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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 4, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR PHILIP BUCHEN

FROM:

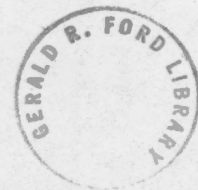
RON NESSEN *RHN*

SUBJECT:

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Attached is a letter from Maxine Cheshire of the WASHINGTON POST, which was received March 4, 1975, by Larry Speakes of my staff, who handles inquiries from Mrs. Cheshire.

I would appreciate your advice before replying to this letter.



The Washington Post

1150 15TH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20071
(202) 223-6000

March 3, 1975

Mr. Larry Speakes
Assistant Press Secretary
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

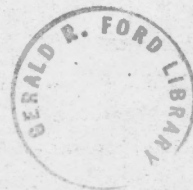
Dear Larry:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC, Section 552, I hereby request that you disclose to me for inspection and copying the following records:

1. A list of donors and amounts contributed to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House since its formation.
2. A list of expenditures by that Committee, along with the names and addresses of all persons to whom payment was made for any purchase or service.

As I have indicated earlier to you by phone, I would like this information as promptly as possible. In view of President Ford's policy on openness in such matters, I cannot imagine that he or anyone in his administration would feel that the public does not have a right to know who gives to this historic White House project and how the money is spent.

Sincerely,
Maxine Cheshire
Maxine Cheshire



Press Office

3/20/75

Phil:

These questions were left over from yesterday's briefing. I doubt if they will come up today in the same fashion, but a general statement of Presidential policy regarding the operation of the FBI would be helpful for Ron ~~taxmax~~ in case the subject comes up today.

Jack Hushen

FBI

Deakin: Has the President requested a report from the AG re. the FBI breaking into the Alexandria home. Does the President feel there are circumstances under which the FBI should be able to enter a private home without a search warrant?

Ted Knap: What is the President's reaction to the FBI report concerning disruptive action taken against the socialist party.

Mort Kondracke: Did Levi receive instructions from the President to bring, for the first time, the FBI operation completely under the AG?

*Lazarus will
call Hushen*



Press Office

1:10 p.m.

Friday, March 21

Eva,

I had a call from a John Stevens in Boston who is the collecting agent for Avis Rent-a-Car re a bill owed to Avis by Eric Rosenberger of the Nessen staff. The bill is for \$222.37. Avis is supposedly bring a civil suit against Mr. Rosenberger.

I spoke with Mr. Rosenberger regarding the call. He indicated that he had spoken to Mr. Stevens and had advised him to send whatever to him with a copy to Mr. Buchen. He also indicated that the bill had been sent to the White House (disbursement I guess) and he thinks they may have paid the bill now (submitted his claim twice). He didn't seem too interested in really finding out whether the bill had been paid. He also gave Mr. Stevens his room # as being 750 - EOB. The telephone directory shows otherwise.

I called Jay and explained the matter to him. Jay said he would speak to Mr. Rosenberger.

I have not mentioned to Mr. B. and think we should wait if we tell him at all.

Shirley



Eva,

Farrell

Mr. Buchen asked me what had happened on this which I knew nothing of. I did talk with Sara about it and she is sending me a note saying she is now 100% sure that

Shirley

See note attached.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

4/23

Shirley:

Attached is a copy of the Jayson letter as it went out. It was cleared by Friedersdorf, Marsh and Cheney.

On the answer to question #5 (which we wanted Mr. Buchen's clearance on) I checked on 3/31/75 with Billy Shaddix down in our Photo Office and he confirmed definitely (and has backup) that all photos used for political purposes are indeed paid for by the RNC.

A note of interest -- Mr. Nessen's office says that they got back a very cordial note from Jayson who was please with such a complete and informative letter.

Sara *S.*

Press Office

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 21, 1975

Mr. Lester S. Jayson
Director
Congressional Research Service
The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540

Attention: Dr. Virginia McMurtry

Dear Mr. Jayson:

In response to your letter to me of March 6, 1975, I am including below the answers to your questions about the White House Photographic Office you reported that a member of Congress requested answers to:

1. How many photographers whose salaries are paid from Federal funds are attached to the White House at the present time?

There are currently five photographers who are assigned to the White House Photo Office and are paid by the White House.

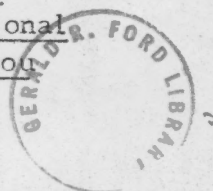
2. Are any of these photographers on loan to the White House from other Executive Branch departments and agencies? If so, how many?

None of these photographers is on loan to the White House from any other Executive branch, department or agency.

3. By which Executive Branch departments, agencies, or other sources of funds are the salaries of the White House photographers paid?

