knew how to deal with Congress and that was the difference between the three ex-governors.

MR. BOSCO: Yeah, that's exactly right. But it's true what you said that Volpe, Hickel, and Romney had tremendous difficulties in getting access to the President. Volpe had a relationship with Rose Mary Woods, who was a fellow devout Catholic, and somehow she managed to get him in to see Nixon from time to time, which infuriated

Haldeman and Ehrlichman.

But the question I wanted to ask you, Steve, was Volpe undertook a lot of initiatives at the Department of Transportation in the area of civil rights and environment and urban renewal. And I wondered how Pat Moynihan looked at the efforts of cabinet officers like him and Romney, whether he considered them allies in terms of what he was trying to accomplish.

MR. HESS: Actually, it was more the reverse really. The way that they could get anything done, other than sneaking into the White House when nobody was looking, was through the Urban Affairs Council of which Pat was the executive secretary. So it was Pat who could create the agenda and it was Pat who could assign the committees and the committee chairs of each one. So it was Pat who ultimately could get the cabinet officers some of the things that they importantly wanted.

For example, the Hunger Program was a very important program, largely increased under the Secretary of Agriculture at that time. Very much opposed by Arthur Burns, as it turned out. But he could get that through the committee.

Now, in return, the cabinet did things for him that he couldn't do that were very important. Remember, there were five of us. We couldn't possibly have researched any of these programs the way they had to be researched. It was by turning them over to the cabinet, particularly on welfare to HEW, that could get -- do the computer runs, could answer the questions, and so forth. So from our point of view, as opposed to the President's point of view, we worked pretty closely with the cabinet and I think it was mutually helpful to both.

MS. DAVIS: I think we have time for a couple more. Sorry, I'm jumping around. You're getting your exercise.

MR. BIRNBAUM: Yeah, I'm Norman Birnbaum from Georgetown

University. I'd like to ask Mr. Hess his impression of Moynihan, the origins of Moynihan's ideas, how he carried them.

You described him as a West Side intellectual. Well, for one thing, he wasn't Jewish, he was Catholic in origin. As you know, he didn't go to leafy Fieldston or River Dell. He went to Ben Franklin High School in a decaying East Harlem, which was undergoing a transition then from Irish and Italian to Latino and Afro-American. He went to City College. He did go to Tufts. He went to the LSE, where he got all that stuff, I think, on the one nation Tories. But he was a very unusual intellectual figure. In a curious way ecumenical. His best friend for a long time was Norman Podhoretz. On the other hand, he had something of Irish Catholicism and Democratic politics. He was a very, very interesting but difficult figure to read in what he came out with in his conception of America and social policy.

What were your impressions of, to use that kind of phrase my students' use, where he was coming from?

MR. HESS: Well, I'm going to answer that in a very roundabout way. First of all, there's a book out that was literally sent to me by the author yesterday by the University of Kansas Press on his philosophy, Burkean. So that, rather than mine, is the way to start to answer your questions.

The thing about Moynihan, nobody has yet and nobody is going to for a long time, I think, write the LBJ-type of volumes on Moynihan. Moynihan, I think, will ultimately be the most written about American political figure of the second half of the 20th century who was not President, Secretary of State, or a Supreme Court Justice. The Moynihan papers in the Library of Congress, the index is 1,100 pages. End to end they would reach above the Washington Monument.

The way we mortals have been attacking it is in small bites, pieces.

James Patterson, very, very good, a historian from Brown, was the first one and he did an excellent book on the Moynihan Report. The second one, Gil Troy, an excellent historian from McGill, did an absolutely brilliant book called *Moynihan's Moment*, about him at the U.N. I'd like to think that I'm the third in this progression. I cite to you a new one that arrived yesterday. I know of two other books that are coming out.

Moynihan is a treasure trove for young people looking for a Ph.D. dissertation. (Laughter) It is all there. It will be Moynihan on transportation, it will be Moynihan on security, and so forth and so on. And it'll come, but it's complicated, as you just indicated just in the nature of stating your question.

MR. SKINNER: Hi. My name is Richard Skinner. I'm from American University.

At the end of your book there's a wonderful postscript about what happened to all the people who worked for Moynihan, like Dick Blumenthal and Chris Demuth and so on. And you probably could do a similar section of a book on people who worked for Kissinger at that time; that both men attracted a lot of very bright, accomplished, young people, many of them with Ivy League pedigrees.

At the same time, under Haldeman you had a lot of young men from Southern California who had come up through Nixon campaigns, and they came from very different backgrounds. The Kissinger people and the Moynihan people on one side and then the Haldeman people. How did all these 20-somethings get along with each other?

MR. HESS: Marvelously. They were 20. (Laughter) When you're in the 20s, you get along with people. And they were fun and they were hard-working.

This book, I should say, this book entirely takes place in the West Wing of the White House. And it's not the West Wing of the White House that you knew from

the TV series, *The West Wing*. On the floor of where you find Haldeman and Ehrlichman working, where the Oval Office is and the Cabinet Room and the Roosevelt Room, it's the sound -- it's not like in the TV where they're running back and forth and shouting. It's the sound of silence. And it's as if -- Bob Haldeman, the director, has got a sign up saying, shh, the President is at work.

If you go down into the basement where you have the two Harvard professors -- Kissinger and Moynihan -- it's entirely different. And a lot of it, a lot of the good stories, I think, in the book, take place down there among us.

By the way, I should add, just because I mentioned what Moynihan said about Nixon said I'll never have to deal with crap like dope addiction again, I can well remember being in the Situation Room dealing with dope addiction because it was a question that moved across borders and it was very important. I can remember Henry Kissinger getting up in the middle of the meeting because there was a Vietnam speech that night, saying excuse me, gentlemen, I have to go upstairs and translate the speech from the original German. (Laughter) Kissinger.

But at any rate, we had fun down there. Strange things happened down there. Read the book.

MS. DAVIS: Well, I think maybe we have time for one more. All the way in the back.

DR. BERGER: Dr. Ed Berger. I was in the Office of the President's Science and Budget --

MR. HESS: Everybody's showing up. This is very good news. I'm going to stand and meet everybody individually.

DR. BERGER: And I have to say that --

MR. HESS: But I didn't see you.

DR. BERGER: -- we had an extraordinarily exciting period of several years during the Nixon period, much of it, in part, due to Pat Moynihan. He was given credit by us for having said to Nixon you should take up a series of issues that will do well and do good, but don't necessarily sound very Republican. One of those was population and family planning. And there were three initiatives put in place. We were worried about the rate of rise of population in the rest of the world: Mexico, Philippines, and so forth.

And so there was put in place three initiatives. One for domestic matters with an appointment of a new deputy assistant secretary and a goal of serving underserved women in America. It was highly successful. The second one was an international program not as successful. And the third one was a year-long study at Princeton to study the issue of population. And we got all three.

So we sat down with Pat Moynihan to figure out what we should look forward to promoting. And he said accept all of the recommendations except abortion. I was one of the ones who -- one of the 12, the Gang of 12, who put in place the Nixon health care program. It was an exciting time for us, I must say.

MR. HESS: Thank you. Obviously, you gather from what he said that that was from the science side of the White House, which is so often overlooked because so few of our presidents have any scientific background.

But I would ask you if you would confirm what I said, that when you guys, the scientists, talked to the President, there was no expletive deleted that had to be done. He was a very different person when he talked with us.

MS. DAVIS: Well, I think that is all we have time for. There are books in the back for sale. As you've heard, it's a fascinating read, so pick one up.

And thank you again for having me. It's been a very enjoyable

conversation. I learned a lot. (Applause)

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