

Timothy Naftali

I'm Tim Naftali. I'm director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library Museum. It's June 12, 2008, and I have the honor and privilege to be interviewing Alexander Butterfield for the Richard Nixon Oral History Program. Mr. Butterfield, thank you for doing this.

Alexander Butterfield

You're welcome, Tim.

Timothy Naftali

Let's start with UCLA. Were you a classmate of Haldeman's?

Alexander Butterfield

No, I don't think. I think -- I'm not sure. I was a freshman and I think Haldeman might have been a sophomore at that time. But I knew Bob, not really well, but somewhat because his girlfriend was a Kappa and my girlfriend was a Kappa and the two girls knew each other, were good friends. But I was 20 years old and just starting at school. I had already done a few things relative to the military before I got to UCLA.

Timothy Naftali

I want to ask you about World War II quickly, because you are a World War II vet. How old were you when you -- you were in the Army Air Corps, I believe.

Alexander Butterfield

Now, that's interesting that you should say that. I Googled myself, or a friend of mine Googled me, for the first time that I had ever Googled anyone -- and this was recently; this was this year, 2008 -- and I don't know where that stuff comes from. I was not a World War II veteran. I never flew the P-38. I always wanted to fly it; I was --

Timothy Naftali

Thank you for correcting that.

Alexander Butterfield

I was in fighters and I was a fighter pilot in my day, but it says in there -- I really have no idea where that could possibly have come from, that I flew P-38s in the Pacific with General Rosie O'Donnell. Well, at one time in my career I was the senior aide, aide-de-camp, to General Rosie O'Donnell, a four-star general, but many years my senior. He was the commander in chief of the Pacific Air Forces. He never flew the P-38. He was a bomber pilot. Rosie O'Donnell led the first land-based raid on Japan after the Doolittle Raid. So he's a great guy, New York City boy. But I was his aide and always wanted

to fly the P-38. But years later, when I was an Air Force pilot in the tactical air business, I flew P-51s, which came along -- well, there are still P-38s around. But that is an erroneous report.

Timothy Naftali

So when did you join the military?

Alexander Butterfield

I joined the military -- well, I joined the Navy in '48 as a seaman recruit and worked out of -- oh, down there near Long Beach, that Naval station near Long Beach. I can't think of the name of it now. And then I joined the Air Force in 1948. I dropped out of UCLA. I never did finish UCLA. In fact, I just had two years of school at UCLA.

Timothy Naftali

So you were in the Air Force during the Berlin blockade period?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

Were you involved at all? Did you --

Alexander Butterfield

No, because that too wasn't fighters, that was transport planes, and I didn't go over to Europe until November of '51. So I was at Las Vegas Air Force Base, now called Nellis Air Force Base, which is the Air Force's fighter school. And I was an instructor there in the early days and during the first part of the Korean War. Then I went to Europe, was in a fighter squadron in Munich, Germany, the 86 Fighter Wing. Then I -- you want me to go through -- [laughter]

Timothy Naftali

Well, I was just going to say I want to fast forward to the '60s. You make -- what were you doing in 1968?

Alexander Butterfield

'68?

Timothy Naftali

Yes.

Alexander Butterfield

In '68, I was the senior U.S. military officer in Australia. By virtue of my title, I was the CINCPAC rep, Commander in Chief Pacific Representative, in Australia. That made me a senior military officer in Australia. The commander in chief of the Pacific happened to be a four-star admiral. But by that time we were interchanging services quite a bit. I was an Air Force officer and he was a Navy four-star admiral. That guy happened to be the current Republican nominee's father, McCain's father. But I knew McCain's grandfather. He came into our house. My dad was a career naval aviator. And in his early days I remember the other Jack McCain -- Slew McCain, they called him -- in our house at a couple of cocktail parties years and years ago, I guess in the late '30s. So I'm from that sort of similar background to John McCain's. I grew up here in Coronado, right across the bay from San Diego, until '43. In '43 I left and did what one does when one grows up.

Timothy Naftali

Did you recall meeting the young John McCain?

Alexander Butterfield

No, I've never met him. I just say we're both -- he was a Navy fighter pilot. That's what I wanted to be, a Marine fighter pilot, go to the Naval Academy, graduate into the Marine Corps, and fly fighters. That sort of assured you of flying fighters if you could be a Marine fighter pilot. Navy guys flew patrol boats sometimes, and I didn't want any part of that. [laughter] But I ended up going into the Air Force and happened to go to fighters, and was always in that. Tactical aviation is the more appropriate name for fighters.

Timothy Naftali

How did you decide to leave the military and go into the White House? How did that happen?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, I'll try to make that as short a story as I can.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us. We have the time. Go ahead, tell us the story, please.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, I've told the story a number of times before. But I heard from a friend of mine, who was a Lieutenant General in Washington -- he was the chief of staff of Personnel, deputy chief of staff of Personnel. His name slips my mind, and that's not important. And he told me that I would have to stay in Australia for another two years. I had gone there thinking I would just be there two years. Now I loved Australia and I loved the Australians, and it was a pretty good duty I had. I had my own airplane and crew and staff car, and it's a wonderful country, a wonderful place to be, and I was pretty much my

own boss. My nearest boss was in Hawaii, Admiral McCain. But it's Siberia in a way. It was in those days. And if you want to be promoted, which I always did, you need to be where the smoke is: Washington, D.C., or Vietnam. Now I'd already been in Vietnam a lot. I'd spent a lot of time there. But I wanted to go back in a command position, a more senior position, and that was my goal. And that was written in my records that I was trying to get back there. So when I had got this news on the telephone, I'd just come back from the South Pole with the ambassador, the then Ambassador Bill Crook, to Australia, and got that bad news from Washington and I didn't know what to do. So we next went up to Papua New Guinea, with the ambassador. He liked to use our airplane. The embassy had an airplane for the ambassador. My airplane was a little better and a little faster and I had a -- we had a bigger bar, so the ambassador liked to travel on our airplane. And we were up in Papua New Guinea for him to make some calls. He had to make official calls in Port Moresby.

And then we went out into the woods and down the Sepik River and that sort of thing. Upon arrival it was raining like hell, and our whole schedule was delayed for a good two days. And in -- the newspaper in Port Moresby is called the "Tok Tok." You know, it's all, not Pig Latin, but something similar in these little outlying places. And the "Tok Tok" was the local paper. And I read in there -- this is November, we'd come back from the South Pole around mid-November. I got the phone call, and now we're up on the outskirts of Port Moresby. I'm reading the "Tok Tok" and there I see Haldeman's name. Now, I can't read this language very well, but whenever they'll have the noun, the subject of a sentence -- like on the door, if you want to sleep late in the little motel where we were staying up there, the ambassador and his party, which included me -- it says, "No wake 'em, manislip." M-a-n-i-s-l-i-p: man he sleep, "No wake 'em, man..." And that's -- so I'm trying to read this paper and I see Haldeman's name there, and I can dope out the fact that Bob Haldeman, my friend from UCLA -- and I'm thinking of him now as a closer and closer friend because I'm hatching a plan -- is the big man in the President's team, the transition team, because the transition was just about to begin up at the Pierre Hotel in New York City.

So I wrote out a letter, just right there, on that funny little motel stationery. "Dear Bob," and I refined it, and the rain's coming down. I had plenty of time. And I took that letter back with me when we returned to Canboro, some six, seven days later. And I pulled together some of my records and refined everything, and I sent it off to Haldeman some quick way, which we had down there. We can send things quickly to Washington. And then I started calling his office and getting this guy named Larry Higby, who I came to know very well. But, you know, I just knew he was Haldeman's man, Higby. And I said, "I'm coming back," and I could do that. I could travel back on official business. But I did have official business in Hawaii, so I came back to Hawaii, did my official business, went on leave, and then took a flight back to Washington. Called -- I knew they were up in New York; I had the New York number. And Higby knew I was trying to get in to see Haldeman. I thought if I could put myself in front of Haldeman -- and I hadn't seen Bob since UCLA. I mean, we weren't in touch at all, but the wives were at Christmas, that type of thing. So yeah, my plan -- I actually thought that I could get some kind of military job, possibly, and then would be able to go -- no one -- I didn't think the Vietnam War would come to a close when it did. No one knew that anyway at this time. And I just thought I could get back to Vietnam in a command position; get a wing or something like that. I was a full colonel by this time and some. So that was my plan. Well, anyway, it all worked out. So I was in a hotel in Washington the night that President-elect Nixon was introducing his Cabinet to the nation. He's the first President, I think, or President-Elect, who corralled his Cabinet together quickly and introduced them at the Shoreham Hotel or one of the hotels there in Washington. And I was watching that on the tube in my hotel room. And I said to myself, "I'm going to know all of you guys because I'm going to follow through and I'm going to be successful in this thing."

Next I heard from Higby, "Bob wants to see you in our office in the Pierre Hotel." I went up there, went to the Plaza Hotel, changed into my coat and tie and left my bag with a porter, I mean, with a guy, walked up the street to the Pierre, saw Bob, had a great visit, really a good visit, met Larry Higby, and then headed back. And I knew slots had been taken. And I won't belabor all that, but the military aide to the President -- the Armed Forces aide, the senior aide, was a guy I knew before: Don Hughes. He had been Nixon's aide when Nixon was Vice President, so he was back in as the senior aide. And I think I was too senior to be one of the assistants to that guy. Al Haig, whom I knew very well from our days together in the McNamara office, and we were in McNamara's immediate office working with Joe Califano, grinding things out through midnight every night, walking out to north parking in a blizzard, all that sort of thing. And Haig was -- had the military job as the military assistant to the National Security Advisor. He had that sewn up. He later became Deputy Assistant National Security Advisor, but at that time it was the military assistant job.

So there wasn't much there for me, and Haldeman told me that. But he said, "Let me think about this." So he was going to think about it and I was going to think about it. So when I got back, just to finish this story, the ambassador wanted to go down to the Davis Cup matches, which were being held in Adelaide that December. It was December of '68. So we all go down to Adelaide to a party from the embassy, a bunch of people, the ambassador and his wife and maybe 10 or 12 others. And I holed myself up in my motel room and wrote another letter to Bob, the essence of which, "I've been thinking, and if there really is no military," I was getting excited about this thing, admittedly, "I would take anything that you think I might be able to contribute." And I guess he'd been thinking the same thing, but I didn't hear and didn't hear and didn't hear. And I've been faulted for saying, "Out of the blue," once I did say, "out of the blue." But it seemed that way to me. I'd long since given up. January 1st came and went. And it was January 12th or 13th, now I do forget the date, when I heard from Haldeman for the first time since I left him in Washington, roughly December 19th. And he said, "I've been thinking about what we talked about. I got your letter." And he said, "I had never planned to have an assistant, but I'm sitting here with General Goodpaster" -- and Goodpaster, of course, was staff secretary in Eisenhower's White House, and I know Andy Goodpaster [unintelligible] many years senior to me in the Army. He was an Army four-star general and was, at that time, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and I think he'd been called back to help Nixon with his transition team. And he said, "He recommends that I have a deputy." And the only thing valuable about me, not that I knew any more than Haldeman, but all of these guys came up to Washington from California and nobody really knew anything, except the President, about Washington. Who else? Al Haig, but he's going to be working for Henry down in the Situation Room down in the West Wing basement.

And I knew quite a bit about Washington and the White House. I'd been working for McNamara for a couple of years. I had been to the National War College. I wrote McNamara's Cabinet reports. I was McNamara's man for the White House, so I was over in the Johnson White House a minimum of 20 hours a week in the Johnson days -- in the Johnson days of '65 and '66. Yeah, '65 and '66, because then I went to the National War College in the fall of '66. So I really felt I could contribute. No one else even knew where the restrooms were. I mean, you know, it takes a while to settle into the White House. So he said, "So I realize I'm going to need a deputy. So how would you like to come in here and be a part of this team? And if you say yes, you must come right away. I'm sorry I'm calling you so late. That only gives you a little more than a week." So I said, "Well, let me talk to the ambassador. Thank you very much." I thanked him profusely and wondered who I'd have to call, which bosses I would have to call.

So the first guy I called was General Rosie O'Donnell. I hadn't worked for him for years. But he was offered Commissioner of Baseball once. He was a very popular general, especially with the sporting world. And he said something during the Korean War, which he shouldn't have said, something like, "We'll bomb them back to the Stone Age." It was LeMay who said that, but Rosie O'Donnell said something similar and everyone thought he was going to be kicked out of the Air Force, and so the baseball people offered him the commissioner -- the commissioner's job to replace Landis, I guess it was at the time. And he said, "No, when the Air Force lets me go, that's when I'll --" and I knew how he felt and I wondered if he would think less of me if I were getting out. Because I felt, and this was just I, that if I went to the White House in a non-military capacity, I shouldn't stay in the military. I didn't want to get out. I had a lot invested. If I do say so, I had moved along fast. I was well ahead of my contemporaries, well ahead. I had been a lucky person, too, had good bosses.

Now to junk that at this stage, just before I'm -- just as I'm anticipating being on the General Officers List. I heard I was on that, actually. I've heard that, but I have no -- I just don't know. So it's been said that -- I've read this myself -- that Haldeman told me I had to get out. Haldeman never told me I had to get out. Haldeman was very good about that. In fact, said quite the opposite when he heard I was getting out. But anyway, I went back to Washington, said goodbye to my family. You know, it was in the school year down there, so I had to leave my family there. Got a flight back, checked in at Bolling Air Force Base in the BOQ, and was being accorded all kinds of privileges because I was the about-to-be deputy assistant to the President. I don't think I even knew that, and I didn't know what my title would be. I had no idea what my pay would be. None of that mattered. So there I was. I did get out of the military, January of '69, and was a complete civilian, well, retired military officer when I went to the White House, and never looked back.

Timothy Naftali

When you arrived at the White House, they told you -- what were you supposed to do? What was your job supposed to be?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, Haldeman sat down and explained that to me. The essence of it was, he said, "You and I," he said, "This is a strange man." That's one of the first things Haldeman said about Richard Nixon. And, "He doesn't like people that he doesn't know." So he said, "First of all, I've got to introduce him to you, but I have to do that on my own time. When I see the situation's right, then we'll go in." So I thought that was silly, because I actually thought he meant later today. I mean, I look back now and laugh. He meant when the time is right. I went something like 13 days sitting outside the Oval Office in what was then Bob Haldeman's office, which later became my office, waiting for the time to be right. And then, of course, the time never was right. One day Haldeman got a call from his wife back in Los Angeles -- he hadn't seen his wife. He went straight from the campaign to the Pierre Hotel in New York to running the transition team, and, you know, making all of the arrangements. He didn't run the transition, but he was certainly a key figure and very busy and he hadn't had time to take off and go back and relax in Los Angeles. He just went from one busy job on the campaign to another.

Now his wife called, it had something to do with the sale of their house. He had to go back and sign something. And he hadn't -- I'm his backup. Nixon doesn't even know me. Nixon has never laid eyes on me. I'd been to a couple of Rose Garden ceremonies where I'm standing there with Bob and I had seen the President look at me a couple of times and he probably thought, "Who the hell is that guy? I

don't remember him on the campaign," because everyone else at the White House had been on the campaign. That's why they were now at the White House. And they had all called Dick, "Dick," and Pat, "Pat," and they were all friends. They'd all traveled aboard "The Tricia." The campaign plane was "The Tricia." I was the only guy from left field, this guy from Australia. Nobody knew me. Ehrlichman sort of remembered me from UCLA, but not really I don't think. "Yeah, it's Haldeman's friend. I think he comes from Australia." I mean that's sort of the way it was. And Haig, I knew Haig pretty well. He's down in the basement and I stopped by and said hello to Haig a couple of times.

Timothy Naftali

And so you have to walk in that day?

Alexander Butterfield

So, yeah, so Haldeman -- I hate to waste time with this story, but --

Timothy Naftali

It's a great story.

Alexander Butterfield

I mean, since we're talking history here, this is really not very important in the annals of American history. But Haldeman rushed up to me and he said, "This is just what I didn't want to happen. Just what I didn't want to happen!" He said, "I've got to go" -- he said, "I've got a flight out of Dulles at," the 550 United or something that everyone took when they were going to the West Coast non-stop to Los Angeles from Dulles. Anyway, he had a driver waiting because his wife, Jo, had called him. He said, "I've got to introduce you to the President right now. Come on, right now!" He's all out of breath. And so I run and I wanted to go in and comb my hair and lick my lips and something. He said, "No, no, come on." So he drags me in there, and that was a funny story. I'd been around the -- I'd seen him from various angles and distances, but now I'm in there, out of breath, with Haldeman. And I think he told the President, "I'm going to get this guy, Alex Butterfield -- he's going to sit in for me. I have to go to Los Angeles for four days." He was gone for four days. And -- so the President did get up from behind his desk, which is unusual for him, and he's standing there. And Haldeman says, "This is Alex Butterfield. He's the guy I told you about. He's going to be sitting in for me. He's my alter ego, just as I'm your alter ego." And that was the way Haldeman explained it to me, "He's been working right here in my office; he knows the way I take notes and everything. And he'll be right here for you." So then it was my turn to say something, and I didn't have any trouble with that: "A great honor for me to be here, Mr. President, working for Bob."

And whatever I said, something simple and to the point, but I didn't have any trouble with it. Well, then Bob had spoke and I had spoke and now it's clearly the President's turn to say something. He hadn't uttered a word yet. But this, I learned very quickly -- well, I learned it that day -- that you can't -- if the President has a plan and he knows beforehand who he's going to see and what the subject matter is, he'll handle it superbly. I mean Nixon can do that; Nixon's good at that. If he knows essentially what he's going to say, he can take speech writer's notes and process them very quickly. He's got great retentive powers. I noticed that early on with Nixon. He could take the speechwriter's comments and pull out just what he wants and put it away in a matter of minutes and give a very good talk drawing

from that. But if he's surprised, the way we had to have surprised him that day, that afternoon, he doesn't know how to handle it and he can't speak. He actually cannot utter a discernible word, so he does these gestures. I mean, I have been known to imitate him, and standing up can do this, but he sort of goes [gestures]. I knew what he meant: "Well, Bob here," he didn't even say that, he said, mutters], all of these guttural sounds. It was really something. People would not believe it. I sound like I'm exaggerating but I'm not. And I'm not making fun either. Well I -- it sounds as though I am in retrospect. Looking back all these years, 39 years ago this is. So anyway, he says nothing. And he's doing this with the rug and he's still doing this with his hand, and I felt -- and he's perspiring -- and I felt so sorry for this guy. Finally Bob, who is really antsy to get that car and get heading out through traffic to Dulles, just grabs me and says, "Thank you, Mr. President, Alex will see you in the morning," or something. And we went out. He never said one word, the President didn't.

Timothy Naftali

Now you were -- you were in Haldeman's place. You replaced him for four days.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

So -- so what were they like? I mean President Nixon had --

Alexander Butterfield

They were terrible. The first -- you want me to go on with this? Because this is --

Timothy Naftali

It's very -- let's -- I want to then talk to you about the Haldeman system and --

Alexander Butterfield

Okay.

Timothy Naftali

-- the evolution system. This is helpful for us to get into that.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, the next morning Bryce Harlow, who ran our legislative affairs staff at that time, prior to Bill Timmons running it. Bryce Harlow came in, and he was a highly thought of guy, plus he was the President's senior aide assistant for legislative matters. He said, "Alex" -- oh, there was a Cabinet meeting that morning. It was going to be the first official thing, early on, something like 8:30. Cabinet members were beginning to come into the Cabinet Room. And the President was in the Oval Office; I knew that. I'd been there early and I had things arranged. But I'm really sort of running the show,

because that's what Haldeman did in these early days. Now the administration is only two weeks old at this time, about. And so Bryce said, "So that the President doesn't get" -- what's the term -- "blindsided when he gets into the Cabinet Room, he needs to know that he's going to get a telegram from the governor of Puerto Rico." Now I thought, at the time, this doesn't sound like a big moment. Do we really want to bother the President? But then Bryce explained why it was important: "It's going to come up in the Cabinet Room something about the governor of Puerto Rico," odd as it may sound to us right now, "and the President needs to know what has happened that morning."

So he said, "Here's a note I've written out and you may want to give it to the President or at least talk to him about it so he's aware of it." So the Cabinet meeting is about to start, and I know that, so I go in there and it happens that Mel Laird, the secretary of defense -- the new secretary of defense -- this is the first Cabinet meeting, I think. Yeah, it is the first Cabinet meeting. And he just happens to be in the President's office talking to the President. And I walk in and the President turns to me and he said, "Yes, what is it?" First time he'd spoken to me right there. And I knew this was going to sound strange, but I had written out my own note and I had that in my hand, too. And I said, "Well, I've got a note here which you should read before you go in the Cabinet Room, because," there's no other way to say it, "the governor of Puerto Rico has sent you a wire."

And it was predictable what was going to happen. I wasn't so much a greenhorn I didn't know that. And I'd been an aide to a four-star general and things happen all the time and you know how to handle those situations, and I knew that this was not going down well. The President said, "The governor of Puerto Rico?" And then he said, "I don't give a blank, blank about the governor of Puerto Rico. Do you, Mel? Do you give a good goddamn about the governor of Puerto Rico?" That's what he said; that's exactly what he said. Now, Mel Laird doesn't know me, but he's loving this. He's loving it, you know, as a guy would. He's seeing, and I'm thinking -- I don't -- I had never had anyone speak to me that way ever in the military. People don't speak to you that way, never. It's civil among officers. And Mel said, "No, I don't give a -- about the governor of Puerto Rico." So I walked over while he [unintelligible] and I put the note on his desk and I walked out. I was mad, and I thought, "I am leaving this place today. I am out of here. I'm out of here." And then I thought, well, I can't leave. Haldeman has entrusted me to this important job.