Since none of the photographers is assigned from an Executive branch, department or agency, each is paid by the White House.

4. Is there any existing regulation or policy which differentiates between using the White House photographers for private or personal as contrasted with public or official assignments? If so, could you kindly describe such regulation or policy?



The White House Photo Office policy is that all White House photographers will perform only official photography while on duty. A check with each of the photographers indicates that none perform any freelance photography as they are always on call to serve the President and cannot make advance commitments of an unofficial nature to perform on their own time.

5. If a picture taken by a White House photographer for official purposes is subsequently used for political purposes, such as campaign publicity, is any reimbursement or other form of payment made? Please describe how this matter is handled.

Any official White House photographs which are subsequently used for political purposes are paid for by the Republican National Committee.

6. We would appreciate any additional information or comments which you believe to be relevant to this inquiry.

Most of the photographs issued by the White House Photo Office go to fulfill requests from the American public. Since most of these requests are for pictures of the President or the First Lady, we have used substantial numbers of lithograph photos to reduce the costs substantially per print. The second largest category of requests, after those from the general public, includes requests from members of Congress for their personal use and for their constituents. Additionally, in the past six months we have placed tighter control on the number of official photographs which are sent to citizens who meet with the President.

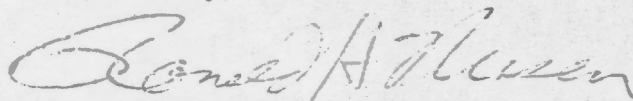
We do not send out unsolicited photographs to anyone. We have also instituted a policy whereby any photographs which go to a publication on an exclusive basis are also made available upon request to any legitimate news medium on the date of publication of these exclusive photos. Occasionally, the White House Photographer may cover an event which was not covered by the press photographers. If his photographs are of particular news value and requested by the press, they are released for publication.

It should also be noted that the primary purpose of the White House Photo Office is for historical documentation of the Presidency. All photographs and negatives of the President at the close of each Administration are sent to the National Archives and Records Service for preservation.



I hope these answers are helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronald H. Nessen".

Ronald H. Nessen
Press Secretary to the President



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

why no response?

3/28/75

Eva:

Mr. Buchen called on the Lester Jayson letter we sent through him for clearance.

He wanted to make absolutely certain sure that the answer to question #5 was indeed true (i. e. any official White House photographs used for political purposes are paid for by the RNC)

I checked with the Photo Office and they assured me that they were 90% certain this is the policy, but that to make sure 100% I should check with the man who sends the bills in for payment (Billy Shaddix) who will be in on Monday.

We'll just hold the letter until the group returns from Palm Springs -- we'll have then checked it out completely.

Thanks.

Sara
Sara Currence
Dave Hoopes's Office



Friday 3/28/75

4:05 This has been approved by Mr. Cheney and
is O.K. to send out if you and Friedersdorf
say it's O.K.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: 3/28/75

TO: PHILIP W. BUCHEN

FROM: DAVID C. HOOPES

FYI: []

Comment:

Could you please look over the attached letter to be sent from Ron Nessen to Lester Jayson and let me know as soon as possible if you have any problems -- we need your clearance especially for the answer to #5.

Thank you.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Mr. Lester S. Jayson
Director
Congressional Research Service
The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540

Attention: Dr. Virginia McMurtry

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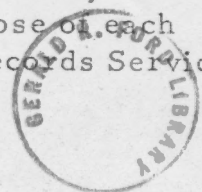
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6. We would appreciate any additional information or comments which you believe to be relevant to this inquiry.

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It should also be noted that the primary purpose of the White House Photo Office is for historical documentation of the Presidency. All photographs and negatives of the President at the close of each Administration are sent to the National Archives and Records Service for preservation.



I hope these answers are helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Ronald H. Nessen
Press Secretary to the President



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR WHITE HOUSE SENIOR STAFF

FROM: RON NESSEN *RN*

Attached is a copy of Secretary Kissinger's BACKGROUND briefing for newsmen Thursday evening prior to the President's address to the Joint Session of Congress.

This transcript is provided to you for your information and to increase your understanding of the factors underlying the President's speech.

Because of the sensitive nature of the information and the ground rules under which the information was given, I ask your diligent protection of the source. Under those ground rules, the information can only be attributed to "Administration officials."



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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 15, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: RON NESSEN *RNN*

Attached find a copy of a scurilous article which appears in this week's New York Magazine. I have outlined the key sentence in yellow. It suggests -- without any evidence whatever -- that Gerald Ford may have attended a meeting with Nixon and other White House officials on June 22, 1972, at which hush money payments for the Watergate burglars were discussed, as well as a plan to use the CIA to head off a Watergate investigation.

