

## **John W. “Bill” Roberts Papers, 1973-77**

### **Oral Diary, July 24-September 12, 1974**

In 1991, Bill Roberts donated to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library 14 linear feet of papers covering his work as an assistant press secretary to Gerald R. Ford during both the vice presidency and presidency.

The collection includes Roberts's personal observations and recollections, which he tape-recorded every few days during July, August, and September 1974. These recollections, on four audio cassettes, provide insight into the last days of the Ford vice presidency, the transition to the presidency, and the persons and personalities involved in the events.

The diary begins and ends abruptly, and it is sporadic. It covers only this brief period in time and is not part of a more complete diary. The Ford Library created the transcript that appears on succeeding pages of this document.

**July 24, 1974**  
**Wednesday**

I'm starting this recording on July 24th. On the morning of July 24th, the Supreme Court, 8-0, ordered the President to surrender the tapes.

The Vice President heard about this shortly after the Court decision was made public and decided that he wouldn't say anything as far as the press was concerned until or unless the President made some sort of response. We had quite a problem in fending off the press inquiries which were coming in at a great rate.

The complicating factor was that CBS that day had chosen and been given the chance to follow the Vice President wherever he went, photograph him, and do a day in the life of the Vice President. Phil Jones and the CBS crew were following him wherever he went. At the time the Court decision came through the Vice President was in his office. Luckily, the CBS crew was at the Capitol awaiting the Vice President's arrival at his Capitol office.

Just before the decision came out, a problem had arisen in that Dean Burch wanted to talk to the Vice President. But with the CBS crew around, the Chief of Staff, Bob Hartmann, didn't want the CBS crew to know that Burch was going in to see the Vice President. I was given the job of getting the CBS crew out of the way before Burch arrived. Luckily, I was able to do it without any serious problems involved because they wanted to get over to the Capitol to catch the Vice President as he came in, and had filmed the Vice President in his office just before Burch was to arrive. We got the crew out and left without anyone knowing that Burch came in to see the Vice President.

A similar problem arose on the Hill where the first meeting the Vice President had was with Minority Leader John Rhodes, Mel Laird and Al Quie, presumably to discuss impeachment, although I really don't know what the meeting was about. Rhodes wanted it to be kept very secret.

As it turned out, the Vice President had told Jones that meeting was to take place and persuaded Phil not to film the meeting. But Phil knew that the meeting had taken place. All I could do was say, "I don't know anything about it," which I didn't, and "I couldn't confirm who was there because I didn't know," which I didn't, except that it was in Rhodes' office. I let it go at that. When the Vice President got over to the Capitol, had his meeting with Rhodes and came back, I went up into the Senate Radio-TV Gallery to get Jones to tell them that the Vice President was on his way back. I was immediately hit by everybody in the gallery for a film with the Vice President and had to stave off their demands because the Vice President said he didn't want to say anything. When we got through with the filming in the Capitol, the Vice President then went to a luncheon with the *Washington Post* editors, Katherine Graham, and all the top *Washington Post* people. Luckily, that was designated as off the record before it began so there was no problem with that as far as the Supreme Court decision was concerned. During the afternoon we

had more and more inquiries from the press but no real problems in staving them off.

Just before the Vice President went to his home that evening, he got a call from Al Haig telling him what the attorney for the President, James St. Clair, was going to say in response to the Supreme Court decision. When he got back to his residence, CBS wanted to do a little piece on his reaction to the announcement that the President was going to surrender the sixty-four tapes subpoenaed. Paul wrote the statement and called ABC and NBC and had them go out there too. The only problem was he forgot to tell me that he was issuing this statement so I had a couple of calls at home before I knew the statement was issued. It was a little embarrassing. I called Paul and we had a small go-around on that. The day ended with that development at which point the House Judiciary Committee was in the process of starting its hearings on the impeachment--the public hearings with full television and radio broadcasts. I stayed up quite late to see what was happening in those hearings.

During the day one interesting thing happened when I was in Bob Hartmann's office. We were talking about the various developments of the day and Hartmann said, "Well, it looks to me now as though it's just a question of time"--meaning time before Vice President Ford became President--and insisted that we get as many newsmen on the plane going out to Muncie, Indiana the next day as we could. This meant we had to bump three Secret Service men in order to get four additional newsmen on the plane, which we did. From now on the policy is that we'll take a minimum of Secret Service and a maximum of newsmen. To me that was as significant as anything else that happened during the day.

In the contacts I had with the Vice President all day, we never discussed the subject at all except in relation to the problem that the newsmen might ask questions. The only thing he said was, "I don't want to comment in any way on this" and repeated it very firmly, until he had word as to what the White House was going to do.

One interesting thing happened during the afternoon. The Vice President went up to talk to a group of Future Farmers of America. We laid down a rule at the beginning that there would be no questions after his appearance. Ordinarily he takes questions. In light of the circumstances we decided that there would be no questions. The Vice President was very insistent that there would be no questions. However, when he went up he told Paul Miltich on the way to the meeting that he wasn't sure what he'd say. But he got up before the group and gave a little ten minute speech, a very appealing, I thought, speech to the group concerning the necessity for faith in the United States. He explained why he thought everyone should have faith in the United States and did it on the basis of what other countries thought about the United States and why they held the United States in such high regard, as demonstrated in various things including the reliance on the United States in the Middle East crisis and in the Cyprus crisis. I thought it was very effective. In all that, no mention of what was going on. The Vice President never mentioned Mr. Nixon by name, but did talk about the President of the United States and

his efforts. But [he] never mentioned Mr. Nixon by name.

The mention by Hartmann that it was just a question of time is the first time in the nearly eight months I've been on the staff that I've heard anybody say anything indirectly or directly that would indicate that there's any thought about a change taking place. The first time.

**July 25, 1974**  
**Thursday**

This is the report for Thursday, July 25, a rather quiet day in the office. The Vice President left in the middle of the afternoon to go on his three day swing through Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. We didn't have many phone calls today surprisingly.

I forgot to mention yesterday that at the end of the day Walter Mote, who is in charge of the Capitol Hill office, called to inquire as to what we'd heard about the Vice President or the President. He said there were all kinds of wild rumors floating around on Capitol Hill, which is typical of Capitol Hill in that sort of a situation. He was surprised really that we hadn't had more phone calls or more rumors than we had, and we hadn't had many. He said all kinds of stories were going around over there. Today we got very little. The only sort of stories we got were one from a newspaper in New York which had heard or manufactured a report that the Vice President had offered one of the members of the House Judiciary Committee who is retiring, a Republican by the name of Smith, a job on his staff. I have approached Mr. Hartmann and the Vice President and neither of them said they'd heard anything about it, so we denied the story. But it spread from the New York newspaper--the little newspaper in Tonawanda, New York--to the two Buffalo papers, the Gannett papers. The implication being that the position on the staff had been offered Mr. Smith in order to purchase a favorable vote against impeachment.

I also had a call from the *Congressional Quarterly* with great speculation as to what the Vice President was going to do to uphold the President in lobbying against an impeachment vote. I simply went to great lengths to explain that the Vice President was not going to lobby. He was not going to seek out people. He would talk to people if they came to him but that he was not going to play an active role. The *Congressional Quarterly* didn't exactly believe that from the way the reporter kept pushing questions at me. I tried my best to convince him but never really did succeed, I don't think.

Outside of that, very little in action. The Vice President was busy most of the day in ceremonial duties and greeting various people. I sat in on one of the ceremonial deals where he greeted a nineteen year old black kid from Riverside, California who was named either the, or one of the outstanding teenagers in America for the year, and who was a Democrat. It was rather interesting. The Vice President was very good in this one-to-one conversation and encouraged the young guy to speak out. The young guy was pretty gentle for a Democrat and after it was all over exclaimed in considerable surprise as to what a nice guy the Vice President was. It struck me that it's too bad the Vice President can't sit down and talk with everybody in a one-on-one or in a small group situation because that's where he's at his best--very warm, very friendly and very interested in other people. He really comes through beautifully in a situation like that.

One of the newsman who called during the day was Bill McGaffin of the *Daily News* wanting to know where the room the Vice President maintains on the House side

was located so that he could look at it and see where the Vice President was going to do his lobbying with members of the House. I told him there won't be any lobbying and said I had to check where the room was because I honestly didn't know exactly where it was myself. [I] talked to Hartmann, who talked to the Vice President, and then called McGaffin himself and told him where the room was. I also told him it wasn't going to be used for lobbying and that if McGaffin wanted to take a look at it, we'd be glad to show it to him. We'll see what McGaffin puts into the *Daily News*.

One other piece came out today in the *Chicago Tribune* about the staff. We've had a lot of articles in the past couple of weeks about the staff, most of them uncomplimentary. This one was not very kindly toward Paul Miltich. It was by a guy on the *Chicago Tribune* who said that there had been some unfavorable articles about the staff. It named particularly Miltich and said that he rated a C-minus as far as the press on the plane that went to Grand Rapids was concerned. This disturbed Paul considerably but I don't think it really bothers him too much because the Vice President's told him that Paul's doing a good job and that's the big thing. Paul's right in thinking that. We'll see how many other articles will be coming out in the near future.

**July 26, 1974**  
**Friday**

It was a quiet day at the office today except for phone calls complaining about the Vice President's statement in Indiana the previous evening in which he said that he believed from the bottom of his heart in the Vice President's [the President's] complete innocence. This caused some consternation among some of the staff members including myself, Jack Marsh, Milt Friedman and others who could not quite understand why the Vice President had gone much farther in his defense of the President, and made it much stronger than he had before. We had somewhere around twenty phone calls complaining about the Vice President's statement and three which defended him. Not really much of a representative indication but it's the first time in several weeks that we've had any phone calls at all, of which I'd been aware, regarding the Vice President's statements. It'll be interesting to find out where and how and why the Vice President decided to say what he did say at the time he said it.

I did spend about an hour this afternoon watching the House Committee Hearings and was impressed greatly with the demonstrated ability, knowledge, and articulate expression of views of the members of the Committee. It was very obvious they had done their homework extremely well and were arguing their various points with considerable knowledge compared to what the Senate Committee does. It seems to me that the House has demonstrated once again what anyone who's covered Congress realizes very quickly, that it really is the House side that does its homework, knows what's going on, and is able to formulate ideas, legislation and in this case, impeachment charges and arguments against impeachment--far better than the Senate, which does not have time. The individual Senators do not have time to prepare their arguments. This represents a tremendous amount of work on the part of the members of the Committee and each member of the Committee of Thirty-eight seems to have an extremely good grasp of what's going on and of the information involved. [It's a] very impressive thing to watch.

**August 8, 1974**  
**Thursday**

This was the day where the thing that everyone had expected, but I hadn't really-- actually did happen. I had been called back from vacation. I left on Wednesday afternoon, and got back last night, with everybody assuming that the resignation was at hand but no serious indication. At the office in the early morning hours from 8:00 on, we were saying, and meaning it, that the Vice President still intended to take his trip to California, an eleven or twelve day trip. That he was going to leave that afternoon. At about 9:00, we got word that the departure was delayed until late that evening or early the next day. Perhaps that might have been a cue but those of us in the office certainly didn't recognize it as such.

At 10:00, the Vice President went over to the Blair House for a presentation ceremony in which he presented Congressional Medals of Honor to seven families posthumously. When he came back there was a call for him to go to the White House and meet the President. He left the office a little after 11:00. Before he had left the office the wires had the story that he was being invited to the [Oval] Office. The phones then started to ring and they didn't stop until 11:00 at night.

As soon as he came back things started happening in the office. In addition to the flood of phone calls, we got word that the trip to California was being canceled. The word was passed that things would be happening, but we didn't know when. At 2:00, the Vice President called in his staff--about 25 people, so-called senior staff, including myself--and gave a little five minute talk in which he thanked the staff for its long hours and hard work and asked the staff to bear with him while the transition was being made. He said he hoped it would be, and thought it would be, smooth. There was no promise however that those in their present positions would continue in their present positions. Later that afternoon Paul Miltich and I got a considerable jolt when we were told by the Vice President that Jerry terHorst, the chief of the Washington Bureau for the *Detroit Free Press*--or the *Detroit News*, not the *Free Press*--was being taken on the staff on a temporary basis as the liaison man to assist in the transition with the White House Press Office. Paul said that he didn't quite understand and the Vice President didn't make it any clearer than that. Dan Rather later came on CBS and said that terHorst would be the new press secretary. My guess is that's exactly what will happen. What will happen to Paul and myself, we don't know. This may be the end of the recollections.

However, the Vice President also discussed in some detail the plans he had for the swearing-in ceremony, which it turned out were considerably changed later on because of the number of guests that were being invited to the ceremony. It had originally been scheduled for the Oval Office or the Rose Garden, but when the number of guests became known it was switched to the East Room, and at least as of 11:00 tonight, that's where it will be held at noon tomorrow.



The Vice President also said he wanted to make a statement after the President made his resignation speech. Paul and I had drafted a paragraph and the Vice President asked to see it, but when he made his appearance he really hadn't used any of it and spoke off the cuff, really. Outside of having answered conservatively at least 200 phone calls, if not more, personally, during the day, and if my voice sounds a little gravelly tonight, that's why. Outside of that we had about ten minutes with the Vice President and that was the only time we saw him all day. He had some dark circles under his eyes and it looked as though he hadn't slept very much. But he also was very calm and very serious and very intent on what he was doing. Whatever happens to me, I have great confidence in him. I think he'll make a good President simply because he does have confidence in himself, which is one of the great things Richard Nixon lacked and which I think a President needs above all. We will see what happens. Perhaps we'll continue this and perhaps we may not.

Just before I came home I had a call from Sandy Sokolow, who is managing the pool for the networks concerning the swearing-in ceremony. He said that he'd had word from Ziegler that he should clear everything with Jerry terHorst and I gave him Jerry terHorst's office and home phone number. Sokolow wanted to know some details about the ceremony. I called Bob Hartmann when I couldn't get hold of terHorst. Hartmann said, "The Michigan mafia is taking over. Let them run it." So my feeling is that the appointment of terHorst was Bill Seidman's appointment, that terHorst indeed will be press secretary, and that Seidman obviously has growing influence with the Vice President and that Hartmann is moving farther into the background. What will happen from now on will be very interesting. We'll see. It's a whole new ball game, and not at all the ball game that I figured it would be. We shall see what happens tomorrow and then on.

**August 9, 1974**  
**Friday**

I'm hoarse from answering so many telephone calls. It's now midnight of August 9th, the day that it all happened. I hope I can get it all on tape, at least as much of it as is significant.