First of all, I thought it was weird that they bring this new guy who has everything from Australia except the accent in -- I'm in the catbird seat here. I'm in charge of who comes in to see the President and who doesn't, taking papers in. And the President had never -- that's the second time he ever laid eyes on me. I could be a, you know, a Communist spy. You know we were all worried about Communism in those days. So, boy, I thought about that and I thought -- I went home, I talked to my wife about it and I said, "I will leave. I will. I'll stay here until Bob gets back and then I'm leaving." Then Nixon did another sort of Nixonian thing. That was a bad day; I just stayed out of there. And he didn't ring for me and I didn't go in and volunteer anything. I had signing material for him, too, that's supposed to go in a couple of times a day. I looked through there and there was nothing that had to go today: laws, acts and things, mostly statutes that needed to be signed. I stayed out of there. The next morning -- it was amazing.

He's such a funny guy; he's so transparent. He always does the unpredictable. He says unpredictable things. So the next day I go in, you'd have thought I had worked for him for 20 years. "Alex," he says right away. He says, "Maury Stans is coming." Now the next day we had -- this was early on in the administration, so you have the Cabinet secretaries coming in, the Cabinet secretaries -- secretary of the treasury, secretary of commerce -- bringing in their staff, assistant secretary of this, they can -- and

they're primary people, 12 or 14 for each one, especially Commerce and Interior and those -- and it's to let them shake the hand of the President. They're on the team; they're sub-Cabinet members and they're being led by the Cabinet member, the secretary of commerce. And Maury Stans was the secretary of commerce, so he's coming in first thing. So I go in there and it's like we're old pals. He said, "Alex" -- I went in with some signing stuff that had been due the day before, and I just put it there, and you sort of hold it for him and he signs it. And that's when he says, "Look, we've got Maury Stans. I don't want these guys to be here forever. I want them in and out. You know, we shake the hand, we do that sort of thing, maybe give them a pen, but in and out."

Now I've got Steve Bull, who's a great guy, and Steve worked the other side of the Oval Office. He's over sort of on the clerical side where the secretaries are. And Steve and I communicate all the time during the day. And later on, when I took Haldeman's office later that year, I worked with Steve for the balance of the Nixon first term. We were a good team. I liked Steve; he's a good guy and a very capable guy. But anyway, Steve was going to be there and he'd bring -- Steve was the guy who brings them in. And then Steve's the guy who feeds the President the -- the, whatever the President's going to give out, pens or something. The President would drop things and, you know, it was difficult to work with this sort of klutz. The President was sort of a klutz, physically.

So now we're friends; we've got this plan. So he said, "When they come in, we'll be signing stuff just like this. Keep the signing here and I'll tell him I have to get back to these papers." Well he just -- he's so pleased with himself, the President, that he's hatched this plan. But, you know, it's all part of -- he's making up with me. I can see that. You know, he's being a good guy: "You and I," you know? So when Maury Stans comes in -- so I leave the signing stuff there. Then I make sure I get in before Stans. Steve says, "Stans is about to come in," on my little communication thing. So I go into the office and the President knows. So I'm there like we're signing. It's all an act, you know. And Maury comes in and the President says, "Good to see you, Maury. Well, I'm just working with Alex here and we're getting stuff signed."

I really was feeling good. I forgot right away about leaving, you know. I thought, "I think I'll stick around." This guy is so interesting; he's such an interesting study, if for no other reason. So he never mentioned the other thing, he never did. He read the note, the note that I had left on his desk, he wrote "okay" on it and checked it, but it was all after the fact. But it was all to assuage any ill feeling that I may have had. He knew he was rude to me. I just -- the rudeness is what I couldn't get over. So from then on we were -- we were buddies, but not right away. I learned more about him, but he was never rude to me again, and he was just such an interesting guy to work with. But I went through a period of getting to know him, then I got to like him immensely. And of course I always spoke up for him; I was part of his team. I was an administration member, and a full-fledged one and a contributor in every sense of the word. But then about two-thirds of the way through that first four years, I saw a few things that -- I mean, I am no goody-goody two shoes person -- but I, you know, I knew there were cases where the President looked at the camera and lied to the people. I knew otherwise, things other than what he was saying were true.

And, for instance, after the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters, he said, "I have assigned John Dean to do an investigation." John Dean told me, "He hadn't assigned me anything." I knew that. John and I talked about that. But he's telling the people that. He's telling the press that. And there were other things that I was involved in, one I'm not too proud of, the first thing that was a little bit shady, a little bit shady, because I was the point of contact with the Secret Service; the principal point of contact between the Oval Office and the Secret Service. So if you had anything

to do with Secret Service you came to me. So Haldeman did that. They wanted to take the Secret Service guy -- we had a Secret Service guy there who used to be on the Vice Presidential detail for Nixon, and he had retired, and we used him around the office. He was like a messenger guy. He was very good. He was not a stupid guy at all. I forget his name now, Newberry or Newton or Newsom or something, his last name. And he worked sort of out of Rose Wood's office, and he was very helpful. We thought, hey -- Nixon was very worried in those days about Teddy Kennedy as a possible -- I mean, that Kennedy dynasty. John and then Bobby was assassinated; now here's Ted.

If Ted wanted to run, you know, Nixon imagined everyone in America running to vote for Teddy. So we knew Teddy liked the ladies, so we thought we'll put, we'll get New -- let's call him Newsom, Newcomb -- put him on the detail. Won't take him long to get back in; he is a former Secret Service Agent in a protective division. So we'll put him on and he can report to us. So we did that, and I was the secret -- I had something to do with arranging that. Or just -- I told them to make the arrangements. That's all I did, but I was involved there. And he was spying on Teddy. And we thought -- we never caught him. Teddy finally, I think, caught on. Teddy went to Paris and we thought, oh, we got him now! He's in Paris; surely he'll run into some ladies over there and Newcomb can, you know, report to us who he went out with and that sort of thing.

Timothy Naftali

There was actually a photograph that was taken in Paris and was --

Alexander Butterfield

Was there? Well, I don't even know that.

Timothy Naftali

Yeah.

Alexander Butterfield

Haldeman was getting these weekly reports. Haldeman got them and he didn't share them with me, but evidently they were rather bland. And Teddy finally wrote a letter and said, "Thank you, Mr. President, for authorizing the Secret Service for me, but I don't think I need them anymore." But there was a rule, I think, if a candidate had more than two percent of the popular vote, he qualified for Secret Service protection if he wanted it.

Timothy Naftali

So the White House selected the man who would be his detail.

Alexander Butterfield

Mm-hmm, who fed us information.

Timothy Naftali

Was there some concern in the Secret Service about the upgrades to San Clemente and Key Biscayne?

Alexander Butterfield

Property upgrades and that sort of thing?

Timothy Naftali

Yes.

Alexander Butterfield

Putting in lawns and all? I never heard that. I never heard anything about that. But having worked with Al Haig in McNamara's immediate office during the Johnson administration, I figured very prominently on fixing up the LBJ ranch. We planted a certain kind of grass there. We had the Army truck the grass in at night with tarpaulins over it. It was a special grass that was always green and beautiful. And we put a radio tower in there so, you know, so you had a real operating airport there. Did some asphalt work out there. We were always out at the ranch doing -- making it suitable for -- they spent a lot of money on that. And I guess I assumed that that's the way -- that's part of -- that's the way the game is played. But I never did hear any complaints about that. Everybody was very professional that I came in contact with as Secret Service. We actually, people don't know that, the Secret Service are sort of run by an assistant secretary of the treasury. Secret Service are T-men, treasury men. They're in existence to stop counterfeiting or to fight counterfeiting and they've only gradually come into this in modern times, protecting Presidents and then their families and Vice Presidents and their families. And now the Protective Division is huge. And the other main division is the Technical Security Division, and they're the electronic experts, the people who sweep the rooms and put the bugs in and take bugs out and that type of thing. And then, meanwhile, they do run their team men. There are Treasury offices all over the country to fight counterfeiting.

But they were all very professional guys. And since I'm saying that, in the Nixon White House I was sort of a fish out of water. I mean I knew Washington better; I'd been around the senior levels of the Air Force a little bit. I'm not trying to pat myself on the back here, but I -- my perspectives were different, and I think a little broader than those of these very young -- not Haldeman, he was my age.

But Higby was 22; someone else was 20. We had one guy, 21, a lot of people between 21 and 25. And I think John Dean, when he came on to be the counsel to the President was only 32, initially. And I just -- they loved to be on the radio; they liked all this. The Secret Service gave staff members radios and people had codenames. They loved it, and they loved to say, "over and out," and all that kind of stuff they'd heard when they were little kids about radios and what pilots say. It was kind of amusing to me. I sound as though I'm above it all, but in many ways I had to smile that they were doing that. But I liked very much every single guy on the White House staff. They were all dedicated, good people, well raised, nice people. Might be one exception. He's deceased now. That would be Ziegler. Ziegler was not a guy who cooperated easily. And I forget the guy who wrote "Advise and Consent," but he later --

Timothy Naftali

Allen Drury.

Alexander Butterfield

Allen Drury, and I got to know Allen very well because he did a book on the Nixon White House. And he said the same thing about -- I mean, he was a hard guy to work with, Ziegler, and lacking in appreciation of how hard some of these enlisted men, say, aboard Air Force One, work and that type of thing. Whereas if you -- you don't have to have been in the military to have an appreciation for -- if a guy's a sergeant on Air Force One, you know that he was a pretty good sergeant in his day. And he's not there so you don't say, "Do you call this a sandwich?" You know, that sort of thing. And there was a little of that. So Ziegler was a problem, kind of, but I thought everybody was -- and Ziegler was smart. He was a smart guy; wasn't stupid. He had a good head on his shoulders. But I liked everybody.

Timothy Naftali

Some people found Haldeman difficult to work for.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, he was, Ziegler and Haldeman. [laughter] No, I don't mean it like that. Haldeman, yeah, he's different. He's different. When Haldeman smiled, boy, you really felt good. You'd think, "Aw, Haldeman's smiling today, that's good." He'd always smile when we'd get on Air Force One to go out to California where the flowers were in all their glory and it's snowing in Washington. Everybody was smiling; we were going west to the sun. And all of the East Coast people, Kissinger and others, they couldn't believe California in the winter was so wonderful. So we loved to go to San Clemente, and Haldeman wore a nice smile. Yeah, Haldeman was very -- to his credit, he didn't give a damn if he was liked or not liked. He did what the President wanted him to do and didn't give a damn what you thought of him or if he -- and he was rude sometimes, brusque. Brusque is a better word, sort of imperious in some ways. Arrogant, you could call it arrogant. He wasn't that way with me too much. We were more like equals. Well, we weren't equals in terms of -- at the White House, but the same age. I was a little older than he. There were quite a few of us 43 and 44 when that thing started out, maybe 42, three, and four. Then there were all of these guys who were under 25. It was amazing.

Timothy Naftali

So how -- when we look at that first year, there seems to be a little bit of chaos on the domestic side. There's this debate between Burns and Moynihan. To what extent, you know, thinking back on it --

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah?

Timothy Naftali

-- do you see that the Haldeman system is evolving? Or, is Haldeman sort of setting the parameters right from the start? He's -- he's going to be a strong chief of staff, everything's going to go through him. Is that clear from the beginning?

Alexander Butterfield

That part about Haldeman and his role relative to staff members, there was no mistake about that. Everybody knew that Haldeman was the grand mogul. Haldeman was the major domo with staff personnel. People even called -- news people started calling him "the assistant president," once it became known. And it took a long time for it to become known. I had just come out of the military where everything is -- the organizational chart is on every wall and everybody knows exactly to whom he reports and who reports to you and what your duties are, right down to the nth degree. I had never been in an organization that -- well, Haldeman said, "No, no, we don't want to do that." We kept getting requests from "Business Week," "Forbes Magazine." No one knew what went on behind the green door. Nobody knew. And Haldeman loved it. I said, "Well, 'Forbes' just wants to know if" -- and I said, "Don't you want to" -- "Shouldn't you be called" -- see, to me, he was an executive assistant. When civilians have that top job, it's executive assistant. That's why I've always been against this term, "chief of staff." That only came along, interestingly, by the press just for fun calling Haig chief of staff because he was a military guy, and it is a military term. And the tradition, the White House tradition was -- I know this from my father being in the service -- you always -- the military always kept a very low profile, and you would never have a term like chief of staff in the White House or on the White House premises.

And that's why Goodpaster, whom we spoke about a moment ago, although he was a brigadier general, wore civilian clothes. Our staff secretary, Bruce Kehrli, was a Marine lieutenant, but he didn't wear his uniform. No one knew he was a Marine lieutenant. We didn't call him Lieutenant Kehrli. Jim Jones, who worked for LBJ and later became our ambassador to Mexico, James Jones, he was a lieutenant in the Army, but people didn't call him lieutenant. So to come out with this chief of staff -- and then it caught on. Everybody wanted to have a chief of staff. Hillary had a chief of staff; the secretary of commerce has a chief of staff; every Cabinet member, and they love it now. And it's around now, and now it's official. The first time I saw it was official -- I don't know when it became official the first time. But when President Reagan's man, Regan, who was that top aide at the White House, when he resigned he said, "So I hereby resign Donald Regan, White House chief of staff." It says that on the paper -- or chief of staff was in the newspaper. I was blown away. I didn't know that it had become official, but some place in there. I'd love to know. I'd love to get the chief clerk at the White House to tell me when did that become an official thing, because I'd like to -- anyway, the tradition was -- and I forget what my point was, why I was saying that.

Timothy Naftali

Well, I asked you about whether Haldeman had authority from the start and you said, "Yes."

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, and so I wanted him to be called executive assistant and I'd be his deputy. I was always his deputy. But no, he said, "No, we keep them guessing. We keep them guessing." But another thing that I think is important for people to know, Haldeman gathered the staff in there the very first day, the very first day, the 21st of January, the day we were all sworn in over in the East Room by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Earl Warren swore us all in and Nixon was standing there. Oh, and Nixon looked at me funny that day, too. That's the first day he ever laid eyes on me. I'm standing right there under his nose, next to Haldeman in the picture of all of us being sworn in, and he was probably wondering, "I don't remember that guy on the campaign." But anyway, we were all sworn in. And then

we went back and had this meeting and Haldeman said, "First of all, the President is the man. We don't -- we are not here to be in the news. From time to time, Ron Ziegler will be in the news because he's the press secretary, and maybe Herb Klein," because Herb Klein had been put in over Ziegler initially to be sort of -- they were sort of trying Ron Ziegler on for size in that job, we were. And Klein had the title of director of communications for the executive branch of the government. It was the longest title of anybody in the administration. And he was there to be in close contact with a hundred major newspapers in America and the major networks, and to properly interpret all of the President's pronouncements and that sort of thing, to see to it that they're properly written about. And then he oversaw Ziegler.

And now, oh -- I'm having these senior moments. I hope I don't have too many of these. But Haldeman said, "So the President gets in the news." You know, when the news is good, the President's in the news. "If the news is bad we have someone in the departments read the news," you know how that goes on the worst news day of the week: Saturday morning or something. "If the news is good we do it here from the White House and it's on Tuesday or Wednesday," and then he said, "also, forget one term; we think two terms. You cannot" -- I was surprised that Haldeman had the -- the view, this view, so early on. But you can't do anything in a modern -- this modern day. The things that you need to get done in four years, you just can't do it. You need a two-year term. So we all think eight years; we think eight years. We get that -- we internalize that; we get that eight-year mentality. Those are the two things I took out of that early meeting. But -- and then things were structured. It was a well-structured White House. Haldeman and I did that ourselves. I was the enforcer, though. Haldeman didn't like to enforce things too well, but we had strict rules and people were supposed to follow formats and that type of thing. As to the matter of domestic policy, which you mentioned, and I sure would give President Nixon credit. I've always said, "I like Henry." I've always liked Henry Kissinger, but I watch Henry. I'm wary of Henry. I don't want Henry to revise history too much. I mean I think I would say this to Henry if he were sitting here. I think, you know, Henry might not be averse to revising history if the opportunity came along. But he's damn good at what he does, and he assisted Nixon.

But Nixon was the architect of his own foreign policy. He needed Henry to help him implement it and get it done and think through a lot of things. Haig told me once, "Henry is a great political scientist because he's a good historian. He knows the history of these nations, too. He sort of knows how -- feels how they're going to react." But Nixon would come down every morning because in his spare time, all through the night, he'd been writing on the yellow pad, writing in the yellow pad. That's all he did was write. And it was always about some improvement. He's the one who decided to beautify the White House, to renovate it. He's the guy who decided to give the press people who were hanging out in the lobby of the West Wing, had been throughout history, gave them that beautiful press room, which was built where the swimming pool, the indoor swimming pool, used to be along the West Colonnade. Nixon didn't want to swim in there, probably would've drowned if he'd tried, you know. So that was beautiful and Nixon did that.

Nixon cared which paintings were hanging on the walls and which paintings we got from on loan from the Smithsonian or from Harvard University, or wherever. The paintings come in from all kinds of places. And so I was surprised to know -- this was about the time I began to -- I guess, come in to Nixon's favor, all throughout that first year. First on the ABM thing I sort of -- he didn't want anyone to bring him notes about where the ABM thing stood up in the Congress, who was going to vote yes for it, which is what we wanted, and who was going to vote no and who was on the fence, except me. He liked the way I wrote the stuff out. I'd had a lot of practice doing that. I just wrote a couple of sentences relative to the ABM vote on the Hill. It's now da-da-da-da and da-da-da-da, because he

didn't want all of these papers and I knew that. I'd even write it longhand sometimes. It didn't have to be typed. He just wanted the information. So he told Haldeman, "I don't want the legislative guys giving me that anymore; tell Alex to give it." And then I started out with the first news summary. The first news summary didn't really come along until that second year. But it started out with me, who knows nothing about the news or journalism or anything like that. I didn't know what to do. Haldeman said, "Let the President know the main thing in the news and who's playing what and what stories they're concentrating on."

I was just bogged -- so, you know, I had some people working for me and I tried to -- I wrote out the main things that were on the front page of "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post" and a few things that, what was on -- and I'd send that out to San Clemente if I wasn't out there, or down to Key Biscayne and in to the President. And the thing developed. It became a little better, but it was nothing like the beautiful news summary that evolved eventually and that Pat Buchanan was responsible for, and it was on the President's desk every morning by 8:10. But early in that first year I was the guy doing those things. And then when the President's November 3rd of 1969 speech, which has since become known as the "Silent American Majority" speech, as that was -- we knew that was coming, the date was set, and I was called in, Haldeman and the President are in there. And they say, "We want you to be in charge of -- we want this voluminous reaction. We want everyone in America to react to this thing. We want wires, telegrams, and --" so we, I knew -- we knew Ross Perot. Well, Ross Perot was hanging around the White House in those early days; I mean the first few weeks when, you know, he was seeing the President more than I was. That's when I was hanging out in Haldeman's office for those 13 days. So I had come to know Ross and I was put in charge of Ross. I was the point of contact for Ross. No one could talk to him except I -- except me in the -- on the White House staff.

So I was doing that. So I was in charge of that beating the -- I had friends all over, but -- I called the chairman, the state party chairman first, had them go out -- just anything you can do: get wires in; get teachers to sign things; get students to sign things. I had friends at the Air Academy in Colorado; they did things. I called everyone I knew. Then we called the labor unions and we called the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the veterans of -- all of the veterans' organizations, so. And years later, years later, after the Nixon thing when the Nixon family are in court to try to value his papers to get what they thought was -- I was a witness for the government. And here again, I turned out to be a bad guy for the Nixon family. Not only did I tell about the tapes and then not only did I testify for 10 hours before the Judiciary Committee, a year after the tapes revelation in which I didn't help the President's cause very much -- now it's years later and the President is -- yeah, I think the President had died by this time, and I'm -- that particular speech and all of the background for it is something that they valued very highly because it got so much attention. And I'm up in the witness stand saying, "Yes, but all of that attention was contrived." It was contrived. I did that. And, of course, I don't know, there was some genuine response, of course. But who could measure what that was? But, you know, Ross Perot said he'd bring a steam engine in to -- Ross never followed through on his things -- into -- Penn, not Penn Station, the Washington, D.C. train station --

Timothy Naftali

Union Station.

Alexander Butterfield

Loaded with -- Union Station -- loaded with wires and all, which he never did. But we got a thousand. So there are pictures of the President with all of these telegrams and things for the November 3rd silent -- so the silent American majority spoke, and then I designed a pin. It's called the SAM pin: Silent American Majority. And we had those out. You know, we wore those -- there's all this stuff about the American flag pin now; we were doing that then. We wore the American flag pin. But then we all exchanged our American flag pins for the SAM pin. That was the more popular pin there during that period. I had thousands of SAM pins. "Where's your SAM pin? You're not wearing your SAM pin." Okay, and people put it on.

Timothy Naftali

What started the flag pin at that point? Wasn't that -- I mean, that was started in the Nixon administration.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, it started in the Nixon administration. I don't remember what it is. Somebody said to me once -- I might even unwittingly started this thing about the American flag on the Federal building -- someone said that to me, "Wouldn't it be a good idea?" And I said, "Yeah, it would." So I mentioned it to Haldeman and he really liked the idea. There was another thing he liked. There were about two things I wrote to Haldeman in all that time that he really liked and he wrote, "Excellent idea!" I have those papers.

Timothy Naftali

And one of them was putting a flag -- an American flag above the Federal building?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, all of the Federal buildings, yeah. But to tie in this thing about there being some conflict between Arthur Burns, who certainly had a major role in writing legislation -- he and Arthur Anderson -- Arthur Anderson.

Timothy Naftali

Martin.