I'm surprised that any responsible reporter would use such flimsy suggestions as the basis for a question. Nevertheless at my briefing today I was asked whether I could state categorically that the President was not at this meeting.

I would like to nail this one down very hard and very fast. Can you get me an answer by the close of business today or first thing in the morning?

C.

1. Don't reveal such info
2. Don't reveal G/E of any such info.
3. Don't ^{show} object 22 info
4. To best of my recollection
I didn't attend, testimony
contrary



due 4/15 106

The Skeleton in Gerald Ford's Closet

By Frank Fox and Stephen Parker

Since Gerald Ford's ascension to the presidency, he has made a number of disturbing decisions in foreign and domestic areas which are more properly of personal concern to Richard Nixon than they are to the country.

Incidents such as Ford's request that Congress allocate \$850,000 for Nixon's transitional expenses; Ford's maintenance of Nixon's San Clemente staff with his own White House funds; the secretly negotiated Ford-Nixon tapes agreement; the pardon of Richard Nixon; Leon Jaworski's refusal to prevent or to challenge the pardon; Ford's sudden revival of an abandoned and discredited Vietnam policy—these and other domestic and foreign actions have so far baffled political observers. Given Ford's reputation for political caution, if not timidity, it is difficult to believe that he has been acting voluntarily.

The explanation for Ford's bizarre behavior may lie in evidence which indicates that Gerald Ford was present at a meeting of high Nixon administration officials during which support payments for the Watergate burglars and John Mitchell's plan to use the CIA to head off the FBI investigation into the Watergate break-in were discussed. The meeting, which appears to have taken place on June 22, 1972, five days after the Watergate break-in, was attended by Nixon, Mitchell, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Colson, and Clark MacGregor, among others. The meeting began in the Roosevelt Room at 9 A.M., moved at 10 A.M. to Nixon's Executive Office Building office across the street from the White House, and continued until 11:30 A.M. President Nixon was present for the last hour and a half of the meeting, and a tape of that portion exists.

The White House has persistently failed to either confirm or deny Ford's presence at this crucial Watergate meeting, but Ford himself has indicated that some such meeting did indeed take place.

During Ford's vice-presidential hearings in November, 1973, Congressman George Danielson asked Ford whether he had had any discussions with Nixon or with Nixon's aides about raising bail money or defense funds for the Watergate burglars. Ford said that he had not. Then the following extraordinary exchange took place:

MR. DANIELSON: Have you at any time since June 17, 1972, the day of Watergate, spoken personally or by telephone with the President, Mr. Mitchell, the former Attorney General, Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, John Dean, Mr. Colson, Mr. Magruder, or anyone else at the White House concerned [sic] the raising of funds for the support of the families of the Watergate defendants?

MR. FORD: None whatsoever. Where I may have called, I might have casually said, in a meeting where there were a number of people that I thought it was, if it was being done, it ought to be stopped and if it was thought of as an undertaking, it ought not to be done.

This time, Ford's denial was in fact an admission of involvement, although couched in terms so vague that Danielson and the committee failed to comprehend its significance. (Congressman Danielson, commenting on Ford's response to his questions, recently told us that "one could infer that there was such a meeting," and that Ford

was not speaking out of fantasy but "out of recollection.")

Certainly, Ford would have been a logical choice to attend at least one of the strategy meetings that followed the Watergate break-in. After all, he had known G. Gordon Liddy since 1968, and had recommended Liddy, then a defeated independent Republican congressional candidate in upstate New York, to Eugene Rossides, who gave him a job in the Treasury Department. When, two years later, Rossides dismissed him, Liddy went to work as a member of the White House "plumbers." In December, 1971, Liddy was assigned as counsel to John Mitchell's Committee for the Re-election of the President.

On Thursday morning, June 22, 1972, five days after the Watergate break-in and three years after Gerald Ford had brought G. Gordon Liddy to Washington, Liddy seemed on the verge of destroying the party's chances of winning a national election. If any two men at that June 22, 1972, Thursday-morning meeting would have felt a profound sense of responsibility for what had happened, they would have been John Mitchell and Gerald Ford.

