The original documents are located in Box 299, folder “Briefing Papers for President - Leaks” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Press Office Blamed in Leak, Nessen Boils Over

JACK ANDERSON
With LES WHITTEN

Washington—In a sizzling ex-
change, White House Deputy Staff
threatened to cut off Press Secre-
tary Ron Nessen from sensitive
presidential papers unless his staff
was more careful with them.

Nessen responded hotly. "The an-
swer is not to cut off the information
we need to do our job for the President.
the answer is to have the President fire
me and the rest of my staff this after-
and build a new press office that you
can trust."

Cavanaugh was upset over the loss
of some presidential briefing papers to
The Chicago Sun Times. He dashed off
a memo to Nessen, dated Sept. 30, com-
plaining about "finding copies of brief-
ing papers for the President lying
around the lower press office area."

Cavanaugh asked for Nessen's
"thoughts on how future occurrences
like this can be prevented" and demand-
ed "the name of the person on your
staff who you will hold accountable for
the proper handling of these papers."

This was followed by the term
"threat. In the event of another occu-
pence, distribution of these papers to
our office will be terminated, and you
will be asked for recommendations on
what disciplinary action should be con-
sidered for those involved."

Nessen fired back a memo the same
day, declaring that his office "is far
more careful of sensitive documents
around reporters than most other... of-
cines."

This was the "second time in recent
weeks," he noted, that Cavanaugh had
accused his staff "of leaking informa-
tion to the press." There was "no evi-
dence" contained in any, to either paper...

"I resent this, Jim," bristled Nessen.
"I'm not going to allow you to disparage
or unfairly accuse members of my
staff."

Footnote: Despite the harsh lan-
guage, Nessen told us that he and Cava-
ough are "the best of friends," and
that they "work very closely together."

OIL BOOMBOGGLE: Four powerful
House members have appealed privately
to the Ford administration to back off
an $11.5 billion boondoggle for the oil
and gas industry.

The administration supports a bill
that would promote the development of
synthetic fuels. Under its terms, the
taxpayers would take all the risk, and
the oil companies would reap all the
profits.

In an urgent letter to Treasury
Secretary William Simon, the four
House members - Rep. Charles W. Mac
(Okla.), Charles Goodell, (R-D.N.Y.)
and John Dingell (D-Mich.) - both subcommittees chairmen with jurisdiction
over energy matters, and blended the
letter with Philip Hayss (D-
Ind.), both science and energy experts,
explained:
The benefits of the bill, accordin-
g to the letter, would include such oil
and gas plants as Gulf Oil, Pacific
Lightning, Houston, Texas Eastern Trans-
mission, and Union Oil. Other official
documents indicate that Ashland, Exxon,
and Shell would also derive benefits
from the measure.

The bill would provide guaranteed
loans and price supports for experi-
minal synthetic fuel plants. Theoretically,
the plants would provide research infor-
mation for the government and the
industry. But the four congressmen
claim the real result would be a "wind-
fall" for big companies, which would
develop commercial rather than experi-
mental plants.

The taxpayers, of course, would pick
up virtually all the bills. Thus there
would be almost no financial risk for the
companies. But if the plants should ever
produce a profit, the taxpayers would
get none of it.
Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

White House Aides Clash on Leak

In a stinging exchange, White House deputy staff chief Jim Cavanaugh last week threatened to cut off press secretary Ron Nessen from sensitive presidential papers unless his staff was more careful with them.

Nessen responded heatedly: "The answer is not to cut off the information we need to do our job for the President; the answer is to have the President fire me and the rest of my staff this afternoon and build a new press office that you can trust."

Cavanaugh was upset over the leak of some presidential briefing papers to the Chicago Sun Times. He dashed off a memo to Nessen, dated Sept. 10, complaining about "finding copies of briefing papers for the President lying around the lower press office area."

Cavanaugh asked for Nessen's "thoughts on how future occurrences like this can be prevented" and denuded "the name of the person on your staff who will hold accountable for the proper handling of these papers."

This was followed by the terse threat: "In the event of another occurrence, distribution of these papers to your office will be terminated, and you will be asked for recommendations on what disciplinary action should be considered for those involved."

Nessen fired back a memo the same day, declaring that his office "is far more careful of sensitive documents around reporters than most other offices."

This was the "second time in recent weeks," he noted, that Cavanaugh had accused his staff "of leaking information to the press." There was "no evidence," contended Nessen, in either case.