Alexander Butterfield

He and Martin Anderson wrote a lot of legislative programs for the President that had to do with domestic affairs. But right after that "Silent American Majority" speech of November '69 is when we decided to put John Ehrlichman to have a domestic council. It had been thought of before, but now it was coming to fruition -- to have a domestic council that operated with a separate budget, just like the National Security Council does. And just as Henry Kissinger is the Director of the National Security Council, with one hat and one budget, he's the President's assistant for national security affairs. So John Ehrlichman was going to be the director of the Domestic Council and the President's assistant

for Domestic Affairs. And so under him came, then, and only then after November of '69, Moynihan, John Whitaker. And John Whitaker, incidentally, had been secretary to the Cabinet and only the third person in the modern Presidentcies who has had that title, that specific job. Usually -- theretofore it had been an additional duty that all kinds of cats and dogs had had over history. I researched that with Bill Hopkins and I have a copy of that, and I used to send it out to the Cabinet members so they'd know something about the Cabinet and who the Cabinet secretaries were in past administrations. And there are usually four, five, or six, you know.

And so I took over from John Whitaker at that time, November/December of '69. And that's when Nixon called us in and said, "Bob, for this -- now we're all settled in. We've had the first year. We got the ABM, we've done this and that." And he was liking me at that time. That was probably my high point. He said, "I'd like you to turn over your office to Alex and let Alex handle all of this nitty-gritty stuff and get involved in the minutia, which is a big part of this job working with me." He understood that. Nixon had a very good feel for how the government works and he'd been around forever and he is a quick study. He's good at that. He doesn't get excited about someone spying on someone; he's used to that. And, you know, later when someone was taking papers out of -- out of --

Timothy Naftali

Oh, the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, that was pretty serious, but Nixon just, you know, kids' stuff, "They do that all the time around here." I mean, that was sort of his attitude. And he said -- so, Haldeman was wondering later, "I wonder where he wants me to move?" Well, Nixon is the first President who ever invited the Vice President of the United States into the White House officially and gave him an office in the White House. But the Vice President already has a beautiful office across the street in the EOB. He's President of the United States Senate, so he's got a wonderful office up on Capitol Hill. But we gave him yet a third office, and it was the old Sherman Adams office there in the White House. So Haldeman marched down there -- I mean, poor Vice President, this was back before Cheney, before Vice Presidents were powerful people -- and said, "Ted," or Spiro, or whatever we called him -- Ted was a nice guy, Spiro Agnew, I liked him a lot. And he was not stupid; he was a good guy. He was a smart, local politician, but he was a -- he said, "We want to take the office back; we made a mistake." So we just kicked the vice -- he only used it occasionally. It was only for ceremonial purposes if he gave someone a medal of honor or something.

So Haldeman took over that office, commandeered that from the Vice President. We sent the Vice President back across the street. Well, he always had that office, too. And Haldeman became -- that he had the biggest office in the White House, which was nice. But it did -- and the idea was the President wanted Haldeman to be more a thinker, to be the follow-through guy on things that were important to the President that needed to get done. And there was a lot of minutia to the other stuff, administrative minutia, and I took that on. I had about 28 separate jobs, if you really go through all of them. I became -- my principal job was the smooth running of the President's day. I was Haldeman's backup, that was -- and I had already done that for four days early on in 1969. That wasn't fun. But I was responsible for the smooth running of the President's official day in Washington and San Clemente. We viewed San Clemente as a true western White House. We did work out there every morning. We all got off at noon and had free afternoons, so it was a very light schedule, but we did work. We had Cabinet meetings

there. The President had meetings in his office at San Clemente. And those of us who worked most closely around him went out every time he went out, and we had offices similar to, you know, around him. I mean always Henry was out there, Kissinger, Haldeman and Ehrlichman and myself and usually Steve Bull, and just a handful of secretaries, skeleton crew, and then people from the press office. So -- but that was my main job: the smooth running of the President's official day.

And I will say that Steve Bull helped tremendously in that. I was the Oval Office guy. I was in that Oval Office. I looked out -- of course, it had been swept every morning before I'd go in there by the technical security people. Radios had been checked. The President has a radio -- I mean a radio phone in his drawer down here and see to it that his Dictaphone is working, and then I set up the papers on his desk. His desk was my business, only my business; not even Haldeman's business, his desk and the table behind his desk where we put the briefing papers and that type of thing. We designed the briefing papers. Some were FYI to just read; others were action papers and they were in different kind of folders. We designed all that stuff. But then I supervised five offices. I supervised the supervisors of five offices. And by that I mean -- what's a good example? The staff secretary's office, the staff secretariat; that's the administrative hub of the White House.

So, in another administration, I might be called assistant to the President for administration, but I was the deputy assistant -- that's another thing. Let me begin by saying that in the Nixon White House -- all White Houses are different. People say, "Oh, what were you working for Nixon?" I said, "Well, I was a deputy assistant," and people don't -- they can't put that in perspective. It's not their fault, they just can't. In the JFK-Johnson days, special assistants were the top -- that was the top rung. If you were a special assistant, you were a very important fellow. In ours, it was just plain assistant. Then deputy assistants was a second rung; there were only about three of those at first. Harlow had two: one for the Senate, and one for the House, and me. And then later Darrell [phonetic sp] somebody, who worked for Flanigan, became a deputy assistant, then later, Dwight Chapin, who was appointment secretary. But special assistants to us were the third rung. Not that we were rung-conscious, but I'm just saying that was generally -- and they were people with true specialties. The speechwriters were all special assistants and other people like that. And then if you were a lawyer, you could sort of choose your title. You know, you could be deputy counsel, associate counsel, or counselor. Well, counselor, that was more senior. Arthur Burns was a counselor; Rumsfeld was a counselor; Bob Finch was a counselor.

So, anyway, so I oversaw the secretariat. The staff secretary reported to me. I oversaw the Office of Presidential Papers, and that's where our archivists were on loan from the Archives. And John Nesbitt and others reported to me. I oversaw the Office of Special Files. We called it Special Files. That's like where we are now in this collections part of the library. Like a collections part of any university library, we had special papers in there, significant papers in there. Trudy Brown, who was our security person, first ran that. And a woman named Danenhower [phonetic sp] came in and took Trudy Brown's place in Security. The Office of Security was another one. So it was Administration, Security, Presidential Papers, Special Files, and then the last one is sort of not really an office. I was in charge of all of the receptionists. So we had about 10 secretaries that were cleared to work with the President. The President knew them; they weren't strangers. They knew his habits. And they were essentially Rose Mary Woods and her assistant, Marge Acker; Haldeman's secretary, Pat McKee; my secretary, Toni Sidley; Dwight Chapin's secretary, Nell Yates -- Dwight Chapin being the appointment secretary, and Nell Yates had been there for years, since the early '50s, working in the appointments secretary's office. She was very valuable to us. We only kept two people on.

You know, when they change administrations, they like to kick out everybody, including the secretaries. I guess it's been proven over the years that they can be dangerous, too, that they can have party affiliations, too. But Nell Yates was totally apolitical and really an important person in the White House set-up. And she stayed there until, I think, the Ford administration. But I guess that's about it. And then I was the point of contact for eight different people, I mean the principal point of contact. If people wanted to see the President or go to the Oval Office or anything, they had to see me, not Bob Haldeman. This is where I could do him a service by being his deputy. And that's like the Secret Service; they worked sort of for me. I mentioned earlier that they really come under an assistant secretary of the Treasury, but we even -- I picked the -- when Chief Rowley left, I picked his successor. I picked him, just me. I mean, I knew people. I talked to Haldeman about it and we both liked this guy, Stu Knight, so we made Stu Knight the director of the Secret Service. I think it's a GS-18 job, or something like that.

We sort of ran the Secret Service. If there was going to be something done to the President's automobile, some modification, we'd go up to General Motors in Lansing, Michigan, and follow that through, I did. If the President wanted to tell the Secret Service something, he'd tell me to tell them. The President, to his credit, didn't like the Secret Service guys looking like Secret Services guys with dark glasses and pins and earphones and not saluting the flag. If we're at a football game and it's the opening kick-off and they're playing the "Star Spangled Banner," he wanted them to blend in more. That was Nixon. To his credit, he didn't want that sort of -- what he didn't want on that occasion: an imperial Presidency. He was later -- it was later said he did when he dressed up the White House police in these uniforms similar to those he'd seen in Europe when he came back from his first European trip, and we changed the White House uniform -- White House police uniforms. Those are now collector's items.

Timothy Naftali

Well, why did they -- why were they changed back? What happened?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, they were -- everybody laughed. They looked so funny in these uniforms. I think Ehrlichman bought those things up or got all of those -- he knew they'd be valuable. They only lasted a couple of months and the whole town was laughing. There'd be pictures in the paper. You know, it just backfired on us. Nixon was very disappointed. But -- so the Secret Service, the White House Protective Force, which is the White House police, another name for the White House police -- the White House police is an adjunct to the Secret Service because they're trained partially by the Secret Service. Some people call them the uniformed Secret Service; that's a misnomer in a way. They're not, they're policeman. They're patrolmen, and they really help the Secret Service. The Curator's Office dealt only with me on anything, and I with them. The Usher's Office, the ushers run the White House; they run the mansion. Because years ago it was the Usher's Office that sent people in to see the President, you know, back before 1910 or something. The Usher's Office -- the Military Aide's Office over in the East Wing, I was the point of contact, the White House Visitor's Office in the East Wing, Mrs. Nixon's office, the First Lady's office, and the social secretary's office. All of those people dealt only with me on state dinners, on guest lists, on what's going to be served.

So that's taking a lot out of Haldeman's lap, much of which I would love to have put it back in there because it was... And then I had another little duty. Haldeman came to me one day and said, "We want

you to deal with Mrs. Nixon." He said, "I've been the person dealing with Mrs. Nixon many times in the past." He didn't mean in the administration. Back in the days when Nixon was out of office, he said, "Dwight Chapin has done that and she's come not to trust any of us, but we think you might try." Well, I loved her. I really loved her. I mean she is such a sweet, sweet woman and smart, not stupid, and not "Plastic Pat," as some people used to call her. So I would meet with her about two times a week, but usually it was a terrible issue. She would want a certain entertainment at the state dinner, and the President wanted that jazz band from New Orleans. And she'd say, "No, that's not appropriate for this particular state visitor. I even know his wife, and I know that they love The Strolling Strings better." And I'd have to go back -- this is all -- this is minutia I'm talking about now. But I'd have to go back to the President and say, "But Pat insists on The Strolling Strings." "I don't give a damn," he said, "I want that jazz band. What's their name?" He could never think of it. I can't think of it now, but if you said some famous band in New Orleans, I'd know it.

Timothy Naftali

Preservation?

Alexander Butterfield

No, anyway, there was that, or what we were going to have for dessert or something. Then I was also the guy who -- I used to check with them, but it became a problem. I could not check with the President and Mrs. Nixon on their -- on state gifts. But I did that. I worked it out with the chief of protocol. Usually the state department made my job easy. They'd say, "We are recommending that the President and Mrs. Nixon give the prime minister and his wife such and such." Of course, if it's a chief of state he's going to get a little nicer gift or a grade up from a head of government's gift. But I handled the state gifts, and then I'd write a little note to the President and Mrs. Nixon just before a state dinner and tell them what the state gift that they're giving is, so when they meet this couple and they go upstairs for this little tête-à-tête they have before they come down and are presented in the East Room, they do the exchange of gifts there, and they -- it's not a surprise to them. So all of those things: the President's wines, he fancied himself a connoisseur or wanted to be a connoisseur. Had his own wine collection. I didn't go out and buy the wines, but he told me what he wanted. And I've researched some of this stuff, too.

But it was Rex Scouten, who was the chief usher, who bought the stuff. And the President had his own supply and paid for it out of his own pocket. And then I was the guy who decided what wines we'd have at these state dinners. And I knew nothing about wine; still don't. But people got to thinking I was this great wine connoisseur, but I had people I went to. There was a great restaurant in New York, one of the top restaurants at that time. And the sommelier there was the top guy on red wines around New York, and I knew that, and I had a line to him. We had an assistant secretary of the Air Force who was a red wine expert. And there was guy out at the University of California Davis, which was the agriculture school at that time, maybe still is, but they have other things other than agriculture there now, and I went to him. So I had three people to go to on red wines. So I could sound like an expert in a matter of, you know, give me a half hour. And I'd call these guys and of course they're more than happy to give you their best advice on the telephone. The White House is calling. And I -- independently, I didn't tell each one what the other one said; so then I could sort of average it out, and the same with the white wines. I had my white wine experts around. And so we were favoring California wines and French wines so much that the New York delegation came to call on me once. I

didn't know why they were coming to see me, it turned out. They said, "We have a hell of a lot of wines here in New York, you know."

Timothy Naftali

[unintelligible]

Alexander Butterfield

"Cut us a little slack here. Give us a break."

Timothy Naftali

So it's true that the President would have different wines served to his table than other people?

Alexander Butterfield

Not at a state dinner.

Timothy Naftali

Not at a state dinner?

Alexander Butterfield

Not to my knowledge. If he did, that's all new to me. That could be, you know, anything could happen. I didn't -- oh, that's another thing, I went to every state dinner, every one. Henry and I were the only guys that went to every one. We changed down -- we built a little -- finally got a shower in down there. There wasn't one. And Henry's always running late, and me, too, so we're down there changing before every state dinner. But I wasn't a normal guest at every one, as Henry was. I was there to be the President's eyes and ears. But I soon found out that his eyes and ears, even though he's the major host and giving a speech and speaking to people, he's picking up more information than I am. And we'd meet usually on Sunday morning; it wouldn't wait until Monday. I was always in there Sunday anyway; it just didn't matter; I lived there. He'd say, "Did you notice how long it took them to serve the salad?" And I hadn't thought of timing the salad guys, you know. He had. "Took them a minute and 40 seconds or something," and he says, "So no, we're not going to have salad anymore." I once told someone this; it got in print and it got in print wrong. He said, "If we have a dinner for less than 80," or maybe he said more than 80 -- now I forget -- "we won't serve salad." But it came out in the newspaper, "eight," and it's been picked up as "eight."

But anyway, Nixon was timing the waiters, and he always -- but he was always trying to improve things: "We need to improve. We need to slow this down. We need to spend more time here, more time there." He hated that little period after the state dinner and before the entertainment. There's a 30-minute period where they have liqueurs and coffee. He hated that, because people would get to him. Congressmen -- "don't want those Congressmen around, you know, about their bill or their state and

all of that sort of thing." And then a lot of people are in -- so he said, "Here's what we'll do," and he'd clear the desk. He liked -- well, this is another one of his plans. Like Maury Stans is coming in, "Here's what we'll do." So he said, "Here's what we're going to do." And the guest list -- I'm the last person to see the guest list. We could actually change it right up to the, you know, the last minute really, a guest list. And he said, "I don't want anybody to talk to me tonight during that 30-minute period except," and he loved to look at the guest list, "Arnold Palmer. Put Arnold down." So Arnold is a guest, so now he's got a sports guy who's going to talk to Arnold, talk about golf. "Claire Luce," Clare Boothe Luce, good Republican, she's going to be there. "Fred MacMurray and his wife," whoever he was married to then, but these are good Republicans. And then someone else, I don't know, you know, he named five guys. And that's all. And he said, "I'll leave that up to you."

Now he's telling me this late one afternoon before the state dinner. I've got to go down and change; I have all of this other stuff to do. But social aides, of which there are about 200 and some in the Washington, D.C. area, there's a pool of them, and they're all vetted very carefully. They're all young bachelors or non-married people, some are women, but they're all lieutenants: second lieutenants, first lieutenants. Hardly any Captains, that's a little too old. Lieutenants: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and, no, I don't think the Coast Guard is involved. And they draw a pool of maybe 35 for a state dinner out of this big -- and the social secretary is their boss, so they come and report to the social secretary the night of a state dinner well in -- an hour and a half in advance. And there they get people talking in the East Room and they're all very personable people and handle themselves well and they're looking resplendent for junior officers in their uniforms. So I called Lucy Winchester, I didn't have much time. I said, "I want five of your best, sharpest social aides," presumably they're all that way, "over in my office right now."

So they came over, these young people. They had just reported to her at the White House. They don't know why they're there. I don't know what I'm going to tell them. But I said, "Look, tonight, you, Lieutenant Smith, when Arnold Palmer comes in the door you latch onto him and you stay latched onto him during the cocktail period before we go into the dinner and get to know him, so that when he comes out you latch onto him again and he recognizes you and he's glad to see you," Arnold Palmer and his wife. "He's your job for the night. Don't let me down." And then after dinner I will have the President and the -- a lot of people don't understand this -- but between the East Room, huge room, and the State Dining Room, big room, you've got the Green Room close to the East Room, the Blue Room in the center, and the Red Room over by the dining room. So Nixon said, "We'll put the guest of honor," let's say it's Golda Meir, "in the Blue Room." So that's the guest of honor. She didn't have a spouse. If there was -- if it was the Shah of Iran, we'd put the empress in the Red Room. So Mrs. Nixon's in the Red Room with the lady, we've got the man in the Blue Room, the President's over here in the Green Room, which is the smallest room. That's where he wants to be, and he doesn't want to talk to anyone except these five people.

So I said, "So you bring him to the Green Room and look for me. I'll be" -- and I stood beside the President. That was my job at these state dinners. I did this for a couple of years. Well we've got -- Hughes, the major general's there, too. He's the aide. He's the resplendent looking guy that everyone sees. And we're both fairly tall; I think he's taller than I am. But he's very noticeable there with the President -- "So look for Hughes and me, and when I give you the high sign you come over, but don't come over before. Or you can get close, but don't --" you know. And they're talking, and they're good at this. They're talking. So this was the plan. "And you, Lieutenant 'so and so,' Clare Booth Luce is your assignment for the night. Do the same thing; latch on, don't --"

Timothy Naftali

Make sure that all of them are in the Green Room.

Alexander Butterfield

All to the Green Room, "and don't all come up at once. I mean you see what I'm doing; I'm going to bring you up one at a time." And I've got -- there are five of them, and we had 30 minutes, so I've got to give them all about five minutes.

Timothy Naftali

So they had an individual session with the President, or did you bring all five at once?

Alexander Butterfield

No, no, they had individual sessions. And so then I had to call Don Hughes and tell him the thing, and he said, "What?" And he's saying, "What?" He keeps saying, "What?" I said, "I know, it sounds weird, but go along with me on this because I think our jobs are at stake if this isn't done well tonight." So we -- that night it worked beautifully, but in then in close it was rough. You know, it was like professional football in there, because someone would be right in mid-sentence, and maybe the guy is coming over with Arnold Palmer. And so I give Hughes the high sign, Hughes takes one, Arnold [unintelligible] -- and the person's going, "So, Mr. President, I --" in mid-sentence and we bring in Arnold Palmer. That's the way it was all night. There was this little -- the handling of the customers was not too smooth, but the President was very pleased, and so we did that. He even tried to get Pat to do that. She said, "Dick is crazy. I will never do that."

Timothy Naftali

By the way, why wouldn't they talk to each other about the -- what entertainment to have? Why did they have to work through you?

Alexander Butterfield

I'll never know. Even the President's official photograph -- we changed it a few times to make it a better photograph. And yeah, when you change the President's photograph you're changing the photograph on all of the ships at sea and all of the Federal buildings; it's a big deal. So I remember, you know, going to Pat with that and all of the proofs and everything. And we tried to get him, we said, "Take these home and see what Pat likes," but just, he didn't do that. He didn't go back to the residence very often. When he left the office he went to the EOB and he had dinner over there four nights out of five. He only went to the residence if the young people were coming over, the children, with their spouses or boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever or someone's going to be there, a friend. Otherwise, when he left the office around seven, the Oval Office, he went to his EOB office across the street with Manolo. Manolo would fix him a drink usually, a drink of scotch. He might not, might just start with a red wine. Those are the only two things he drank. And he didn't drink a lot over there; he had one cocktail and then red wine with dinner. And Manolo fixed him his dinner and he sat there just the way you're sitting there, with his coat on, never took his coat off.

Never, never, never took his jacket off, even on the hottest Washington, D.C. night, in a -- in a chair and wrote with his -- wrote his yellow pad, ideas, things that would be relayed to Haldeman the following morning. All of this stuff related to Haldeman. Then he'd eat his dinner at a little table and have his wine, and then he might go down and bowl a line. There was that single lane, or double lane, bowling alley in the EOB. I don't know if it's still there. And he'd go home around 10:30 or 10:45. I was always there. I never went home until he went to the residence. And he knew I was there. A couple of times he called me and I went over. He might say something as mundane as -- well, it wasn't mundane; it was very important at the time. "What about these young people? What are they thinking? Why are they rioting? What is it they're after? Don't they know we're withdrawing forces in Vietnam and we're bringing the war to a close? What is it?" And I used to have trouble in there sometimes trying to answer his questions, but, you know, the guy cared. Of course, Presidents do. Presidents are all well-meaning people, and it's too bad people can't get to know them better to know -- but he struggled with that.

And he didn't ever call me in for any great substantive things. I was a personal assistant to him, very much a personal assistant. I look back and see that now, handing in his absentee voting a couple of times, the wine thing, and all of this stuff with Pat, and little notes. Once Tricia ended up missing; she had given the Secret Service the slip. Or her boyfriend -- she was with a boyfriend at that time. Or a date -- I don't know if it was a boyfriend. And the Secret Service had lost her, but they feared she was up in an airplane, which she was. And they didn't -- you know, then they'd have to get an airplane, but there are a lot of planes in the sky. They took off from some little airport out around Middleburg or something. The President was very concerned. And there was a state dinner that night. When she came in, she was fine. She was none the wiser; she didn't know that she'd been the cause of all of this anxiety. So I just wrote in longhand a little note. I said, "Tricia's back in the White House, none the wiser. We're going to leave that as it is." I'd make a lot of decisions like that. I know he'd want it that way anyway. You get to know a guy, as you know, and you can make a lot of decisions for them: little things. No need to bother the President about this. But I put it right at his place at a state dinner. You know, I know he felt good.