It all started out pretty calmly, as a matter of fact, almost routinely. The Vice President had a meeting with Secretary of State Kissinger shortly after he got into the office about 8:15. I had a tape to record, that the Vice President wants to record, for the participants in a new housing project that was being dedicated in Watts in Los Angeles. This was what he was supposed to visit on his California trip that had been canceled by the events of the previous day. It was a very uncertain beginning for me because I seriously at that time believed that my future was very uncertain. Nevertheless, I went ahead with the routine with a sort of facade of gaiety, I guess. I hope I had a good facade, but I was really considerably concerned and uncertain. Let's put it that way.

I made a tentative agreement with the Vice President the day before to record this thing at 9:00. We got it set up with the audiovisual people and the White House staff. They brought up their recorder and were set up and ready to go at 9:00. I notified the Vice President that it was time. He said, "Well, let's go to 9:15," which was cutting it pretty close because he had to be over at the White House on the South lawn before 10:00 to see the President off. The timing was the President would board the plane at 10:00, take off, and while he was in the air on the way to Los Angeles, San Clemente, the change in command would take place. The Vice President came out a little late, it was about 9:30 before he finally broke clear. It allowed me to have several minutes in the office before he decided to come, while he was going through with Bob Hartmann the last steps in the ceremony of the swearing-in and the reception.

It was as if he were discussing something very normal, very routine. There was no real indication of serious pressure. Actually Bob Hartmann seemed a little more flustered and excited than the Vice President did. He then went in, sat down at the table, and did his recording, just as normally. He read through it first and then did it again. He made a very small fluff during--not really a fluff but just substituting an "on" for an "an"--so I asked him if he wanted to do it over. He said, "No, I'm sorry I don't have time." At twenty minutes of 10:00, he left the conference room and went on to watch the President take off and bid him good-bye. Also, at the time I'd brought him the final copy of his swearing-in speech. He had no time to look at it before he went to see the President off. He had some time after he came back at about quarter of eleven, perhaps a half an hour, to go through it again. Really not much time for such an important speech. It read well. I thought it would go well. But the event was so much more impressive than I had imagined it would be. It was really a very moving experience.

Until 10:30, I didn't really even know whether I'd be able to take part in the

ceremony, it was very limited. I forgot to tell you I had great problems trying to find Jerry terHorst, who didn't come in until 9:00 and then was closeted with Bill Seidman for half an hour. We had great problems with the pool coverage and other coverage and the Michigan press coming in, [the] Michigan TV stations coming in, all wanting to do something. I finally got all the Michigan people cleared for the White House Press Room and just had them sit there as a place to wait and sort of grab what they could. They all claimed they had been told they were going to get exclusive interviews with the Vice President. Everybody who was quoted by them as saying they would get exclusive interviews denied it. I have a feeling that they were promised exactly that. I was left, or the Press Office really, as the place that would be responsible for the problems they would encounter, which everyone knew they would encounter. We were able to get them into the East Room before the ceremony which helped out somewhat, but they didn't get their exclusive interviews.

After taking care of all of these problems, which is simply a matter of making a few phone calls, but getting 80 million phone calls in order to do it, I was told I should get over to the White House Press Office right away. This was about 10:30, or 10:45. I went over and the first thing I was told--by Tom DeCair who is Jerry Warren's assistant, sort of a deputy, deputy press secretary--was that his office was now my office, that he'd moved out everything and that it was a bare office. He said, "That's your office." I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "Oh, yes." That was really the first solid indication that I'd had that I might be kept on. Of course, that buoyed my spirits considerably.

I suggested that I go over and check out the TV pool situation and other cameras. They said, "Okay," so I went over. There were a few little problems but they were mainly ones of technical detail--which are the ones that I learn are the real problems. In other words, what's the seating order of the Ford family? Where are the VIPs situated? Who are they? Can we get idents, idents, idents? Where exactly is the Vice President going to come in? Where will he leave? And so forth.

One of the most interesting things though, and most illustrative I think, of the man--I happened to be standing by one of his military aids, Colonel Jack Walker, while he was discussing with the Captain of the Marine Band the ceremonial music that would be involved. The Captain said, "Well, we're going to play our four *Ruffles and Flourishes* as the Vice President comes in and then the *Hail to the Chief* as he comes out." Colonel Walker said, "I don't think that's on the schedule. The Captain said, "Oh yes, it is." Colonel Walker said, "Let me check," and he went back to the telephone to call the Executive Office Building. He came back and said no *Ruffles and Flourishes*, no *Hail to the Chief*. And that's the way it was. There was a simple announcement, "The Vice President of the United States and Mrs. Ford," when they came in, and absolutely no *Ruffles and Flourishes* when he came in, and no *Ruffles and Flourishes* when he left. It's a mark of the man and his ideas and of his distaste for the glamour and the trappings of the office that so seemed to grip Richard Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson, and perhaps even

President Kennedy. Harry Truman and Gerald R. Ford have a great deal in common in their approach to life and to the presidency. It will be very interesting to see how Gerald R. Ford conveys to the people his simplicity and his ideas of the simple values which Harry Truman also had and so successfully expressed. Well, that's a divergence, but I really think it's really a very significant factor, very significant, and to me most important.

While I was occupied with all these details, the ceremonies began. I managed to stand in a place very close to the platform and was able to, from where I stood, watch the crowd. All I could see was the back of the Vice President's head while he was speaking. When he got to the part where his voice broke as he said, "I want to ask you to offer a prayer for Richard Nixon and his family," I could see tears on the faces of a number of people there. Some of those were hardened politicians who had been in the business a long time. It was a most moving moment. After it was over the applause was so sincere and so prolonged, it indicated to me that he really had done exactly what we had hoped he would do to set out the kind of a man he is, a man without pretention, without glamour, but with great sincerity. When it was over and they had the reception, I went back to the White House Press Office. We had 83 million phone calls, of course.

At about 2:00 or so, the President came in to introduce Jerry terHorst, his new press secretary. He did it very gracefully with a little joke about how the press was standing on the part of the White House that he would like most, the swimming pool, which had been converted into the Press Office. He joked that he might reconvert it. In the process of introducing terHorst he also said that joining Jerry on the press team would be his press people from the vice presidential staff, Paul Miltich and Bill Roberts. That was the real confirmation that I had that I was going to be kept on. I felt a great load of relief lifted from my shoulders. I went on from there with a much greater spirit, a much happier spirit anyway. Let me stop to think here. (machine off). Today is sort of a blur. I don't remember many specifics.

One thing that I do remember is the tremendous speed of the White House photographic operation in getting out pictures. The ceremony took place at noon. By 5:00, we had them. Then, there were some formal pictures taken in the Oval Office of the President and Mrs. Ford, and the entire Ford family, plus the regular shots of the ceremony that the White House photographers had taken. By 5:00, we had color prints. It's just unbelievable to me--all that--and enough to distribute to the press and very good color, very good color. The speed of that operation is just a matter of great amazement to me because I know a little about photography and what it takes.

Another thing that impressed me was that on the way over to the White House, at about 10:30 or a quarter of eleven, as I walked across the Executive Avenue--you go in through the West wing of the White House and then you walk through a long, narrow hall that goes through the ground level and then up one flight to the Press Office--and all the way along that long hall, which is just a plain hall, broken only by doorways, are photographs. These had been photographs of Richard Nixon in various activities, and the

Nixon family. As I was going through at a quarter of eleven, the Nixon photographs were being taken down and the Gerald R. Ford photographs--very similar, but ones they had taken of him as Vice President, although there may have been some as Minority Leader that they had added from somewhere else--they were going up. By 12:00, all the Nixon photographs had been replaced, except in the press room. (laughs) But anyway, the ones that were controlled by the White House photographic service, all those were replaced. Just unbelievable! It reminded me of the assassination of President Kennedy, when by the time Kennedy's body was brought back from Dallas, everything of his in the Oval Office and in the White House hallway had been removed and Lyndon Johnson's things had been brought in. The same thing had happened in the Oval Office, of course, but with only two hours to work in. Fantastic!

I didn't have time, I was on the phone too much to see much of President Nixon's farewell. What I saw was very moving to me, although Tom DeCair, who is one of his press secretaries, thought it was maudlin. But I was moved, and felt a deep sadness as the President nearly wept and, understandably, was intensely emotional in bidding farewell to his staff. Then the departure scene of course was even more so. The contrast between that and the new President delivering his swearing-in speech was again an indication in the differences in the two men. A great indication. (sighs)

So where was I? I'm afraid I'm wandering. We spent the afternoon after the press briefing--I learned I have a new task which is to proofread the transcripts of the press briefing, which is a job because they of course are taken by ear and there are a lot of mistakes in them where the reporter hears words that sound similar. You have to be pretty alert to the meaning of what's being said as well as the physical. I'm a good proofreader in detecting errors in spelling, but not very good in detecting errors in meaning because I tend to read words instead of meaning. I look at words for spelling rather, so I'm going to have to learn a new technique for this type of proofreading. All of this takes time. You get phone calls and all that sort of thing. I wish I'd kept track of how many phone calls I had and how many I answered that day because by the time we quit my voice was--well, still is--a little husky. Even my ear was tired! I've had a quart of beer and I feel much better now.

We were told to be in the office before 7:30 tomorrow morning because the President would be in very early. [Roberts stammers here, calling President Ford the "Vice President," and exclaims he's "going to have problems with that." Roberts' recurring mistake was corrected in editing.] Now that I think of it, it still seems not quite real to me. I really can't believe it's happening to me, but it will be most interesting. My outlook is considerably different from what it was twenty-four hours ago. We will see how the first day of the Ford presidency goes tomorrow.

**August 10, 1974**  
**Saturday**

I'm recording this about 9:00 on the evening of August 10. My voice is still rough. I had another tough day on the phone. In addition, we had the damndest parade of photographers in and out. We had photo opportunities yesterday and today. Deliver me from those photo opportunities. Incidentally, Jerry terHorst, the new press secretary, said that we're going to stop "Zieglerisms" so they are not going to be photo opportunities now, they are going to be photo sessions. A decision I heartily applaud. The phrase "photo opportunity" was coined by the Nixon administration. From now on it's going to be "photo session" and we are not going to have any news "availabilities." We're going to have news "briefings."

Mr. terHorst, incidentally before I forget it, had his second news briefing today. As I told you, I proofread the transcript of his first one yesterday, at which he was very nervous. His hands were shaking all the way through, understandably.

Here's a guy that came fresh out of a newspaper bureau chief job and twenty-four hours after he gets the job he's asked to brief the press on the first day in the presidency of a man who has made history by becoming the first President ever installed without being voted on by anyone except by the members of Congress. He handled it well. He had some fairly tough questions considering the fact that we're supposed to have a honeymoon. Reasonable questions, but tough. He handled them very well. Questions as to whether the President would grant immunity to Richard Nixon, to which he said no. Questions as to what happened to the tapes which he said were still in the custody of Mr. Nixon's counsel and would be until that counsel left--the White House legal counsel I think he said, not Mr. Nixon's counsel.

It was a well done job, very well done. He did the same thing again today. [An] excellent briefing with a few tough questions, again, handled well. I think he's a very definite plus. I don't know who made the decision to hire him, but on the basis of these two performances at least, they didn't make any mistake. I certainly could never have done anywhere near as well. I'm sure that Paul couldn't either. The only problem is that Paul Miltich doesn't recognize that fact and is more worried I think about his image suffering than anything else. For example, he came in today and closed the door and said, "My sister in wherever-she-lives- Minnesota, had told everybody that I was going to be press secretary, and now in essence, "What can I tell them? How can I face them?" Which I really think is understandable. But I think he should be basically thankful he doesn't have the responsibility. I don't know whether he appreciates that. Maybe he doesn't. I'm sure glad that I don't have the responsibility because it is a tremendous responsibility. When you think every word you utter is judged and weighed and can have a definite influence on foreign affairs, [or] domestic affairs. It's a great responsibility. While I'd certainly like to try it, I'm not sure that I could measure up the way Jerry did

under those circumstances. Really a fantastic performance in my book.

He does have the advantage of getting very good briefings from Jerry Warren, the deputy press secretary of the Nixon administration, who is staying on temporarily, is consulting with Jerry, and advising him regularly, frequently, and at length. So that helps. But when you're standing there in the spotlights under fire, it's very easy to forget everything you've been told. He just did a fine job, I thought. He's basically a hell of a nice guy. There are two kinds of newsmen. The nice guys, of which I consider myself, who are aggressive in ferreting out the questions they want answered, but who aren't basically interested in 1) showing off, or 2) being antagonistic. There are two ways of asking questions: 1) you sincerely want an answer for the question you're seeking, and 2) either to show what a smart ass you are for asking that brilliant question or to show what a son-of-a-bitch the other guy is. There are a few of those in the White House Press Corps. Not too many, but there are some. They were audible today but Jerry handled them very well. He and I seem to get along very well so far. I've known him ever since I've been in Washington I think. We've always gotten along well because he is a friendly guy, a nice guy and easy to get along with. He's a lot easier to get along with than I am, "Huh, Helen?" [Roberts' wife is in the room] Anyway Paul and I went through the day sort of flying blind really. Not really knowing what we were supposed to do, but handling the routine of the office which consisted of all kinds of demands. Poor Naomi Nover came in and wept in my office about her dear Barney and the trouble she's having and how crippled she is. It's amazing how she and Trudy Feldman sound exactly alike and operate the same way. She happened to see some pictures on my desk which I was giving out to the wires and a few others, and demanded a complete set. For nothing you know. She won't use them. Her papers won't use them. I won't burden you with those small problems. That was the type of problem Paul and I were fielding all day.

The only thing about today was it was a short day, thank the Lord. I drank a lot of coffee this morning and this afternoon. Still by the end of the day I was really wearing down mentally as well as physically. I was getting foggy and that's bad for even a deputy, deputy assistant press secretary to be. At the end of the day, we got to see the President a couple of times in the Oval Office and in the Cabinet Room and in the Roosevelt Room for these "picture sessions," not "opportunities."

At the end of the day he had a small ceremony where he swore in Bob Hartmann as counselor with Cabinet ranking, but as Hartmann said, with no increase in pay. There are now two counselors to the President, Bob Hartmann and Jack Marsh. Both of them nice guys and I hope that they do well. I really think Hartmann is invaluable to the President. I think he's aware of that. That speech alone was just unbelievable. Hartmann is now going to work on the Joint Session speech coming up Monday night. I spent a little time on that today but I'll spend more time on it Monday. I got a clearance from Jerry to do that. This bothered Paul, who sees himself weakened by everything that happens that he's not thoroughly clued in on. I hope he can adjust to the circumstances,

but he had a tough time today.

