

INTERVIEW WITH  
Dr. Kevin McCann

on

July 20, 1972

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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Ruth C. McCann  
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October 31, 1983  
Date

This is an interview with Dr. Kevin McCann on July 20, 1972. Present for the interview besides Dr. McCann are Dr. John E. Wickman and Dr. Maclyn Burg. The interview is being conducted in the home of Dr. McCann, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

DR. MCCANN: That sort of thing doesn't bother me in the slightest, so long as it's being recorded--

DR. WICKMAN: These--

DR. MCCANN: After all, I am a Hollywood character.

DR. WICKMAN: You're a Hollywood character?

DR. MCCANN: Oh, Lord, I'm the oldest surviving director of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. I survived even Cleopatra. I started out in the movies back in real kids and crowd scenes at fifty cents a day. In fact, that was 1911.

DR. WICKMAN: That was pretty good pay.

DR. MCCANN: Right. I'll tell you--go ahead.

DR. WICKMAN: I'd forgotten that

DR. MCCANN: What other questions did you have?



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DR. WICKMAN: Well, weren't you with the General when he went over to Culzean Castle, on any of those trips--he made about two or three trips over there.

DR. MCCANN: He made more than three. I was on only, only one.

DR. WICKMAN: The one in '59 or--

DR. MCCANN: Oh, no, no,--

DR. WICKMAN:--earlier?

DR. MCCANN:--no, Marie and I and her husband, we were the last to leave seeing him and Mrs. Eisenhower off on that trip. No, the trip I made with him there was in '51 or '52, from Paris.

DR. WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

DR. BURG: Yeah.

DR. WICKMAN: He was [lost this phrase]

SHAPE.

DR. MCCANN: All other trips I made to Culzean Castle were with my





wife and grandchildren, and that sort of thing.

DR. WICKMAN: Well, can you, in this '51 or '52 trip, do you remember that pretty well--his reactions to the whole thing, to the gift of the apartment?

MCCANN: The what of the apartment?

WICKMAN: The gift, the gift to him of the apartment.

MCCANN: Oh, that was much earlier.

WICKMAN: Right.

MCCANN: That was voted in '45 or '46, as I recall it.

WICKMAN: Right, it was.

MCCANN: But the next--

WICKMAN: It was, but he wasn't there, then. You see, he didn't, he accepted that kind of in absentia. He couldn't make it, he



couldn't make it up to the castle when they presented it to him.

MCCANN: That's right.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: That's right, that's right.



WICKMAN: And one of the things that we're interested in, because we've been so involved in the Eisenhower Room there, is finding anybody who could give us his reactions to having this particular honor from the Scots, of, you know--you don't have to turn it off.

BURG: It's all right.

WICKMAN: Here, go ahead. And that was something I was looking for--what did he do when he was there? Did he--

MCCANN: Well, the one time I was with him I walked with him, and that may have been his first time there. We strolled around the grounds, and went to the, the Kennedy--that's Kennedy of Ayleshire[?]

WICKMAN: Yes, uh-huh, right.

MCCANN:--not Kennedy of Richmond.

WICKMAN: Right.



MCCANN: Kennedy of Ayleshire, the family, a funeral, a burial--

WICKMAN: Burial, uh-huh.

MCCANN:--place. It's a thousand or a couple of thousand feet away from the castle. And the only thing I can remember him talking about on that was that the Kennedy's were an awfully cautious people. The senior Kennedy always made sure that half of the sons were Catholics and half of them were Church of Scotland. So the Stuarts came back, and the Catholics there, and, if the Hanoverian people stayed on, well, they had the Protestants. And, also, half of them were raised Gaelic-speaking and half of them were raised--as their first language--and half of them were English-speaking. And he said, "I just don't understand this sort of thing--why did they have to walk the fence like that?" Well, in Kansas he couldn't understand.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: In the highlands of Scotland, or in Ayreshire[?], they would understand very well that was the only way of protecting the family estate--

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MCCANN:--until the new laws made estates intolerable. The Kennedy's were smart; they turned it over to the government or to the National Trust.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MCCANN: But I can't, I can remember just, not things involving the General there, involving the staff, like scaring the life out of Bob Schulz--Jack Good came in dressed up as a ghost--

WICKMAN: A ghost?

MCCANN:--with a--

WICKMAN: Is that right?



MCCANN:--piper behind him.

WICKMAN: Oh, is that right?

MCCANN: That sort of thing.

WICKMAN: I knew that there was a--isn't that the time, either on that trip or maybe it was a later trip, where they had a piper--

MCCANN: Oh, the piper was always there at every dinner--

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.



MCCANN:--even when we were there alone, my wife and family, we had a piper.

WICKMAN: I see.

MCCANN: They march around the--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--and bring in that dog-goned--what do you call it?

WICKMAN: Haggis.

MCCANN: What?

WICKMAN: Haggis.

BURG: Haggis.

MCCANN: It's 's', it ends 's', but you pronounce--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--it, I think, Haggis.

BURG: The sheep--bladder and all.



WICKMAN: Yes.

MCCANN: Oh, yes.

BURG: Boy!