Timothy Naftali

Do you remember planning the Sinatra dinner?

Alexander Butterfield

No.

Timothy Naftali

The Sinatra concert. What -- he snapped at you that one time. Did you see his temper other times?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, it wasn't so much a temper thing.

[BREAK IN TAPE]

Well, [unintelligible] two years. And when he came down, he didn't like that there were all of these tangential missions going on. I mean you've got the USAID guy, your U.S. Information Service, you've got the CIA, you've got all of these cats and dogs around. He didn't like that, just being a military guy. We've got to get this thing together. He'd say, "I'm in charge of the country team. I want to know everybody who's in country and where they are and I want them here," and he had a couple of meetings a month. But I was not -- so I went to the ambassadors meetings, a couple of them, if I didn't -- some of them I missed, but I had my own job to do down there, but I was a part of the country team. And that was fun, such a soft life down there. You know, the embassy life, you know. And then there's a holiday every other day in any foreign capital because if the Japanese -- then you honor it, if it's a Japanese holiday. They honor ours. And the Egyptians are having a holiday and someone else. So you're never working and everybody's drinking all the time, a lot of drinking.

Timothy Naftali

Just so the people who watch this know, you were talking about Maxwell Taylor, right?

Alexander Butterfield

Huh?

Timothy Naftali

When we started the -- you were answering that question, you were talking about Maxwell Taylor.

Alexander Butterfield

What was the question again?

Timothy Naftali

No, it wasn't a -- you were telling a story about the creation of a country team.

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, was I?

Timothy Naftali

Yes.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah. Was I --

Timothy Naftali

I just want, for the people that listen to this to know that -- because it was cut off at the beginning of this -- you were talking about Maxwell Taylor.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, I -- okay, but I didn't know the genesis of that subject.

Timothy Naftali

No, you were mentioning. You talked about Maxwell -- we -- we were talking about Maxwell Taylor, just so they know.

Alexander Butterfield

Okay. Now what was your --

Timothy Naftali

[unintelligible]

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, but what was your question?

Timothy Naftali

No, my question was about Nixon's moves.

Alexander Butterfield

Oh.

Timothy Naftali

But when the tape --

Alexander Butterfield

Oh right, right. But we're going to pick up after that?

Timothy Naftali

Yes, because we --

Alexander Butterfield

Do you want --

Timothy Naftali

The battery had to be changed.

Alexander Butterfield

I know. So you want me to say -- say again --

Timothy Naftali

Yes, I mentioned the fact that that first experience when Haldeman was away there was the moment of rudeness. To what extent did you get to know Nixon's moods? You saw a lot of him. You were with him a lot.

Alexander Butterfield

I did. I actually told someone once -- I wasn't showing off -- but I felt that I knew Richard Nixon better, as well as anyone, while he was President the first term, including Henry. I know Henry would say that he did. And Haldeman certainly had reason to say that, because Haldeman was with him after every meeting, he called Haldeman in, and was on the phone with Haldeman at night. And Haldeman had known the guy for years. But I got the feeling now and then that Haldeman wasn't -- Haldeman's a bright guy, a really bright guy, but something -- he wasn't as observant, I didn't think about certain things. Now he may have been. But anyway, it would be sort of a tie: Haldeman, Henry, myself.

Timothy Naftali

What wasn't he observant about?

Alexander Butterfield

I don't think that he -- I saw things in Richard Nixon that I'm not sure he did, but he may have because he and I, Haldeman and I, never sat down and really discussed this boss of ours, because we were both responsible for working effectively with him, you know? But you know, I just saw him eaten up with resentment. He hated -- Richard Nixon had a lot of hatred in him, and yet he was a thoughtful guy, too. That's another thing I did, incidentally. I wrote notes to people. If I knew someone at a lower level had worked on a piece of legislation and we're having a signing ceremony, I would do that and say, "The President wants you here." That just means so much to people. And I'd get a letter from that guy's boss, from him. But the -- or, if the President just wrote something casually in his news summary, you pick up a lot in that news summary about his moods and temperaments and thoughts, too. So much so, that when I went to the FAA and was the administrator over there, I did that. I had a similar thing that I got every morning and I thought when the hell did this start? Or who said this -- and people, the staff, loved it because they got my reaction, as we did with Nixon. But we never sat down and discussed Richard Nixon to that extent. I could be wrong. I could be wrong. But I felt -- I am observant. I do like to observe people.

But Richard Nixon, he had all these hatreds and resentments and that really is what -- that's the -- that's what Watergate's all about. That's why -- that's what did him in. He did all of these wonderful things on the domestic side. He was, by today's standards, a very moderate Republican President, a very

thoughtful guy. He'd thought about this stuff for years. That's why he did so many things on the domestic front that just, history forgets. Not just establishing the EPA, Environmental Protective Agency, but all of the things he did initiating funds for cancer research, Sickle Cell Anemia, other things, highway safety, airport funds, airway and facility funds, all kinds of things, workfare in place of welfare. And he enjoyed working with Moynihan, too. Moynihan was very important to Richard Nixon. Moynihan's the guy I said -- I used to tell people, "He's the smartest guy on our staff." Then I'd put maybe Henry next, but Henry in his own bailiwick, pretty much. Moynihan was good. We forget he was our U.N. Ambassador and a good one, ambassador to India. So people thought he was a raging liberal, but he was a tough guy in the U.N. Great guy; I loved him. I had a drink with him almost every night. Nobody would use the swimming pool.

We were all just aides to the President. We wouldn't have the -- we wouldn't be so presumptuous as to think that we could use the President's swimming pool. Moynihan would go over and take a swim. Well, I guess he knew Nixon wasn't going to get near the swimming pool. But he'd come back, hair all tussled, red -- funny red socks, maybe one red, one blue. He was a funny dresser. And he'd say, "Alex, come on, let's have a belt." And I love to have a belt. And we'd go in his little office on the basement level of the West Wing. We had a real low ceiling and he's a tall guy. We'd go in there and have a belt and discuss things. He was a great guy and a very bright fellow all around. Then probably Henry, then Ehrlichman, Ehrlichman was so bright -- when he was in high school they put all of his honors in a glass cage and that sort of thing, which they took out when Ehrlichman was indicted and sentenced and all, a very sad story. And I'd put Haldeman in there, around in there with Ehrlichman. Haldeman was a member of Mensa and all that sort of thing. But the rest of us were just normal cats and dogs, you know.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about the relationship between President Nixon and Rose Mary Woods, since you watched these things.

Alexander Butterfield

Okay, from what I am sure of, in the early days when she was his secretary when he was a congressman, before he went to the Senate, before he became Vice President for eight full years, she was very, very important to him, probably helped square him away on Washington, D.C., and all of that. I wouldn't even -- oh, I shouldn't say that, well, I'll say it. To myself, I thought he might even have had an affair way back with her. She was very important to him. She's part of that family now. She was part of that family when I knew her. Of course, she's dead now. But Rose is the kind of person that, then as he went up -- now he's a senator, and I'm sure she was still very much a part of his staff and very much a part of everything he did. Now he's the Vice President of the United States. That's a whole different ballgame where he works in the EOB, standing in for Eisenhower, which he did several times when Ike had his heart problems, and running the National Security Council staff and a couple of Cabinet meetings during that period, and doing well at it.

Rose wasn't -- Rose was not in that element too much, and I think she was kind of running along trying to be a part of the gang. Now we start in the White House and she really resented me, because I wasn't even on the campaign. I was this guy coming out of Siberia or something. It was so bad at one time that I went in and sat down and I said, "Rose, I want you to know something. I'm not here to latch on to this President's coattails and be something later. I'm not here for any of that. I'm just here

to do the best job I can, in Haldeman's eyes, as I can. And I'm not trying to take anything with me. And so I don't want you to think I'm trying to curry favor with your -- I know he's your President." Maybe I didn't say it like that, but I tried to have a nice talk with her. Because I had -- I lost my temper two times while I was in the White House. I really blew up. Once was to Ross Perot on the phone when Ross was in Vientiane, Laos, carrying all of these goods to the -- supposedly for the prisoners, 1,400 of everything: sleeping bags, hams, turkeys, first aid kits, blankets, everything. Very thoughtful, generous, nice man, but there came a time when I'd had it with him several times before and I got mad at him.

And I got mad at Rose and shouted at her and my lower lip quivered. And so I think I went in to apologize and then tried to want -- I wanted her to understand me. I said, "I'm not trying to be his guy after he's President." In fact, I left all of my -- I had some very unique pictures in my office that Ollie Atkins, the White House photographer, took. One set was very good, a set of four, where Nixon's sipping coffee with one; he's looking quizzically or something in another -- these are all 8 x 10s, but separate -- he's in meditation on another one, and they're just good. Everybody commented. Not everybody, when they came in they were right on my wall. Now I didn't take that stuff, I didn't take anything, I just left. And I wasn't trying to -- I have a wonderful picture that very few people have and it was taken by Ollie Atkins. I have two pictures, one taken by Ollie Atkins on the day of Nixon's inauguration, and one was taken by LBJ's photographer, who was a Japanese fellow whose name I don't recall now. Two pictures, and they were both taken in the residence in the Blue Room, which is right over the Diplomatic Reception Room, which looks right out on the Washington Monument. And here's this big, hulking LBJ standing there with his pins [phonetic sp] tails, getting ready to go up to be the outgoing President, but LBJ is still President. Here's Nixon looking a lot shorter, and these guys are facing each other. You see this big man with a big -- his ears are like elephant ears, huge man. People forget how big LBJ was. And Nixon with his little ski jump nose here. And equidistant between the tips of their noses is the Washington Monument in one of the pictures. The other one's not. One's in color and one's not.

And one day Johnson -- and Johnson and Nixon got to like each other in a strange way, not that they probably always didn't respect each other in a political way. But after Nixon was President for a while, LBJ came in our White House a lot, the two Presidents met up in the Redwood Forest by the General Sheridan tree at one time. We'd invited LBJ to a state dinner with the President of Mexico at the Hotel del Coronado here in Coronado once. He was around. And I would never ask him to sign -- that I had that thing, but I just wouldn't do that. But I got to know LBJ in those years that I was in his White House so much. And the guy I worked for initially, Joe Califano, came over and became his domestic czar. So, you know, he saw me a lot. It was Nell Yates who told him, and Nell knew him very, very well. She said, "Mr. President," to LBJ on one of his visits. He's just wandering around the West Wing. She said, "Mr. Butterfield in there has a picture," and I know I'm going to get choked up. And he did, he came in, mentioned that to me, and he said, "I hear you have a picture in here you might want me to sign?" Now, God, I mean he surprised me. I looked up and here's this giant -- speaking of redwoods. So I went over and got the picture, it was just leaning up against the radiator in that office that I had there, and he got it out and he just -- he leaned over and he wrote, "To Alex Butterfield." He didn't say Alexander P. Butterfield, which would render it impersonal. "To Alex Butterfield who serves his nation with distinction." Nice, short, and to the point, I used that myself when I wrote for people later if someone had me when I was at the FAA or something.

But what I started to tell you is I'm the guy -- I'm the only one who took signing in to the President. Nobody else did that. Steve Bull never did that; maybe after I left. Haldeman didn't do that. I did it. So

everything that was signed I was there. Now, of course, these are things that need to be signed by the President. Other things went to the signing pen, of which there was six, we had six signing pens, or Rose Woods. Certain personal things, a photograph to an ambassador of the Court of Saint James, Rose would do that. People aren't supposed to know this, but Rose could do his signature perfectly and it was an intimate little note. And so I'm in there, I watched him sign his name eight million times, but I would never take that photograph in. I would just never be that presumptuous to say, "Would you sign this?" It isn't even presumptuous. You're leaving. I'm leaving now. President Johnson signed this the other day, would you mind signing it? But it would also put him on the -- he's such a -- he'd think, oh my God, what am I'm going to write and he would get all tied up in knots. You know, I'd have to leave it with him for a week and then see what happened. But I never did that, so I've still got that picture and it's missing Nixon's signature, and Nixon's signature is the thing that I know so well. You know, I know it so well. I watched him; I'm right there. I could've just slipped it in and he wouldn't have known what he was signing.

Timothy Naftali

That's your one regret, I can see.

Alexander Butterfield

Not so much, no, no, it isn't. In fact, it's sort of an interesting picture because some say, "Didn't you work for Nixon?" "Yeah." "Well, he didn't sign it." And I'd say, "No, he's mad at me."

Timothy Naftali

How did your job change when you became Cabinet secretary?

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, none at all, absolutely none. The Cabinet thing -- we realized probably about the same time that we made John Whitaker the Cabinet secretary, we made him one of John Ehrlichman's lieutenants on the Domestic Council. Now John Whitaker's a smart guy. He had a Ph.D., and he became a significant guy on the Domestic Council staff, along with Ken Cole, incidentally, who was a guy who started out real junior with all of these junior guys, but you could see his value right away and his savvy. And he became, well, he was Ehrlichman's deputy really. He was a very savvy guy. And I think he did a little turn as staff secretary on his way up, Ken Cole. I liked Ken a lot. Oh, I did want to just finish that thing about Rose Mary Woods. So by the time the President of the United States -- Nixon's President of the United States now, Rose didn't understand a lot of things. She would go in -- she had a tendency to want to go in, although we had strict rules. Nobody could walk in Nixon's office unannounced ever, except Haldeman, Steve Bull, and I. Nobody. Not Rose or not Kissinger, nobody, just unannounced. If we went in unannounced we'd have to have some good reason. Or maybe it was just to put something on his desk, or maybe to tell him something. Depends upon who he's with. And Mrs. Nixon would call and if I didn't think he wanted to be bothered I wouldn't put her through. But she'd understand that. I said, "I think he's about to up now with so and so, but I'll have him call you right away." So we decided -- I usually just made that decision who called or who got in and who didn't. But -- what?

Timothy Naftali

Rose.

Alexander Butterfield

Rose would go in at an inopportune time. Maybe he's in there with the -- solving the postal strike. We had a postal strike in '69, which was a big deal. Nixon liked the way that was solved. We brought all of the right people in, had meetings, worked things out. This guy went and did that and that, we meet the next day, and it -- they were very proud of themselves. But she'd go in the middle of that, say, not really understanding how important that was at the time to him, and say, "Your Aunt Martha wanted you to..." something like that, something totally off the wall, and he hated it. He hated it. So he said to Haldeman, "I don't want her this close." She was in that traditional secretary's office right on the other side of the Oval Office, close. He wanted her down the hall. Well, she got a bigger office by going down the hall and she had her own staff, Marge Acker and that Newsom worked out of her office, and Shelley Scarney, who later married Pat Buchanan, Shelley Buchanan was one of her sort of secretaries in there, who later became a receptionist in the lobby. Shelley Scarney did. And he said, "I don't want her to come in here. You've got to tell her nobody comes in unless they check with you or Alex or Steve." Steve could come and go because Steve's the guy who brought people in and he had to check with the President on things, and for all kinds of reasons. And he did everything unobtrusively and appropriately, but Rose didn't. Well, of course, Haldeman got the blame for that. I know Rose thought, "That damn Haldeman, you know, he's moved me down here."

I mean, proximity is the close thing -- I mean, is the close thing? Proximity is the important thing. Everybody wants to be close to the great man. I was naïve about that for a while. Someone said, "You're the guy -- you mean your office actually," and I said, "Yeah." I didn't really, but you know I didn't think of -- you don't -- you stop thinking that he's the President of the United States. He's just your boss there, and I did work closest to him. I guess as the crow flies through the wall it was about 18 feet, and I had a two o'clock meeting every afternoon, which was about the planning for the following day. And I had the important people there, the doctor, the President's doctor, someone from the Press Office, someone from the Secret Service, everybody, and all of the people who were in charge of the meetings the President would be having the next day. And we had to -- we sort of conducted that meeting in a whisper because the President took a nap every day, without fail, which was good. He could lie down and close his eyes and go to sleep after a light, small curd cottage cheese lunch.

Timothy Naftali

Because he didn't sleep well at night often times. I mean he told people --

Alexander Butterfield

Probably not, yeah. But he slept in that little room, which President Clinton made famous. It's just a little anteroom. You know there's a hot plate in there and a place where Manolo could make coffee. There's a little bathroom, and then there's a cot and a desk. And he'd lie down on that cot. It was just a cot, too, it wasn't a bed. It was like a cot you'd find in an Army barracks, as I remember it.
[unintelligible]

Timothy Naftali

Remember, Rose.

Alexander Butterfield

Huh?

Timothy Naftali

We were talking about Rose --

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, oh.

Timothy Naftali

-- but I'm going to --

Alexander Butterfield

I've sort of finished that. So I think he was totally disenchanted by the time he was President. He -- and she pretty much was limited to letters to relatives from him, from the President. He had a little Dictaphone with those wide belts that they used to have along them, dictabelts, they called them, and that was just Rose's. And he only used that dictabelt or that Dictaphone sitting in the Oval Office when he wanted to send a letter that Rose would type up and send. It had nothing to do with the White House or with his Presidency. Those dictabelts, when they were in the out basket, they were for Rose automatically. And it was usually to his Aunt Martha, or whoever it was that was calling. Or it could be about contributors. Rose was in charge of contributors. She had the list, who contributed what and how much. And family, and she was Aunt Rose to the girls and she was over at the residence a lot. And she was a very nice person. I felt sorry for her in a lot of ways. She viewed all of us as competition sort of. This was her man. This was her man, and you don't understand him, and I should be in there. So she lost her -- the role, important role, she had earlier and she blamed -- I guess she went to her death probably blaming Haldeman. Haldeman didn't care.

Timothy Naftali

No, as you said, he didn't. I wanted to ask you about a few moments in the history of the first term, things that you might have witnessed. What affect did Kent State have on the -- what affect did the response to the bombing of Cambodia, the invasion of Cambodia I mean, have on the President in 1970? I know you weren't with him at the Lincoln Memorial, but it's a pretty famous episode --

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, yeah.

Timothy Naftali

--

[inaudible]

what you saw?

Alexander Butterfield

You mean when Bud Krogh and --

Timothy Naftali

Yes.

Alexander Butterfield

-- and Haldeman eventually came in it. Well, I don't -- it's hard for me to say that. I didn't notice any -- I didn't notice anything. Kent State had a huge impact, of course, in the country. But I think, you know, the President felt, I'm sure, like he did with Captain Calley, or was it Lieutenant Calley?

Timothy Naftali

Lieutenant Calley.

Alexander Butterfield

He would tend to side with the soldier, or the soldiers, or the people who weren't breaking the laws or rioting or causing a civil disturbance. Generally he would. That's where -- his sympathies would be more with the establishment and the law rather than with lawbreakers, in terms of how he felt about it. He did talk to me once about that Calley thing coming back from Key Biscayne, just the two of us. I think only Ziegler and I went with him on that trip. Coming back, I was with him the whole time back, and that Calley thing and that My Lai thing had broken and we had heard there was some reporter who was putting out all of this stuff and he didn't -- leaking, you know, this stuff hadn't been leaked but it was beginning to be. You could see it was going to be a big story. And then he did help Calley in the long run. Calley never did -- I don't think he ever served a day. He might have had a few weeks or months of house arrest. But that's the way Nixon thought about that sort of thing. I think he was just puzzled. He was just puzzled that the war was -- that people didn't see it his way. We're working on Vietnamization, and as the Vietnamese are able to handle their own affairs we will drop back, just like President Bush says we're doing now in Iraq.

I mean, that's my take on it. Other people might be able to give you a better answer. I can't -- I never saw -- I never saw him change much because of any events that resulted from the war. And he's a tough guy, too. He wouldn't admit that, you know, maybe like this President, likes to play that role, I think, be the tough guy and not fall back or admit your errors. I don't think Nixon ever felt bad about stepping over the boundary there in Cambodia or anything else we did, carpet-bombing with the B-52s.

It's interesting how that war developed. I felt early on -- I left in '64. I left the day of Tonkin, Gulf, August 3rd and 4th of 1964. I had flown 98 missions. But my job -- and I was there in the early part. We lost the first plane, the first combat plane was from my squadron. And I had a lot of guys from my squadron in prison, so a lot of people were in that prison who were also heroes. If you say a guy's a hero who went to prison, he was, just for enduring what they endured. They all got tortured, not just John McCain.