Ford's association with Gordon Liddy would not have been the only reason for his presence at the June 22 meeting. There was also the CIA connection. (According to a White House tape of a meeting between Nixon and Haldeman on Friday morning, June 23, 1972, Mitchell had formulated the CIA cover-up plan the day before, and Dean had analyzed it that night.) From 1955 through 1965, Ford had been a member of a small committee overseeing CIA appropriations, and, according to his own testimony, had detailed knowledge of CIA covert activities. When Ford assumed the post of minority leader, his responsibilities in this area ended, but there is no reason to believe that his knowledge of CIA operations and his closeness to CIA officials had diminished. On the contrary, they may have increased. We know that in 1970, Ford, in his efforts to impeach Justice Douglas, worked closely with John Mitchell (then attorney general and a member of the "40 Committee," the country's top national security intelligence organization, one of whose five members is head of the CIA); Ford received information on Douglas from Mitchell, who had gotten it from the FBI and the CIA.

Thursday, June 22, was the last possible day that Ford could have been briefed on Watergate and still have had time to convey the administration's position on Watergate to his congressional troops. The next day, Friday, Ford was scheduled to leave with Representative Hale Boggs, the Democratic majority leader, on a long-planned two-week trip to China at the request of President Nixon. Even though Ford was to breakfast with Nixon on Friday morning, before boarding a plane at Andrews Air Force Base, the meeting would also have been attended by Boggs. Ford's trip to China could not have come at a worse time for the White House. It would have been far more desirable to have Ford at his post and in a position to help orchestrate Republican congressional and party responses to Watergate developments. But to cancel the trip might have suggested White House anxiety over what Ron Ziegler had termed "a third-rate burglary."

The meeting on Thursday, June 22, was the first brainstorming meeting since the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters on Saturday, June 17, 1972. (The meeting which would have normally taken place on Monday, June 19, had not been held; Haldeman had been in Key Biscayne with Nixon; Mitchell and other CRP officials had been in California.)

The most complete record of the final 90 minutes of this two-and-a-half-hour meeting would be contained in the White House tapes, but, for reasons best known to himself, the only material pertinent to this meeting which Leon Jaworski entered into evidence were the Haldeman,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF

FROM: JERRY JONES

The audio only portion of the President's questions and answers at the American Society of Newspaper Editors will be on Channel 6 at 1:25 p.m., today.



Press office

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 23, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: PHIL BUCHEN

FROM: RON NESSEN *R.N.*

Could you look at the attached letter and give me suggestions on its contents, if they should be changed?

The check addressed to me was in a Republican Finance Committee envelope with no correspondence of any kind. Apparently it had been sent, in addition to a check for them, and they passed it along.

I have no idea who Ralph L. Hill is, and of course want to return the check to him.

*Looks O.K.
to me.
P.W.B.*



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 23, 1975

Dear Mr. Hill:

I am returning the check which the Republican National Finance Committee forwarded to me, made out in my name for \$50.

I presume this is a campaign contribution, and if so, it should be made out to the Republican National Committee and sent directly to them. I have nothing whatever to do with campaign donations for the Republican National Committee.

Sincerely,

Ron Nessen
Press Secretary
to the President

Mr. Ralph L. Hill
4625 Oakwood Place
Riverside, California 92506

RALPH L. HILL
4625 OAKWOOD PL.
RIVERSIDE, CA 92506

No. 1116

4-14-1975

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PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

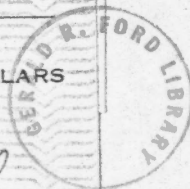
Ron Nessen, White House Press Secretary \$50.00

Fifty & 00/100

DOLLARS

SECURITY PACIFIC NATIONAL BANK
Riverside Main Office
3773 Main St., Riverside, Ca. 92501

Ralph L. Hill



*Press Office
Policy*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 7, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF

FROM: Ron Nessen
Press Secretary to the President

SUBJECT: "Ground Rules" Regarding Interviews with Newsmen

Most White House officials have occasion to be interviewed by the news media concerning matters pending before them or to discuss general Administration policy. The President supports and encourages increased accessibility to the media, balanced, of course, with the need to insure a proper and timely flow of information to the public.

There are certain ground rules to be observed when talking to a reporter. The most important rule -- and the one most often misused or misunderstood -- concerns the attribution of information given to a newsman by someone on the White House staff.

It is the responsibility of the person releasing the information to set the level of attribution -- on the record, on background, on deep background, off the record, or for guidance.

It is the reporter's job to seek the highest level of attribution for his story. If no discussion of attribution occurs, the reporter is correct to assume the information is on the record.

The five types of attribution under which the Press Office operates are as follows:

ON THE RECORD: All statements are directly quotable and attributable, by name and title, to the person who is making the statement.



ON BACKGROUND: All statements are directly quotable, but they cannot be attributed by name or specific title to the person commenting. The type of attribution to be used should be spelled out in advance: A White House official, an Administration spokesman, a government lawyer, or whatever.