MCCANN: Yes. Oh, yes. The General loved that part of it, the piper. After all, you--what was his reaction--he was a Kansas boy, in all his forming years--

WICKMAN: Yes.

MCCANN:--and to end up, at least in his lifetime, the possessor of a floor of a Scot's castle, a Scottish castle--

WICKMAN:Yeah.

MCCANN:--even though it was really a house, an Adam house.

WICKMAN: Right.

MCCANN: Well, that's, you know, it impressed him.



WICKMAN: Yes, yeah.

MCCANN: Now, I'm sure he asked himself many times, 'How in the world does this sort of thing happen to me?'

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Uh-huh.

MCCANN: But--

WICKMAN: Was Jimmy Gault up there when you were there?

MCCANN: Oh, yes. Jimmy would, the General never went to Culzean without Jimmy--never, that I know of. I thought he had been there four times, but now, you see--

WICKMAN: Well, he may have.

MCCANN:--I don't have, I don't have my--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--I don't have my backup.



WICKMAN: Yeah, he may have.

MCCANN: '59 cannot have been the last time, because he was--

WICKMAN: No--

MCCANN: I'd have to check with Marie.

WICKMAN:--not the last time.

MCCANN: She could remember, because he was there in the--the last



trip was in the sixties sometime.

WICKMAN: Yes, right.

MCCANN: Marie might remember the year, I don't know--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--whether her memory is better than mine or not.

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MCCANN: She--in many ways, she says she is just as bad as I am.

WICKMAN: The only one you were out there with him was this first one in '51 or '52?

MCCANN: '51.

WICKMAN: Yeah, I can check the date; you see, I've got the records.

MCCANN: Yeah.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: You won't find me in the party. I came over from, I was on the Island of Skye, just went over there, the party left Paris and went up there, and then from Culzean I went over to the north of Ireland for the salmon in the Ormkillyou[?] River. So I doubt that you will find me in the party.

BURG: Oh. Was the General able to do any fishing on that trip, Kevin, do you remember?

MCCANN: The fishing in that part of Scotland is bad.

WICKMAN: It's not very good.

MCCANN: What we call bad.



WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Yes.

MCCANN: He liked two courses there, golf courses, the Eagle, Eagle--

WICKMAN: Yes, Gleneagle?

MCCANN: It's more than eagle--

WICKMAN: Gleneagle.

MCCANN: Is it Gleneagle?

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.



MCCANN: It's got an immense building. I stayed there for a couple of days when I was a boy, when my father was in money--it was very expensive taste. And one other, not St. Andrews, one other down in, below Gleneagle in Ayreshire, a small course that the--

WICKMAN: Turnburring[?], was that--is it Turnburring?

MCCANN: It was near Turnburring.

WICKMAN: Near Turnburring, yeah.

MCCANN: I don't know what--that isn't the name of it though.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: It was near Turnburring.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: The bailiff for the Kennedys took him down there--I've forgotten his name, a great big man, good golfer, damned sight better than I or the General.

BURG: Now, if they served him traditional Scottish dishes, how did he react to that? Haggis, for example.



MCCANN: Well, he took a little bit, but at Culzean he got one salmon, and a big one, and he loved salmon. That is, Atlantic salmon--he detested that stuff from the north, from the Pacific coast.

BURG: He did?

MCCANN: It always comes in cans.

BURG: Aw, he never had it fresh--what a pity!



MCCANN: I don't know, I don't, at Fort Lewis he may have gotten it fresh. I doubt it though; I think the army would have served it in cans.

BURG: Yes, yes, I think so too.

MCCANN: The traditional Scottish dishes--he liked stirabout very much. He and I used to talk about how we can't get stirabout, good stirabout, in this country. You know what stirabout is?

WICKMAN: No.

MCCANN: Oh, me, that's an oatmeal porridge boiled--

WICKMAN: Oh, yes, yes.



MCCANN:--boiled in milk and butter. Um-m, it's wonderful on a raw morning.

WICKMAN: Where did he acquire a taste for that--when he was in SHAPE, or what?

MCCANN: Well, no, in the, I think the first time he--the first time, as I recall it now, he told me he had fished in World War II. Maybe some of the Scotsmen around him insisted on it.

WICKMAN: Jimmy Gault, probably.

MCCANN: No, well, Jimmy is not all that Scotch.

WICKMAN: No.



MCCANN: He was in the Scots Guards, but Jimmy is more an Englishman than anything else. But, on half a dozen, maybe more than that, half a dozen occasions, anyway, he and I talked about stirabout as being the way to start off the day when it's raw and murky outside. I couldn't take it though; it's a pretty heavy dish.

WICKMAN: Yeah, it is, it's awfully heavy. Well, this is, you know, one of the things that's rather interesting--you have some side-lights on this that we don't have anywhere else. One of the things that I find interesting, in going through the pre-Presidential and the Presidential papers, is after the war this continuing

association with the British. And, of course, Jimmy Gault plays a part in that, too.

MCCANN: Well, Jimmy was the liaison.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: He was the liaison with the Royal Family, to start with. And then Jimmy had been in the Guards--you know, the Guards hang together tight, except the Irish Guards are a little bit standoffish. I'm not fooling, they are standoffish--they think they're a little bit better than the others.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.