Timothy Naftali

Is that one reason why you were put in charge of Ross Perot? Since Ross Perot was most concerned about the POWs, was --

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, you know an interesting thing? I've never said this to any one official, like yourself, before Ross left, as his point of contact, he said, "How many men of ours, Americans, are prisoners in North Vietnam?" Or missing, and/or missing, he wanted the total number. So -- and that could be the trick, this missing thing, but let me finish what I was going to say. So I called Mel Laird's office, which I did all of the time. As Cabinet secretary, I called these Cabinet officers frequently and I knew who their top assistants were. And I said, "I need to know, as accurate as you can, give me the number." So the number I got back an hour or so later, I do forget the number now, but it was -- I think it was in the high 1,200's, 1,280, 1,290, something like that. So I told Ross that. Now that's captured and missing in North Vietnam. We're just talking about North Vietnam, not South Vietnam. And so he bought 1,400 of everything to allow -- to be on the safe side. Fourteen-hundred of everything: turkeys, as I said; hams; first aid kits; sleeping bags; blankets; shaving kits and things; I think shoes, socks. But, you know, when those guys came out of prison, I think only four hundred and, what is it 430? Where are those other guys? Were there that many missing? Because that's the other element, but I've never known that. I mean, I got that number from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. And it was the White House calling, so I don't think they were cavalier. But I always wondered about that. Anyway, he goes over there with two 747s, with the press, and you know. He's a funny little guy; I like Ross in a way. But he's like an ankle-biter, you know, I mean he's just always at you calling and wants this and wants that. And we stopped and looked back on it once and we realized that, you know, Ross never did give us anything. We gave him a lot. We helped him get certain states, you know, he was getting these state pension funds with his, with his --

Timothy Naftali

EDS.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, EDS: Electronic Data Systems, and it was big, big business. So he was making more and more money. He was already, when we met him we looked him up, he had \$2.2 billion on paper. I remember that, \$2.2 billion. Because later I think that was my budget when I went to the FAA. Initially it was \$2.2 billion. So then he called me and Henry, he drove Henry crazy. Henry would come into my office and say, "Where is he now?" I said, "He's landing in Vientiane. He's on his way; he'll be in Hanoi next. "Oh, I wish he," you know Henry just didn't want him to go, because he was interfering with Henry's business in various ways, some of which probably Henry was making up. And then the -- so the plan

was so -- and we had a plan. If you were not successful in delivering these goods to the North Vietnamese, to our prisoners in North Vietnam, give them to South Vietnamese orphans. Go down to Saigon. So he somehow thought, "So then I give it to the North Vietnamese?" "No, no, Ross, not the North Vietnamese orphans." It reminded me of that old -- that guy who does the monologues who's so good; had his TV program for years. I know the guy myself. I can't think of his name now. But he does this routine where Abraham Lincoln's PR guy is talking to Abe on the phone and he's saying --

Timothy Naftali

Bob Newhart.

Alexander Butterfield

Bob Newhart, yeah. He's saying, "No, no, Abe. No, get it right. First you were a rail-splitter, then you were a lawyer." And that type of thing, you know. "No, no, no, not -- on the back of an envelope, Abe. Right." That's the way we were with Ross on the phone: "No, Ross, get it right." So --

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about managing King Timahoe. Did you have to worry about King Timahoe at any point?

Alexander Butterfield

Not really. See, that's -- I do -- I am proud enough to resent some of the people who, "What'd you do at the White House? Did you manage the President's dog?" "No." "Did you buy the President's wines?" "Well, yeah, a couple of times, but through another person." I told my mother once -- you know how mothers are. My mother, of course, wanted to know what I was doing at the White House. And I didn't know how to -- I wanted to just wrap it up in one quick -- I said, "Well, I'm the one who --" "I bring all of the papers in to the President." Well, my mother thinks -- she hears papers, that's the newspaper. So she was so proud she told everyone in Tacoma, Washington, where my parents were then living, "Oh, and Alex brings the newspaper in to the President every morning." But I don't ever remember having anything to do with that dog. I guess the guy who was the florist there or something -- I forget who the guy -- he wrote a book, the guy that -- he wrote a book about taking care of King Timahoe and the dogs there. And he mentions me a lot in that book, because I'm the one that he would normally come to get something from the President. And I wouldn't bother the President with that anyway. But that's another one of those kinds of things. But I didn't ever take care of King Timahoe. King Timahoe was in the office a lot in those early days. I think that was the President's way of saying, "I don't have a little John-John to be in here like JFK did, but I've got this nice dog." And, of course, in the Oliver Stone movie they have a scene in there. They soaked the dog biscuits in ammonia, Oliver did, so even when the President tried to feed the dog, the dog pulled back. And he throws the dog biscuit on the wall and said, "Even the dog doesn't like me." A little Oliver Stone...

Timothy Naftali

Tell us what you observed of the President's friendship with Bebe Rebozo.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, I observed a lot of that, because Bebe was around all of the time. I would usually get the nod to call him. The President would say, "Call Bebe and tell him to come up." And Bebe would always come up; I don't think he ever failed us. Fly up, either for a weekend, or if the President wanted to go to Camp David, he wanted to go with Bebe. Usually Mrs. Nixon did not go to Camp David. If the President had a lot of work to do, he might not call Bebe, but if he wanted to relax he'd call Bebe. Another favorite was Bob Abplanalp, but Bob didn't come much to Camp David. Bebe came a lot. And Bebe and I would often -- we'd travel together. We sat in the helicopter together. I was the Camp David guy, too. That's another thing, Haldeman didn't like to go to Camp David. Everyone, after one or two visits to Camp David, you've seen it; there's not much to it. It's pretty little, and nobody wants to go again. You've got a lot of food up there and a lot of movies, and you can sit and eat and watch movies. But the President doesn't call on people much. But I would go up there always with a secretary; sometimes my family, my children. Take my children where -- well, the kids were in college. I had one child in high school then, Lisa. She could take a friend; that was nice. And my wife liked it for just relaxing, but they didn't go that much. But I went almost all the time to Camp David, and many of the times to Key Biscayne, and almost always to San Clemente. But we tried to make it clear to people that Camp David and Key Biscayne were rest and relax, by and large, there's always a little business that goes on. But San Clemente was the business. So -- relative to Camp David was your question?

Timothy Naftali

No, I was asking about Bebe Rebozo --

Alexander Butterfield

About Bebe --

Timothy Naftali

-- and you said Bebe would go to Camp David a lot.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, yeah, and he was a lot of -- he was a lot of company for the President. He wasn't gregarious at all; very quiet guy, Bebe is. Quiet, sort of very reserved, but they'd watch a football game and, you know, just grunt. "Yeah, that was a good play." Bebe would go "Oh," you know. He was just there. He was a good guy. I liked Bebe, too. You couldn't help but like Bebe, a very, very nice man. And I think the kids sort of got to see him like Aunt Rose; he was like Uncle Bebe, almost. The President really liked that guy. Another guy I mentioned, Bob Abplanalp, but another guy -- I'll think of his name. It just slipped my mind. He was very big with the "Reader's Digest." He might have been retired during the time that Nixon was President. And, oh, I started to say his name. Hobe --

Timothy Naftali

Hobe Lewis.

Alexander Butterfield

Hobe Lewis, Hobart Lewis. He was with "Reader's Digest," yeah. Those three guys, Nixon loved to be around those three guys. And he loved Abplanalp, a big, you know, rough-hewn guy, you know. Made a million dollars like -- well, I started to say the hard way, but maybe it was the easy way. But you know he liked those guys and they liked him. They liked him. They kidded him a little bit about his, you know, he's just uneasy with women. He doesn't know how to talk to women or do any even mild flirting. So they went out and bought a naked lady, or a rubber life-size lady and put it in his bed once. But you know, he would just get all tied up in knots on something like that, Nixon would. He couldn't sort of roll with the punch.

Timothy Naftali

Which bed did they put -- where did they put this naked --

Alexander Butterfield

What?

Timothy Naftali

Where did they put this naked mannequin?

Alexander Butterfield

In Nixon's bed.

Timothy Naftali

In the White House?

Alexander Butterfield

No, no, down in Key Biscayne, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Back up the tape.

Timothy Naftali

In Key Biscayne, wow.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, in Key Biscayne.

Timothy Naftali

Hijinks in Key Biscayne.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

Okay, let me ask you about the taping system. When --

Alexander Butterfield

The taping system?

Timothy Naftali

The taping system -- when were you asked to put it in? What do you remember of the --

Alexander Butterfield

Well, you know, the date is around -- I could look up the date.

Timothy Naftali

No, no, but I --

Alexander Butterfield

We all could. It was February of '71. I think when I testified before the Congress, before the Watergate Committee, and I was just hauled up there, I didn't have any time to look up anything. I -- just in my mind, I think I thought it was late 1970, and I think I said that, or in the middle of 1970. Then they looked it up and, lo and behold, it was February of '71. I mean we were more than halfway through the --

Timothy Naftali

Well, why don't we pursue that a bit. Because when we interviewed Larry Higby he said that there was an attempt to do it briefly and it didn't work out, and then the full system went in. So, is it possible that maybe you did do -- there was a little system in 1970?

Alexander Butterfield

No, it sounds to me like Larry is confused with the guys bugging the Democratic National Committee. There was an attempt to do it on May 18th, prior to June 17th.

Timothy Naftali

No, we were talking about the White House telephone -- the taping system.

Alexander Butterfield

No, well not to my knowledge, because as soon as I got that order, whenever it was. Yes, I heard it initially from Larry Higby. He just said, "Bob wants you to put in a taping system." He might have said -- he didn't say this, I know he didn't say it. But I was just saying the other day that -- I was doing an interview once for David Thelen, T-h-e-l-e-n, who used to be the editor of "The Journal of American History." And for whatever that runs, they change editors now and then. He was there in the late '80s and he faulted me later. I mean he and I are good friends, but he said, "Butterfield's memory didn't serve him." And he used as an example some funny things, which had nothing to do with my memory. But I said to him, "Yeah, Haldeman said he wanted the tapes put in." And that's the way I look at it; Haldeman did. But if you ask me who came to you first, I would, of course, say, because I remember distinctly, I have no fuzzy recollection. It's a very vivid -- of Larry Higby coming in and saying, "The President is going to want to put a taping system in." But he wasn't really relaying the order officially then, and anything he said came from Bob. He was Bob's -- and I respected Larry. I mean I dealt with Larry 10 times a day, everyday; I knew Larry so well. So I think I said to Thelen, "Bob wanted -- said the President wanted to" -- in fact, after Larry talked to me, Bob always came into the Oval Office through my office. He came down the hall from his grand office into my office and then into the Oval Office. And he'd say something on the way in usually, "I want to talk to you on the way out." So I said to him going through, I said, "Oh, Larry gave me that message about tapes." I said, "I've got a couple of questions." "Okay, when I come out."

So he came out and I did. The first question I had was, "What are your thoughts about who puts it in?" He said, "I don't care as long as the military doesn't do it." Haldeman looked with some disdain on the military; that's fair to say, "Eh, just military guys." I had a lot of that in the Johnson era, because Vietnam was in its glory then. And I've had more than one congressman refuse to shake my hand. They had a big party for new congressmen at the White House in the East Room and I probably looked like a new congressman a little bit to some people who hadn't seen me around. I'm there because McNamara's there and he's going to do a briefing, and I'm McNamara's chart man on Vietnam and on the Dominican Republic too, as it turned out. And a guy would come up and say, "Hi, I'm Wilbur Mills," or "I'm" -- no, it wasn't Wilbur Mills, it was Hays or something, this Ohio guy. I forget his name.

Timothy Naftali

Wayne Hays.

Alexander Butterfield

Wayne Hays, I said, "Oh hi, I'm Colonel Butterfield." I never wore a uniform. And I said, "I'm here with Mr. McNamara." Pulled his hand away, spun around, and got out of there, embarrassed that he had even spoken to me. Of course, that was the Vietnam War. Different deal now, they'd probably say, "Oh, thank you for the service you're giving to our country." Whole different thing, just thought I'd throw that in.

Timothy Naftali

No, no, so Haldeman, as you said, was uncomfortable with the military.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, so he said, "Don't have the GD military do it." And also, there's a point to that, too, apart from his disdain, which I knew existed. I wouldn't say that if I didn't. Military guys do get transferred from time to time. We don't have all of that -- we could have something to do, say, "No, don't transfer him, but we're going to keep him there for the whole Nixon term." Whereas the Secret Service you've got some control there. So the Secret Service Technical Security Division was the place to go. And once Haldeman said that, that settled it for me. And he might have given me a couple of other pointers; I'm trying to think what he might have said. But I was going to talk to him anyway; he was my boss. This was not a big thing, but this was significant. We were going to put tapes in no one was going to know about. And he said, "Make sure nobody knows this. Nobody, nobody." And that was said a couple of times later when he and the President and I talked about it. And there was never any doubt in my mind, although no one told me these -- in so many words, was that there was no sinister purpose to the tapes. None. I sensed it was for the memoir. That would be valuable if you could have all of that. And I went to Haldeman a couple of times later, much later when these things are accumulating so fast. The Secret Service were coming to me and saying, "Ah, we're having to look for a new place to put the tapes." And I said, "Bob, we ought to have a couple of secretaries get up on the fourth floor of that EOB and just type all day long, because this is a career here, you know. This is all day every day." And he said, "Yeah, good idea," but we never did do that. So that had to be a mammoth job. And, as I mentioned to your cameraman, not only was there never any sinister purpose for that, and I'm sure I'm right about that. The President was never -- what's the word? I forget the word. When you're -- he didn't worry that the tapes were running --

Timothy Naftali

He wasn't inhibited.

Alexander Butterfield

He was not in the least inhibited by the fact that -- I used to sit in there a lot and hear a lot of things going on, and I was very conscious of them all the time, because I dealt with them now and then and I'd have these guys coming to me now and then, "Where are you putting them?" And I knew that they had to change -- certain ones they had to change every day and others they didn't. And I was just conscious of the tapes. And he, you know, he said all kinds of things. It was good in a way. He was very comfortable that they were going -- being well taken care of, and would be there for his memoirs when we typed all of this stuff up.

Timothy Naftali

When Higby, on behalf of Haldeman, on behalf of the President, asked you to put them in, initially they were just for the Oval Office in the Cabinet Room?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, now -- yeah, to get that right -- I don't know. I would like to know that, too. It was the Oval Office and the Oval Office telephone for sure. And the Cabinet Room, I'm almost positive, came on that first order. And the Lincoln bedroom I'm wondering about, the phone in the Lincoln bedroom. Because he was -- if he went to the residence he ended up in the Lincoln bedroom. I mean, yeah, in the

Lincoln study, the Lincoln room way down at the east end of the White House. And the second order, which I was not around to relay to the Secret Service, so Larry did that, was the EOB office and I guess the EOB phone, and maybe the telephone at Camp David. Maybe that was in there. But the Camp David office, the little office in Aspen Cabin, Nixon told me not to tell even Haldeman. I have no idea why. So we put it in and when they came to me to say, "We can't do it." I didn't even go to the President about taking it out, I just said, "Take it out." I knew he'd go along with that if I said, you know, "Gorbachev's coming," not Gorbachev, whoever it would be at that time.

Timothy Naftali

Brezhnev.

Alexander Butterfield

Brezhnev, yeah.

Timothy Naftali

But when we were talking offline about this, you said the reason you were -- the reason it was suggested that you take it out was that you had this problem with foreign -- was it foreign police or --

Alexander Butterfield

That's what they told me, no, foreign dignitaries using it. So are we going to put it in, take it out? I mean how often is it going to be used? We'd be putting it in and taking it out all of the time. And, are we sure we want it in there? I mean they'd be respectful about it. If I said, "Yeah, we're sure, put it back in," they'd do that. They'd do that. Someone thought that Al Wong, when I first mentioned this to him, brought him over to tell him about the tapes the first time. He wasn't disrespectful at all. He did -- and he didn't roll his eyes, but he sort of -- his body language said to me, "Here we go again." So I said to him, "Have you done this before?" "Well, we've -- it never seems to work out in the end," or something with -- that was kind of his answer. See, he could have told me a lot right there. But -- but when the tapes were exposed -- so I knew how important the tape secret was to Richard Nixon. When I left the White House, nobody else knew. No new people knew. Except I had Haldeman's permission while I was still there one day. I was going for a physical out at Andrews Air Force Base -- they still did my physicals as a retired officer -- and there was going to be a Cabinet meeting. And I said, "I need to tell" -- it's funny Haldeman wouldn't do it, but you know Haldeman, that was sort of a minor thing for Haldeman to be doing. So I said, "May I tell Toni Sidley," my secretary, Mary Sidley, Toni Sidley, to -- I -- you didn't have to press the button under the table in the Cabinet Room. There was another button you could push and it was an odd button on my phone, which had many, many buttons. It was this one down in this corner or something, you know.

So I took Toni in there and I said, "Look, at 2:00 today -- don't ask any questions. Maybe someday I'll tell you, but it's not all that big a deal -- come in here. You see this button? Don't forget which button it is. See, it's the first one up and the second one over. Push that button at 2:00 today and just walk out." I knew I was going to be back before the Cabinet. So Toni -- and then I did tell her about the Cabinet Room, but she was one of these trusted secretaries who could work for the President, could go to Camp David and all that, like the others, one of those 10. And then I got Haldeman's specific permission to tell Steve Bull before I went over to the FAA, but it was pretty close to the time of my

departure, which was March 14th. And I don't think anyone else knew other than those we mentioned: the President and Haldeman and Higby and myself and Al Wong and three Secret Service technicians who worked for him, now Toni Sidley. But then -- and it was four months later, four months after I arrived at the FAA that I ended up testifying on the tapes. I was called first, of course, by the staff who vets everybody, the Watergate Committee staff. I've explained to people, some don't understand it, almost all times when you go before a Congressional committee, you've met with the staff because they zero in on what it is you're going to say and what you know and what you don't know so that time isn't wasted before the committee principals. So, I mean, people hear that and they understand it. And in that session, the very first question out of the box on that session, on the afternoon -- it started at 2:15. Not 2:00, as I think I have said in the past, 2:15, and they started right out.

They threw a piece of paper to me; slid down the table to me. And it was just Scott Armstrong; Eugene Boyce, who worked with Scott Armstrong on the Democrat side, the majority side; Don Sanders, a former FBI agent who worked for the minority, the Republican side. So these two guys are representing Sam Dash, the Majority Council. Don Sanders is representing Fred Thompson, the Minority Council. And a woman named Mary Ann Brazier [phonetic sp] -- not brazier, but it sounds like that, it's one of those -- it's a French name -- who said to me at the outset, "Mr. Butterfield, I'm sorry but I don't take dictation, so would you go as slowly as you can within reason?" And I said, "Sure, thank you." I guess they couldn't find someone who took dictation. It would have been better, because there were lots of errors in that first thing that she did. But I got to look at that. They sent me the thing and I corrected it. On September 18th, I corrected it. It was long after the fact. And I had a special meeting with these guys on September 18th, and I went over every correction I made with them, the same guys. But the first thing they did is they slid this piece of paper to me and it was -- looked like a transcript. P -- they tell me that means p, I guess, and D. We're assuming that means John Dean. And they said, "Will you look at this?" And the question was, "Tell us where you think it may have come from." That was the question; that was the first question. I thought -- I'd been interrogated many times before by the Justice Department, Silbert and Glanzer, the guys who were investigating from the U.S. Attorney's Office for all kinds of things, but nothing to do with tapes. But I was the keeper of the \$350,000 secret fund, and it was usually about that or something. No one could understand we did all of this without receipts and anything. They all thought we were crazy, and I guess we were. \$350,000, just leave it with a guy that you know. He's going to put it in a safety deposit box and say, "Okay, see ya," no sign, no nothing. So I had been interrogated many times before, and I had just thought about this tapes thing. The tapes had never been brought up, never mentioned. I thought I know it's a remote possibility, but if they should ever ask about tapes to me, I'm going to fuzz it as long as I can fuzz it. If they're oblique in their questioning, I'll be equally oblique if I can think that fast on my feet in response. If they ask a direct question, and I'll be listening for a direct question, and I was, so that's why I'm so -- I tried to explain that to Thelen when I did this journal. I said, "Listen, I was listening to every question. I know what they said. I remember how it went down exactly." It's so amazing how things get reported later. And of course I could be wrong about things, too. I'm not saying that I'm perfect about memory, not at all. But I'm just saying, on that occasion, I was listening. It wasn't that I had this acute hearing; I was just listening. And so it was -- they said, "Where might this have come from?" So as soon as I looked at it I thought wow, and I said, "Wow." I think I said that. "This looks very detailed." I can remember saying that. And I said -- and the President had a fantastic memory -- but I said, "This looks even more detailed than that. I don't think he could recall a meeting with John Dean in this detail, so let me think."

So I am fuzzing it a little bit. Of course, I'm thinking of the tapes and I'm thinking this came from the tapes; it had to have. And so, you know, my mind was blown. And then I'm saying -- and then I told

them about the dictabelt. That's just to make words. That's just to go for time. I said, "Now, there was a dictabelt in there, but that was just for Rose Woods." I explained that. And then I finally said, I said, "Well, this does look very detailed," and I threw it back on the table and it slid a little bit. And I said, "Let me think about this for a minute." And just good fortune for me at that moment, they said, "Okay," and he went on. And the next four hours, almost four, until about quarter of six -- from 2:15 to; it's 2:30 now, until about quarter of six, it was just the kind of stuff I've answered many times about the White House: how it works, who does what to whom, who the President sees most frequently, least frequently, how papers are done, all of that kind of stuff. And finally, and only then, did Scott Armstrong say, "Well, I'm out of questions," and he turns it over to Don Sanders. And Sanders says -- first thing he says is -- he reaches for the paper and shoves it my way again and I thought, "Oh, geez." I thought I was home free there. And he said, "Mr. Butterfield, you mentioned about this dictabelt" -- that's why I mentioned that thing again -- "and that that was just for Rose Woods." Whenever there's a dictabelt and that was, "Yes." I said, "That's right." And then his next question was as direct as a question can be. He said, "Well was there ever any other, to your knowledge, was there ever any other listening device in the Oval Office?" And Don writes -- and he writes a section in that same -- it's about in April or it's a March of '89 "Journal of American History." He writes a section in there, too, and so does Scott Armstrong. And Scott Armstrong writes that he's the one that asked the \$64 question, you know, because people don't know. He's -- in his mind all this time he's the guy. He was the lead interrogator, and he's the guy who gave me the paper, but he didn't get close to a direct question. Now here's a question about as direct as it can be, coming from Don Sanders. And I said -- I remember my exact words and I'm clear about this -- I said, "I wish you had not asked that question. Yes, there was."