"I resent this," Jim, bristled Nessen. "I'm not going to allow you to slander me or unfairly accuse members of my staff." He suggested that "if you seriously suspect my staff of what you have accused them of twice," the President should fire the whole lot.

Then he added emphatically: "Should the President decide not to fire the press office today, the answer to your question in the press office who can be held accountable for this and all other matters is named Ron Nessen."

Footnote: Despite the harsh language, Nessen told us that he and Cavanaugh are "the best of friends" and that they "work very closely together."

Oil Boondoggle—Four powerful House members have appealed privately to the Ford administration to back off an $11.8 billion boondoggle for the oil and gas industry.

The administration supports a bill which would promote the development of synthetic fuels. Under its terms, the taxpayers would take all the risks, and the oil companies would reap all the profits.

In an urgent letter to Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, the four House members call the scheme a "pennywise loan," which would enrich the oil and gas tycoons.

The four are Reps. Ken Hechler (D-W. Va.) and John Dingell (D-Mich.), both subcommittee chairmen with jurisdiction over energy matters, and Reps. Richard Ottinger (D-N.Y.) and Philip Hayse (D-incl), both science and energy experts.

DROPOUTS

The beneficiaries of the bill, according to the letter, would include such oil and gas giants as Gulf Oil, Pacific Lighting, Sunoco, Texas Eastern,Transmissers and Union Oil. Other official documents indicate that Ashland, Exxon and Shell would also derive benefits from the measure.

The bill would provide guaranteed loans and price supports for experimental synthetic fuel plants. Theoretically, the plants would provide research information for government and the industry. But the four congressmen claim the real result would be a "windfall" for big companies which would develop commercial rather than experimental plants.

The taxpayers, of course, would pick up virtually all the bill. Thus there would be almost no financial risk for the companies. But if the plants should ever produce a profit, the taxpayers would get none of it.

The House rejected a similar bill last December by a resounding 260 to 140 vote. But the crank-up costs have been reduced from $6 billion to $5.5 billion in loan guarantees, plus $500 million in price supports. This has made the bill more palatable, although the end cost will still be $11.8 billion.

The Ford administration has also joined the oil and gas industry in a mighty lobbying effort. For a time, the backers urged the ingenious claim that the bill would help small farmers to convert cow manure into synthetic fuels. But the claim, according to experts, is of the same texture as the measure.

Under the skilful manipulations of Rep. Olin Teague (D-Tex.), nevertheless, the bill stands a good chance to pass.

By Howard Post
MEMORANDUM FOR:  JIM CONNOR  
FROM:  JIM CAVANAUGH  
SUBJECT:  Distribution of the President's Briefing Papers  

September 10, 1976  

I recommend an immediate change in the format of the briefing papers for the President. Page 1 of the briefing paper should only include Roman numerals I and II. Under no circumstances should the talking points appear on the first page. 

My second recommendation is that in the distribution of the briefing papers that the Press Office only receive the first page. Frankly, there is no reason why they need the additional information for most of the meetings that the President has. 

I think the attached copy of my memorandum to Ron Nessen will provide more than enough background on why this procedure must be changed immediately. 

Attachments  

cc:  Dick Cheney  
    Ron Nessen  

(Stamp: Gerald Ford)
MEMORANDUM FOR: RONALD NESSEN
FROM: DAVID C. HOOPES
SUBJECT: Change in Briefing Paper Format

Hereafter Briefing Papers will be prepared with only the following paragraphs on the FIRST PAGE:

I. PURPOSE
   xxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS PLAN
   A. Background: xxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
   B. Participants: xxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
   C. Press Plan: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

On the SECOND PAGE will appear:

III. TALKING POINTS
   1. xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
   2. xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

If you or your staff have any questions on this new format, please call me.

Thank you.
MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN
FROM: JIM CAVANAUGH
SUBJECT: Press Office Distribution of Briefing Papers for the President

From time to time I have mentioned to you, to John Carlson, and other members of your staff my concern about finding copies of briefing papers for the President lying around the lower press office area. Obviously this practice still continues. Yesterday's Chicago Sun Times had an article quoting liberally from the President's briefing paper of September 7 on his meeting with Polish American leaders (Tab A).