MCCANN: And they have been in more battles than any other Guards regiments. And, of course, the O'Grady's are, who are in control of them, are sound sons of the Church of Rome, and they sort of look down their noses at the Church of England. But Jimmy was the liaison, principally, particularly, with the Royal Family, and then with the sub-strata, because he knew everybody, and if

he didn't know the man who had to be contacted, or the woman, he knew somebody else who would pave the way. Jimmy was invaluable. The power is--

WICKMAN: I find that relationship very unique, really --for an American President to be able to have that kind of personal contact there. I don't know, have others had it?

MCCANN: No, not that I know of. Oh, Archie Butt with Theodore Roosevelt had a little association, but not much; it was only a couple of years.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.



BURG: Yes.

MCCANN: But Jimmy--what the heck, he lives in a house built in 1566, and, you know, the family's been around since the beginning of time. But Guy [Eugene] DeGreef--you know the name--

WICKMAN: Yes, I do.



MCCANN: Guy DeGreef on the continent had just as good contacts as Jimmy in the United Kingdom. Guy was, he was almost in the Royal Family; his father was Minister of Defense, of course, under Baudouin.

WICKMAN: Yes.

MCCANN: And Guy--although he didn't throw his weight around--knew everybody from the Club de Paris to a deputy mayor down in the Auvergne. And that--now, in later years, of course, Guy was not used; he had to fight wars in the Congo and that sort of thing. But for the eighteen months of SHAPE, that is, NATO--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--Guy was just as invaluable as Jimmy.



WICKMAN: That's one of the things, you know, that does emerge when you, when you study Eisenhower as President--you find that he has these personal contacts which were so enormously valuable.

MCCANN: Yes, well, then, you also had to take the men themselves.



MCCANN: There were days, of course, when there wasn't anything to do. On the other hand, he didn't like to use the telephone.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh. Why was that, I wonder?

MCCANN: Well, there were no telephones to speak of in Abilene to start with, in his formative years. There were only, it was an oddity, so to speak, in Abilene. He grew up without the telephone. In the army, the sergeant on the other side of the rail made the call.

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MCCANN: He just didn't. He did not become accustomed to--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--using the telephone.

WICKMAN: Well, I think, I think--

MCCANN: Afterwards, he became a telephone addict.

WICKMAN: Yes.

MCCANN: Here in Gettysburg, why, Bob Schulz couldn't make as many phone calls as he could make. My God, he could spend a whole morning--

WICKMAN: Yeah, I know, I--

MCCANN:--dialing people, if he could find the number.



WICKMAN: Yeah, if he could find the number. Yeah, that's true. Maybe that came with the transition from the Presidency to the post-Presidential period. He came out of the White House.

MCCANN: Well, as a matter of fact, I think he was trying to prove that, 'Now I'm in retirement' I'm going to be independent.'

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: 'If I lose my staff all of a sudden, I'll be able to operate on my own.' I think that was part of it.



WICKMAN: Yes.

MCCANN: We're talking trivia now, though, I think; this is just flavor or taste, isn't it?

BURG: It's all grist for our mill, you know--

WICKMAN: Well, yeah, it's all--

BURG:--every bit of it.



WICKMAN:--and again, it's, no, I think your observations from a particular vantage point which very, very few people had--this is, this is the whole thing.

MCCANN: Well, you see, I, John, I was mainly, after the first couple of years, I was mainly a friend, I wanted no part of the staff operation. There were things I wanted to do, and there were thousands who wanted the jobs that I could have. And why not give them the chance? So it, I don't know how long I spent in the White House, but during the eight years there that he was

there I'm sure I was not there four years, if you put all--

WICKMAN: Yeah, put it all together.

MCCANN:--the time together.

WICKMAN: Yeah, uh-huh.



MCCANN: I was coming and going--sometimes I was on the payroll, sometimes I wasn't. And I was generally called in when, just when, for ad hoc things.

WICKMAN: Yeah. Well, how did they handle it when you weren't on the payroll? You were on, were you still on at Defiance?

MCCANN: I had a small salary from Defiance, too.

WICKMAN: Oh, yeah. Well, I--

MCCANN: My face gets red when I think about small salaries.

WICKMAN: No, I haven't, I can imagine small--

MCCANN: And my wife gets, my wife in the face gets a little thinner.

WICKMAN: Yeah, I see.

MCCANN: Because my TIAA pension pays the rent.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: It was a long way from paying the rent.

BURG: Well, John knows how you came into all this--

MCCANN: John?

BURG: John Wickman.

WICKMAN: Me, yeah.

MCCANN: Oh.

BURG:--but I don't. Where did this association start?