And I will say they were cool. I know they didn't know about it. I know they didn't know about it. I just know they didn't know about the taping system. But they didn't jump up or say, "Whoa, there was?" They stayed cool and they said, "Well, tell us." They asked me a couple of questions. So I said -- I was not under oath, you know. Well, everyone said, "Well, you were under oath and you had to tell the truth." I'm not a big oath guy -- I mean I'm a big oath guy, but I mean I have more respect for just telling the truth than I do for -- if a person's going to lie, I don't think the oath matters. And I didn't even like it that was I fudging a little bit early on, you know? They're an official investigative body, and even the President was saying, "We want everyone to cooperate with this body." I mean he had to say that as President. But in reality I was not. I was being a little bit obdurate. I was not going -- I was not a willing guy. But now I'm still in this session and I said, "I'm sorry, yes, there was." So I said one other thing before they asked a question. I said, "I suppose I should treat this session just as I would with your principals in session, that this is that much a part of" -- and they said, "Yes." Now I finally admitted -- they said, "Yes." In other words, you've got to, "Yes, you should." So I said okay. I didn't say I'm under oath, but -- that I wasn't under oath, but I knew I was not. I knew I could have gotten up and walked out. I mean, I didn't -- these guys didn't run my life, really. And I think people who blame me, and many do -- many, many, many do -- I think some think -- but I've read at what a willing guy I was. That I just, "Oh, tapes? You want to know about tapes? Let me tell you about tapes. We've got this secret thing." But it didn't flow out that way. Or maybe they think the only time I talked about the tapes was in the big session before the committee on Monday, the following Monday. When I did, that was the first question out and I answered, but that's because that was why I was there, for that purpose. But when I was being vetted by the staff, they didn't learn about it until quarter of six that day. Then they asked me questions about it and I answered them all. And then I gathered them around. They were all, to me, younger guys, I felt. I said, "Look, I know what I told you is big, big news, and I know right where you're going now: to your bosses to tell this." But I said, "This is so big that I just feel -- I just hope you're going to handle it well."

And I have to admit some naiveté on my part, I was thinking of things like -- that Golda Meir, Prime Minister Wilson, those people, would hear that they had been taped in our President's office. I knew of the other import of these tapes. I knew that -- I knew intuitively that Richard Nixon would probably never speak to me again. I knew that I was toast, basically. I thought I would be fired. Of course, someone said later, "Well, no, you couldn't be fired for doing something basically good." Because, yeah, what I had really done was answer a direct question honestly. That's really all I did. But there are only -- but there are a very few people who see it that way, I can tell you that. If you do something that does not reflect well on the President of the United States, you lose a lot of friends in a hurry. That's -- I understand Washington, I know Washington, and that's the way it is. And I was a dead man right away. I was a spy in the cold. Not long after that, there was a -- not a sub-Cabinet meeting, a meeting of, you know, all of the people who used to work at the White House. Or maybe it was a sub-Cabinet meeting where everybody goes, sub-Cabinet members, everybody other than GS-18s, above a GS-18. And I could see people dodging, people I knew. I knew everybody and had a lot of friends. No one was speaking to me. But we'd get around a corner and maybe no one else -- we'd be going up the stairs up to the EOB, the top floor, that's where the meeting was going to be and they've got a big hall up there. But you get around a corner and no one's around a guy said, "Hey Alex, that was good. I was proud of you." Something like that, and then somebody would come and then they'd sort of look this way and go on up the stairs. No one wanted to be seen speaking to me. I mean it. I got a few phone calls from a few fast friends. And I was in Washington just recently, this thing for "Vanity Fair" where they took pictures of various Presidentcies.

Of course, the only people that showed up for the Nixon thing were Colson -- but Colson, I'm not his best pal -- and Bork, all of these staunch, dyed-in-the-wool Republicans. I never knew Bork very well, anyway. Well, everybody was nice, but not chatty. And Bill Safire, I always considered Bill a good friend and Bill's fine. But I think they feel I could've either not said anything or invoked the Fifth Amendment or something like that. Of course, on May 22nd of 1973, the President released everybody from the Executive Privilege rule in his May 22nd speech, and I was aware of that. But -- so I had friends in the Air Force. One, when my father had a heart attack I had to go up there and I needed some help, I called him. He was a head of Alaskan Command; he was a lieutenant general, a good friend of mine that I had known in there. He didn't return my calls. I wanted -- I was trying to get some safe -- my mother was the wife of an admiral, my dad was a retired admiral, and my dad had a heart attack. My mother's up there with early- on Alzheimer's disease -- I won't get off on this tangent, but I needed some help for my mother to get her back to Anchorage and I wasn't trying to get the military to fly her, but I was trying to get quarters for that night at Elmendorf or some airfield. And he never returned my call. And I know how a lot of these guys feel. They just feel that you've -- the President. You've crossed the President and you've made things hard for the President of the United States. So I will always bear that cross. I mean, you know, I'd rather it weren't that way. But I have no regrets. I don't regret it for a minute, wouldn't do anything different. Screw them, I mean, there's that attitude I could take. But as I said, I liked everybody at the White House and had a lot of good friends. And Colson was one of my good friends. He and I had lunch a couple of times; I liked Colson.

Timothy Naftali

Who did you tell -- after you got out of the session, who did you tell first that you -- that this had come up in the interview?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, I went back to the FAA and worked, and then the next -- I told my wife. I was just at the FAA. I didn't tell anybody at the FAA. I guess my driver picked me up and I went back to the FAA, worked for a while. Tuesday I was going to the Soviet Union and I was a little concerned about that. That was a trip that had been planned for a long time, almost since the beginning of my FAA tenure four months earlier. And I was going to open the trade fair. I was taking about 50 industrial leaders with me, and it was a Congressman, industrial people, but I was the leader of the delegation. And I was going to cut a ribbon at the trade fair and make a talk, and then I was going to meet with my counterpart and we were going to try to get some business for our people because they had a very dilapidated air traffic control system. And we thought it would be funny if we ended up doing their air traffic control system, but it was a possibility. I think the Swedes ended up getting that contract. So that -- it was an important trip, and I was to leave at 6:00 a.m., take off at 6:00 a.m. on Tuesday. And so on Saturday I had to go up to New Hampshire to Nashua, New Hampshire, to open a new FAA tower, airport tower, cut a ribbon, make a little talk. And then I came back. And when I came back, my wife said, "Oh, the phone's been ringing off the hook." And I knew, you know, her just saying that, I knew something's up about me testifying. I told these young guys, too, before I released them or they released me, I said, "I don't want to testify. I don't want to get involved in that because I've got this trip coming up." And most of these people were up there for at least a day, you know. But I knew that they'd go to Sam Dash and that probably Don Sanders would go to -- and that's exactly what happened. They say this in the "Journal of American History." It's been written about several times since. And now it's Saturday afternoon and I had all of these calls, so I answered one and it was Scott Armstrong. He said, "We're going to call you up here on Monday" -- yeah, I called him first because he was sort of the leader of this team.

Then I didn't know who -- I didn't know Baker all that well, but Baker was the co-chairman of the Watergate Committee, Republican. I knew him a lot better than he knew me, but I sat in on some leadership meetings over in the -- he came over for leadership meetings. So I called him, he was the [unintelligible] and I said, "I need to talk to you." I just wanted to talk to someone, you know, on that committee. So he said, "Okay, come over tomorrow morning," meaning Sunday morning at 10:00. So I had my driver take me over there and I met with him. I went through this whole damn story, but all about the tapes and everything, everything. And he said, "Well, that's what I heard last night." I mean he had heard it before. And I said, "You mean you knew all of this? You let me go on?" He said, "Yeah." And I said, "Well now, I'm concerned about being held up. I can't be held up in a way. I'm leading this delegation and it's important. I don't want to get involved in the Watergate thing. I'm not involved anyway. I'm quite peripheral here." And he said, "Oh, I don't think you'll have to testify." And he said, "I'll see to it that -- I'll do what I can." And later on I told Sam Dash that, years later we're on a panel. He said, "Baker said that to you? Baker was pushing for you to come up more than anyone else!" I mean, Baker, you know, so Baker did not do me any favors and was deceptive. So I'm not a big Baker fan, but that's not a big thing. So then, as I've told this story so many times, so then Monday I went in. I wore a coat and tie, but I didn't wear my thing I would normally wear in the office. Because that was at the cleaners and I had things to do, to get a haircut, because I'm leaving Tuesday morning at six. So I was in my office early and worked until about 10, then I had a haircut appointment. And the White House barber cut everybody's hair and he cut my hair when I was at the White House. I forget his name now. I got him, Colson told me about this barber. I went and interviewed him and all that stuff and I'm the guy that got him to come to the White House to be the new stylist. Nixon loved him. He was a nice -- but he had a shop. When he wasn't working in the chair in the basement of the White House, he worked at the Ritz Carlton.

And that's another thing Thelen got me from memory, he said, "Butterfield called it the Ritz Carlton and it's just the Carlton." Well, I always called it the Ritz Carlton because I thought all Carltons were Ritz Carlton. That's how dumb I am about hotels. But the example with Higby and -- so I'm in there getting my haircut in the basement of the Carlton hotel right up there on 16th and L or wherever it is, 16th Street. And everybody -- there's a TV going all over the world in every office and every barber shop, in furniture companies, all of the TVs are on to whoever is testifying. And, of course, John Dean had the whole nation spellbound, for four days he went on, the last four days, I think, of June. And now it's that guy Moore, Richard Moore, I guess. He's up there confusing -- now, Moore is a very confusing guy. He's a nice guy, but he's not organized in the way he speaks. And so I'm watching that and getting my haircut. I'm in the chair and the phone rings, and the nail lady brings it over to me: "It's for you, Mr. Butterfield." And this guy, he says Hamilton, and I forget his name. I know him, too, and I can't think of his first name. He said, "I'm with the Watergate Committee, and," he said, "we've decided we want you to start off the evening session -- the afternoon session, which starts at 2:00. But the chairman, Chairman Ervin, wants you in his office" -- turned out later not to be his office -- "at 1:00, without fail." And I said -- that struck me as odd.

And I also thought I was pretty safe because of what Baker had told me. So I said, "Well, you can tell him that I am not going to be there. I'm not even thinking about coming there. I've got things to do today. It's an important day. I'm leaving tomorrow. I'm not going to be testifying." I said it assertively like that. And he said - well, and I swore a little bit, too. I think I said goddamn or something in there. I was very upset. I didn't mean that to the chairman or to him. I just didn't like my plan being upset at that late date in that way. So he said, "Well, I'm going to have to report what you said to the chairman." I said, "Go right ahead." I didn't think they had any hold on me at all. So I'm watching and I see a guy go over, on the TV right there in the barber shop, go over behind the chairman and whisper, and I thought that must be that guy Hamilton, I said to myself. And maybe I said it to the barber, too, "That's the guy I was talking to." And I saw the chairman look up and he had those big, bushy eyebrows. His eyebrows go woop, woop, woop, you know, like that. And he's saying something and I figure that's a message for me he's giving there. And sure enough the phone rings again and he said, "I just talked to the Chairman," and I said right away, I said, "I know, I saw you on TV." That lightened me up a little bit, too. And I said, "I saw you on television do that." And he said, "Well, he said if you're not in his office at 1:00" -- or room, I think they gave me the room number then -- "he will have" -- and this has been reported erroneously, too -- but he said, "Federal Marshals pick you up on the street." Those were his exact words, Hamilton's exact words, "Federal Marshals pick you up." Not the FBI, as I've heard, and other things.

So I knew that they weren't going to pick me up on the street. How could they? They wouldn't know where I am and all of that. I knew it was sort of an idle threat, but I also knew they wanted me up there. So I made two phone calls. I just read Joe Califano's book -- it's mostly about addiction, because that's his bag now. He runs that thing at Columbia University, where he says, "Alex called me and wanted help." He's confused. Later, in 1975, when I was involved in the Church committee and was doing the CIA investigations, some guy said that I had been the White House -- had been a CIA agent while I was at the White House. I know that guy's name; he's an Air Force colonel. He was just trying to let people know he knew a lot about the CIA. A lot of Air Force people work for the CIA. Other military people do from time to time, about 800 total in any one time. But I was no CIA agent, but I had been in the photography business, reconnaissance. It's all part of the same thing in a way. And that caused me a lot of trouble, and I was out job-hunting at the time. If word gets out that you've been with the CIA, you're not going to find a good job. And I had my hands on a good overseas job with a

company that's owned half by Paramount and half by Universal Studios. Barry Diller was a friend of mine at that time and that screwed up a lot of things for me. That's when I went to Joe to see if I could sue this guy. And Joe had some people in his law firm, which was then Arnold and Porter before he went to Edward Bennett Williams law firm. And so Joe is confused about that. Another case of someone getting confused about -- memory plays tricks. So I made two phone calls. The first one was to my home and my wife wasn't home, but fortunately my daughter was back from the University of Virginia. That's where she went to school. And I told her what suit to bring and where my white shirt was and which tie, and I made sure she got it right before I hung up.

And I said, "Just come to that Howard Johnson at the end of King Street in Alexandria as you're getting out of town," downtown. "It's one of the last commercial businesses on the right side," she knew where I meant. I think it's a Tuttle House or something, but I think it was a Howard Johnson's. She said "Okay," and I said, "And come right away." I said, "I know it's going to take you a while to get that in the car. This is very important." Then I called the White House to my regular -- when we all left the White House at the end of the first term, we were all given contacts. Mine was Leonard Garment. "Call Leonard anytime you want anything," and I had been doing that. I called him that weekend. I said, "I have told about" -- so the White House knew. They knew from my call Saturday night about my Friday session that there were tapes, and so they knew over the weekend. Now I'm calling him again and I'm just calling him to say, "They want me to testify up there this afternoon and I'm going to try to get out of it. I have one more chance to get out of it, but I may be on this afternoon at two." But before I could say that, he came to the phone and he said, "Get your own lawyer!" I think they were all up in arms there and they were all anxious. And when I called in to report, just to report, it was just my report -- I wasn't asking him to do anything -- he thought I was calling for legal advice. I didn't want any legal advice. That's the thing I want to tell Joe. I was fine. I'm a guy who doesn't -- I often wonder why these guys drag their lawyer up there. Are you up there just to tell what you know? I didn't need and didn't want a lawyer. If they had tried to give me a lawyer I would have refused to the extent that I could. I did not want a lawyer there. I was later involved in a few lawsuits and people sued me.

And the guy on the National Security Council staff sued me, and a few other things. I mean, this Watergate thing got very big. And then I hired a lawyer because I had to defend myself, but I sure know that Joe is mistaken about that. So those are the two phone calls I made. And I had my driver there, so I went and got my stuff from Susan, my daughter -- now married to a lawyer, mother of four, she's 56-years- old or something like that. And so, oh, Joe even says in this article that he told me, "Well," he said, "I can't do anything for you but at least you'll look good on national TV; you just had a haircut." But that was a joke that was in the newspapers because I made that joke myself a few times. Anyway, so I went and met in this room -- it's now a famous room, G, whatever it was, a little room. I think it might have been the same room where that staff had met with me. I could be wrong about that: G-134, something. And I asked the chairman, I said, "May I speak first?" He said, "Sure, go ahead." And I was pretty relaxed in this session. I mean, I just said, "First, I want to apologize." I said, "I didn't mean to be confrontational." I know I -- but I said, "Let me explain myself. I'm so peripheral to all of this stuff. I didn't get in and plan Watergate." By this time Watergate was, you know, it was pretty big. You knew it was going to be big already at this point after John Dean's testimony. And he had already fired -- I mean let Haldeman and Ehrlichman go on April 30th of prior and this was July 16th of '73. So I said, "I do apologize for that, sincerely, but here's why I'm not -- and since you have Haldeman coming along, and he knows about the tapes and he's going to be one of your people soon," because they had published a list in May of everyone they were going to talk to throughout the summer and the order in which they would be called.

Now they're just injecting me before Kalmbach and after Richard Moore. So I said, "That makes sense to me." And then the old North Carolinian said, "Well, Mr. Butterfield, I mean we appreciate that what you're saying, but you know you're the one who told the staff and we feel you're the one who should tell the country." That was his only argument. Baker didn't say anything. I had some words for Baker, but -- actually, I didn't know then that Baker hadn't -- it was later I learned that Baker hadn't helped me. Baker was just sitting there, but he was there with Ervin and Dash, and two counsels were there: Dash was there and Fred Thompson. So then they said, "Well, we're just going to ask you about the taping system." And I thought Sam Dash would do the thing which he normally did in these interrogations. So we left and I did go in -- this is what Al Haig should have done when he went up and said, "I'm in charge here." He should have gone in the men's room first, put a little water on his face, combed his hair, and thought just for a moment about how he would open this, because then he wouldn't have had that poor moment for several moments before the camera. Because he was perspiring and he was trying to get up there though before they ended that thing, and I think he wanted to seal his already very good reputation with the nation. [laughter] Didn't work out. So I did go in there and I thought, what the hell am I going to say? Well, first of all, about substance, I'll answer the questions.

Anything I know I'll tell them; anything I don't know I'll say I don't know. And I combed my hair. Then there's a knock on the door, a big, gruff voice I didn't know: "Mr. Butterfield, are you in there?" Said, "So and so, Capitol Police, we're here to take you upstairs." So they had this cordon of six policemen, two in front, two beside me, and two behind. And we start off walking. And I wrote about this in a book I wrote, which never got published because Little Brown wanted me to change the book so much I refused to do it. They wanted me to make it more of a Nixon/Watergate book. And that would have been better, I'll admit. They know their business. I had it as a memoir of mine. It's all about my Air Force days, you know, nobody wants to read about that. But I said, "No," to that. So I tried to -- I got off on the wrong step, all of these guys are in step and I had to do one of those quick little things to get back in step with the six policemen. We walked down this long corridor, the elevator comes, they clear everybody out. This is serious business. They cleared everybody out. It's their elevator.

They commandeered the elevator, and up we go. I think we had gone across a couple of streets -- I don't know the Capitol very well -- to another building. Now we're in the building where this big hearing room is, and it's the biggest hearing room up there, the famous hearing room where they've had many -- and we're walking along and I can hear people say, "Who is it? That's" -- and "The Washington Star" had come out early that day, the evening paper: "The Post" in the morning, "The Star" in the evening. But they came out with a noon edition, which said, "Mystery Witness Next." That's all it said. Probably not much beyond that, no one knew. And I heard people say, "Who is that? That's the FAA guy." Someone said -- I heard someone say, "That's the FAA guy." No one knew who I was; no one knew my name. I might have heard Butterworth or Butterball or something. You can just hear these from people along the corridor, because they're all stepping aside because here are these seven guys walking down and into the hearing room. And then they're very nice, they marched me in, kept in formation all the way down the aisle to the little table. And then one of them tipped his hat and said, "Good luck, sir," and they left. And I noticed a pad and pencil on the table and I thought good, I'll busy myself with that, you know, I wanted to write something. Maybe I'll get to say something before we start. I wanted to say something; I didn't know what. So I did, I wrote something out on that pad. But right in front of me all cross-legged here, that's where they put the press sitting there on the floor. That's the floor out there. And I see Connie Chung, who was a little cub reporter then. And I've heard later that -- oh, the pretty girl on "60 Minutes"?

Timothy Naftali

Lesley Stahl.

Alexander Butterfield

Lesley Stahl, I always had a crush on Lesley Stahl. I see Lesley there. I think she was there. I may have made that up in my -- and, uh, and boys with their girlfriends on their shoulders, jam-packed room. That room was packed. You couldn't get another human in there. And then the thing came to order and the chairman turned it over to Sam Dash, and then Sam Dash said, "I'm going to break with our normal routine today in that a member of the minority staff elicited the information which Mr. Butterfield is going to discuss -- was from the minority side. I'm going to turn the questioning over to minority counsel, Mr. Fred Thompson." So Fred said, "Mr. Butterfield, were you aware of --" and I said, "May I make a statement first?" And he was very apologetic. "Oh, oh, oh," he said. "I'm sorry, Mr. Butterfield. Yes, go ahead." So I said something and it was just sort of made up, you know, I wasn't sure. I don't know much about subpoenas and things and the law. I don't know -- and I said, "I was just notified late this morning that I was going to have to appear here." And I said, "But I appeared voluntarily." I felt as though I was appearing voluntarily. I felt I had a right not to. I was being nice to these guys. That's the way I looked at it. Now Hamilton still tells me that he has a copy of the subpoena on the wall of his office in Washington, D.C., and that he gave me that subpoena in that small office as we adjourned from that very short meeting.

If he did, I never got it. I don't know what the subpoena looks like or a subpoena looks like. I never got it. So I said, "I'm here voluntarily, and I would just advise" -- and then I wanted to rub it in a little bit. I really did, I thought: "And so I've had no time to arrange for counsel or even temporary counsel," which I actually didn't. Even temporary counsel, imagine that? I knew they didn't like that, but I sort of didn't like the way they were running me in there. And I've since found out that had they subpoenaed me, or if I had really received it and acknowledged it, you have 24-hours to respond to a subpoena. You can't just respond in an hour. So anyway, that was easy. They asked me these questions all about what I knew, and I didn't know much about the machinery. I did test it a couple of times, the tapes. I just asked randomly for a tape. I gave a date and a meeting the President had, and they went and they got that, and sure enough that was out and I listened. And it was clear; I didn't hear -- but, when there were people around the President's desk, the fact that they put microphones right in the desk, that came back to bite them because coffee cups made a hell of a noise rattling every time they're picked up or put down. And the Cabinet Room wasn't great because the microphones were on the base of the lamps on the far wall. So if the President's talking, it's the far wall that's picking up, because certainly the mics behind him aren't helping much. But that's where the mics were in the Cabinet Room, the base of the lamps on the wall. But it was okay, it was okay. I didn't hear any really bad tapes, and I only did that two or three times. I thought that was maybe part of my duty. But apart from that I don't know. I didn't keep the tapes, maintain them. The Secret Service did.