I would appreciate receiving from you by c.o.b. Saturday your thoughts on how future occurrences like this can be prevented. I would also like to have the name of the person on your staff who you will hold accountable for the proper handling of these papers.

In the event of another occurrence, distribution of these papers to your office will be terminated, and you will be asked for recommendations on what disciplinary action should be considered for those involved in violating your new procedures.

Attachment
cc: Dick Cheney
Jim Connor
Ford follows his script with U.S.-Polish leaders

By David Murray
Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — President Ford met with a score of Polish-American leaders Wednesday and carefully followed a script that told him in advance: "You need address only domestic matters."

At the time Ford was skirting Eastern European affairs in his White House meeting, the Democratic Presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter, a half-mile away, hammered Ford's East Europe policy.

In addition to proclaiming Oct. 11 Pulecki Day in honor of the Polish general killed fighting for U.S. independence in 1779, Ford asked two aides, Myron Baroody and William J. Barney Jr., to ask the Federal Communications Commission to look into television programs that use "Polish jokes" as part of their broadcast content.

Indeed, Point 5 of a six-point list of "talking points" prepared for Ford by Baroody and Barney suggested the President tell the leaders: "As you know, Al (a reference to Alyosya Mazeski of Chicago, president of the Polish American Congress) and I are in distress by the manner in which some of our television stations are dealing with Polish Americans. We have no place in our society for ethnic slurs. "I've asked Bill and Myron to meet with the Federal Communications commissioner to see if we're doing all that we can to put an end to such tactics."

Asked if Ford had indeed repeated the points at the meeting, Baroody confirmed he had. Other participants said the language was close to the suggested wording.

"I don't know what the FCC can do exactly, but we'll look into it," Baroody said after the meeting.

He also confirmed that Ford had covered all five of the other points in the briefing sheet and the White House document that came into Sun-Times hands before the meeting.

Ford told the Polish-American leaders he would make a speech during the campaign outlining his policy on Eastern Europe.

In addition to Mazeski, who had requested the meeting with Ford, and Kobelinski, several other Chicagoans attended the meeting in the Cabinet Room. Among them were Rep. Edward J. Derwinski (R-Ill.).
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 7, 1976

MEETING WITH POLISH AMERICAN LEADERS
Wednesday, September 8, 1976
2:00 p.m.
The Cabinet Room

From: Myron B. Kuropas
William J. Baroody

I. PURPOSE

To respond to a request for such a meeting from Aloysius A. Mazewski, President, Polish American Congress

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS PLAN

A. Background: In anticipation of the Polish American Congress Convention scheduled for Philadelphia later this month, President Mazewski has requested a meeting to discuss present conditions in Poland, Affirmative Action programs, Polish jokes in the mass media and Polish participation in the Ford Administration.

At the request of the National Security Council, a foreign policy briefing will precede your arrival coupled with a briefing from the Office of Public Liaison. You need address only domestic policy issues.

B. Participants: (See attached list)

C. Press Plan: Full White House Press Corps coverage with TV prior to beginning of session.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to meet with you and to respond to your concerns.
2. Before we begin, Al, I just want you to know how pleased I am with the outstanding work Leonard Walentynowicz and Mitchell Kobelinski have been doing as members of my Administration. You and the Polish American community can be very proud of them.


4. I'm also pleased with the large number of meetings Polish American leaders have attended here in the White House during the past year. We need your input and we welcome it.

5. As you know, Al, I'm distressed by the manner in which some of our television stations are dealing with Polish Americans. We have no place in our society for ethnic slurs. I've asked Bill and Myron to meet with the Federal Communications Commissioner to see if we're doing all that we can to put an end to such tactics.

6. I'm also concerned with the way in which discrimination seems to linger in our society. Our nation's strength is based upon the concept of equal opportunity for all Americans. I am personally committed to the goal of eliminating discrimination on the basis of race, creed or national origin. I also believe, however, that the use of inflexible, mechanical means of achieving equality of opportunity -- such as quotas -- is inappropriate and, in the long run, detrimental to the overall effort.