MCCANN: Well, you see, I had, I had come to Washington, and the craziness of the United States Army, and this is one point that I don't think anyone has ever made, though--Dwight Eisenhower was



a professional soldier, and though he was far from a pacifist he was usually anti-War Department and often anti-army. Well, I got, in the craziness of the army and the War Department, I was brought into the Pentagon in 1945 as an expert on the Japanese war. And I discovered that they were planning Olympic and Coronet--vast things, ten million men, I guess. I had no idea, and I just erupted: these people are defeated, the war is going to end in months --I didn't know anything about the atomic bomb at that time--the Japanese simply cannot survive. And if they're going to try to fight the thing out, just blockade them with the navy, and forget about these crazy landings. It didn't get me, I got a bad name, but--particularly with Bob Patterson, and I became his assistant when he became Secretary of War, and we didn't get along too well. He finally got to the point where he referred to me only as "that newspaperman from Illinois." But I had enough points, I had, I could have gotten out right away, and I was fighting my way out. And Bob Patterson--I don't know what got into him. Dwight Eisenhower came back from Europe in





the late fall of '45 and went to Walter Reed, and Bob Patterson sent me out there to talk to Dwight Eisenhower. And he began posing the, presenting the problems that were ahead of him, and this turmoil among the enlisted men--and it's forgotten now, but we came to the edge of major mutinies--

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MCCANN:--during Bob Patterson's tour of the world. And as I, General Eisenhower telling me that I had an enlisted background and understood something of the enlisted--I had been an enlisted man for a year, a newspaperman--I could help him through the demobilization period, at least. So, instead of getting out--I was scheduled for December--somehow or other I stayed on another three years.

WICKMAN: Let me ask you a question at this point, Kevin. How, from your point there, how did you view these "I want to go home" clubs that were started in the army and elsewhere--this letter writing and--



MCCANN: I was in favor of them.

WICKMAN: And, uh-huh.

MCCANN: So long as they appreciated the fact that it would take-- there was just so much shipping. General Eisenhower broke the problem in the Atlantic by the double loading, and presenting it to the troops--remember?

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MCCANN: And we did double load.



WICKMAN: Right.

MCCANN: We did not double load in the Pacific.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: But that was not his territory.

WICKMAN: Yeah, uh-huh, right.

MCCANN: And we cut the, and into the bargain he made sure that

in the--I called them concentration camps--the centers where the troops for demobilization--

WICKMAN: Oh, yes, uh-huh.

MCCANN:--were assembled--

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MCCANN:--he made sure there was something going on from reveille until taps.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: That didn't happen, either.

BURG: Sort of repple-depples in reverse?

MCCANN: Yeah--

BURG: Yeah.

MCCANN:--they were, well, I didn't--

WICKMAN: I think they were.

MCCANN:--they moved the troops into the old repple-depples.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN: On account--

WICKMAN: Well, they used Camp Grant, Illinois, for that, too.  
You know--

MCCANN: I don't, really--

WICKMAN: Yes, it had been a, an enlisted center and they--

MCCANN: That was my first experience--

WICKMAN:--got there.

MCCANN:--with the United States Army, was Camp Grant for a few days.

WICKMAN: Of course, you enjoyed every minute of it, I'm sure.  
You there in the winter or the summer?

MCCANN: I was there in cold weather--



WICKMAN: Yeah.

MCCANN:--and I went from there to Jefferson Barracks--God help me. And from there to Dutch Harbor, and back to Jefferson Barracks after June.

BURG: What time were you in Dutch Harbor?

MCCANN: Well, I was there on June 4--

BURG: The day they--

MCCANN:--they came in, yes.

BURG:--they came in, uh-huh.



MCCANN: But nobody gave me a medal for my courage. As a matter of fact, I was scared stiff; there was a Japanese pilot I thought was trying to kill me.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Someone who took the war seriously.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Well, how long were you out there--out at Dutch Harbor?  
Did you come back, then, to--

MCCANN: I came back to the Jefferson Barracks as a casual. Somebody discovered that I had been sent there by mistake, because my I. Q. was too high for me to be a mere grease monkey.

BURG: Uh-huh.

MCCANN: So they brought me back to Jefferson Barracks to rot there for a couple of months.

BURG: And this is still 1942?



MCCANN: Yeah. Under the command of Col. Allen Kimberly [?], who later became Brigadier General. One night--I made all kinds of arrangements; I used to go AWOL every, every weekend. I had made friends with a master sergeant who controlled the shipping lists, so I knew whether I was going on a shipping list or not, and I'd



take off, and my wife, Marie, would pick me up in Joliet. I'd take the Ann Rutledge or the Abraham Lincoln, I don't know which one it was, and get off at Joliet and they'd meet me. And then I'd be back in time for reveille on Monday morning. But one night a friend of mine--well, he had worked for me, Cliff Upjohn(?), who belonged to one of the oldest St. Louis families dating back to the French days, got word to me somehow or other that he would like to have me for dinner, and that there would be a fellow soldier there. Well, somehow or other I worked out transportation, military transportation, for this dinner, and arrived there, and ahead of me is awaiting my fellow soldier, Col. Allen Kimberly. I almost went underneath or through the crack in the door to get out of there, but I was stopped.

WICKMAN: Well, we were, we were back with Patterson, then. Patterson had gone [lost this phrase]



MCCANN: Judge Patterson sent me over. The Judge was a good egg, a patriot of the old school. In ways, he was a ham actor:

those darned GI shoes he wore all the time and that gun he was always chomping. But he worshipped Dwight Eisenhower. He had met him several, several times in Europe during hostili--, during combat, and in England before the, in the Mediterranean, and in England, and on the continent after the landing. And even though he and I didn't get along and I had refused to go on that global tour with him, I think he figured that I could have been some help--that I could be of some help--if I stayed on under a new Chief of Staff. So I stayed on for three, two and a half years, something, more than two and a half years.