We had a few sessions with the President but it's obvious that the close contact that I like so much [will not continue], on trips and on Saturdays in the office, when you could go in on business matters but still you could discuss substantive things with him. He really hates small talk and I never indulged in it. In going into his office it was always business but we still managed to get in a couple of sentences back and forth. I'll miss that because it's pretty obvious that as far down on the totem pole as we are, the only contact we'll have will be to see him in the picture ceremonies. That's part of the office. I can see why it develops. The new transition group that has been formed is supposed to be laying out the rules for the transition and the staff structure that's going to be put together.

The interesting thing was I had thought that Seidman was doing so well. I talked to him today and he said, quite frankly, he just didn't know what was going to happen. Which is funny, completely contrary to the impression I'd had--what was it forty-eight hours ago?--whenever I had learned that terHorst had been appointed. I think now that Hartmann was just soft soaping me a little. I don't know. It's hard to judge. It really is. It's easy to understand how paranoia can develop in a presidential staff or even a vice presidential [staff] for that matter because you get these entirely different stories being told by people about the same thing. For example, Seidman and Marba Perrott both denied that they'd told the TV guys from Grand Rapids that they would get special treatment. But the TV guys swore up and down. One said Seidman and one said Marba. They told them that they would get special treatment. That they called them and told them that. I just can't believe that those guys from the TV stations would concoct stories like that, different stories in essence, one Marba and one Seidman, but maybe they would. On the other hand, Jack Hogan, I've known [him] for a long time. I don't see why he should lie to me. You could expect treatment from me, but not Marba. The point is you really think, "Who do I trust? Who is telling me a straight story or who is simply pushing this off to his best advantage?" Basically, Miltich--I think Paul is as straight as I am--and Jerry terHorst, and basically I trust Hartmann. Except that now if Seidman really is concerned about where he stands, that's also an interesting factor. That throws into some cloud Mr. Hartmann's statement about the Michigan mafia taking over.

As I said I would, I'm trying to stay out of any of this bucking for power because I really don't give a damn for power or even for access to the President. I hope I'll get taken along on some trips and will be able to do a little, but nowhere near what I had before. That is the new life that's starting out. This is Saturday night after 9:00. I've eaten. I'm going to bed very quickly. I have to work Sunday, a short day. Again, an indication of Jerry terHorst as a boss. He said, "I haven't taken a pool yet. I'll take the pool to church tomorrow morning." The President decided to go to church on his first Sunday in office, and I think the first time he's been to church since he's been Vice President. I shouldn't say that because I don't really have the knowledge of that. I know he never goes to church on his trips. TerHorst said he'd take the church pool. So I said, "Somebody should be



covering the office while you are there. Why don't I come in and do that?" I was prepared to stay all day. TerHorst said, "Okay, but there's no reason you need to stay after I get back from church because I'm going to be in all day and I'd just as soon stay around." Which is very thoughtful and very appreciated.

I'm weary and about to go to bed. I'm very content. I had a nice long talk with Helen. I hope that she's satisfied now that...(phone rings) Whoop! (laughs) There comes a call. I'll shut her off for the night and hopefully go to bed and get some sleep. [Machine off and on again] It turned out that call was from some guy in New York wanting to find Ron Ziegler. Of course I don't have any idea where he is so I told him to call the White House and good luck.

One thing I forgot to mention. In a conversation that we had with Jerry at the end of the day, he mentioned a very interesting little thing at the Cabinet meeting that I thought was kind of significant. TerHorst sat in on the Cabinet meeting. As they were going around, one thing that was discussed that was not reported was that the question of immunity for President Nixon came up. There was considerable discussion about that. Saxbe said that he thought Jaworski was not particularly eager to pursue the prosecution. There was some hope expressed by Saxbe that the whole thing might just sort of die out. That the public clamor for Nixon's scalp might dwindle as things went on in other areas of the prosecution. In other words, Jaworski is not going to move unless there's a strong public pressure for such a move. At that point, the President interjected that he thought that nobody should say anything about the matter except the Justice Department, and that he would advise all of the Cabinet members to refer everything to the Justice Department. That he himself would do that. In essence, he's staying aloof from the matter which is a pretty sensible way to go about it, not to involve himself in the whole question. (yawns) Now, I think I will go to bed and hope I don't get any more phone calls.

**August 11, 1974.**  
**Sunday**

But I did get some more phone calls. This is Sunday, August 11, 10:00. I finished mowing the lawn, put in a 8:30 to 6:00 day at the office. It was really quite an easy day. No big deals on the phone. Not many questions from the press. The only problem was that I had to pack everything in the old EOB offices for myself, for Miltich, and our two secretaries--which made nine big boxes of stuff. I spent a couple of hours on that but it wasn't bad. In many ways, it was a very fascinating day. A day in which the arrogance of the people that worked for the Nixon administration was brought home to me full-face for the first time. I still find it hard to believe. A couple of examples. Milt Friedman, the speech writer for the President, spent the whole day just shaking his head about the attempts of the old Nixon administration people to insert their viewpoints in the presidential address coming up tomorrow night, Monday night. How they were urging the President in the strongest terms to denounce Congress for its lack of action and for its apathy and for everything else--which is totally opposite to what the tone of the address is supposed to be--and urging the President to assert the authority of the presidency and to make sure that the presidency is singled out as a powerful, powerful authority. I find that hard to believe after what's happened. That the Nixon people would be pushing that sort of thing. Just unbelievable.

In our own press office, two examples. I just had a call from Phil Jones of CBS before I started this. He has been flying with the President when he was Vice President, right from the first day that he was Vice President. He had called Friday, had called Jerry terHorst, the press secretary, to try to get him to appear on *Face the Nation*. He complained that terHorst didn't appear, but did appear on the NBC show Friday night. I said, "Well, did you get to talk to terHorst?" He said, "No, but I left a message with his secretary." I said, "Well, there's one problem there. Do you know who his secretary is?" He said, "No." I said, "It's Connie Gerrard, who is Ron Zeigler's secretary." So you can imagine. My bet is terHorst never got the message. That's just my bet. I'm going to talk to him tomorrow and find out.

That's perhaps paranoid suspicion but I just can't believe that terHorst would do that because yesterday he ran into a deal with Dave Kennerly, of *Time* magazine who has been picked by the President to be the President's personal photographer, tried to and in fact did persuade the President to talk exclusively to Bonnie Angelo of *Time* magazine. He had her on the threshold awaiting an interview when terHorst found about it. Just an hour before, terHorst had assured *Newsweek* that he would not allow any exclusive interview with anybody, in denying *Newsweek* an exclusive interview. TerHorst just had time to go to the President, explain the situation. and get an assurance from the President that Bonnie would not get an interview. Then he had to tell Bonnie about it. That's an indication that terHorst is fair enough so that he would not appear on one network show

and refuse a second on the grounds that he wasn't doing any television, which is what secretary Connie Gerrard had told Phil Jones. I strongly suspect that Mr. terHorst never got the message.

In our own press office, downstairs from Mr. terHorst, we have two holdovers who have been most cooperative and very, very helpful in telling us how the place operates and what we do to get what things. Very pleasant. One of these girls is named Joy, Joy Childs. This morning we had a whole group of photographers in the press room wanting to film the President as he came into his office from church. I checked with the Secret Service--they call the Press Office on any moves the President makes. You know, at 9:57, the President left his residence; at 9:59, he arrived at Immanuel Church on the Hill; at 11:02, he left Immanuel Church on the Hill; at 11:05, he arrived at the residence. That sort of thing.

So I told Joy to let me know when they called in to say that he was leaving the residence and to find out which gate he was coming in, because it was uncertain. Normally the President goes in through the East gate and comes up through the ground entrance to the Oval Office inside the White House grounds at the South portico. But yesterday, the President came in through the Southwest gate and went to the Executive Office Building and up to his old Vice Presidential office on the second floor. We didn't know where he was going and neither did the Secret Service.

Finally, the Secret Service called in to tell us that the President had left his residence. I asked Joy, "Which gate is he coming in?" She said, "I don't know." I said, "Call the Secret Service and find out." She said, "Oh, that's security information. We never give that out." I said, "We're not going to give it out. I just want to know what it is." She said, "Well, they won't tell us. It's classified information, security information." I said, "What do you mean? They won't tell the Press Office where the President's going? This is ridiculous." And she said, "No." I said, "Joy, are you sure?" "Yes, I'm sure." So I went down to the Secret Service Office which is only a few steps away from our office. It's the Secret Service control headquarters. I went in and identified myself. Most of those guys don't know me. I said I would just like to know which gate the President's coming in and they said the Southwest gate. He's going to the EOB. So we took the photographers over and we were there waiting. Obviously, this is the way the Press Office has been operating--we just don't tell you what the President's going to do. Unbelievable!

Another thing. One of my friends is a producer with NBC who used to work for *KOJO* [?], in San Diego, Chuck Welty [?]. He was doing producing work on the NBC stuff out of the White House today. He came up to me late in the afternoon and said, "Can I have your permission to move our live TV camera from the Press Office where it was, out to where all the action was?" We'd allow the film cameras to set up outside so that they can film the various Republican leaders that were coming in to see the President. He had meetings all afternoon with the various Republicans. I said, "Sure, why do you

ask?" He said, "I started to move out there and I was stopped." Ms. Childs told me very properly that I had not asked permission." I said, "Oh, hell, go ahead." Here's this gal operating like a gestapo agent. The film cameras are set up. There is no reason why poor old Chuck shouldn't have been allowed to take his camera out there. You get some faint idea from that what the atmosphere must have been.

One other anecdote. The Nixon girls told me this, and I couldn't believe it--that during the final days, I can't remember if it was the day President Nixon announced his resignation, or the day before. The President wanted to walk from EOB back to the White House and they didn't want any press to watch, to see him. This was unbelievable to me. They locked the doors of the press room, front and back so the press couldn't get out. Then they complained because the press acted like beasts and pounded on the door and screamed and hollered, "Let us out! What's going on?" What kind of a mind would conceive of a thing like locking the doors to the press room so the press couldn't come in and out? The concept is so alien. It will be just a difference of night and day. We're already getting that in reports. I had at least three different reporters telling me stories of their own about how all of a sudden the guards on the gates have changed their attitude. They're friendly and helpful, instead of obstructive and nasty. I just tell them that that reflects the attitude of the man on the top and it does. What a sad commentary on the Nixon administration. What a sad commentary.

So I didn't do much today but it was an interesting day in terms of changing ideas, revelation really, of just what arrogance the Nixon administration people had and still have and apparently without realizing it. I hope we can, "we" (laughs)--I hope the President can make a real clean sweep over there in the White House and in the EOB. A very clean sweep and the big day is tomorrow. I wasn't in on any of the planning for tomorrow so I really don't know much about it. I think I'll...

Oh! I want to make sure there's one anecdote from Friday that I might have related but I'm not about to go back and dig up the other tape. I had it brought to mind again today so I want to put it on the record again. If it's duplicating, all right. But if it isn't, fine because it is extremely illustrative of the thinking of our new President. On the day of the swearing-in, I was going over it beforehand to run down the form of the ceremony for the TV pool producer and to make sure that he knew what was going on and I knew what was going on. I got over there and got into a big discussion about details and finally the pool producer said, "Well, I need to know on what cue the Vice President will come out of the Red Room and start coming down the hallway in the White House to come into the East Room." He said, "I know it's going to be on *Ruffles and Flourishes* from the Marine Band, but I don't know how many they're going to play.

He went back to talk to the Marine Band Director and Colonel Jack Walker of our staff just happened to be there, talking with the Marine Band Director. We all introduced ourselves and the pool producer said, "We need to know how many *Ruffles and Flourishes* you're going to play. The band director said, "Four." Colonel Walker said,

"Sir, are you sure that you are going to play *Ruffles and Flourishes*?" The band director said something to the effect that, "We always play *Ruffles and Flourishes*." Colonel Walker said, "I think you may not play them this time. Let me check." He went back talked on the phone for a few minutes and then came back and said, "Sir, there will be no *Ruffles and Flourishes*," and there were none. The Vice President and his wife walked with no *Ruffles and Flourishes*. He just doesn't like that elaborate pomp and ceremony that apparently was essential to Richard Nixon, and which Lyndon Johnson delighted in, and the Kennedy administration had plenty of. It's not a put on. This is not a pose. It's very genuine. The President just doesn't like that sort of stuff. He's not comfortable with it and I hope he never is. I feel the same way and I love it. I'm going to bed. It's going to be a long day tomorrow. I may not be able to record tomorrow. We'll see what happens.

**August 12, 1974.**  
**Monday**

It's midnight. I'm just turning up the 13th. I'm home and I've had another long day. I got in at 7:15 and just barely beat the President who got in at 7:25. It was a long, long day but a very pleasant one for everybody and especially, I think, the President. It was an important day for me because this was the first day that I was alone in the Oval Office with the President, which is quite an awesome feeling except that the President was on the telephone with some woman, obviously an old friend, who wanted to make sure that he was giving strong consideration to appointing a woman to the vice presidency. He was very patient with her. This was at 3:00 in the afternoon, when he had his big nationwide TV speech coming up, which he hadn't yet seen in its final form--the reading copy form. Still he spent several minutes on the phone with this woman. What a guy! He really is something.

Also, it was important for me because terHorst indicated today that he wanted me to handle the TV side especially. That Al Snyder was not going to stay on. In other words, that I'd be responsible for the TV, which is reassuring for me. Everything went well in this first TV performance. The lighting wasn't perfect but it was very good. Of course the President was magnificent and absolutely the best I've heard him read a speech except for the Utah State speech which I still consider the best one he's ever given in terms of reading quality. Everything seemed to go well, and Al Snyder was very helpful. He hopes to stay on. Maybe he can convince terHorst to keep him on, I don't know. He does have a lot of expertise and I kind of wish terHorst would keep him on, at least for several months. I will try to talk terHorst into it. We'll see what happens. In any case, the day was a considerable success.

I'm very tired and I have to get up in time to get to the office at 6:30 tomorrow morning to ride with the pool to the President's home and then ride back with him to the office. Every morning and every night there's a pool that accompanies the presidential limousine to and from his home in Alexandria. Every one of those members of the pool and the members of the overworked Press Office are hoping that the President will move into the White House very quickly to eliminate this extra hour beginning and ending every day. We've been rotating the going to and from the residence among Paul Miltich, Eric Rosenberg and myself. It's a chore. I'm going to be a little short tonight. I didn't have anything to do with the preparation of the speech, but it was well-delivered and has won unanimous applause from everybody I heard.