ON DEEP BACKGROUND: Anything that is said in the interview is usable but not in direct quotation and not for attribution. The reporter writes it on his own, without saying it comes from any government department or official.

NOTE: Reporters generally dislike this form of attribution and it should be used only in the most delicate circumstances and urgent news. Too often, government officials use "deep background" to plant or leak stories or to get the reporter to stick his neck out when the official has only part of the information.

OFF THE RECORD: Information given "off the record" is for the reporters' knowledge only and is not to be printed or made public in any way. The information also is not to be taken to another source in hopes of getting official confirmation. This form is mainly used to prevent reporters from speculating along inaccurate lines.

NOTE: Reporters do not like to obtain information "off the record" because they have to sit on it while their competitors are able to get it "on background" somewhere else and print it. Some absolutely refuse to hear it, so it is essential to secure a reporter's agreement before going "off the record." But if there is good reason -- and the reason is clear -- they will go along with it.

GUIDANCE: Reporters often will ask for "guidance" on the particular timing or status of an event. In this case, they believe they are receiving the information on a "background" basis, and not "off the record," and the information will be used in stories which say "White House sources predicted that the appointment would be made this week." It must be made clear when giving a reporter "guidance" whether he can use the information in a story.



It is important to understand that the terms "off the record," "background," "deep background," and "guidance" are much misused, even by reporters themselves. To avoid confusion which might have serious consequences, make sure you and the reporter know exactly how he is receiving his information and to whom he can attribute it before the interview begins.

You should both understand not only which of the categories you are speaking under, but exactly what that category means to the other person.

One of the most commonly misunderstood uses of attribution is by the government official who says to a reporter that he is supplying the information off the record and not to quote him. By saying, "Don't quote me," the source is really talking "on background" and not "off the record," so the reporter feels he is entitled to use the information as long as he doesn't attribute it to a specific source.

Those who choose to talk to reporters on something other than an "on the record" basis should be aware that they, as well as the reporter, have a responsibility for keeping the conversation confidential. An official who tells someone he has been interviewed by a reporter can't complain if he is later identified with something written by the reporter.

Finally, the Press Office strongly recommends that White House officials speak "on the record." It is by far the safest policy.

We also encourage you to speak to reporters openly and fully about matters within your area of responsibility and personal knowledge -- but you should be aware of the dangers of uninformed speculation or talking about something not within your field of expertise.



Press

Wednesday 5/7/75

Press Interview
5/8/75
3:30 p. m.

10:40 Aaron Latham is doing a story on the White House Staff and we have scheduled an appointment for him tomorrow (Thursday 5/8) at 3:30 p. m.

965-5686

He is seeing Cheney at 4:30 p. m.

He is with the New York Magazine.



Press

Wednesday 5/7/75

Meeting
5/8/75
3:30 p.m.

11:25 Kathy in Cheney's office said Ron Nessen said Cheney should definitely not meet with Aaron Latham ----- so Kathy is telling him that Cheney had scheduled something she was unaware of, and will have to reschedule at another time (but won't).

Do you want to go ahead with it?

(Nessen said this was another opportunity to do a "knife job" on the President.)



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

RON NESSEN

FROM:

PHILIP W. BUCHEN

P.W.B.

If you are asked any questions about the remarks on NBC last night by Carl Stern which he attributed to me, here are some comments:

Stern asked me why the Congressional leadership was not consulted by the President on the final actions until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday when the President had already made his decisions and issued an order to take the Mayaguez and Koh Tang Island and support the marine landings with tactical aircover and strikes at mainland military targets. I pointed out that not until the NSC meeting from about 3:45-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday did he receive the necessary information on which to base the decisions and that his orders for the operation had to be issued within that period in order to begin operation at dawn in the Gulf of Siam. The War Powers Resolution calls for the President to "consult" with Congress only "in every possible instance ... before introducing" U. S. Armed Forces into hostilities or situations of imminent hostility.

Here there had been earlier advice and response-opportunities given Congress on the preliminary introduction of armed forces to try to prevent further movement of the captured Mayaguez and removal of the crew from the ship or the nearby island. On the follow-up seizure and rescue actions, the consultation took place as soon as possible after the 5:30 p.m. end of the Wednesday, NSC meeting, by starting them at about 6:30 p.m. Even then there would have been time, if Congress could have actually persuaded the President of the need for doing so, to modify the President's orders to the armed forces involved.

Press



In this particular case, with only a few Senators who questioned one aspect of the orders and otherwise unanimous concurrence, the President had obviously ordered what a majority of those consulted were in favor of doing.