Timothy Naftali

They chose where the microphones would be?

Alexander Butterfield

Mm-hmm. In fact, they did all of that on their own while the President was away the very next weekend from the time that Haldeman and Higby told me to put them in. And Wong came over on Monday, and the President wasn't coming back until Tuesday, I think, on that occasion, which was often the case. And they said, "I'd like to show you in; let's go in." I said, "Okay, good." So we went in the Oval Office and he showed me where the microphones were. Then he took me down and showed me where the machinery was. They broke into a brick wall in the Secret Service Agents' dressing room downstairs. A lot of people don't know that there's sort of a Secret Service control center under the Cabinet Room, more or less. And right across the hall from that is this tiny little -- looks just like a locker room, string of lockers, bench in front of it, but very narrow. You wouldn't have much room to change clothes. And the brick wall at the far end, they broke into that brick wall and then put a metal door on it. And I said to Al, "Do you think the protective service guys who change clothes here," -- they're the only ones who change -- "will wonder what that is, that new door on the brick wall?" "No, no, I mean because we do stuff around all of the time that they just don't ask. They know we do our thing; they do their thing." That was his -- there may have been a curious guy that wondered what it was, but no one could get in there. It took a key. So he opened it for me and I looked in there and here's all this machinery going on, back in there like someone's basement, like you're in a crawl space.

Timothy Naftali

Did you have to -- were you the one who pressed the button in the Cabinet Room whenever -- Who would press the button at the start of a meeting?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, yeah, as you know in the Cabinet Room, voice-activated based on the locator system. So when the Secret Service Locator System -- and only a few people had that. I had one on my desk, Haldeman had one, Dwight Chapin had one but he didn't need it, and Bull had it. And that says where the President is. There's West Wing, barber shop, there is no Cabinet Room on there. That's in the West Wing, so West Wing takes care of Cabinet Room. That's why it was not voice- activated in the Cabinet Room. "Out" meant he's out; he's off the grounds of the White House. "East Wing", "residence", all of these, about eight choices. They're little windows, and where the light is on the window, that's where the President is at any one time. If he's in Key Biscayne he's out, that's "out." And they move that down there, you know, when the President's moving. When the President leaves the Oval Office and goes to the EOB office, they've got the little watch thing, too. Or, there's a little thing on the wall. There are a lot of these little microphones on the wall. Secret Service -- they'll open one and they're calling their command post down under the Cabinet Room, and they'll say "POTUS is moving, we're" - - POTUS, P-O-T-U-S, President of the United States, "moving to the EOB." And all six of them go over there with him. So --

Timothy Naftali

Well, the point is, would they turn the system on, so that when he would come into a room, the voice-activated system would be on?

Alexander Butterfield

No. No, the voice-activated system was tied in with that locator thing. So when that light went to Oval Office, then the mechanism was live in the Oval Office. If the President leaves the office and they forget the light, the thing is still live. If they move the light to another office, that cancels out the voice-activation part of it. And you can run in there and yell obscenities all day long and nothing would be picked up. So when he goes to the EOB office, it's off. Now when he's in the Cabinet Room we had to put a manual system in there. So we had a coffee thing down there where the President could press. It just meant if he's in a meeting in there and he wants a cup of coffee, that goes to the staff mess downstairs, the Executive Dining Room I should say, and they'd bring something up. Well I put two more buttons there; I had the Secret Service put two buttons there. We just put "H" for Haldeman and "A" for Butterfield. We all had these initials, and the President addressed us that way on paper often. Ehrlichman was "E" and Henry was "HAK" usually, H-A-K, or just "K," because I don't think we had another K. Anyway, I put those two there. And I forget which was on and which was off, it doesn't matter. But as the Cabinet secretary, I sat right behind the President anyway and off to the right one. So everybody would come in, Steve Bull would come in. The President of the United States -- he's announced even when he comes in to his own Cabinet Room. People have been milling around talking, so they all run back to their seats. And I stand up, it was a piece of cake, and I just turned it on. Now if I was not there and running late -- I didn't mean to stand up there. I'm off-camera there.

Timothy Naftali

That's all right.

Alexander Butterfield

Did I go --

Timothy Naftali

It was dramatic.

[laughter]

Alexander Butterfield

Well, it shows I'm out of the -- I'm letting myself go here. I had a button on my phone that did the same thing. I could activate the Cabinet Room tapes with a button on my phone. So there were two ways to do that. And sometimes I was running late, but I was supposed to be in there. I was the Cabinet secretary. And the one time when I couldn't I told Toni Sidley to hit that button.

Timothy Naftali

That's what you mentioned. When you were asked the direct question and gave a direct answer, did you have any sense of the consequences for the Nixon administration?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, pretty much. I think I mentioned to you, I really didn't think -- I thought I probably would be fired. I didn't think outright that moment. It would be too -- that would be ham-handed. But I hung on. There was a meeting in the White House about me after my -- a year later when I testified. I was the first of eight witnesses to testify before the House Judiciary Committee during its deliberations of impeachment. And I guess just by my manner -- not that famous Boston lawyer who came down here to be Nixon's lawyer --

Timothy Naftali

St. Claire?

Alexander Butterfield

St. Claire. Not due to him, because he didn't know me from Adam, but the people that he brought with him, young lawyers from the White House, I think by my body language and maybe tone, I didn't look like a loyal aide to the President in that session, I don't think. And I think they went back and reported that. And I know who -- a friend of mine at the White House told my PR guy, the FAA Public Affairs guy, Lou Churchville -- told Lou Churchville, "We had a meeting today; a number of agenda items in the staff mess, but one of them was about your boss," meaning me, Butterfield, "over at the FAA. And the decision was, you might want to let Alex know this, 'Get rid of Butterfield when the time is right.'" So at least I knew I was a target, but that was a year later. I didn't think I'd last that long. And then what I did resent a little bit is "when the time was right" turned out to be after a bad airplane crash on the first of December at Dulles; a TWA Flight 134, I think. Well, there may have been 134, it meant fatalities. I think that was about right for, I think it was a 727 coming out of Cleveland or some place in Ohio, just a morning flight. A lot of people coming in to Washington. And it was extremely bumpy; a lot of clear air turbulence. Well, the weather too, but just one of those terribly bumpy days. And the pilot was trying to get down low. Well, he's got charts and most of these accidents are either due to maintenance or pilot error, maintenance function -- malfunction or pilot error. And he led down below minimums. There are minimums that tell you you can only -- there are hills out there west of, not very high, but there are hills. And I think in his hurry to get down, and they were probably eating breakfast or had been eating breakfast and it was probably bedlam. Of course, that next bump they hit was everybody was immediately dead; you run into a mountain going whatever he was doing, 300 miles an hour. And there was a lot about that being the FAA's fault. That was clearly a pilot error accident, tragic as it was. So there was a lot about the incompetence of the administrator and the FAA and all of that stuff.

Timothy Naftali

You were talking about your immediate sense of the consequences for you, but I also wanted to know if you had a sense of the consequences for President Nixon -- for the Nixon administration, that the tapes were now known?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah. I think I said to someone, a guy named Bill Lilly. He's the one to whom I entrusted the \$350,000. I said, "I think that these tapes are going to be so -- you know, they're going to start

subpoenaing tapes." They have to. They will do that, and not just the special prosecutor, but Judge Sirica as well, and the Justice Department, everybody. And I just thought when they hear those tapes, I mean, I knew what was on these tapes. I mean, I didn't know everything, but you know, they're dynamite. I guess I didn't foresee that the President might be put out of office or impeached, but I thought it would be a perilous few years for him. Perilous. I mean, I thought, yeah, I guess I couldn't conceive of being forced out of office. That had never happened before. Forced out before the term is up? And he was in such -- he was in such clover, you know. He won the election by what he wanted to do. A lot of people wondered why he tried so hard to -- he was always trying to -- it wasn't to win the election. He knew he was going to beat McGovern in '72. It was to the record. He wanted it to be the biggest landslide ever. And the biggest Presidential landslide prior to that was LBJ's defeat of Goldwater, where LBJ just got something like -- it's funny the millions now -- something like 42 million to 23 or something. I forget what it was for Goldwater.

But he also won the electoral vote by a big margin. But Nixon won the electoral vote by a bigger margin and he won the popular vote by even more. Instead of 42 million, Nixon -- 45, he had 47 million -- it seems like nothing nowadays -- to McGovern's -- he had less than Goldwater. And the electoral was 512 or something to twenty-some, I forget. So Nixon achieved that goal. And now in just not many months later, not many months later, he is saddled with this thing. And I didn't like to be the cause of that. I felt I was in a lot of ways.

Timothy Naftali

But you told us at the very start of this interview that your opinion of the President had changed by this time.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, yeah, but it doesn't mean I --

Timothy Naftali

I'm not saying that -- I'm not implying there's not a causal --

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, it did.

Timothy Naftali

But your opinion changed.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, I saw him -- he was clearly not what I would call an honest man. But I thought, well, maybe that's politics.

Timothy Naftali

Well, you had observed another President.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, but I didn't observe him. I only observed him in a good light. I did. I didn't see Johnson talking to people or... I say, just to explain that. In the Dominican Republic thing, I know that he really was concerned about American citizens down there. He was chastised for overreacting, even by his own people, Fulbright and others. They were really down on him for sending the 101st, plus the -- whatever he sent. People falling out of the sky, too many people. We had something like -- well, I don't think we ever had more than 23,000 people down there, but it was a lot for what had happened down there in Santiago. Is that right, Santiago? Anyway.

Timothy Naftali

Santo Domingo.

Alexander Butterfield

Santo Domingo. But I was convinced from sitting in on all of those meetings with McNamara that they were concerned. They did think there could have been a Communist conspiracy as a part of it, and the lives of not only Americans but other foreign nationals down there. Because the embassy was actually being stoned and bullets were fired. But yeah, I liked old Johnson. Well, I liked him because he signed my thing, too. [laughter]

Timothy Naftali

But just to follow up. But with Nixon you felt there was a greater -- I don't want to put words in your mouth. But you were observing things that troubled you.

Alexander Butterfield

Mm-hmm. I said, "I thought he was a crook." I guess I said that later. "I'm not a crook," only because he said, "I'm not a crook." Yeah, he really was because -- well, then also I reviewed a lot of the tapes. If I was not a very good FAA administrator, I would point to the fact that I did that -- I was diverted from the job a lot because I was interrogated -- I was under 89 hours of interrogation, but sort of like this, in my office or someone's office. I did the FBI or, yeah, or the U.S. attorneys, the Justice Department. And went before two Grand Juries; one, because someone had doctored one of my memos. That's still something very few people know about, although it was brought before the attention of the Judiciary Committee, which didn't pick up on it.

Timothy Naftali

Doctored it?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

To make it out -- to make it seem --

Alexander Butterfield

To make it look as though I were in a questionable position relative to the law. Yeah, so that's why I had to meet a Grand Jury. And I just had to look them in the eye. You can't have counsel in a Grand Jury, so I'm in there saying, "You have to believe me. I had nothing to do with this." But finally I found the original. The original had been taken from my files. I first went to files in the White House, and all of my files were there except for this one, January of 1970. That whole month's files were missing. That's where this thing was, a January 9, 1970 memo of mine to Jeb Magruder. It's a long story; I won't go into it. And I think I know who it was, because I went to a guy named Horowitz, who was a head of one of the segments of the Special Prosecutor's Office. You know, some were looking at the President's taxes, some were looking at campaign activities, some were looking at dirty tricks. And I said, "Who was it that brought that memo to you?" And he told me the name of the guy that brought it over, and that he came alone that day, and that his only business was that memo. It was a memo doctored in about 13 different ways to make it appear that I was the one that essentially had been behind the bugging of the White House staff members, when Safire got bugged, you know, which he resents so deeply, which he should. And I think Kraft, the --

Timothy Naftali

Joseph Kraft.

Alexander Butterfield

Joseph Kraft, and a lot of others -- I think on the NSC staff, a number of guys. Oh, I can't think of any --

Timothy Naftali

Anthony Lake or Morton Halperin?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, Tony and Mort. And Halperin was the guy [unintelligible] It was Mort who sued me later for another reason. I called him once, and I know you're not supposed to do that. And I said, "Mort, it's me. I'm not on the other side; I'm on your side." And eventually I think he dropped that lawsuit. But that's just another one of those things. Someday that may come out. I'm tempted to put that in my book.

Timothy Naftali

Let me just ask you, did it come from the White House?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, oh sure. Yeah, well, I mean my files were at the White House.

Timothy Naftali

Well, I just want -- I assumed it.

Alexander Butterfield

And no, I guess I couldn't foresee what would happen to Nixon, but I knew it was going to be bad and I felt responsible. People were telling me I was responsible. Well, newspapers were telling me I was responsible. There were a few reporters out there that jumped on my side. And then that guy who used to run "Meet The Press", Larry -- little guy. He ran "Meet The Press" for many, many years, a very nice little guy. He liked me and we --

Timothy Naftali

Larry Spivak?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, Larry Spivak. Nice guy. He lived up at the Sheraton Hotel, had an apartment there. And I went by there and had dinner with him a lot and he counseled me a little bit in those days. But the -- so anyway, after the -- what do I want to say? Before the Judiciary Committee -- my appearance before -- that was 10 hours. I think we had a little lunch, but that was 10 hours behind closed doors, just the Judiciary Committee up there, all of those people that we remember. Those were really dramatic days when Barbara Jordan with her resonant voice was talking about the Constitution, and all of those people who were -- and people really, even this guy, Don Sanders, who asked me that question, he wrote very touching words in that "Journal of American History" about -- he said, "I was hesitant to even ask this question of Mr. Butterfield, thinking I didn't want to ask a question that might elicit an answer that would be of this great import. You know, the Presidency, people have this reverence." And the little guy who ran the Judiciary Committee, Rodino, he's mentioned about revering the Presidency.

You know, they all hated Nixon, the Democrats, but they revered the Presidency and they had this genuine sense of -- well, everyone knew history was being made then. They were deliberating the articles of impeachment. And finally, Cohen, Bill Cohen, who worked for Clinton as secretary of defense. He was one of the first Republicans who began to cave. Then about six followed. And then those six continued to vote against Nixon, but boy, there were a lot of guys there. Everybody was giving everybody dirty looks. But when I went before that committee, yeah, it's a big committee, so it was a long deal. And the guy who was the counsel, I forget his name now, he just disappeared into the mist. I used to know him a little bit when I worked for McNamara. He was working in the Civil Rights Division, in the Justice Department, I think. And Hillary Clinton, of course, was on that committee.

Timothy Naftali

Do you remember where you were when President Nixon announced his resignation?

Alexander Butterfield

Yes, oh, his resignation, the actual resignation? Or you mean when he gave that speech?

Timothy Naftali

Either one. Either one. What do you recall?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, I've said this before the camera before, and I'm sure Nixon-lovers hate me for it. But I could not understand the weeping. I could not understand it. But that was dramatic. Nixon is having so much trouble with that talk. I mean, it was agonizing to listen to him. And Pat is standing there, the whole family. Steve Bull put them on. You know, they have little places where they stand. And they're all very disciplined people. They come in and they know that Steve has a place for them and they're all standing up there in front of the White House staff for the President's last farewell to his staff, the people closest to him. I think I saw tears in Al Haig's eyes on the TV. So I don't want to say --
I just -- I felt totally different.

I was over in my FAA office with the TV on, cheering, cheering that justice had prevailed. That sounds corny, but justice had prevailed. I didn't think it would for a while. This guy was the ring leader. I think Ford probably went to his death thinking in his naive way that Haldeman and Ehrlichman were the guys that got his pal in trouble. I know that was Ford's mindset early on, I mean, even late on when he became President. Maybe later he got a little wiser. But it wasn't Haldeman and Ehrlichman and the dirty tricks guys; it was Nixon who was the architect of all of that cover-up, just as he was the architect of the wonderful things he did in the foreign affairs field.

Timothy Naftali

And why are you sure of that?

Alexander Butterfield

I'm absolutely positive he knew about the break-in before. Of course, I'm the only one that said that publicly. I said, White House aides are not loose cannons. They don't run around. They know better than anyone that anything they do reflects on the President. And White House aides aren't going to -- and plus, I was aware of Nixon's intense curiosity about Larry O'Brien, who was running the committee. And I have talked to John Dean many times about -- because Dean was, Dean was in those meetings when they had Liddy presenting his, his plans. And they were sending him back to the drawing board, not so much because of the details of the plans as they were for the money. Just bring it down a little bit. So, you know, he comes back with another plan. And I know through Colson that Colson was calling over to Magruder to get going on this damn thing, and I just put two and two together. Plus, I know all these people very well and I know Nixon. And then in the tapes, I have listened to the tapes. What I started to say is, all these hours I spent, 89 hours of interrogation, three --

two grand juries, but 40 hours of going over tapes that Judge Sirica had me do. So I'm down in the basement of the U.S. District Court building, listening to tapes. And sitting over there listening to tapes, too, for his own defense purposes is John Dean.

We have often talked about this. But at the end of the day Dean -- they don't manacle him but he gets in a car with agents and they go back to Fort Myer where he's in jail, you know. He's in house arrest at Fort Myer. He comes in every day and he's doing his thing. I'm listening to tapes for Sirica and they're billing me as this -- I don't know if I'm the first or not but it seems odd. I was a witness in the Sirica trial, the big Watergate trial. I was a witness for the prosecution because that's when I'm working for the special prosecutor, and I'm listening to these tapes for that purpose. And I could tell people's voices just like that. I knew all these guys. So if someone said, "oh, I think so," I knew that that was Ehrlichman and not someone else. And there was something like 110 errors on the tapes before I looked at them. Anyway, they billed me as this guy who was an expert on hearing or something. I had good hearing. And I'm sitting in the dock there as the witness for the prosecution and someone is going on about my acute hearing. I wasn't there for that purpose. And then they turn to me, the judge did and he said something to me and I was lost in thought. I shouldn't have been. I should have been paying attention. So I said, "What was, what was that?"

Right after this guy -- and the whole, the house came down so it made a light day of the trial. But I'm sure the guys in the -- the defendants weren't laughing. But Haldeman's wife came to me and asked me please to be a witness for him. Well, he was my friend and I was there because of him. Now, I had reason to -- I didn't have a falling out with Haldeman but I knew Haldeman probably a number of times throughout the first four years, later on, probably wasn't all that happy with me. Maybe, maybe that's my imagination. There was once a meeting of all people from California who were renowned in politics. I considered myself one of those. I wasn't invited to that meeting. I blame Haldeman for that, not that the meeting had anything to do with it. Although, when I went to leave, I wanted to leave the White House and Haldeman said, "The plan is for you to stay." And you know how Nixon is with other people. So the idea was that in the grand scheme of things, I was supposed to stay on in roughly the position I was in, just working closely with Nixon. But I did -- I did want to leave and I wrote out my choices. We all had to do that. Everybody in the administration had to write out. We called it "what I want to do when I grow up" letters. We had to give them to Haldeman.

Timothy Naftali

This was after the election of '72.

Alexander Butterfield

After the -- right after the election Haldeman and Ehrlichman were running everything. And so --

Timothy Naftali

What did you say to Mrs. Haldeman?

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, I said okay. She was my wife's best friend at UCLA. So -- so what I started to say, so this court case starts, Judge Sirica presiding. I'm a witness for the defense and a witness for the prosecution. How often does that happen?

Timothy Naftali

Now, were you supposed to report on what was -- what you heard on the tapes or were you just to verify the tapes or what -- they just had you testify as to the substance of the tapes?

Alexander Butterfield

I forget specifically what the special prosecutor's office wanted me to do. There were a number of errors. I think some of errors we brought out. I actually do forget the point. Her point was -- Jo Horton, Jo Horton, that was her maiden name. Jo Haldeman's point was to say what a nice guy her husband was. And I went to a lawyer about that just to get some advice, and the lawyer said, "When you -- when you speak for someone and recommend someone's character, you do it as that was the person you knew at the time you knew him," like if it's come up that he's been in trouble. It was a sporty course, sort of, but I was ready to speak well of Haldeman. But I never had to. I didn't have to because I'm in there, I'm in the dock for that purpose and the prosecutors stand up and say, "We don't want Mr. Butterfield to testify on Mr. Haldeman's behalf. And if" -- oh, this was done on a side-bar. "And if he does, if he proceeds, we will bring up" -- and what they were going to bring up is Haldeman and the President being involved with the law during the President's run for the governorship back in '62. There was some little reason that -- they had done something, and it wasn't a big case but they were involved and they'd just bring that up and talk about it. And the defense decided that that wouldn't be good. So they dismissed me. The judge turned to me and said, "You can step down." So I meant well and appeared for Jo, for her sake, and never did have to testify. I was actually relieved that I didn't. But I mean, Haldeman was as guilty as he can be about lying. I mean, everybody lied. Magruder said there was never any thought of not covering up. That's just the way it works. And that's an interesting thing for ethics classes.

Timothy Naftali

Did you -- I mean, you were peripheral to it, but did you notice in the -- did you notice after the break-in in the summer of '72 a tightening in the White House? Did you see any visible effect of this? I mean, you weren't listening to these conversations; you weren't part of them, but from your advantage point.

Alexander Butterfield

No, no, I didn't. I never did notice any of that stuff. And, you know, Dean would go in on various things. I knew Dean was reporting on -- I basically knew that Dean was -- his job was to contain the thing, keep it out of the White House. Keep it out of the White House.