This was another little interesting thing. I was in the holding room, which is a speaker's office before the speech and it is just a place where the President can chat a little and get prepared for the speech before he goes out on the floor. As he was talking I noticed his tie was a little askew. I was keeping the time. I was the one that was going to determine when he left so when he had a minute left, I said "Sir, you might want to check

your tie in the mirror. It looks a little off to me." He went over to the mirror and checked his tie. It was off and [he] combed his hair again. After we got back to the office terHorst said, "Boy, I'm sure glad you mentioned that tie. I had noticed it but had forgotten all about it. So scratch up one for Roberts. He was lucky on that."

During this preliminary before the speech, the President was totally relaxed. Whenever I go into a situation like that before a speech I'm very tense usually and not good at making small talk, but he was just chatting away with his old friends and having a good time. First of all, you would never know he was the President. You would never know he was going to make an important speech. It's still really hard for me to comprehend that he is the President, whereas I had no trouble considering him as the Vice President. Well, it just is hard for me to accept the fact. I just do not believe it's real. But, as I've told several score of people he's going to be a President that's going to surprise a lot of people with what he can do. It's going to be a very interesting three years. There was one little phrase in that speech tonight which I thought was exceptionally intriguing in which he said, "If the good Lord grants me at least three years," which is the first time I've ever heard him hint openly that he would consider running in 1976. I think you might mark that as the opening of the 1976 campaign. It was a well done speech. The Republicans were ecstatic and so here we go. We're off and running.

**August 20, 1974**  
**Tuesday**

It is exactly eight days since the last recording. It is now the evening of August 20th, Tuesday--one week and one day after his really great speech to Congress. The reaction the following day was even better than we had anticipated. That authoritative manner in which he delivered the speech was carried on all through the rest of the week. I'm only going to give a montage of various little things that happened during the week because I got so involved in working such late hours and with such traumatic experiences all the way through that I just did not and was not able to record anything from the time of the speech on. Let me start out with the first day, which was the 13th.

It was a whirlwind day. The President was meeting with a lot of people. We were running photographers in and out of the meetings. The biggest meeting was one with the Cabinet. We were giving what we no longer call a "photo opportunity," but which is running the photographers and a group of writing people in for a couple of minutes before every meeting. The most interesting thing that happened was the Cabinet meeting in which the President-- terHorst told us later, he sat in on the meeting--the President and the Attorney General discussed the problem of immunity for the President [Nixon]. The President finally directed that all the discussion of prosecution of President Nixon for whatever problems arise out of the Watergate tape would come only from the Justice Department and Attorney General Saxbe. Saxbe told the group that Jaworski had no real desire to prosecute President Nixon and that he would do so only if there was a massive public pressure for such prosecution. That's where the matter rests right now.



**August 20, 1974 (continued)**  
**Tuesday**

A very hectic pace continues and shows no sign of letting up. The President is doing what he did as Vice President and astounding everybody that did not know how active he is--in the office before 8:00 everyday, meetings every hour on the half hour, or more frequently, with photo sessions, and photographers running in and out. Speculation is now starting on the vice presidency.

It is a very tough life on those of us in the press room. There's Paul Miltich, myself and terHorst, is all. Jerry is staying upstairs and Paul and I are downstairs in our two offices. We only have his secretary and mine plus an added girl. We're handling all queries. With the help of Eric Rosenberger and Tom DeCair, we are running the relays of photographers in and out, plus covering the President's departure from his residence and trip to the White House for the pool, and the reverse, from the Oval Office to the residence at Alexandria at night. It's a very tough life in terms of hours. I'm lucky to be getting home before 10:00 any night.

We had some good news today in that Helen definitely confirmed when I got home tonight that she will be able to come home tomorrow and bring her mother with her. At least I'll have somebody who will be able to help get my breakfast, get the cats fed, and do the laundry, which I just managed to finish up tonight. I did part of it last night and did the rest tonight but didn't get much done in the way of cleaning up. One of our cats, probably Herman, threw up all across the floor in the basement and I wasn't able to clean that up. Outside of that the house isn't in too bad shape, but it sure needs Helen. So I'll be very glad to see her get back tomorrow evening.

I don't get to see too much of the President except on the trips out to the house or in running photographers in and out of the Oval Office or the Cabinet room or wherever. He's an amazing man. He really seems in command and very much relaxed. We're getting continually ecstatic comments from the press people, who continue to tell us what a change there is in the atmosphere.

Some very interesting stories floating around. One, and this was confirmed incidentally by Secret Service agents after we had a run-in yesterday, I was bringing a press pool in with the motorcade to the Oval Office, which means we should go into the grounds. As we turned into the White House gate, the guard leaped out and stopped our van. We have a van really that holds ten press people in it. I jumped out and said, "You can't stop us. We're in the motorcade." He said, "Those were my orders." I said, "Who gave you the orders?" He said, "The sergeant over there." I went over and the sergeant said, "I got my orders from the Secret Service." At that point of course the motorcade had already arrived at the Oval Office and there wasn't much point in pursuing it further, but when I got to my office the Secret Service agent in command was already there. He said, "For ten years it's been the policy that the press part of the motorcade stops at the gate." I

said, "The press pool in the motorcade is supposed to go from door to door with the President, and it should go in the grounds." He said, "Is that the way you want it?" I said, "Yes, sir."

So this morning the motorcade went in without any trouble and the photographers and the press people in the pool were thanking me greatly for doing really basically nothing. I learned later that this policy had started in the Johnson administration and continued in the Nixon administration, although it was only in the last two years. That before that they'd been stopped from taking pictures when the President arrived inside the grounds. The last two years they'd been barred from entering the White House grounds at all. So we're opening things up a little and making it a little better.

The story that I started to tell was this Secret Service agent pointed out that in the last days of the Nixon administration--actually I think it was the day he announced his resignation, Thursday--he had instructed the Secret Service and the Executive Protection Service that he wanted no newsman to see him when he crossed from the Executive Office Building, where his working office was, to the White House. In order to carry out his orders, believe it or not when he started to leave the office, the police locked the door of the press room and no one in the press room could get out. Later I asked people in the press room who had been involved in it if that was true, that they were beating on the door and pounding at the door of the press room, demanding to know what was going on?

It's hard to fathom anything like that. Locking press in the press room is just unbelievable. In the first place, that it could happen. In the second place, that the Secret Service and the Protective Service could think of such a thing. In the third place, that they actually would do it. This explains to a considerable extent the great euphoria that has settled over the Capitol with the Ford tenancy in the White House. It would be hard not to have anything like that. Let us hope that fine feeling goes on for some time.

**August 15, 1974**  
**Thursday**

Helen arrived today. I just barely had time to say hello. They got in about 6:00. I was unable to meet them because I didn't get home until almost 10:00, which is pretty standard these days. We had another long day. The problem is there is so much to do in the day-to-day routine of just meeting the press, of the events of the day--that is getting photographers in and out, getting the press pool out to the Alexandria residence, and then the President back again. The hours just go on and on and on. We're extra short-handed because Eric Rosenberger, who had been doing a good deal of the help with the press pool, has been out on advance. There's going to be a speech in Chicago on Monday. He's been out working on that, along with Al Snyder. We just haven't had anybody except Paul and myself to run the motor pool. Today I did both the morning and evening motor pool and it looks like I'll do the same--excuse me, I did the morning and Paul did the evening. It looks like tomorrow I'll be doing both. Tomorrow we have a massive State Dinner laid on--the first one of the Ford administration, which will be quite a large deal. I'm not going to say much tonight because I'm pretty tired and I think we'll call it quits.

**August 17, 1974**  
**Saturday**

This is being recorded on Saturday the 18th, because it was a long, long day yesterday and quite a long day today. Yesterday I had to get up and be at work by 6:30 to escort the motor pool out to the President's home and come back with him. Then we had King Hussein come in, with pictures in the Oval Office and a huge State Dinner. Then I had to go with the press pool to bring Mr. and Mrs. Ford back to their residence very late at night, at 12:30, go back downtown with the motor pool and then come back home. I didn't come home until after 1:00. It was a very, very interesting evening yesterday. The day was standard in-and-out pictures and what not, and very great confusion.

It was a bad day for Paul Miltich. Jerry terHorst made his announcement of what the staff would be in the press office. Jack Hushen, who had been a press aide to Senator Griffin, who went over to the Justice Department as Director of Information for the Justice Department and stayed on through four attorneys general, has been named deputy press secretary to terHorst. Paul Miltich has been moved over to the Executive Office Building into a job that essentially is nothing, with no specified areas of coverage. The real work in the Office of Communication is being handled by the deputy there, and Paul has just been given sort of a nothing assignment with basically nothing to do. I really don't know what's going to happen there, whether he'll stick it out or what. I don't think he deserves that kind of treatment.

In addition, terHorst has taken on another guy who worked for Senator Eastland and is, I gather, my equal or perhaps even a little more equal than I am, as far as an assistant to Hushen is concerned. I was named as being responsible primarily for radio-TV. I had a session with terHorst yesterday in which he wanted to know whether that was satisfactory. He implied that I would be the Al Snyder of the Ford administration. I said I wanted something more than that. That Snyder was primarily a production man, which he is. I wasn't too interested in that. I'd do it but I wanted to stay in the Press Office and answer press queries. I think terHorst had not planned it that way. However, he agreed to go along with it. I think what he planned to do is put me over in Snyder's office in the Executive Office Building, which I did not want. So as of now, I'm sort of hanging on by my fingernails. We'll see what happens. It's an interesting situation. I don't think terHorst particularly wants me around. We'll see how it goes from here on.

I was given the responsibility of handling the photographic press, both film and stills, at the doings with King Hussein tonight. It was very interesting because this was the first State Dinner in the State dining room in which I have been in the dining room during the toasts. This was also a first in that it's the first time it's ever been televised. We had a mini-camera videotaping it. It's the first time it's ever been photographed. We had four photographers in. I was the escort for the photographers. The mini-cam camera was in the back of the room. We had several problems with the photographers. The

shutter noise while the President was giving a toast was very loud and distracted the guests. When the toast came, the photographers couldn't get decent shots because everybody was standing up. We decided that they would be on a platform in the back of the room from now on. The lighting was very good. We had concealed lights that were built into columns in the State dining room. The lighting was excellent and the photography that I saw from it was good. I think I'm going to write a memo to terHorst suggesting that we keep this up, which we probably will.

In addition, for the first time, instead of entertainment after the dinner. Mrs. Ford decided there would be dancing in the East Room. They had a really great party. In between there was a reception in the Red Room and the Green Room adjoining the East Room. The photographers and myself were shoved out on the portico while we waited for the dancing to begin. As we were waiting, a black limousine pulled away from the South portico entrance and a group of Secret Service agents followed. I couldn't think who that might be except Kissinger. I called down to the guard, "Who was that?" and he said, "It's Speaker Albert." For the first time it dawned on me, there is no vice president and Speaker Carl Albert is next in line. He gets Secret Service protection until President Ford names a vice president, in fact until a nominee of the President is confirmed. A very interesting little sidelight on the situation. I don't think many people--I certainly wasn't conscious of it.

At the dancing, they allowed just still photographers to come in for the first five minutes. The President, Queen Alia, the King and Mrs. Ford danced. It really looked like they were enjoying themselves. They got some very nice pictures. The President danced with his daughter. The pictures in the paper the next day were great. The most interesting thing happened after the Fords escorted the King and Queen out to their car at about 11:30, which was an hour after the dancing had begun. It was a very hot and humid night. A camera crew, the press pool, had been waiting outside with me. The President and Mrs. Ford turned around and went back to dance some more. I told the press pool to go back to the air conditioned bus and stay there. I'd go inside and wait until they were ready to come out. Then we'd give them the cue. Would you believe it? The Fords stayed there for 35 minutes and had a great time. Including the President who had a long dance with Ron Nessen's wife, who is a very attractive Asiatic gal, dancing to the tune of *Big Bad LeRoy Brown* with a whole crowd attending and clapping hands. Mrs. Nessen was doing sort of a modified rock and roll. The President was going along with it, not really participating, but just sort of half imitating what she was doing. The girls all say that the President's a very good dancer.

But, the whole point was that people kept saying, "What a change. What a change. What a wonderful place this White House can be when people are having fun." That's all it was, they were just enjoying themselves. Just as the Fords did when they went to the Sigma Delta Chi dinner and stayed an hour and a half afterwards for dancing when they really didn't have to. They just like dancing and they like being with people. They're

really great. Even though I didn't get home until 1:00 and then had to get up, go out and go to work at 8:30 again, and escort the President home Saturday night late--not late, but I didn't get home until 8:00. Still, the whole evening was one of those things you remember for a long, long time. Just an immense good humor that was prevalent all through the White House. You could feel it in everybody. It was really a marvelous evening.

We thought this was going to be one of those easy Saturdays. The presidential schedule had him working through the morning and then nothing for the afternoon. I'd warned some of my colleagues who were less experienced that as Vice President when this happened in the schedule we would be lucky to get home before 5:00. That the President as Vice President usually stayed in the office--even though he had nothing on his personal schedule--and worked by himself through the whole afternoon. That's exactly what happened today. They first said, "He might be going home at 3:30." Since I was escorting the press pool, I was trying to keep close contact on this. It stretched to 4:30, and 5:30, and finally at about 6:00, he did pull out of the Oval Office and head for home. We went with him, came back, and I finally got home about 7:30, which is really pretty good for any day this week, in fact one of the earliest times I've had. I do get most of the day off tomorrow although I have to go in. The presidential speech will be ready for final typing Sunday afternoon, so I have to go in to proofread that. It's supposed to contain a request for some kind of conditional amnesty for Vietnam veterans who deserted, which since he's speaking to a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention on Monday, may cause serious problems. We'll see about that. Outside of that, very little of great interest happened Saturday.

**August 20, 1974**  
**Tuesday**

I did work a little bit on Sunday. This is being recorded on Tuesday, actually. I put in a couple of hours at the office. I was supposed to go in at 3:00 to start on a speech. I had slept late--really needed it--mowed the lawn, and was just getting cleaned up when I got a call from General Haig's office. General Haig's deputy said the Greek demonstrators, which I had shifted to his office yesterday, were now put back in my lap.