WICKMAN: And stayed in the army?



MCCANN: And then when--I stayed in the army, but I got out of it when Dwight Eisenhower got out, and then I went up to Columbia with him.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: The initial--

MC CANN: I loved the army, but I'm not a professional soldier.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: What the heck, I just didn't belong in it. In '50, the General and Harry Truman wanted me to go back in--late '50. And the deal was that I would go back as a colonel; in thirty days I'd get my star. Well, I didn't want any part of it. They sent Pete Carroll up to talk to Ruth, who was then in St. Luke's Hospital, and she was for it. But it bothered me--Pete Carroll, a professional soldier, a West Point graduate, the silver, the DFC and the silver star and all that sort of thing, and I inside of thirty days am going to rank him? I couldn't live with myself. So I went over to SHAPE as a civilian.



WICKMAN: When did you go to SHAPE?

MC CANN: SHAPE--

WICKMAN: Was that the deal--

MC CANN:--Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe--

WICKMAN: Yeah, right.

MC CANN:--in NATO.

WICKMAN: Yeah, they went--

MC CANN: Yeah, this was--

WICKMAN: Yeah, I see.

MC CANN:--yeah, this was, Pete came up--after I had turned the thing down--Pete came up as the emissary of President Truman and the General, and it was at Thanksgiving time of 1950.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh, yeah. So you went as a civilian--in what capacity, then? What kind of a--

MC CANN: I went over as a civil assistant to the--

WICKMAN: I see.

MC CANN:--Supreme Commander Allied Powers Europe.

WICKMAN: A new position?

MC CANN: Huh?

WICKMAN: A new position--they had to create it in order to--





MC CANN: And very poor pay.

WICKMAN: Yes.

MC CANN: I should have, I should have taken that brigadier general of his.

WICKMAN: Well, now--

MC CANN: In fact, for four months they didn't, I couldn't get a dime out of them. They gave me this darned form after I got there to fill out--this is a crazy story but absolutely true. It's the Form 57?

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: I think it still is--



WICKMAN: Yes, they're still using it.

MC CANN: Well, anyway, one of the things was, "describe in detail your duties," so I filled it in, "to think." And sent it off. You know, nothing bounced back from Washington as fast as that



business with a memorandum saying that 'there was nothing--'  
(Interruption)

MC CANN: It was four months before I could get a paycheck. And Ruth, finally--who was with me then--she just got upset. She got Bob Schulz and Craig Cannon to fill out another Form 57 for me, forged my signature, and they put in five hundred words of gobbledygook about what I was doing. I refused to read it.

WICKMAN: Where did you live when you were over there?

MC CANN: We lived in the Trianon Palace Hotel, immediately above the Eisenhowers. And I, in those days, was a rope skipper.

WICKMAN: A rope skipper?

MC CANN: In the morning.

BURG: Oh, of course.

MC CANN: And I didn't dare skip rope, because the Eisenhowers were right below us.

WICKMAN: I see. But they moved out to Marnes-la-Coquette, didn't they?



MC CANN: Well, no, we left--yes, they moved out to Marnes-la-Coquette in late August or early September, somewhere around there--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--I've--

WICKMAN: But you did not?

MC CANN: Huh?

WICKMAN: You did not go out there?

MC CANN: No, no. You see, we came back to the United States--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--because I became president of Defiance College, and then the General--oh, twice I was called back. And then, finally, when the political thing was getting just too hot, I was called back in February of '52 and stayed on as long as he was there, and came back as soon--the day he left for this country.



BURG: Well, Kevin, did your, did your original job description, your two-word, "to think," is that the way it actually worked for you?

MC CANN: Yes, that was, that was my job, that was the way-- Dwight Eisenhower told me, 'Just come over there and think; you don't have to do anything else.'

BURG: Now, typically, what kinds of problems, then, were given to you to work on?

MC CANN: Oh, gee, that I--it was, it was just mainly lost this word 7. I'm afraid I outraged the staff, because more often than not--it was like Louis XIV's day: leaving that office in the evening there'd be fifteen people, senior officers waiting to get a ride with the Supreme Commander. And more often than not I was the one who was picked to go off with him. It was just talking over the problems of the day. There weren't many speeches in that time; the only major speech we had to work on was this one for the English Speaking Union in London on July 3 of 1951. Dwight Eisenhower was a man who always wanted familiar faces around him. And I had become a familiar face. Into the bargain



he could, I think he felt he could unburden himself with me and not have it spread all over the, all over headquarters. Talking aloud to himself.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

BURG: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: He wasn't going to do it all by himself; he had to have an audience of at least one. Now, Pete Carroll used to, about half the time that I was with him, Pete Carroll would also ride with us. The specific problems I don't remember, because that was a good time. The problems--every day we were moving ahead; we could see it.

WICKMAN: This is the setting up of NATO now?



BURG: Yes.

MC CANN: It was, yeah, but there were tens upon thousands of people who were moving with us--

WICKMAN: Yes.