Timothy Naftali

And did they ever come to you as the special fund that you had?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, one time. There was one thing from it, and yeah, I testified. That's all. That was sort of overtaken by more important events as it turned out. Yeah, Lilly [phonetic sp] was very proud. You know, if you go to a guy and say, "Would you like to" -- he's a good Republican. This guy was an ace in the Korean War, shot down seven Russians or North Koreans, a West Pointer, very good, good guy. The President -- we have this fund and we need to keep it handy because we're going to want to spend this money. And I told him, I think it's for polling, but no one told me. I even said to -- I said to Larry Higby, I said, "Does Haldeman want to know this guy's name?" He said, "No." He said Bob just said that I knew people -- he knew I knew people in the area, maybe more than others did because I had lived there before, years past. That you would have -- if you had someone who could take this money, put it in a safety deposit box and be handy to just make disbursements from it now and then. Maybe Larry even said it's for polling. But I got the idea that it was sort of for polling. So I said -- I went back a day later and I said, "I've got the guy. He's in town. You want to know his name?" "No." Nobody wanted to know his name. I mean, that -- he and I joked about that. \$350,000 was a lot of money. Still is but -- and those that we joked about it, we could just take off.

Timothy Naftali

I want to ask you as our last set of questions something that has nothing to do with Watergate, has to do with airport security. You were actually -- you had just come to the FAA --

Alexander Butterfield

When they started that.

Timothy Naftali

I want to ask you as our last set of questions something that has nothing to do with Watergate, it has to do with airport security. You were actually -- you had just come to the FAA --

Alexander Butterfield

When they started that.

Timothy Naftali

Could you tell us a little bit, a little bit about the effect of -- because for young people watching this who are -- you know, since 9/11 have seen a lot of airport security.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

You, you had just arrived when they put metal detectors in airports; is that right?

Alexander Butterfield

That's right. Well, and the credit goes to a lot of people, but my predecessor at the FAA, Jack Shaffer, now deceased, was the FAA administrator, I think, the very day it took off, which I think was January or February, '73. I came along in March. It had just, just moving along. But, I'll tell you an interesting statistic. I hope I get these figures right. If these figures aren't right, they're very close. The average hijacking attempts in the United States for five years -- five-year average for the five years prior after the implementation of that metal detection system was 17 attempts per month for five years. Imagine that. And successful something like nine or 12. I want to say 12. Maybe it was as low as nine. Successful hijackings per month. Multiply that by 12 and that's how many you have in a year, and they were all going to Cuba. They had a business down there in Cuba. They had guys that sold maps, you know, another hijacked plane. Someone would take people to lunch. They had a little tourist system. No, we'll get you back to the airport. We know the planes get released in about three hours. It was amazing. But that thing stopped everything dead, it really did. And the people who were the slowest to cooperate were Congressmen. Not all of them, not at all. I shouldn't even say Congressmen, but some Congressmen. They just felt too high and mighty for that. They didn't want to be bothered. You know, they're used to coming and going. And that -- that was a problem for the FAA because the FAA owned Dulles and National Airport in those days. And we had a lot of trouble with members of the Congress, or policemen, that was another story there. One of our policemen had to wrestle a Congressman to the ground and I got in a lot of trouble. I went before the Congress on that one. But the same guy. Ohio Congressman.

Timothy Naftali

Wayne?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, I think --

Timothy Naftali

Wayne Hays?

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, I think Wayne Hays.

Timothy Naftali

He had a gun? He brought a gun with him?

Alexander Butterfield

No, one of the Congressmen didn't want to be stopped for traffic by an -- those are all FAA policemen out there at National Airport. So he nudged the policeman. The policeman is in the middle of the road directing traffic, and he turns around and tells these people to stop. This Congressman was the first car here. He moves forward as if to let it be known that he was impatient and moved his

bumper right up against the legs of the policeman. The policeman, as this turns out, ends up being a black guy who had been shot in the neck, wounded in Vietnam. He had all the credits that you would want him to have. But he went over and asked to see the guy's driver's license and he wouldn't show it to him. So the policeman opened the door and said, "I'm going to ask you to step out." And they started to fight. There was an FBI guy there who witnessed the whole thing. But of course, they called me up to the -- he was -- this guy was the chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, I think.

And they gave me holy hell. They treated me like I was a Communist spy -- me -- because I was the boss of this guy. Of course, when it came out that he was a Vietnam vet and was black and a few other things that made the Congressman look bad, too. The Congressman needed a comeuppance and I don't know if he ever got one. But I got some credit from Washington. I did a thorough investigation of our police and their pay was low and there were a lot of things that needed to be done and we cleaned out the police -- this guy, though, lost his job, not while I was there. As soon as I left, they fired that guy. But I did stick up for him.

Timothy Naftali

How concerned in that period were you with international terrorism?

Alexander Butterfield

Well, they were still -- they had a couple of -- they had a couple of hijackings but they were international. I was concerned. And I spoke overseas. I have talked all over the world about that, now that I think about it, New Zealand, Amsterdam, every place, London, before the "Times of London" staff and all of that sort of thing. So I was very involved in that. And it took a while for it to catch on. Look how it's grown. I think of that often now when I go through. Everybody is just -- what else is new today? People just submit. No one seems to be giving these people a hard time. Of course, they have improved it a great deal in the last couple of years, since 9/11, I guess. But I don't -- if you're asking for something substantive on aviation security, I can't think of anything. I used to go up -- I do think it's important to mention that big international aviation -- now I forget the name of it.

Timothy Naftali

It's the ICAO.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah, ICAO, I-C-A-O, International Civil Aviation Organization, which is headquartered in Montreal. And they sit around just like at the U.N. And some of their people are the rank of ambassador, and others are ministers. Most of them are ministerial level. And they have got a secretary general, and that's where decisions are made relative to civil aviation safety, noise standards and that type of thing. We would always up it a little bit. Well, we could bring -- we'll bring some T-28s over. T-28 is a trainer over here but more sophisticated to them, better than a T-6 or an SNJ. So we brought T-6s over. Then the next thing, well, we'll put our pilots in the back seat. No, no, but our guys won't do any of the flying. Then the next, well, we'll have a fighter squadron come over and just be here to hit certain targets, and we'd bring the 510th Fighter Squadron from Clark Field over. And, you know, I can see that happening. And we're at constant escalation. So I was so against this Iraq war. I was absolutely

dumb -- dumbfounded when I heard we were -- I read in the paper or heard on the evening news we were going into Iraq to march on Baghdad, and I said -- and I think that's prescient.

We will be there 20 years. We will never get out of there. How do you get out of there? And do we think these guys are a pushover? They hate us with an intensity greater than the North Vietnamese because you've got the religious element to add to it. And I just read -- you only have to read two books about the Middle East, any two books about the Middle East to know that the fundamentalists over there resent our society, our way of life, and they hate us. And it's an honor to kill guys like us. Do they -- I couldn't believe that Cheney, and I knew Cheney so well, and Rummy, I knew those guys. They were my good friends. I didn't know the President at all. And I don't know Wolfowitz at all, but I thought who, who -- how could you do this? And I said, any panel, to myself, any panel, historians, former ambassadors of Middle East countries, former desk officers, former anybody, anything would say, "my God, don't do that, that's, that's the kiss of death." Invade an Arab country? And I didn't even like the fact that we were pre-emptive. We hadn't done that in our history that I knew of. And torture, when I was in that reconnaissance thing, we went through some courses and I learned in those courses, we all did, what certain countries do, how far they'll go to torture you. Some just humiliate you but they do bad things. That's not on, is it?

Male Speaker

Yes.

Alexander Butterfield

It's on now?

Male Speaker

Do you want me to stop? Any time the red light is on.

Alexander Butterfield

I used to claim --

Male Speaker

[unintelligible] that question.

Timothy Naftali

I was just asking about how it was when Rumsfeld was chief of staff in the Ford administration.

Alexander Butterfield

Well, of course, that's -- I was fired by Ford. I used to think, I really did believe this, that Ford didn't know me well enough to fire me, and basically I was doing a pretty good job in terms of the safety

thing. I knew that from various people. But of course, you have to be pleasing the right people. And I knew that I had not endeared myself to Richard Nixon, who was now in San Clemente, or to a lot of people on his staff, and I knew there had been this meeting down in the staff mess about getting rid of me and it happened on December 1st of '74, shortly after Nixon resigned. And so Rummy, I knew -- Rummy, I saw Rummy all the time in the Nixon White House and I knew Cheney as a guy who worked for Rummy. First, we put Rummy in charge of the OEO, Office of Economic Opportunity, and Cheney, Cheney is a nice guy and a very sharp guy but in those days he was young and he was the coffee guy, essentially the coffee guy. He got Rummy's coffee. Of course, you can make a funny story out of that today because he's this tiger of a Vice President. But that's what he did for Rumsfeld. And then when Rumsfeld became a counselor, Cheney came over from OEO to the White House, was in the White House.

And then later when Ford -- and then Rumsfeld leaves and goes to be a NATO ambassador, misses all of Watergate and comes back and gets hired by Ford, his old pal from the Hill because Rummy had been a Congressman pal, to come and be his White House chief of staff. By now I think they're calling it the chief of staff but I don't know even then if it's -- I should have learned that from Rumsfeld if that was an official title. And I always said, just kidding, that when Rumsfeld decided he wanted to go over and be secretary of defense and left, Ford, not paying much attention and not knowing what a deputy is, not knowing a deputy from an assistant or a staff assistant, just elevated Cheney without giving too much thought to it. Now, that's probably not fair to Cheney. He probably saw in Cheney a really sharp guy and even though he knew Cheney by virtue of his youth, and I want to say youth and inexperience, which I guess that's a Reagan line, isn't it, that he used with Mondale. He -- he put Cheney in there. So Cheney was this young guy, suddenly the White House chief of staff. But it was Rummy who called me and said, "The President wants you to resign," and, you know, wants to put his own guy in there. So I said, when? How long do you think I can drag this out? I didn't say that but that's what I meant. And he said, "Right away." This was before Christmas now of '75.

Timothy Naftali

'74.

Alexander Butterfield

No.

Timothy Naftali

'75.

Alexander Butterfield

Before Christmas of '75 -- of '74, you're right. Now we're about to go into '75. So then he called back and said, "Don't do anything yet. We're -- we're going to Vail, don't do anything yet." Something had come up. I don't know what it was. So I went over to find out what that thing was and Rummy wasn't there but Cheney was and I had a talk with Dick. I knew Dick very well. And Dick said, "Look, here's what we'll do. We're going to Vail. Let's drop -- just drop the whole thing. Forget it. Forget what we told you. When we come back we'll pick it up and -- but you might be looking -- you might be having to leave this spring." So I did. I went about my thing. Now I'm out in Denver and it's about February,

so I know the shoe is going to drop sometime. And I got a call from -- it's late February. I got a call from Rumsfeld. He said, "Now. Go now." I don't know what had come up or what prompted it but Ford decided he wanted me -- now, I had sort of a spy there. The new Steve Bull was General Rosie O'Donnell's youngest son, Terry O'Donnell, who was later, after he -- he later went with Edward Bennett Williams Law Firm.

But he was, he was general counsel for defense after this. You know, what a little celebrity status will do for you, you get put in some pretty big positions. So I think of Terry as this very young guy. I got Terry. I hired him to -- I told Haldeman, this will be the perfect guy to take Steve's place. As Steve gets elevated this is the perfect staff assistant. Clean cut looking guy, nice looking. And I don't know where he went to school. Went to a good school, all that stuff. And Pat O'Donnell is his older brother. Those are two sons of General Rosie O'Donnell, who was my -- practically my best friend. He was like another father to me, O'Donnell was. So, so Terry gets in there doing the Steve Bull job for the new President Ford. And right away he gets shot at twice, you know. He called me and said, "Thank you for this new job that you got me." But he had to duck like Ford had to duck. It was Squeaky Fromme and then that other woman whose name I don't recall. So --

Timothy Naftali

[Unintelligible]

Alexander Butterfield

So Terry heard some things in there and he said -- he gave me a few tips. And so I had to write a letter. And I wrote a letter. And I didn't put a smart-ass thing in there but I said something in my letter that I knew better than to include. I had a little run-in with Ford, very small, back when I was FAA administrator and Ford was the minority leader in the House. I guess that's what he was. He wasn't the Vice President yet. I'm running a regulatory agency in a way. I mean, we prosecute people who violate Federal air regulations. So we had a guy that -- my regional director, our regional director in the Great Lakes region, a big region, covers Chicago, headquartered in Chicago, said we had given this guy every chance to come into compliance with these rules and he was running sort of an executive charter business, executive jets. It wasn't executive jet. There is such a company, wasn't there? And so Ford called me one day. He's just Congressman Ford calling me knowing I had been at the White House. He didn't know me from Adam. Like Baker, he had seen me probably at some leadership meetings but I didn't go to all of them. I wasn't part of the legislative staff. But he knows I'm a guy from the Nixon White House so he calls me over and he said, "We're meeting in Tip O'Neill's office." Well, Tip is the Speaker. We're meeting in his office. They're going to impress me with that and Tip is a senior guy. But I'm, in my own right, a part of the executive branch. I don't have to do what these guys say. I never felt that way. But I go over there. I didn't know what -- well, I learned what it was about so I brought the general counsel, FAA general counsel with me, and I sent for the region director. He came in from great -- from the Great Lakes region.

Timothy Naftali

Uh-huh.

Alexander Butterfield

And I was briefed on the thing and how many chances we had given these people to comply, so I went in there and that's what it was about. And there was a little glad-handing and good talk at first. Then I said, now, Mr. -- and the guy was there. Mr. So-and-so was there, the donor, but he was a -- he was, he was a generous donor to, I think, mostly Democrat coffers. And I think Jerry was being used a little bit by the Speaker to get me to come down there. So I just said, you know, it was easy for me. I said, well, I'm all -- I hope, you know, you're going to go before -- you're going to get to air your case in court. And if you prevail, fine, more power to you because we -- you have, you have then -- that's good, and so I hope you win that case. I mean, it would be good if you did. But meanwhile, I'm told by -- I can almost remember this guy's name. He was a really good regional director, a young guy, Polish guy, and tough but good, savvy -- that he's given your company every chance to comply, and so forth and my general counsel here says such and such. So I said, it's really out of our hands. I can't do that.

They were asking me to do what politicians do. Now, if I had been a good old boy and a good -- and I know that Ford said to Rummy -- Rummy said, "What's this about?" And I had some little reference to that in there but it was -- I thought it was very subtle but maybe it wasn't quite so subtle. Ford got it. And Rummy said -- Rummy is saying what -- "Why did Butterfield include this?" He showed it to Ford because he didn't understand it. And he was so palsy-walsy with Ford. Normally he wouldn't take something like that into a President. And he said, oh, we just -- we had a misunderstanding or something. So Rummy never got the story. But the story is I was being asked to, you know, turn my back on a violator of the Federal regulation. You could do it easily. I mean, it's just like these things go on every day, but I was -- so I always had that in my own mind about Ford. I know Ford is a nice man. I know that. But he -- he had been a politician long -- this was nothing for Ford. I'm sure he did this kind of thing every day. Guys do. And I thought I could see Nixon probably that -- so you're always putting on another face for the voter when you're in Congress. And if I remember one thing about the Nixon White House it was that we were always saying if I had to think -- what is the one thing you remember most? It was always -- it was our saying this: "Well, look, we could always say that --" We said that all the time. Well, look, we could always say that -- it was usually national security, but we were always looking for a cover because of the true story. And it might not have been anything terrible to come out and admit but that's politics.

So you get so used to doing that, so used to telling the voter that you're going to do thus and so, so used to getting your picture taken. You'd go in to be testifying before Byrd's committee and Byrd would have you in and glad hand you and get the picture taken that goes back to his voters there. I had the FAA administrator in here and I gave him a piece of my mind so we're going to get a new, you know, a new tower in such and such a field and six new slots for the -- that's the way -- you know, a trade. And we did trade. We did trade. We traded with, with Byrd before -- in our budget committee. You always had that. They came and briefed me. They said, this is what you do at budget time. You know, we give them a few slots here, a few more parking places. The FAA gets a few more --

Timothy Naftali

Do you think that this experience with Ford is what, what led to your --

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, I don't think so, no. I think it was more a deep-seated incomprehension. You know, when they went up there, Haig went up to the hospital, Nixon was in the hospital with his pneumonia, and I think his phlebitis had reared up or something. Maybe not. Maybe it was just pneumonia. And Haig has written that the President said, "What the hell do you think possessed Butterfield? Why would Butterfield have done this?" And Haig said, by his own admission in this article I read in the paper or book, "I don't think he understood the import of it." Well, that I did understand. I certainly understood the import of the damn thing. It was just -- it was as straightforward as what I just told you. I thought I held out pretty well for four hours but when they asked a direct question, yeah, I caved. Cave if you want to call it cave or -- and, as I finally admitted to David Thelen, he drug me out of this. I didn't even realize it. This was a subconscious feeling. I was relieved. I had never said that before.

I talked to him. In fact, it was months later I wrote him and I said, "You know, I did have another feeling when I gave those guys that information that Friday afternoon, the 13th of July of 1973, before that" -- once I gave that out I knew there would be hell to pay, but I was glad it was out.

Timothy Naftali

That's why I asked you the effect of your changing opinion of the President. At a certain point you were unhappy in the White House. You had seen this change. That's why I probed you.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

That might have -- I wondered if that had played a role in your relief.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah. I don't like to think that I did it because of that, you know. But I thought, yeah, this is out, needs to be out. Let the chips fall where they may. If the President can escape, great. But you read those -- I got talking about the tapes, all the tapes I had listened to, 40 hours of tapes. And John Dean knows this thing better than I but not many people know it that much better than I. You read those tapes about not even blanching when you talk about fire bombing the Brookings Institute or breaking in to something. Once he said, "I don't care what it takes. Goddamnit, get a copy of the" -- whatever it was he wanted. Break into the safe, do whatever you have to do. Nixon was a tough guy. That's the way he -- he was a tough guy. And he did play hardball as a part of running the security office, which I didn't really run it. Trudy Brown ran it and then Jane Denenour [phonetic sp] after Trudy. But we vetted people, Presidential appointees, and she'd come to me with these. So everybody had to be approved, not by Trudy, it had to be approved by me. So a lot of them were kind of blanket approvals. But there was this guy who was trying to be an appointee, been the governor of West Virginia. So the secret is out now. I do not know his name. I truly -- he had a record as long as your arm. To me it was bad. So I was wrestling with -- and I think Lynn Nofziger or someone who was steeped in political know-how said, "Oh, yeah, Nixon knows that guy." He's a good guy or something. So I went in, and I

was just talking to Nixon. Well, I didn't go in with this. For some reason I was in there and I said, "Oh, there's a guy and I have been sitting on this for too long and I want to ask you. So-and-so is up for a certain position on some board or something." It probably wasn't a serious position. And I said, "I got to show you his record." So I went in my office and got it and brought it back and showed Nixon this guy's record. Nixon read it and said, "Oh, no, he's fine. No, he's fine. He's good." I said, "Then I'll approve it?" "Oh, yeah, yeah." He didn't even -- I wanted to say, "Are you reading what I'm reading here?" [laughter] I mean, it was that bad. But just different.

Timothy Naftali

We're going to have an exhibit on the tapes. Could you tell us why the tapes were sound activated? Was there a reason why they were sound activated?

Alexander Butterfield

Why they were voice activated?

Timothy Naftali

They're actually sound activated.

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, well, they are, sound activated. Yeah, that's right. If you bang on it --

Timothy Naftali

Yeah.

Alexander Butterfield

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

Why were they sound -- why were they automatic like that?

Alexander Butterfield

Because Al Wong decided to, I guess. I left it all to Al Wong. I didn't give him any marching orders except I intimated, if I didn't spell it out very clearly, we didn't want a cheesy thing in there. Now, you're telling me these things are little ten cent --

Timothy Naftali

Well, I don't know how much they cost.

Alexander Butterfield

Tapes. But no, we wanted something reliable. I think that was imparted to him. Something dependable. This is for the President of the United States. You don't go buy something -- and I didn't know it was going to be elaborate. In fact, when he took me through that afternoon and showed me that, I was amazed. And then I did that to the President. And with the President you had to -- you just had to make him do it because he would never do that. Nixon would never want to go see that. But I went in there that next day when he came home and I said, oh, incidentally. He knew. I said, a taping system that he did see, that embarrasses him. He probably started doing this. He wouldn't want to discuss that, you know, with me that he had ordered a taping system. He's that kind of a guy. And I knew that but I had -- I said, "The taping system is in place and I would like to show you a little bit about it, some things you need to know," with emphasis on need to know. You had to sort of say that to him and guide him.

Like getting him to make phone calls. He knew he should make them, but the kind of phone calls we reserved it for Saturday morning usually, to call the little third grade school teacher in Des Moines, Iowa, or Duluth, Minnesota, who had taken her class to the museum or something, gets a call from the President. That gets in all the papers in Duluth and St. Paul and Hibbing, every place. So -- but to get him to do it you had to go in there and practically put the phone in his hand. Look, I'll dial the number for you. We had to treat him like a little boy. "Now, look, we'll dial the phone for you. Now, this is the first one. This is the school teacher. Her name is Ms. Nancy," or whatever the hell it is. Because he just -- and then he would be on, he'd do fine. He'd just do fine. He's just stubborn. So I said, "I'll come in here later in the day and we'll walk through it." And I did that. And I walked him through. But he was just like -- I said, "Now, here in the desk are these things." I showed him where they were on the lamps. I told him everything Wong told me except I didn't take him down and show him all that stuff downstairs. He wouldn't have understood that anyway. And I said, in the Cabinet Room -- we didn't go in the Cabinet Room. He's not even nodding. He's sort of looking down.

Timothy Naftali

I just asked if President Nixon ever told you why he ordered the taping system put in.

Alexander Butterfield

Oh, no, no, never discussed them with me.