I also made the point that it is not appropriate, and I did not believe the War Powers Resolution required it, that Congress be consulted on advance contingency planning because the choice of action would in the end be controlled by fast-breaking developments in the actual situation and that contingency plans had to be highly secret or they could be thwarted by premature disclosure on the part of any dissident who objected to any of the plans.

cc: John Marsh
Don Rumsfeld
Brent Scowcroft



Press Office

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

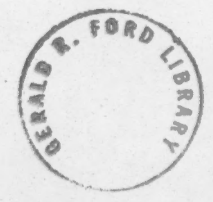
May 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Carolyn Wimmer

FROM: Eva Daughtrey *Eva*

As you requested, I have checked Mr. Buchen's appointments and phone calls for the period May 8-16 and find Mr. Buchen talked with the following people:

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
| May 8 | Don Sanders | AP |
| May 9 | Alex Taylor | WZZM |
| May 12 | Walt Rogers | AP |
| May 13 | Phil Jones | |
| May 15 | Carl Stern | |
| May 16 | James Whitcover | Washington Post |



Tuesday 5/20/75

12:05 The Press Office is trying to correct that article that appeared in the New York magazine and is asking assistance in providing to them (Carolyn Ext. 6623) any interviews (in person), phone calls or what-have-you that Mr. Buchen might have had with the Press during the week of May 8-16.