MC CANN:--and it was not, it was not like trying to handle the



United States government, because you saw visible progress-- change and progress--every day. And as I say, the only speech that I can recall making--I prepared some drafts for him--but the only major speech that I can recall was that one in London on July 3. I don't--he and I were extremely compatible. The finest compliment that was ever paid me was by Ken McCormick of Doubleday and Company. They had a press conference or something or other for launching At Ease. There was some newspaperman there--I don't remember who he was, I may not have even known who he was at the time--and he said, "Well, how is it," addressing himself to me, "how is it you get along with General Eisenhower so well?" And I didn't answer him. Ken McCormick, fortunately, interposed by saying something like--well, I know it's exactly because on some things my memory is precise--he said, "Kevin and the General think on the same wave lengths." But, so, and I got away to another corner.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.



MC CANN: Or went to the bar.

WICKMAN: Yeah, I've got, I've got a question for you too, based



on the amount of time that I've spent up here from '66 on. General Eisenhower was so involved, in what was supposed to be his retirement, in all kinds of things, he made speeches--

MC CANN: From '56 on?

WICKMAN: Well, no, from '60--

MC CANN: '60--, well--

WICKMAN:--'61 on, yeah.

MC CANN:--in January, yeah, yeah, yeah.

WICKMAN: '61 on; I only knew about this from '66 on, when I went to the Library.

MC CANN: Oh, I see, yes, I see, you said '66, not '56.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: Yeah.



WICKMAN: So, but my point is, he was so involved, he was called on so many times to do things, to advise or confer with the

existing Presidents. And I'm just curious as to your view of this post-Presidential period. It doesn't seem to me as though the nation provided really at all for the post-Presidential period; Eisenhower came into this retirement--

MC CANN: Up, up until then, the nation--there was no provision for tapping the resources of former Presidents.

WICKMAN: Turn it off.

MC CANN:

(Interruption)

MC CANN: So far as, so far as I know in the history of the Republic, former Presidents went into a sort of isolation or maybe of rebellion--rebellion in the case of John Tyler, and Theodore Roosevelt with his Bull Moose movement. Dwight Eisenhower went into neither retirement nor isolation. Under John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson he was called repeatedly, and he himself phoned them. For example, one morning he told me that Claire Francis, as I recall it, and a big, tall, young fellow who was president of the Studebaker Corporation were coming in, and he would like me to sit in on the meeting. Well, this must have been in '62



or '63, early '63--I wasn't here in early '63; Well, I, it must have been '62, the fall of '62. And the Studebaker Corporation man's presentation was that the South Bend economy would collapse, thousands upon thousands of people would be out of work because Studebaker simply could not get a contract from the United States government. And the General listened and the man brought up what sounded to me like sustainable facts.

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MC CANN: And he threw in Father Hesburgh's name, and this name and that name. And the General thought it over, and finally he reached for the phone and called John Kennedy and said in substance, 'Look, I have two men here with me, so-and-so and so-and-so. They tell me that unless Studebaker can get that tank contract South Bend is going to be a disaster center.' And John Kennedy put in his pitch--I didn't hear that, of course--and the conversation ended. Within a week, Studebaker got an eighty-million-dollar-plus contract.

BURG: I see.

MC CANN: That, is that the, you might call it political pressure.



If you're against Dwight Eisenhower, you would say he was a political arm twister. On the other hand, he was concerned about thousands of people in South Bend, and he went directly to the President of the United States. And I, and he, even as I, took it for granted that Studebaker would do just as good a job as--and the price, I think, was only a few thousand dollars difference.



WICKMAN: Yes, well, this is the interesting thing, you see. The thing that I've found is that on what research I have done, when it's available, is that the Presidents, both Kennedy and Johnson, listened to him. Because, you know, like critics would have said--

MC CANN: Look, John Kennedy--and I kept on telling Dwight Eisenhower that--John Kennedy worshipped him, idolized him, and that I know at first hand from John Kennedy himself, with whom, politically, I simply did not get along.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MC CANN: But I know from the thirty-fifth President himself how he felt about his predecessor.

WICKMAN: What do you think the basis for that was?

MC CANN: Huh?

WICKMAN: Why?

MC CANN: Oh, that I don't know.

WICKMAN: What, I wonder what Kennedy saw.

MC CANN: Why Kennedy idolized General Eisenhower?

WICKMAN: Yeah, I wonder what he saw.

MC CANN: That I don't know.

WICKMAN: I don't know either, it's--

MC CANN: After all, after all, tens of millions of Americans idolized Dwight Eisenhower.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MC CANN: And John Kennedy was just another one of many millions.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Do you know of other instances like that, Kevin? Where, where President--





MC CANN: He used influence to help out a community?

BURG: Yeah, where he called in or--

WICKMAN: Or where he was made aware of a problem that he brought to the President's attention?

BURG: Yeah.

MC CANN: At the moment, I cannot recall any of which I had first-hand knowledge. That, I had first-hand knowledge, because I was sitting there.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Yes.

MC CANN: I sat in the whole meeting.

BURG: Well, Kevin, we all agree, too, that his contacts with the heads of state was a great asset to him. How about in the post-Presidential period--do you recollect any instances where he was able to put his contacts to use for Mr. Kennedy or for Mr. Johnson?