Several months ago, I directed HEW Secretary Mathews and Labor Secretary Usery to review existing Federal affirmative action programs to insure that these programs were effectively carrying out their mandates -- to protect the rights of all Americans -- in a manner consistent with my overall philosophy. I expect to have the results of their review in the coming weeks.
Polish American Leadership

Mr. Joseph Bialasiewicz
Editor
POLONIA

Mr. Henry Dende
President
Polish Union of the United States

Congressman Edward Derwinski

Mr. Richard E. Jablonski
President
Union of Poles in America

Mr. Valentine Janicki
President
Polish Alma Mater

Mr. Daniel Kij
Polish Union of America

Mr. Mitchell Kobelinski
Administrator
Small Business Administration

Mr. Zbigniew A. Konikowski
President
Polish Army Veterans Association

Mr. Stanley Krajewski
Editor
POLISH DAILY NEWS

Mr. Jan F. Krawiec
Editor
DZIENNIK ZWIAGKOWY

Mr. Robert Lewandowski
Le Van Enterprises, Inc.

Mr. Aloysius A. Mazewski
President
Polish National Alliance of the USA
Mrs. Lillian J. Miciak  
Director  
Polish American Congress  

Mr. Kazimerz Olejarczyk  
President  
Michigan Division of Polish American Congress  

Mr. Joseph L. Osajda  
President  
Polish Roman Catholic Union  

Dr. Walter Sikora  

Mr. Dennis Voss  
Chairman of the Board  
Parkway Bank  

Mr. Leonard Walentynowic  
Administrator  
Bureau of Security & Consular Affairs  
Department of State  

Mr. Boleslaw Wierzbianski  
Editor  
POLISH DAILY NEWS  

Mrs. Elaine Wojcik  
Vice President  
Polish Womens Alliance  

Staff  

Mr. William J. Baroody  
Dr. Myron B. Kuropas
MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM COUGHLIN
FROM: RON NESSEN
SUBJECT: ATTACHED MEMO FROM ELEANOR COUGHLIN

Obviously, Jim, this memo from Eleanor is highly objectionable to me.
It follows a phone call from Eleanor in the same tone.
I am sure you agree this has already gone too far.

Attachment
MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN
FROM: Eleanor O'Donnors

I gather from your prominent mention of my name in your memorandum to Jim Connor of September 10, 1976, that since your office could not get its request for new carpeting for the lower Press Office approved, you apparently have decided to "walk all over me" instead. I just wanted to assure you that I have no objection whatever to this because it saves unnecessary expenditure of the taxpayers' money, a policy of the President's which I, for one, fully support.

I hope I can continue to be of service to your office.

cc: Dick Cheney
    Jim Cavanaugh
    Jim Connor
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 10, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM CONNOR
FROM: RON NESSEN

1. Please instruct Eleanor Connors and Sara Emery of your staff to handle briefing papers delivered to the Press Office in a more secure way than has been their custom in the past. They routinely drop these often sensitive briefing papers on desks or in "in" boxes when a member of my staff is not present to make sure the briefing papers are kept private and out of sight of the press. The way Sara and Eleanor have left briefing papers untended in the Press Office could lead to reporters seeing these private documents.

2. If you censor briefing papers delivered to the Press Office, I will instruct my staff to tell reporters, in response to queries about Presidential meetings, that we have no way to answer their questions because we have been cut off by the Staff Secretary's office from access to the necessary information.

cc: Dick Cheney
Jim Cavanaugh
MEMORANDUM FOR:  JIM CAVANAUGH
FROM:  RON NESSEN

I am totally baffled by your unfounded accusation that someone in the Press Office leaked or showed a copy of the President's briefing paper for his meeting with Polish-Americans to a reporter from the Chicago Sun Times.

Who else in the White House had this briefing paper? I suspect several dozen copies of the paper were in circulation. My experience has been that the staff of the White House Press Office is far more careful of sensitive documents around reporters than most other members of other offices.

This is the second time in recent weeks that you have accused a member of the White House Press Office staff of leaking information to the press. There was no evidence in either case. I resent this, Jim. I'm not going to allow you to disparage or unfairly accuse members of my staff. This is the hardest working, most loyal and dedicated and most trustworthy group of people I have ever worked with anywhere. I have seen no evidence that any other office in the White House has a staff more loyal and trustworthy than mine.

If you seriously suspect my staff of what you have accused them of twice, the answer is not to cut off the information we need to do our job for the President; the answer is to have the President fire me and the rest of my staff this afternoon and build a new Press Office that you trust.

Should the President decide not to fire the Press Office today, the answer to your question is: The person in the Press Office who can be held accountable in this and all other matters is named Ron Nessen.

cc: Dick Cheney
Jim Connor