What happened is that there had been a whole group of Greek-American demonstrators who were protesting American policy. They wanted to present a petition to the President. The standard policy in the Nixon administration, and I guess the Johnson administration, had been to send a very junior attorney from the office of the legal counsel to the President to the gate to receive the petition, say very little, take the petition and let it go at that. I called our legal office and informed them of this practice and let it go at that. They called back to say that they were shifting it over to the National Security Council which came under General Haig's purview and let it go at that. At 2:00 in the afternoon, I got a call from Colonel McFarland in General Haig's office saying, "We've decided that the Press Office should receive that petition." There was no one in the Press Office. I was the only one available so I hurried to get dressed and went down, got caught in the mob of Greek demonstrators, of whom there were 20,000 according to police, and had trouble getting to the White House. I finally did get to receive the petition. The people were very friendly, expressed their concern over the situation and seemed to aim most of their complaints against Secretary Kissinger. At the end, they declared their best wishes for the President, said they wished him well, felt he was a fine man and really indicated that they were strongly for the President but against Kissinger, because of his policies. I brought the petition back in.

We finished the speech and then we went to a party for the 25th anniversary of the Wrigley's which was a very nice deal. I had a messenger take the speech out to the Ford residence because the President wanted to look at it that night, only to find out that just as I left the White House the President had come in from golfing, from where he'd been playing at Burning Tree, to do a little work in the Oval Office. I could have delivered the speech to him there if I had only known he was coming back, which I didn't. Got home from the party not too late. I knew I had to get up at 6:30 for the final trip out to the Ford residence on Monday. I wasn't in too bad shape on Monday morning. We did manage to get the President safely into his Oval Office from Alexandria in spite of a drizzle that began just as we got there and wetted down just about everybody. The President took off for the VFW Convention in Chicago about an hour after getting to the office. We had a typical little hassle which illustrates, I think, the difference between the Nixon administration and the Ford administration before the take off.

About 8:00, with the helicopter departure from the South lawn scheduled at 8:25,

I went into the newsroom. Jerry Warren was the highest ranking guy there. Hushen had not come in and terHorst hadn't come in. I said to Jerry, "What do you do about taking the press out to view the take-off." He said, "We just put them on the South portico," which is miles away from the South lawn. I said, "I don't understand that. You can't see the take-off from there." He said, "It's a nothing shot." I said, "You mean the press doesn't go out on the South lawn to witness take-off?" "No, no," he said, "What's the point of that? It's a nothing [shot]." I said, "Whenever the President takes off from anywhere I think you should at least make it available to the press if they want to cover it." He said, "We haven't done it and the Johnson administration hadn't done it, for two administrations. I think you ought to follow our policy this time and then give serious consideration to reversing it." I said, "It goes against every instinct that I have as a newsman, but I'll go along with you. I just don't think it's wise." A couple of minutes later he came and he said, "Well, if you want to do it, go ahead." I did, and we had photographers all over the place. Really, I hadn't thought about this but it's the first time the President had taken off from the White House with Mrs. Ford in the helicopter. It was a significant picture.

Afterward I was glad I had insisted on it. We had the same go around when they came back in the afternoon because they insisted on trying to close it. Jack Hushen, who was with me on this, said "To hell with this." We took them out and the only thing that went wrong was that the President confused us. We thought he'd go into the White House. We had the camera crews--a lot more than we had in the morning--all lined up on the roadway. The President escorted Mrs. Ford up to the door of the White House, then turned and came down the roadway, and right into the midst of the cameras and everything else, who of course were running along with him, shooting film and firing questions, without anything significant happening. It just was kind of a mob scene that I don't think looked very good. We have in any event established a precedent that the press should witness every arrival and departure of the President from the White House by helicopter, which I think should be standard procedure.

One other thing that happened. I had lunch with Milt Friedman. He said that there is a very serious and intense battle going on between General Haig and Bob Hartmann. That General Haig simply wants to take over the whole operation and is arguing with the President that he should not throw away this great structure of administration which has been built up over so many years and Hartmann is going completely the other way, arguing that the structure is what brought about the Nixon downfall and caused a lot of Johnson's problems. I really think eventually Hartmann will win because the President is not the kind of a guy who likes this sort of structured thing Haig is talking about, although he does like and respect Al Haig and thinks he's a great guy. I'm not so sure of that. I personally don't like military men in that type of a position. Milt quoted several examples of how Haig has been trying to dominate in terms of taking over initiatives in areas of appointments to see the President and of deciding policies in



terms of speeches before the President has a chance to see them that doesn't sound good at all. Friedman says that he and Hartmann are really buckling down for a long battle there. Friedman is supposed to be taking a look at the speech department, deciding what to do and what not to do. He's going to have some very interesting problems in that situation. He was asking me what he should do. I don't know.

After the plane returned from Andrews, I discovered that I had been handed the job of doing the Oval Office, supervising the Oval Office declaration for the vice presidency, which is supposed to be announced tomorrow. When we started out we thought it was going to be at 9:00 p.m. Tuesday and the only argument was whether it should be 9:00, 8:30 or 9:30. At about 7:00 or 8:00 on Monday night, the word came down that they decided that it wasn't going to be at all on Tuesday night. It was going to be on Tuesday morning. So there we were, really caught short, with 10:15 Tuesday morning set as the time. The TV guys said they were going to have to have at least six hours to set up the lights. The TV producers said that was ridiculous, they could do it in half the time, but still they needed a lot of time. We decided the TV crews would come in at 6:00 and that the program would go on at 10:00--all this without knowing who had been selected as vice president and that old lucky Bill would be in charge of the operation.

The ground rules were pretty well laid out as to what would happen and how and what people would witness the ceremony. I didn't have any decisions in that regard. My decisions were all in the production areas which were preliminary at the beginning on Monday. I finally got in contact with the pool producer who promised to furnish the names of the crew. They wanted to bring in the truck at 4:30. We finally compromised on 5:30. By 10:30 I thought I had all the crew names entered for clearance and went to bed, only to be awakened near midnight by a call from the producer saying that one more name had been added. I had to call that in. I also had to get up at 4:30 in order to get to work by 6:00 or a little after. Actually I got in at 6:15 to start supervising the set-up. Things went surprisingly well. I had several arguments, not arguments but discussions, with Al Snyder who wanted to limit the cameras and put the crowd behind the President. I overruled him a couple of times. Luckily, as it turned out my decisions were the right ones because it looked pretty good on TV.

But it was a most interesting day.

This is the summary of Tuesday, August 20th. We finished setting up the Oval Room at about a quarter of ten. They decided that I was going to be the guy that cued the President. I was to sit in Bob Hartmann's office which adjoins the private study of the President just off the Oval Room and when the cue came from the producer, to knock on the door and tell the President he was expected to go on. But of course the President was a little late. The meeting with the bipartisan congressional leaders ran longer than expected and they were late getting into the room.

I was sitting in Bob Hartmann's office on the phone, holding the phone open for the pool producer who was in his van ready to go, and here comes the President walking through Bob Hartmann's office on the way to his [office]. I was so surprised that I remained seated, and as he left the room I started to jump to my feet realizing it was the President. He went in and placed a call to President Nixon with his choice, who at that point I did not know was Governor Rockefeller. He talked to the President about the choice. Then he came back about a minute late into Hartmann's office and looked in the mirror. I said, "Are you ready, Mr. President?" He said, "Yes." I told the pool, "The President is ready." At that point he said, "I got to make a call to George Bush." I immediately said, "The President is not ready," but in the meantime they'd opened the door. Then he made a call to George Bush. I heard him only make the opening statement when he said "George, this is a very difficult call for me to make" in which he was telling George his selection was Rockefeller. George Bush was the number two selection. After that I stayed in the Hartmann office and watched the whole thing on TV. It seemed to go very well. When the President came back he seemed quite pleased with the way the thing had gone.

A couple of interesting things happened after that, and one of them involved General Haig again. Last week, Ron Nessen sent an invitation through me to the President to invite him to a pool party for the newsmen and some of the staff who had been on the vice presidential flights. The pool party is at Ron Nessen's house on this coming Sunday, August 25th. On Friday night, the night of the Hussein party where the President danced with Ron's wife, he had told Ron and his wife that he would be at the party. So Ron had been bugging me to make sure that this was definitely on. I went in after all this was over this afternoon and talked to the scheduling officer, Terry O'Donnell, and asked him whether this was on the schedule. Terry said no. I said, "The President has told Ron that he would do it." So the guy said, "I'll put it on the schedule." I got the time and the event and told Ron, "It's on his schedule." Ron said, "Okay." About an hour later Ron came back and said, "Hey, what kind of a guy are you? I'll never take your word again." I said, "What's wrong?" He said, "Al Haig called me and noted that I had this appointment with the President for Sunday and that he thought the President ought to get a little sleep and relaxation on Sunday and asked me to postpone it a week." Ron, who is a good, sharp, hard-nosed newsman, said, "Well, it would be very difficult." He wanted to be sure that the President didn't want to do it before he postponed it because all the arrangements had been made, etc. So General Haig said, "If I don't call you back in two hours, it's still okay." He didn't call back. But the thing was that I'm sure that before that he had not talked to the President about having a Sunday off or anything, and that he was just trying to intervene. In other words, think for the President. This is exactly the kind of staff that President Ford does not need. He's a man to make decisions himself and I hope that he can see the problems that Haig would cause him.

Another thing that happened was that Gwen Anderson told me that Dean Burch

called her. Gwen Anderson has been the political expert for President Ford while he was Vice President and really doesn't know what she's going to do now. Burch called and as Gwen put it wanted to pick her brain, wanted to know who her contacts were and everything about her operation. She said that he said that he'd talked to the President. After she began telling him about all this she began wondering what was she doing and so she didn't tell him anymore. She began to think is Dean Burch trying to get her expertise and take over her job? She came to the conclusion that was just what it was. She said, "I don't think he talked to the President at all," and she said she tried to check as to whether and when he might have seen the President and couldn't find any indication that he had. I said, "Gwen, that's exactly why that group got into the whole Watergate trouble. That's the way they operate."

The thing was that on the Vice President's staff, where we had maybe a dozen or fifteen people that were anyway instrumental in anything in terms of policy or advice or whatever, there is some of that staff jealousy that you always have, that clutching for access. But there is none of this nasty lying and back-biting in an attempt to... We were helping each other. We were working for the guy. Some were more interested than others in furthering their own ambitions but basically it was a cooperative feeling. Now we're in just the opposite--with the old vice presidential staff running into all of this Machiavellian atmosphere, which is most unpleasant in a lot of ways. That isn't true in the press department, but it sure is in a lot of other areas.

It will be very interesting to see how long General Haig lasts. When pressed, the President was quoted as saying he's there for the duration. So far no one has asked him to define what the duration is. My guess is that the duration for General Haig won't be too long. That he either will be side-tracked or will retire quietly back to military life from which he resigned to become Mr. Nixon's big aide. He's a very pleasant guy. I'm not sure he knows who I am, but he shakes hands pleasantly and recognizes my face. But I just don't like his way of operating. I hope that the President, who I am sure would not like it either if he knew what was going on, can cut through that fog that surrounds Mr. Haig and get to the truth of the matter. I think that will be it for tonight. I'm very tired. I think I'll go to bed.

**August 25, 1974**  
**Sunday**

I'm now picking up the thread of our presidential experience narrative where we left it as of Tuesday, August 20th. I'm doing a whole week in review at one time. August 20th was a long and hard but very interesting day for me because that was the day that the President announced that he was selecting Nelson Rockefeller as his vice presidential nominee. I actually did not know the choice until I saw Rockefeller come out of the door of the Oval Office on the TV screen. However, I did have a good deal to do with the physical set-up of the broadcast since Al Snyder and I worked together on the setting up of the Oval Office, the arrangements beforehand. On Monday night for example, I was awakened in bed with Helen shortly before midnight with a call from the CBS producer of the show asking me to clear one additional guy for the crew. I got down there before 6:30 in order to help look at the setting-up of the Oval Office. NBC was doing the pool. The NBC truck was there at 5:00 and started unloading at 5:30. By the time I got there they'd had most of the camera gear moved out of the truck onto the portico, were ready to set it up and the lights were being set-up. It took until 9:40 before everything had been checked out and was ready to go. They were taking up the protective coverings they'd taped over the blue and gold rug on the floor of the Oval Office to get ready for the broadcast.

There was one argument as we prepared for the broadcast. Al Snyder insisted that there were only two cameras needed in the Oval Office for the ceremony. But Charlie Jones, the producer, said he wanted three. He explained that one of those would be a camera built on a special platform which would give an overall view of the Oval Office that no one had ever had before. I went along with him on it and they did put the third camera on the platform. Although it did take up some 30 square feet of space there was plenty of room for the people who were invited. It did give an extra dimension, I think, to the pictorial representation of the actual ceremony. I think it was basically a plus. From now on, I think I'll tend to go with the technical guys on this sort of production.

I was also the man who was responsible for relaying the signal from the TV pool director, Charlie Jones, to the President so that he would have the right signal to step out the door and actually start the program. As we were going on the air at 10:00, we had a big argument over that. They originally had set-up at 10:15, but the nets [networks] pointed out that this would give them a big problem in that it would come in the middle of their programs and likely run over the end into another half hour. That it would be better if we do it either at 10:00 or 10:30. And that's what we did.

So there I was sitting as it turned out in Bob Hartmann's office, right next to the private office where the vice presidential nominee was situated and where the President was supposed to be. I'd seen him going into the Roosevelt Room where he was informing the Cabinet of his choice and then bringing the Cabinet on in. At five minutes of ten I

was sitting, actually in Hartmann's chair--at his desk, on the phone, with my feet up on the desk, not doing anything, but just waiting for an indication of when the President was going to come out of the Cabinet room. When all of a sudden from the door at the left the President came right into the room and in his usual rapid pace dashed across the room giving me one look as I was struggling to get my feet off the desk and get to my feet. I didn't even get to say, "Hello, Mr. President," or anything, when he went into the private office where as it turned out Mr. Rockefeller was waiting for him. At that point I contacted the pool director and told him that the President had just gone into the private office and that it looked like he was on time.

Then, somebody came back out--I don't remember who it was--and said that there might be a delay because the President and Mr. Rockefeller were calling former President Nixon. So I informed the pool director that that was background only and not to be broadcast. A few minutes later, a little after 10:00--the nets had gone on the air by this time, the President came out, looked in the mirror in Hartmann's office, combed his hair and adjusted his tie. I said, "Mr. President, are you ready to go now?" He said, "Yes, I'm ready." I relayed the word to the pool director, "The President is ready," and I could hear him say, "The President is ready. The President is ready." (laughs) Except at that point, the President said, "I've got to make one more call. I've got to call George Bush." So then I said, "The President is not ready," and I explained what was happening again, for background. The President went into the secretarial area adjoining Hartmann's office to make his call to George Bush. The first words I heard him say and then I stopped listening were, "This is a very hard call for me to make, George." He obviously was telling George what George knew by that time of course, that it was not going to be George Bush, who was the front runner for awhile as the choice. Then the President came back and I said, "Are you ready now sir," and he said, "Yes." I said, "The President is ready." Within a few seconds he went into his private office and came out through the door into the Oval Office with Governor Rockefeller and made the announcement.