MC CANN: No, no, offhand, I do not.



BURG: Or any times when he may have, have called them, or that they sought his help in any foreign--

MC CANN: Oh, now, now wait, yes, now I do remember--oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. In Denver, and I cannot remember the year, but he insisted that I sit in on the thing, there was an international telecast--I think four nations were represented. I remember Anthony Eden representing England--this was sometime in the sixties; I don't remember who the others were--

BURG: We can find it.

MC CANN: Huh?



BURG: We'll be able to find it.

MC CANN: But he presented, almost on behalf of John Kennedy, the American position on a wide range of affairs. And as I recall it, he talked to Anthony Eden privately, afterwards--I'm beginning to get dim there.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: Because I, but I do remember that that evening and the following evening, he talked about a private conversation with Anthony Eden in which he had explained that Anthony Eden was looking at us through the wrong section of his bifocal glasses, or something--he used that--

WICKMAN: Yes, very good.



MC CANN:--he used that term about the bifocal glasses.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh, yeah, very good. Well, one of the, one of the things that we started this with is this business about what the country does or doesn't do for the former Presidents. This is the sort of thing I wanted to get into.

MC CANN: Well, I got into, I think that thing is correct, and I don't know whether I did a good job or not--Mrs. Eisenhower was unhappy with me, John certainly was, because they got    lost these words   . I pointed out in the paper to the present President that there never had been any formal arrangement for tapping the resources--

WICKMAN: That's right, there hasn't.

MC CANN: That paper's on record somewhere.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh, yes, I've seen it.

MC CANN: Oh, have you?

WICKMAN: Yes, I have.

MC CANN: Is my name on it?

WICKMAN: No, that I, that I can't tell you, but I saw a copy of it.

MC CANN: Well, my, my name, I wrote it.

WICKMAN: That goes back to the beginning of the formation of the office.

MC CANN: Yeah, well, that's it.



WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MCCANN: Now, I think it's got a little bit disheveled.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: But it is now, I hope, a permanent arrangement within the American governmental system.



WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: And we won't have Presidents lost out in the, in the woods.

WICKMAN: Yeah. Well, it seems to me, you know--from what I know of the operation here--it seems to me that in order to, as the current President has more things, or seeks advice or whatever of the former President, just the staffing question gets to be a nightmare, because what kind of resources are you going to use?

MC CANN: Yeah, well, what I, what I originally proposed was a Council of Former Presidents.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: Now--

MC CANN'S DAUGHTER: I blew a fuse.

WICKMAN: You blew a fuse?

MC CANN: Now, wait, what--

(Interruption)





BURG: Now it's going.

WICKMAN: Now, I--

MC CANN: Now where were we?

WICKMAN: Well, I just wanted you to finish out this thought about the support which we do not give the former Presidents. And, you know, as I was saying, General Eisenhower's office, for example, here really--the government provided very little--

MC CANN: Yes, that's true, that's true.

WICKMAN:--in the way of staff support. They--

MC CANN: That's true. I was--

WICKMAN: You, when you were at Doubleday--

MC CANN: I was either unpaid, or on occasion I was paid by Doubleday.

WICKMAN: By Doubleday, yes, uh-huh.

MC CANN: But only on occasion--I wasn't, most of the time I was just unpaid. Doubleday will bear that out, that I'd say, "Look,



I'm not doing anything." But my, my interest in this dates way back to when I--my doctoral work is in mathematics, but I had a hobby of the Lincoln period, and one of the weaknesses of Lincoln in his early days was that the country was crowded with Presidents at the time--

WICKMAN: That's right.

MC CANN:--and he had absolutely no contact with Tyler or Buchanan or Pierce, or the whole lot of them.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.



MC CANN: And he should have. If he had any gumption he should have assembled all the former Presidents and talked the thing over with them, because they represented every, they were a cross--, they were a cross section of America. But in those days there was no way, there was absolutely--there were no telephones, he couldn't talk with them easily. The telegrams were public property instantly, and there was no formal structure within the government. Now, I think, we have it at the moment. It may not be much, but I don't think it's going to be washed out, and some day it may, it may be a, it may be a substantial contribution to--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--the American future. So that's why I asked, "Is my name on it"; I'd like to be associated with it.

WICKMAN: Yeah, well, I, well, I think your, I think your name is on it, I can't--

MC CANN: I don't know; I have never seen it since I got rid of it.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: And I can't remember whether I signed it or--

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MC CANN:--what I did with it. And it was some time, but it's-- The Council of American Presidents, Former Presidents--the General himself, throughout, he said it didn't sound quite constitutional to him. Well, that's, it might, it might, it might very well, if it were an official body, it might very well require an amendment.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: So I, I said instantly, "Of course, that's a, that's a valid objection."



WICKMAN: Yeah, well, you know, you know the situation as well as I do--what General Eisenhower used to get into here as a former President. If there was an important job to do for the White House, that was fine; the White House could provide transportation, the White House could pick up the cost. But suppose this was all in a kind of preliminary stage, then you were simply thrown back on whatever resources you could muster from patriotic citizens or whatever to get the job done.