She is in Margita White's office -- Gerry Warren -- Rm. 164

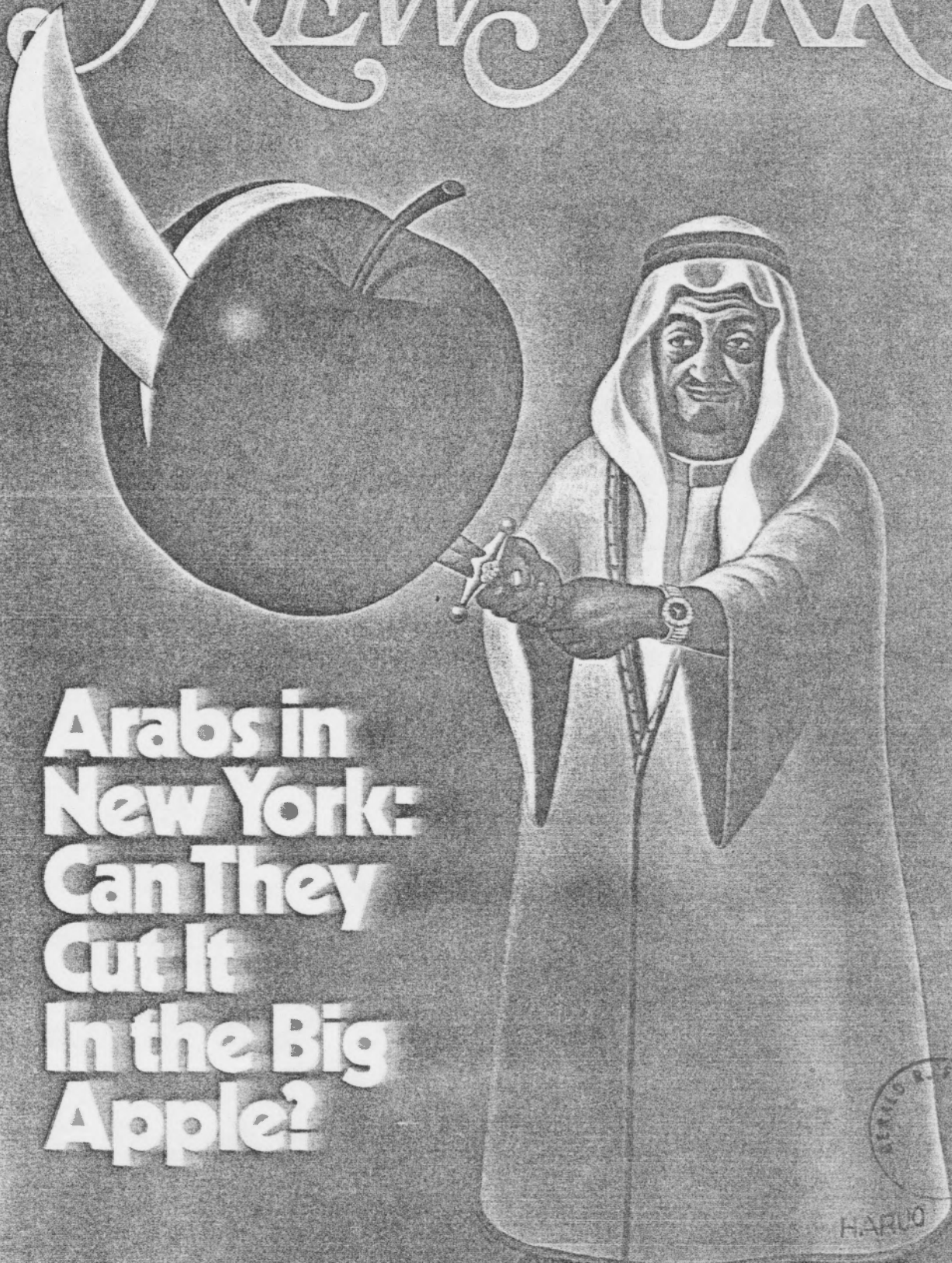


People Are Talking About... Vogue's New Sex Kick
The Mysterious Q-Rating: TV's Casting Secret
First Color Pictures of the Met's New Lehman Wing

15 CENTS

MAY 28, 1975

NEW YORK



**Arabs in
New York:
Can They
Cut It
In the Big
Apple?**

BERNARD BORD LIBRARY
HARLO

THE CAPITOL LETTER

BY AARON LATHAM

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUN

One reporter called him "the dummy's dummy." He was referring to President Ford's press secretary, Ron Nessen. Now it would seem the dummy's dummy is trying to dummy up.

Nessen recently attended a cabinet meeting on board the presidential yacht *Sequoia* at which he seemed to suggest—in informal remarks made to White House staff members who had come along for the ride—that the Ford White House had become a little too open.

What Nessen reportedly said was: "A lot of White House staff members think they have been giving too many interviews recently and are thinking of turning down all requests for a while."

Of course, Nessen did not come right out and say not to talk to reporters, to clam up and act like Nixon people, but a lot of people seemed to get the point.

The next morning shortly after 9 A.M. my telephone rang. It was Richard Cheney's secretary calling. Cheney is a deputy assistant to the president. The secretary canceled the interview I had scheduled that afternoon at 4:30. She added that there was not much hope for rescheduling it anytime in the foreseeable future. Cheney had attended the cabinet meeting.

The next call was from Philip Buchen's secretary. He is the president's counsel, which means that he has the job John Dean made famous. The secretary canceled my 3:30 P.M. appointment and did not believe it could be rescheduled. Buchen had been on board the *Sequoia*.

The next to call was Robert Hartmann's secretary. He is counselor to the president. The curious thing was that

I didn't even have an appointment with him, although I had requested one. The secretary said there was no hope for an interview anytime soon. Hartmann had been on the president's yacht.

The next to call was Roderick Hills, who spoke to me himself. Hills is a deputy counsel to the president; he is also the husband of Carla Hills, the new secretary of HUD. (One imagines that they have fascinating conversations over breakfast. "Darling, I need a half-billion for that public housing in Chicago." "I'm sorry, darling, but the president has already promised that money to Defense.") Hills said he could not make our 10 A.M. appointment.

I asked him why. He told me about what Nessen had said on board the *Sequoia* the night before.

All four calls had come within fifteen minutes.

Peter Roussel, White House staff assistant, didn't bother to call. When I showed up for our appointment at the White House at 5 P.M., he just happened to be busy.

At the White House briefing that day, I asked Nessen if he had told White House staff members on board the *Sequoia* that they were giving too many interviews. He said he had not spoken formally at the cabinet meeting, and any informal remarks to White House staff members were private.

(And what the president's men can do, the vice-president's people can do also. Rockefeller's staff have been told that they must report *all* contact with the press.)

The White House's clumsy efforts at

clamping up were probably prompted by its even more clumsy efforts at leaking a couple of weeks earlier. It began in earnest in Palm Springs, where President Ford played golf while South Vietnam dissolved. It was here that White House staff members began telling reporters: "Kissinger's not the only foreign-policy adviser the president has"; "We resent people saying Kissinger is the only one around here who knows anything about foreign policy"; "Ford is not a puppet on a string."

The week before the president's State of the World message, the anti-Kissinger propaganda coming out of the White House staff escalated. A White House staffer told Bob Schieffer, CBS News chief White House correspondent, that with this speech the president was going to put his "own stamp" on U.S. foreign policy. Schieffer was also told that there was a movement under way in the White House to replace Kissinger as chairman of the National Security Council.

When the CBS correspondent put the story on the "Evening News," the White House staff proved that they conformed to a domino theory of their own. Kissinger leaned on Nessen, who leaned on a press office assistant named Louis Thompson. In fact, Nessen fired Thompson and let it be known that he considered the leak taken care of. However, Bob Schieffer swears that he did not get the story from Thompson. And Thompson has been quoted as saying Nessen leaked the story himself.