I watched it on the TV screen and watched the replay. It looked to me pictorially very good. I was very happy with it and told Charlie Jones so. That was my first big production as the radio-TV expert with the Ford administration. It still doesn't sound right for me to say that. The rest of Tuesday the 20th passed in sort of a euphoric mood. Everything seemed to go well. I had a few more chores escorting some people in to get photographed with the President, which I have been doing much of in the last couple of days, and it looks like I'll continue to be doing. But basically, everything went smoothly.

Wednesday the 21st was a pretty bad day. I got moved out of my office--the rather small but still separate office that I'd had when I came over from the Executive Office Building--into a little cubby-hole, which really isn't an office at all but simply a little tiny, desk space just about big enough for one person. Larry Speakes who had been the press assistant to St. Clair, the defense attorney for President Nixon, has been taken on I gather primarily as Hushen's Assistant. In other words, he is going to be Hushen's

guy. I have a feeling that I'm sort of the third wheel there and I'm not quite sure where my motive power will come from. So Wednesday was not a very good day, particularly after the euphoria of Tuesday. I had a distinct feeling that I might not be around very long. This changed as the week wore on, but Wednesday as I say was a very, very dismal day for me. And also for Gwen Anderson, who came around and sat in my little cubby-hole and lamented together with me about our plight. She has the same problem as I mentioned earlier with Dean Burch.

She did confide something very interesting to me. There were two lists drawn up for the vice presidential choice: one, a list if Mr. Ford was not going to run in 1976, and the other if he was going to run in 1976. The list if he was going to run in 1976 was headed by Nelson Rockefeller so it was pretty obvious what everyone knew anyway that he would be a candidate in 1976. It's pretty obvious too that he considers Rockefeller as his running mate in 1976 as well as right now. So to all intents and purposes the ticket for 1976 has been chosen as of now, assuming that the Congress will confirm Rockefeller. At the moment there is very little doubt that will take place, with a very, very sizable majority for Rockefeller.

I might mention, however, that after the Rockefeller announcement the Press Office is continuing through today to get a lot of angry calls from people who are complaining bitterly about the choice of Mr. Rockefeller. They're mostly conservatives who would prefer a Goldwater or a similar conservative choice and think that the President has made his first big mistake in office, as they say. But generally the reaction country-wide, editorially and otherwise, has been pretty favorable.

Thursday, August 22nd, is a much better day for me. I got a little note from the President, handwritten in his own hand, saying he wanted me to prepare two tapes for him to record. One for the Michigan Republican State Convention on Saturday and the other for a rodeo where he's crowned the queen for the last 25 years on Labor Day, but won't be able to do it this time. I really was not in very good mental shape, and had no opportunity to confer with the President as to what he wanted to say. But I did draft the two proposed tapes and sent them in for him. We are supposed to do those on Friday before noon so that Gary Brown can take one out to the State Convention and so the other can be sent out by mail. I am somewhat, as a matter of fact, considerably encouraged by that particular development.

The rest of the day was not very noteworthy in terms of what was going on except that I happened to be in Bob Hartmann's office when Gwen Anderson called about an announcement that Dean Burch would stay on as counselor to the President and would handle political matters. Gwen was understandably very upset about it. I walked out of Hartmann's office as she was complaining bitterly. Bob was trying to explain to her what the situation was. Later he told me that the problem was that the conservative reaction against Rockefeller had been so strong that they felt that if they fired Dean Burch out of hand, that this would be just rubbing salt in the wound and perhaps even the straw that

was breaking the conservatives back. So they decided to keep Burch on in a higher ranking post, at least temporarily, say for six months or so, to handle the political end of it and keep the Goldwater conservative types happy, or at least mollified, and that eventually he would be dispensed with. But it still hurts to see that a man who came on so strong for President Nixon--right down the line towards the end when it was very apparent that line was not going to last--should be staying on in the Ford administration. Nevertheless, he will be on for a number of months they tell me. He is a very sharp guy but he does have that old Nixon image. This is one of the problems that the President has got to cope with. He's coping with it the best way he can.

Friday, the 23th of August, was a very euphoric day, not only for me but for poor long-suffering Helen who finally, along with all the other husbands and wives of the vice presidential staff, I think got some small repayment for the hours of loneliness they've put in while their mates were occupied with vice presidential staff duties. The President and Mrs. Ford held a very elegant reception at the White House for members of the vice presidential staff only. No press. No one except every member of the vice presidential staff was there, with spouse. Each couple had their picture taken in the main hallway of the White House with President and Mrs. Ford--the women on the President's side and the men on the First Lady's side. In addition to the drinks, of which there were many. As one Nixon staffer said, "We never had anything stronger than punch and cookies at a Nixon reception for staff." The drinks were plentiful and anything we wanted. The hors d'oeuvres were excellent. In addition, we all got to tour the living quarters on the second floor, which I'd never seen before in sixteen years in Washington, and which was a very interesting experience.

It's considerably like a museum on the second floor. I can't imagine. It doesn't feel like a home. You get the feeling that if you were living there you'd be living in a museum. The only rooms we didn't get into were the private bedrooms of the family but we did see the dining room and the guest bedrooms, the Queen's bedroom and the Lincoln bedroom, and the sitting rooms. Each room is filled with antiques of the period. The Queen's bedroom has a canopy bed and is very plush, from bathroom right on to sitting room and bedroom. But it was to me anyway like a museum rather than like a place to live in. I can't imagine a family like the Fords, who have been accustomed to life in the type of home Helen and I live in, adjusting very easily to this sort of structured opulence that's of museum quality. It would be like living in a museum. I can't imagine it would be very enjoyable. Helen and I got home late. It was one of our great nights. The President spoke to both of us. At one time when I was talking with him, somebody else came up and he said, "No, let me finish talking to Bill." It just gave you a good feeling of closeness to the President. So now I'm pretty sure that whatever happens, I'll at least be on the staff in one capacity or another for as long as I want to be, and that's an extraordinarily good feeling.

Saturday, the 24th, was another work day and nothing extraordinary in the day.

We had several photographic sessions with the President meeting with various groups but nothing exceptional. Because of the party the night before I was in pretty dull condition and really not very alert as far as anything going on was concerned. I was very glad to get home even though it was rather late when I got home. We had a late afternoon event. The President went out to get measured for contact lenses in the afternoon and had no appointments Saturday afternoon. Everybody thought they were going to get home early, but I kept warning them that as Vice President the man had not taken off. The earliest I can remember him leaving on a Saturday afternoon when he was in town was 5:00, and this was no exception. He stayed in the Oval Office until 6:30.

Incidentally, the Nixon staff people are very intrigued by the fact that the President likes to work in the Oval Office. Apparently Mr. Nixon did not like the Oval Office and much preferred his much smaller and much more intimate room in the Executive Office Building across the street from the White House West wing, and used that almost exclusively for his work. It is a very small room, smaller than the average size living room. The Oval Office is huge, about three times the size of our living-dining room combination but the President likes it. He's worked there and stayed there until 6:30 or a quarter of seven on Saturday night. So I didn't get home until quite late. We went to bed very early.

On Sunday, August 25, I slept very late. I got up, mowed the lawn, washed two cars and then we went to a most interesting party. Ron Nessen, the NBC correspondent who had been on the second highest number of vice presidential trips, had a party for the old vice presidential gang--a pool party. He had a nice swimming pool and several of us went swimming, not everybody. The President and Mrs. Ford came early and they stayed late. We sang songs and the President distributed certificates to those who had been on the vice presidential trips. Anything over "five" got one of the certificates. It was a very nice evening except for the fact that Ron had invited down a couple of top NBC guys, including Jack Chancellor, which I thought was bad taste because this was really supposed to be an old reunion of the vice presidential people. Chancellor obviously had not been on a trip. They were just giving him access to the President which is not good, but the President didn't seem to mind. Outside of drinking too much, not eating enough and getting home too late and having a hang-over most of Monday, it was a very good party. How often do you get to go to a pool party with the President of the United States? I don't know how often that will happen again in the future but it was a lot of fun. Helen and I both had a very good time and enjoyed it very much and that was all that happened on Sunday.

Another big project coming up. It's Monday, August 26th. It was decided that the President would have his first news conference on Wednesday. It was also decided that it would be different in terms of setting. It would have to be in the East Room because of space but that the setting would have to be different from the usual blue curtain which Presidents Johnson and Nixon had favored. We all went over to the East Room during



the day and had a big conference. It was the thought of Jerry terHorst that instead of having any background, we would use the Great Hall of the first floor of the White House, opening the doors to the East Room, putting the President on a speaker stand with the doors open behind him, and behind him the long sweep down the hall. So the nets set it up for us. The pool--CBS is producing this one--set it up for us. We went over to take a look at it and to me it looked like something for the coronation of a King or a Queen. Somebody else said it was a great setting for a wedding and that's what it reminded me of. The long shot from the East Room down the hall made it look regal. It is as foreign to what President Ford represents as anything I could see. I was against the idea and voiced my opinion but was overruled by Jerry terHorst who came over and looked at it and thought it was pretty good. The decision was that they would tape the view, put it on videotape, run the videotape on a closed circuit TV, and see what the President thought about it. That's coming up on Tuesday. We'll see what happens.

In the meantime, in the afternoon I was supposed to arrange the photo arrangements for a ceremony where the President was greeting the 160 members of the championship teams in the Little League Baseball contest, the world championship which had been won by the Republic of China and Taiwan. We planned it for the Rose Garden and had it all set up. As we went out to place the ropes for the press, a little after 1:00, less than an hour before the ceremony, it started raining. The forecasters told us there were showers all around and it could very likely rain during the ceremony, so we made the decision to move it inside. The question was then what room would hold such a ceremony. It was decided the State Dining Room would be the best. The poor ushers, always, had to move out all the furniture in the State Dining Room. We moved in our lights and our mult sound equipment.

At 1:30, the cameras--it was really a messy scene. The baseball teams came in. Then the President came in. He was supposed to make a little speech and then exit. He made his little speech and the winning pitcher for the Taiwan team presented him with a game ball autographed by each member of the team and also a pennant, and a picture was taken. Then the Venezuelan team presented him with something else. The President turned to the other team and said, "Does anyone else have anything here?" So they grabbed the Indian pitcher for the California team, a guy 5'8," who weighed 240 pounds, which made for a great picture. He posed with the President and several other kids did. Then the President said, "Why don't we have a picture taken with each of the teams?" And I'll be darned, this took a lot of shuffling around, as you can imagine. He finally got himself with each of the teams, shook hands with each of the team members after the picture, and gave some autographs. When the Chinese team, the championship team, came through, he signed the caps. Each member of the Chinese team had their caps on. He signed their caps. The whole ceremony, rather than taking the ten minutes on the schedule that we had laid out for it, came closer to half an hour. To give some indication of the way the President operates. He's some kind of a guy in that sort of a situation. But

it was a very hectic day and lasted a long time. I didn't get home until late with a hangover and all. I was in bad shape. I went to bed very early and was very glad to get to bed.

Tuesday, August 27th, was a pretty routine day except for a couple of things. The President did decide that he was going to use that long shot although he didn't get a look at it. He went over and looked personally at the setup but did not look at it on TV camera, which I think makes a difference. He approved of it so that's what we're going to do for the news conference. It was also decided that I'd go out to Columbus right after the news conference and set up the TV operation for the speech that he'll make at Ohio State University on Friday. I'll probably stay out there Thursday and come back with the presidential party on Friday. This will be my first advance trip with the President. I've done a little of it as vice president [vice presidential staff], so I will be quite interested to see what is the difference in operation, if any. I doubt that there will be any. I'm kind of looking forward to the trip tomorrow.

Outside of that, it was pretty much of a routine day with not much out of the ordinary. A lot of time wasted in all these arrangements and scurrying around trying to find out what was going on where and who was going to be responsible for what. Actually I got less work done today than I have on any day since the President took office, in terms of concrete accomplishments. I'm afraid that's what it's going to be like from now on with the pressure of the minute by minute demands diminishing, going into more and more meetings and less and less productive work. We'll see what happens in the future.

**August 31, 1974**  
**Saturday**

It was the first news conference. I spent most of the morning running between the Press Office and the East Room, checking the set-up for the news conference. Everything went pretty well as far as the preliminaries were concerned. We had very few problems except that it took the electricians an awful long time to get the lights set-up. We didn't really get them in place until about 1:30, when things were ready to go and we brought the press over. There was a tremendous crush of press people trying to get in. We were supposed to take the camera crews and the sound people over first. We had to cut off at the door of the White House the number of reporters who tried to get in at the same time. We had kept them out for twenty minutes in the very hot and humid air because we felt it wasn't fair for them to try to get in with the camera crews, which it wasn't. There was a tremendous jam of people at the press conference. When we finally did let the correspondents in, every seat was taken. There was standing room. A good many members of the staff including Dr. Kissinger, Al Haig, Bob Hartmann, Jack Marsh and other high ranking people also were in.

The news conference went extremely well. The President sounded to me just a little nervous at the start. He said later he was nervous and he did sound nervous. I didn't think it started off well. He had a little limp joke about having to persuade his wife to postpone a press conference that she had scheduled for today in return for which he had to make his own breakfast, lunch and dinner for the next week. After that he did well.

The first question was on what he would do about President Nixon. He answered in essence that he was sympathetic to the idea that President Nixon had suffered enough, but that the legal actions had to take their course, and in due time he would exercise his prerogative as President to either grant a pardon or do whatever he felt was right. He was going to say no more until the legal process had been completed, because until then he basically had no part in it and would take no part in it, which was a good answer. From then on his voice had that ring of presidential authority which I've noticed amazingly in most of his public statements. It was a very good press conference.

Everybody seemed pleased with the set-up over which I had many misgivings. The press, especially the White House press covering it, seemed impressed and wrote favorably about it all the way, so we're going to continue that. I wrote a little memo to terHorst about a few minor technical problems involved, but basically the format seems very good and I think we'll continue it.

During the day they said that I should go to Columbus to prepare for the Friday morning speech the President will give to the Ohio State University graduating class. I finally left on the 8:55 flight that night after working right on through. The 8:55 flight of course was delayed, and we didn't get into Columbus until after 11:00. I didn't get to the motel until midnight and immediately went to bed. I got up the next morning and met

Eric Rosenberger, the advance press guy who said we had problems with lights. He wanted to get a CBS crew in. I would have preferred to have had the White House Communications people set-up the lights. They are very well equipped to do it, but he wanted to bring in CBS. He said the university officials were the ones who were protesting the lights and he felt it would be better if the university officials didn't get the idea that the White House was trying to run things, and instead let the university officials fight it out with the networks.

During Thursday we spent most of the day out at the arena, walking back and forth, and checking out things but basically waiting for the CBS crew from Chicago to arrive with their lights. The CBS crew came in at 2:00, but their lights didn't. Something had happened at the plane that the lights were supposed to come in on. The crew came in from one direction and the lights from another. As it turned out, the lights never did come in until midnight, and when they came in there weren't enough of the right kind. Thursday passed in a welter of physical effort as far as walking, standing and sitting was concerned, but very little was accomplished. It was a very frustrating day. I got the feeling that this was going to be a bad situation as far as the President was concerned.

The problem was the university officials wanted the film crews to be at least 80 feet from the platform, which meant they had to use long lenses which also meant they had to have a lot of light. At the same time, the university's educational TV station was doing a live TV pick-up. The university people said they could use the existing light, which was the light normally in the field house for basketball games and such. The TV people admitted this was below--well, right on the line--between minimum and bad lighting. They would have preferred more light, but they were afraid that the light that the TV film people brought in would overshadow the floor lighting and cause them camera problems. So everything was in a mess. The whole day was spent simply mulling around with no decisions. The type of day that is very frustrating to me.

We didn't get to bed until after midnight, with nothing really decided. So I didn't sleep well. I had to be at the auditorium at 6:00 in the morning so I had to get up at 5:00. I had four or five hours of sleep and was not in the best shape mentally when I did get to the auditorium on Friday to find that the CBS crew had set up their lights all on one side of the auditorium. This was fine for the film crews. They were getting a nice picture from the side, but the TV cameras, which were in different positions, were getting a picture of a face half in light and half in shadow—very bad. Finally, we scrounged around for other lights, but couldn't find any on that short notice. Finally, we got two small lights set up on the other side which half way counter-balanced the effect of the power lights on the other side, but it didn't really do the job. On film the President looked great, but on videotape he didn't look as good because the left side of his face was in shadow when he turned to the left. The effect was not professional, as we say. It was acceptable but not really that good. However, the President made an excellent speech and the audience was with him all the way. The event went off far better than anyone

expected it to, especially me in light of the conditions we had to deal with. It was basically a good day.

I flew back on the press plane which left an hour after the President did. We had a nice steak lunch going back and didn't get in until about 3:00. I spent the rest of the afternoon working on the film the President has to do next week to kick off the United Fund campaign. Each year the President traditionally does a five minute film appearance in which he inaugurates the campaign for the United Funds. It's on all networks. I basically rewrote the script that the United Fund people had provided. We hope to film that in the White House after his work is finished on Tuesday. So I'll probably be late getting home Tuesday. I was really ready for bed and luckily we didn't have to work too late on Friday. There was some talk that the President and the First Lady might go to Baltimore for a Bob Hope show but luckily that was squelched. The President went to the residence early and said that he was going to have a short day on Saturday. Since it was the Labor Day week-end coming up we decided to make it a one man day each day, with me working Saturday, Eric Rosenberger on Sunday and Larry Speakes on Monday. That way each of us would get two days off. So we ended up that way and I went home rather early, about 7:30 or so, and got to bed in good shape.

Saturday was one of the nicer days. I didn't get to work until 8:00. The first thing on the schedule was a presidential meeting with Attorney General Saxbe and Secretary of Defense Schlesinger in which he got the recommendations for the conditional amnesty program which the President wants to establish. The meeting was supposed to last 45 minutes but actually went for two hours. There was a lot of give and take and a lot of discussion, according to Jerry terHorst, who came out afterwards and said that literally everything was discussed, but no decisions were made and that there would be a decision by the President within a week. There would be some sort of a conditional amnesty program which would allow those who wanted to return, to return and earn their way back through some work of some kind, probably for the government. We'll know more about that later.

The rest of the day was really quite smooth. The President was supposed to take off for the golf course about noon and did leave about 12:30. I stayed in the office until about 3:30 or 4:00 and did some work which needed to be done. I asked Jerry if I could get off early because I needed to get the car inspected. That was the earliest I'd gotten away from the office. With two days off coming up, it was really quite an enjoyable prospect to get the car inspected and get home in time to have an early dinner with the Wrigleys, which is the first entertaining we've done in the house since Helen got back. It was really kind of a nice evening, after all that work at the office.

The week left me really mentally exhausted though. Drained, I guess you'd say from the amount of questions and the persistent questions that I got from some people. I can understand now why people get impatient with those who continually pester one with questions on the same subject over and over again. This is basically what it was. I was

really quite drained mentally when I got home. I'm looking forward to a week-end which I hope will recharge my mental batteries, as they say, and get me back into a shape where I'm looking forward to getting to work again. We'll see what happens from now on.

**September 3, 1974**  
**Tuesday**

I slept on Sunday, played a round of golf on Monday, got called off the course with basically an inconsequential phone call, and then went to work on Tuesday for a week that looked to be fairly interesting. On Tuesday, I was in charge and starting to make plans for the first big pre-Summit meeting which was to be held in the East Room. It was a long involved process. On Tuesday, we spent a good deal of the morning discussing the plans for it. We finally worked out the basic plans and went over them with *Public Impact*, the public broadcasting television, which wants to televise it live and will do the production. Except when we informed the networks that *Impact* was going to do it, the networks said, "We will pool it and Impact can take the off-the-air fee." The networks would then make the necessary videotape on their own and then put on what they wanted to at the end of the day. It's a very complicated procedure.

We spent a long time on Tuesday deciding what the physical layout would be. That was our big problem. We have almost 50 people to be seated. They're all economists. They're all important people in one degree or another. The problem is to make sure that no one thinks he's outranked by the other. We finally settled on a huge rectangular table which will occupy a big share of the East Room. We will simply have seats all around it and three TV cameras. It opens tomorrow morning and we hope that everything goes well. The NBC crew that will handle it will begin setting-up in the afternoon. We had a long argument with Bill Seidman who did not want any lights in there or any cameras. We finally convinced him that live coverage was right. So we're all set to go on another long day tomorrow. I've got to get in there before 7:00. They actually started setting up this afternoon but hadn't really got the table in position. We're going to cover it with a blue cloth and see how it looks tomorrow. We'll see how it goes.

**September 5, 1974**  
**Thursday**

This has been quite a euphoric day for me since I was basically the guy in charge of making the TV arrangements for televising this conference of economists which was opened by the President, who then spent about an hour listening to the opening part of it. He left, and then came back for the closing. All in all, it really was a brilliant day and a most interesting day in a lot of ways.

First of all, the TV picture simply looked magnificent. The table which Rex Scouten had covered with a blue cloth was so impressive, with the chandeliers and everything else in the East Room. It made a picture that was absolutely perfect. The only thing that marred the whole thing was that at the opening there was some problem with the President's microphone. The network guy apparently didn't know which mike the President had. There was great confusion and bad sound as far as the President's first two or three minutes of speaking were concerned. But it really wasn't that noticeable unless you were listening for it. I was in the room when it started and it sounded funny to me, on the PA system. It sounded worse on the replay, but it really wasn't that bad. You could clearly hear what he said. It just sounded hollow because of the fact that it was being picked up by other mikes. Outside of that everything went well.

The President was most impressive in his opening remarks and more impressive in his closing remarks, when he was summing up the Conference and thanking the people for participating. He had some head-to-head confrontations with a lot of the Democratic economists, Walter Heller and others. Heller, and this was at the end of the day when they were summing up and it was widely used, said the President had introduced Heller by saying that he was from a state which had given Michigan great problems in football. That it was rather unusual for a Michigander to introduce a Minnesota man, but he felt that it was very appropriate. They had a big laugh about the Little Brown Jug which is a traditional football rivalry between Minnesota and Michigan, and the fact that Minnesota now has the Little Brown Jug because they've beaten Michigan in the last couple of years. Heller remarked what a pleasure it was to get back to a White House where there is not only a little laughter, a little humor and friendliness, but also a willingness to face up to tough issues and listen to differing views, which obviously he and other Democrats had.

It left you with a very nice warm feeling about the way the whole thing was handled. Everybody was very happy with the way it went and the way it looked on TV. I heard nothing but compliments and that naturally made me feel good. It was a very great day as far as I was concerned. It was a lost day too, however, in as much as I spent the whole day at the Conference and had no time for anything else in the Press Office. But it really was a good day.

Note from Roberts:



Well, I lost a day in there somewhere. The meeting was actually on September 5, Thursday and all I said before applied to Thursday, September 5. What happened to Wednesday, September 4 except in planning for the meeting coming up on the 5th, I don't know. The first conference was on the 5th and everything I said about it still applies but it happened on the 5<sup>th</sup> instead of on the 4<sup>th</sup>. I really can't remember, at this time, anything about the 4th

**September 6, 1974**  
**Friday**

Friday, September 6th, was pretty much a quiet day. In the office, photos--but nothing very exciting, nothing very interesting and no big stories breaking. It looks as though the aftermath of the Conference is very good. We're going to use the same procedure for the Conference next week, which will also be in the East Room and will involve labor leaders. Everybody's a little worried about that. We had a meeting in the Roosevelt Room to discuss the plans for the one coming up next week. For the first time we learned that the President plans to send a message to Congress recommending a lot of cuts in a lot of programs on the same day that the Labor Conference begins. So naturally there's a recommendation that that be held up. It is on the 11th, and also the day that Congress begins. The legislative people want to get it into Congress right away. So there's a struggle between them and the economic side as to what's going to happen. Indications are, however, I think, that the message will be delayed.

**September 7, 1974**  
**Saturday**

This was a fantastic day. I've never spent a day quite like it. I was in charge of the press operation when the President went to a crab picnic Saturday afternoon, way down in Fairfax County, south of Fairfax. The Alexandria Police Department was putting on a crab feast for their police department and families, and invited the President. He felt he should go because the Department had done so much for him after he became President, while he was living in his Alexandria home and also when he was Vice President, when they provided a lot of expert protection and a lot of escorts. So he felt he should go down there.

The President not only went down, but brought with him three Russian cosmonauts and three American astronauts who had happened to come into the White House fifteen minutes before. There was also the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Dobrynin. The scene at this picnic was out in the middle of nowhere at a place that looked like an abandoned CC [Conservation Corps] camp, actually it was the Northern Virginia Police Academy, a police academy that looks very run down. About 300 people were there, and in comes the President in the helicopter. I'm there ahead of time, of course, and walk in with the press as he comes in. He comes up the macadamized road from where the helicopters landed and into the crowd. He keeps walking on through the crowd up to the speaker's platform and they introduce him. He makes a gracious little speech thanking the Alexandria police, and introduces the cosmonauts and the astronauts. Somebody presents him with a funny cartoon in which a hippy-looking guy is holding a cracked world in one hand and a sign saying, "Fix it" in the other. Then they invite the whole party to join in the crab feast.

The problem with crabs is you have to crack them apart and then pick out the meat. It's a very tedious and time consuming process, and if you don't like crab meat, it's not very interesting. The Russians obviously, except for Ambassador Dobrynin, had never done this. The President obviously hadn't done much. He said in Michigan they don't have crabs although they have a few crabby people. He sat down at a long table in front of the speaker's stand with the astronauts, and the cosmonauts and the Russian Ambassador. They're all sitting there at this table and they bring in a bushel of steamed crabs. The President sits there with a little wooden hammer along with the astronauts, teaching them how to crack crabs and eat crabs. There's a tremendous crowd. Everyone that can get up around the table is ringed all the way around the table. The press guys came in. There were four film photographers and several still photographers. They're as close as they can get. They're right up at the table and they're all shooting pictures of these people cracking crabs and eating crab. It's just an unbelievable scene! The President of the United States at this long table out in the middle of nowhere in Fairfax, Virginia, eating cracked crabs with the Russian Ambassador and the Russian cosmonauts.

This went on for a long time, and drinking beer I might add. Finally, the police sergeant in charge asked the crowd to move back. They did move back and gave them a little room, but that still didn't diminish the interest.

Finally the President decided he'd had enough, got up from the table and spent ten minutes signing autographs of all kinds. Then he decided he'd had enough of that, and said, "I want to look at the Model A." There was a 1929 Model A convertible on display. I don't know whether it was some policeman's or whether it had been left there or what. Anyway he went down to look at the Model A, took the Russian Major General, who is the head of the space program, sat him in the Model A and tried to explain to him through an interpreter that this was the kind of a car that he [the President] grew up with. He also put another cosmonaut in the rumble seat with a pretty girl and explained how he used to go in the rumble seat with girls himself. All the time photographers were crowding around, shooting film. The crowd is around there, too. It is a scene like I've never seen before involving the President of the United States.

Then he finally decides he had enough and heads back to the helicopter. We all get in the two helicopters and go back to the White House. On the way, the President decides to give them a tour of Washington. He takes them up the river, past the White House, up the river, over the Key Bridge, back down, right over the Pentagon, showing them the Washington area and into the White House again, where we all got out. I've never seen anything like it.

At the conclusion of this remarkable day was the word that I was supposed to get tomorrow off. But we're all going to have to work tomorrow. There's going to be an important announcement. The President is going to pardon Richard Nixon. I have to set up the one film camera in the Oval Office. That will be my job. I'll have to get to work at 6:00 in the morning and start on that. I'll also have to escort the President to church, going to 8:00 church across the street at St. Johns. The remarkable thing is that through all of this afternoon--all this long session with the astronauts and the crowd in which the President was very relaxed and obviously having a good time--in all this time, he did all this knowing that he'd made this decision to pardon Nixon, a decision which will certainly cause strong repercussions, coming as it did... I don't understand the timing myself. I think it's a mistake to do it now. Obviously there must be some reason why he's decided to do it now, but we'll know more about that tomorrow. It really impresses me that he is able to be as natural and down to earth as he was in that whole hour long affair at Fairfax at the Alexandria Police Association's Crab Feast today. Never any indication that any worry or any thought that had crossed his mind except having fun with the Russians. A very solid guy.

**September 10, 1974**  
**Tuesday**

I'm recording this later actually. Sunday was a day that I don't think I'll ever forget. A strange, strange day. We all got in early. The whole Press Office was there early. The instructions were that the announcement of the pardon was to be made at about 10:00 from the Oval Office. There would be one film camera and, of course, the audio would be piped into the press room and anybody could record it. There would be a very limited pool of photographers and writers with the one film camera. We were to make no mention of this until 8:30, an hour and a half before. At 8:30, we were to start calling everybody and on an off-the-record basis alert them to the fact that the President would have an announcement.