If Nessen was the source, then not only did his firing of Thompson show a lack of candor, but so did his leaking of the story in the first place. For Nessen



WIRED DIRECTLY TO THE
CEREBRUM, THE CONTINUOUS
COMPUTER PRINT-OUT HAT

SURE TO BE POPULAR WITH
THE ARRIVAL OF WARMER
WEATHER ARE MATCHED HIS

Press

Thursday 5/8/75

9:40 I called and cancelled the appointment for
Aaron Latham of New York Magazine.

968-5686



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 20, 1975

Press Office

MEMORANDUM FOR: PHIL BUCHEN

FROM:

BILL ROBERTS

JRB

Maury deJong says that a letter is being circulated in Grand Rapids, soliciting \$35,000 in funds for a mural at Kent County Airport depicting the life of Gerald R. Ford from boyhood to the Presidency. The letter says that Artist Paul Collins has been commissioned to do the work, and that he has been assured the President will be there for the unveiling of the mural. deJong says he's talked with Collins, and Collins claims he was told by someone in the White House that the President would "try" to be there.

The letter is signed by Mrs. Bobbie Butler, Patron. deJong says her address is 2309 Jefferson St., SE in Grand Rapids. Others listed on the letterhead include Burke Porter, Hazel Grant, and Milo DeVries. Maury wasn't sure who was organizing the effort and pushing it.

If you'd like further details I'll be glad to pursue it.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Press
Office*

May 23, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: BILL ROBERTS

FROM: PHILIP BUCHEN *P.W.B.*

SUBJECT: Proposed Mural at Kent
County Airport

After receiving your memo of May 20, I talked to Jack Hogan at Grand Rapids. He advises that the group, hoping to raise funds for commissioning Paul Collins to paint a mural at the Kent County airport which would depict the life of the President, has not even attempted to clear this with anyone at the White House or to assure themselves that the President would appear for the unveiling.

I see no reason for trying to discourage efforts by this group but if asked we should say that the project arises from spontaneous local interest, and is not a matter on which the White House or the President is taking any position.

It may be, of course, that the interest will vanish before any progress can be made in financing such a project.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: PHIL BUCHEN

FROM: BILL ROBERTS



Maury deJong says that a letter is being circulated in Grand Rapids, soliciting \$35,000 in funds for a mural at Kent County Airport depicting the life of Gerald R. Ford from boyhood to the Presidency. The letter says that Artist Paul Collins has been commissioned to do the work, and that he has been assured the President will be there for the unveiling of the mural. deJong says he's talked with Collins, and Collins claims he was told by someone in the White House that the President would "try" to be there.

The letter is signed by Mrs. Bobbie Butler, Patron. deJong says her address is 2309 Jefferson St., SE in Grand Rapids. Others listed on the letterhead include Burke Porter, Hazel Grant, and Milo DeVries. Maury wasn't sure who was organizing the effort and pushing it.

If you'd like further details I'll be glad to pursue it.



We weren't
sure you
saw this. Did see
but put
copy in my
Emergency
det's file.



May 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BILL ROBERTS

FROM:

JAY FRENCH

In reference to our telephone conversation earlier this morning, I would like to explain more fully the inquiry the Counsel's office received from a young law student named Wallace who called to complain that he had been hired and then refused employment as a summer legal intern with the Presidential Clemency Board.

It is my understanding (but these facts have not been confirmed) that Defense agreed to place on its payroll 100 summer legal interns who would be detailed to the Presidential Clemency Board. Accordingly, Defense sent telegrams to 100 law students accepting their applications for employment. Simultaneously, the Presidential Clemency Board notified a different group of 100 persons that they had been hired as legal interns. When the error was discovered the Board's staff informed me that it would be resolved by moving up the date for reporting to work in the hope that not all 200 students would accept. Nevertheless complaints have been made to Members of Congress, Defense, the Board, and the White House Counsel's office.

This is clearly a matter for the Board to explain and resolve (perhaps in cooperation with Defense). However, you should be aware that at least Mr. Wallace was told by a member of the Board's staff that this error could be remedied in the "Oval office".

It is the White House Counsel's feeling that the Board's staff should not have indicated that this was a problem for the President, and I have requested the Board's staff to correct this statement.



It should not be necessary (and might be undesirable) for the White House Press office to explain the facts which I have set forth above. However, since you might receive inquiries on this subject Phil Buchen thought you should be fully informed.

If you have further questions about this subject please don't hesitate to contact me.

JTF:jcp

bcc: Philip W. Buchen