I took the President to church, got back and we started the calling. The reaction of the press at first was that there was some major international crisis, which we immediately killed, but we refused to speculate on what else it might be. During all that time, only one person said, "What is it, a pardon for Nixon?" Of course, he wasn't answered. Nobody was answered. But that was the only question I heard that had any indication of being right on target.

Just before the President was going to make his announcement, which we finally scheduled for 10:30, the Union's camera man and (machine turned off and on again) pool with one camera, that all network cameras would have to be in there. The President told terHorst that he only wanted one camera, which terHorst said was the case. We said, "Sorry, we're only going to use one camera," and they said, "Well, there may be no camera." We said, "That's your privilege. If you don't want to pool it, okay." Flop on our side because we really wanted that on camera. TerHorst was all ready to cave in and allow the three or four cameras that were needed in the room, when suddenly we got word from the Union guys that we going to go along with our plan. So they did. We set up the Oval Office and, except for the fact that there was considerable trouble with the sound system which delayed everything for fifteen minutes, we were ready to go at 10:30. But actually we didn't get the President in there until about 11:00. He came in and didn't say a word, except, "Are you ready?"

He read his statement, signed the Proclamation of Pardon for President Nixon and left, without saying a word. Very serious. The whole tone of the statement was serious, solemn. One report called it grim. It wasn't grim but it was very solemn. I thought he was very good in his statement. He ad libbed in the statement about the former President's health. In any case, following the announcement we scheduled a briefing by Phil Buchen. We immediately were bombarded with all kinds of questions as to why at this time the Pardon was given. To which Buchen really had no real answer. The answer was, "Well, it just seemed like a good time." So until those questions are answered I don't see very much except problems ahead.

During the Buchen briefing or just after it started really, the President went out to play a round of golf. TerHorst asked me to go out with the pool. I pointed out that I was supposed to have a day off on Sunday. He said, "Well, you can take Monday off, but we don't have anybody to go with the pool. Larry Speakes was supposed to, but they wanted him around because he had legal background. They needed a guy with legal background to handle the questions. So I went out with the pool.

Actually, although it was a wasted five hours, I was glad I did. After the golf game ended, the President actually must have had two or three drinks, far more than he usually does at the end of a round. He came out and I said I could give him a capsule summary of the reaction as I heard it on the radio if he was interested, which he was. I summed it up for him. Mostly the Congressional reaction, the first Congressional reaction was pretty mild. I think they were waiting to see what the public reaction would be. On the way out to the car, he said, "Bill, do you know that Jerry terHorst is thinking of resigning?" I said, "No. Why?" He said, "Well, he has very strong moral principles and feels this was not right and he's thinking of resigning. I wish you'd talk to him and see if you can convince him to stay because we need him." I said, "Yes, sir. He's very valuable and we do need him." He is very valuable. I still could not understand why terHorst would think of resigning on something like this.

I called the Press Office earlier and suggested that instead of going back to the White House, I simply go on home, where Helen was waiting for me at a Wrigley cocktail party. It was 7:00 before I got home and we were supposed to be there at 5:30. I got to the cocktail party, naturally almost two hours late. Most of the guests had left, so I had a couple of drinks. Then Helen said we had to get back because a roast which was in the oven would be overcooked, which it was. Just as we got back in the house the phone rang. The White House was calling. TerHorst had resigned.

I asked Tom DeCair, who called, whether I should come back and he said, "No, I think we can handle it." I said, "Okay, you sure? Okay." I hung up and I couldn't stand it. I had to get down there. I left without dinner and went down to work at the office and stayed there until after midnight. Shortly after I got there Helen Thomas came up and said we need a statement from the President. I said, "I'll try to get one." I called the President and finally got to talk to him, got a statement from him, and he said, "I wish that Jerry could appreciate how difficult this decision was for me. I don't think he did. It was a very difficult decision." He said he regretted very much terHorst's decision, but he understood it, and he could see how good people would disagree with him on this very difficult decision. But, he still thinks it's right for the country. So, you can't argue with that. Then he said, "Well, it's a much bigger ball game, Bill." I said, "Yes, sir, but there's a pretty good batter at the plate," and we said good night. I heard later from Kennerly that the President was very appreciative that I did come back.

Before I talked to the President I called Bob Hartmann. I had to break in on a conversation he was having with Jack Marsh. Well, first of all I called Hartmann and he

railed against terHorst. About the rat, the dirty rat that would do a thing like that. I said, "I agree with you, Bob, but right now I think we ought to have a statement from the President." He said, "Okay, you call the President," which is why I called the President. Then when I called Hartmann back to check the statement we had worked out, Hartmann said that I interrupted a call with Marsh, after great problems with the White House operator, who didn't want to do it. Hartmann said, "Who named Jack Hushen as acting press secretary?" I said, "I don't know." I got Tom DeCair on the phone and asked, "How did this acting press secretary thing come up?" Tom said he didn't know. He just thought it was just an assumption. I said it seemed to me that was an assumption anybody would make. I mean it's obvious that as deputy press secretary, he is acting press secretary. So Hartmann went back in, "Well, who named him?" The point is that nobody named him. It's just a common assumption. Finally I said, "Bob, I don't think that's really important because the fact is that he is acting press secretary, whether he has that title or not doesn't really make any difference." We finally called everybody on the calling list with the Presidential statement and went to bed in an atmosphere which was considerably less euphoric than the evening before.

The resignation of terHorst is going to make the impact of the Pardon even severer because terHorst said that he differed with the President as a matter of conscience. That's going to hurt badly. I wish he'd held up that resignation. I understand that he planned to hold it up, but that *Newsweek* had broken the story and he finally confirmed it.

Monday, September 9th, the one month anniversary of the President's succession to office, was a very, very rugged day. TerHorst came in for no more than fifteen or twenty minutes in the morning, cleaned out his office and left. He saw nobody. Jack Hushen had his first baptism of fire although it wasn't very serious. The President went to Pittsburgh to make a speech in which he didn't mention the Pardon. But, it help keep the press away from the Press Office most of the day. They didn't get back from Pittsburgh until the middle of the afternoon. Those of us who were left in the office, however, had the chore of answering the telephone, which was a considerable chore. We got our first telephone count which was very adverse. The telegram count was very adverse. The telephone calls ran about 2 1/2:1 against the President and the telegrams were running 5:1 and 6:1. I fielded a couple of calls from irate citizens which I really dislike to do. The situation doesn't seem overly bad. I think there is enough sympathy with the President so that he will get through this storm eventually, although it's clear the honeymoon and first glorious period is ended.

Despite the fact that the President was out of town a good deal of the day, it was a long day for me. I didn't get back until after 10:00 on Monday night and went in fairly early again on Tuesday. I got in at 7:30 because it was our first press briefing day. So Jack Hushen had his first day under fire and under the worst possible conditions. He did very well starting out with a statement that he planned to continue the open policies and disagreed with terHorst in resigning.

The word is beginning to get around incidentally that terHorst--to my feeling the real reason that terHorst resigned was because he wasn't told in advance that this decision was coming. He was told after the fact. In fact, Phil Buchen steered him off the original story by misleading him in saying that the guy who did the arrangements for the Ford side, an attorney named Benton Becker who had been seen out in San Clemente talking with the Nixon people, was out there simply to discuss a question of the tapes and didn't say anything about a Pardon. Well, of course that was a half truth. Like most half truths, it was designed to mislead, which it did. Buchen did very well in the briefing. It was the second time he'd done a briefing. He came in after Jack had finished, did very well, explained his misdirecting of terHorst by saying simply that terHorst did not ask him whether they'd been out for a pardon, which of course did not go over very well with the newspeople because they know the game as it's played.

We were really getting a lot of calls. A good many of the press people are talking about a deal and about the atmosphere of the old Nixon administration because of the secrecy of the announcement and all that sort of thing. It's not exactly pleasant to have to deal with that type of question. As Tom DeFrank says, "Oh, he's blown it. The election is down the drain in 1976." I don't think so. I think that this is going to be a short flurry. We may never see the Ford popularity go back to the levels it was last week, but we'll nevertheless see him restored in public opinion and justified, I hope, in his decision. Although to me, the timing is still bad.

I feel there must be some compelling reason that caused him to make the decision to grant the Pardon now, either health or mental problems with Nixon or something else. The Nixon people deny this, but it just seems to me there must be something that changed the President's mind. Incidentally, at his first news conference in August, he stated he'd let the legal action take its course before he made a decision. Now he's moving to subvert the whole legal action which of course irritates a lot of people. There's a lot of vindictiveness in some of those questions in the Press Office, which bothers me very much, and I'm an old Nixon hater from way back. There's a lot of desire for vengeance visible and audible in the questions as they come from some of the people out there. It's a minority, and a small minority, but it's a disturbing minority. I hate to see that, especially among press people. From the public, it's understandable. But not from the press people. So it's been a long, long day. I hope I get some time off sometime soon because I'm getting tired.



**September 13, 1974**  
**Friday**

Wednesday was an easy day, except I had to get up very early and get in to set up the Labor meeting which--this is September the 11th. CBS did the pool on this. It's very interesting to see the difference between the CBS pool operation and NBC. The NBC director came in and spent a lot of time there in the afternoon before and on the morning of the Conference and did an excellent job. The CBS director didn't show up until the morning of the thing. It went on at 9:45, and I think he came in at 9:00. The room was set up by somebody else and the lighting was done. He didn't have a look at it or do anything about it or plan it. I don't quite understand the CBS operation. I have less respect for the CBS production than I do the NBC. I really think NBC does a much better job. It's interesting to see them work. I still have to do one with ABC. In any case, the lighting wasn't as good as NBC had it. It was not as hard on the eyes either I might add, which helped out. But again, it was another interesting meeting.

The President stayed the whole morning and had some face-to-face confrontations with George Meany, Leonard Woodcock, and some of the other labor leaders. Even with the Pardon hanging in the air, it was all a very low key and friendly sort of a session. The President was hit only a couple of times by labor leaders that were really hitting him hard on issues, and even they were kind of soft when they came to personally talking to him. They were talking about the old administration mostly in their hard-hitting type of thing. So there's a lot of respect left for the President. He handled himself beautifully and did not seem perturbed at all or display any visible signs of concern over the situation of the Pardon. The phone calls are now evening off and actually running a little favorable. The telegrams and the mail count, however, continue to be running about 5:1 against the President's decision.

Incidentally, for the first time we're publicizing numbers. On the first day with terHorst gone, they asked me to draw up a little mini-release on the calls we were getting. So I simply wrote down the numbers. Tom DeCair, who was with the Nixon administration, said, "I don't think we ought to put that out." I said, "Why not? It's the truth." He said, "Well, we just never put out the numbers." So I showed the thing to Hushen. He said, "Put it out." So we put it out and I think that's a good thing. We've had a pretty good day.

The President then took off for Pinehurst where he's going down to dedicate the Golf Hall of Fame and play a few rounds of golf with some of the pros. I would have liked to have gone on that, but I had this damn labor conference so I stayed in the office and I went home early. I was the only one in the office who went home early, about 6:30, since there was nothing else to do anyway, and for the first time, had a good night's sleep.

Thursday was a very rough day. The press was really snapping at poor old Jack Hushen. He's a little weak in his answers to the press. The problem is he's just uncertain.

As a result, he is not as positive in defending the President as he might be. He's adequate, but not convincing. The press was really giving him a hard time in the briefing. The problem was that on Tuesday he said, "I'm authorized to say that the administration is studying the question of pardons for everybody in the Watergate case." This brought a whole raft of questions and Hushen went back to his statement.

On the following day, another statement was issued saying that in essence the statement the day before was not accurate--that what the administration was doing was planning to study any request for pardons that might come in from the Watergate people, which is entirely different. That left Hushen with a problem. Today instead of simply admitting, "Well, I goofed," he was trying to defend what he said and to claim that he was quoted out of context. He got involved in a pointless argument with newsmen about the fact that he really wasn't quoted out of context, which he wasn't. So it was a messy situation. I hope he comes out of it all right. It was a very unpleasant day.

It went on for a great while into the night and we're still getting all kinds of questions. I took I don't know how many groups of photographers over to film the piles of telegrams, etc. And we're going to have some of those stories, but it looks like it's going to be a longer fight than I thought to overcome this adverse reaction. I really think that statement on Tuesday was bad, simply accentuated the negative reaction and will give us problems longer than anything, although this statement today should really help clear things up.

At the end of Thursday, I left at 6:00 to take a plane to Montreal and speak to the Radio and Television News Directors Association Convention on Friday. I'm recording this now after returning from that. It was a fine time for me in renewing old acquaintances, but they gave me a pretty hard time, including some of the old acquaintances in answering questions about the whole situation. My problem is the same as Hushen's, when you don't really know everything it's very hard to make a decent case for the President. All you can say is, "Have faith in him," and that doesn't convince people that don't know him or don't understand what a great guy he really is. So I probably didn't do the President all that much good, although I think I did soothe some of the wounded feelings of some of the news directors who were upset over the way their local operations had been treated by White House advance [men].

One valuable suggestion came out of the meeting. We were asked to bring in local newsmen in talks with the advance people of whatever outfit is putting on the event to make sure they get adequate representation during the presidential trip and get access equal to anybody else's. I think that's a great idea and will so recommend it. That's one positive thing out of the Convention. The President sent a film message which was well received. They tell me there was no projector capable of putting it on when I spoke. I was supposed to introduce the presidential film. I didn't get to it, but they say it was good. So it was a pretty good day by and large.

I got back in the late afternoon. It looks as if things are going to calm down now.

The Nixon people issued a statement saying the former President has a new blood clot in the upper thigh that's giving him great pain and causing leg swelling. This could, I think, be the real reason why the President issued the Pardon when he did. So we'll see what happens.

One other thing, Frank Pagnotta came up and asked me to talk to one guy about selecting a new press secretary--what my recommendations were--which is kind of flattering even though it's pretty obvious that I won't recommend me and nobody else will. But I'm interested that Pagnotta would ask me to say something. So I'm going to make a couple of recommendations. Friedheim [Jerry Friedheim, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs] and Bob McCloskey [Ambassador-at-Large, State Department] from the government, and I don't quite know who I'd recommend from the print media, except somebody like Peter Lisagor, for example. I doubt they'd pick anybody from the media though since they got burned so badly with terHorst. We'll see what happens. I think the President's going to come out of this all right with the indications that President Nixon has severe physical problems. That would explain a lot of the unanswered questions that the press has been so upset about. Now I'm going to bed.