MC CANN: Yeah. It can be a valuable office; it must be headed by a man of wide and deep political experience who has no partisan affiliations, who knows the consitutional system thoroughly, who is not a--now this is no reflection on Bob--but who is not a name-dropper or an arm twister or that sort of thing.

WICKMAN: Yeah, right.

MC CANN: But in the next twenty years we may, we may be in perilous times. And we might very well have three or four living--

WICKMAN: Presidents--

MC CANN:--former Presidents--

WICKMAN:--that's right. That's exactly right.

MC CANN:--who simply should be, in some way, gotten into the picture.

WICKMAN: Yes. Well, of course, I've seen this, you know, because I, I worked at the state level in the governor's office--

MC CANN: Uh-huh.

WICKMAN:--and the United States--



MC CANN: Yeah.

WICKMAN:--simply throws away its governors--that is, the governor is out of office, he may have very valuable experience that could be tapped, but you just simply write him off, and off he goes to be on a letterhead committee somewhere, you know, or whatever he--

MC CANN: That's it, we're, we Americans are great for shelving people. The Europeans are not quite as, are not nearly so bad as we are. And the British, informally, have done a very good job--on an informal basis.

WICKMAN: On an informal basis.



MC CANN: But Americans have to have a formal structure.

WICKMAN: Yes.

MC CANN: Unless you can put it down on a sheet of paper with the chain of command and all that sort of thing, they won't buy it.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Well, Kevin, you suggested that part of your, your paper had its origins in your work on Lincoln, and the situation that prevailed there?

MC CANN: Well, no, it was just, well, it wasn't, I had always been conscious--

BURG: Right.



MC CANN:--of the fact that Lincoln was, in a way, an amputee in his first month in office because he was dependent totally on a partisan cabinet, whereas he had at his call, if he wanted it, an immense amount of Presidential experience.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

BURG: Well, I wondered if any of your paper rested upon the situation when Dwight Eisenhower took over from Harry Truman?

MC CANN: I doubt it, because we had a lot of that--there was no chasm between those two administrations.

BURG: There was not?

MC CANN: Not in my--after all, I worked for Harry Truman; Pete Carroll, who was as close to the General as I, worked for Harry Truman; and we probably had some other people there.

WICKMAN: Sure.



MC CANN: And of course we had the permanent White House staff for whom the General had a high regard, particularly for Bill Hopkins, a Truman man, whose wife had been Dwight Eisenhower's own secretary many years before. There was no great chasm there, there was no chasm like the Buchanan-Lincoln thing. Or, the great chasm was the Roosevelt-Truman one.

WICKMAN: That's right.

MC CANN: Got a man all of a sudden who had--

BURG: Yeah.

WICKMAN: Well, how did, from your vantage point, how did the Eisenhower-Kennedy transition go? Now, you get, you get varying views of this. I've read all of the literature there is on the subject, and in some places you find a, you find the Eisenhower administration--Laurin Henry, I think, brings this out in his book on Presidential transitions.

MC CANN: Lord Henry?

WICKMAN: Laurin.

BURG: Laurin.

MC CANN: Oh, oh.

WICKMAN: L-a-u-r-i-n, yeah.

MC CANN: Oh.

WICKMAN: Henry points out that Eisenhower made overtures to the Kennedys, to the incoming administration, saying, "We will help you any way we can."



MC CANN: Yes.

WICKMAN: And--

MC CANN: And he talked to John Kennedy at length.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MC CANN: John Kennedy got a thorough briefing on the Presidency from Dwight Eisenhower--thorough briefing. Incidentally, there is the one between Mrs. Eisenhower and the General in his go-to-hell cap--that is the last photograph taken of Dwight Eisenhower before he walked over to the mansion to get dressed--

WICKMAN: Right.



MC CANN:--to meet John Kennedy. Don't I look like the President of the United States? Dwight Eisenhower looks like--

WICKMAN: That's a very good picture--who took that? Is that Abbie Wells?

MC CANN: That's a Life picture; it ran in Life magazine--

WICKMAN: I see.



MC CANN:--and in that special Eisenhower edition. That was taken just before we had finished talking and I was lecturing him. There, he was lecturing me.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: Well, I had not, I've never really thought of that, that paper on the office with what I originally called the Council of Former Pres--,of all the former Presidents.

WICKMAN: Former Presidents, uh-huh.

MC CANN: And it might be my great contribution--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--and an enduring contribution--



WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--to the American future.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: It was bought completely by Dwight Eisenhower--the only thing he objected to was that business, the name: Council of Former Presidents.

WICKMAN: Well, I, I've been very interested in this area ever since I left the governor's office, because I, when I was there I saw what happens to the former governors, and I tried to work up a study here a couple of years ago. I had the project planned out, but never could get support for it.

MC CANN: Uh-huh.

WICKMAN: And the National Foundation for the Humanities wouldn't buy it, but I still think it's, it's a tremendous area, because we--

MC CANN: Yeah.

WICKMAN:--waste--

MC CANN: Yeah.



WICKMAN:--wast enormous resources.

MC CANN: Well, I must say that Richard Nixon instantly bought mine.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: Instantly. It hasn't thus far worked too well, in my opinion.

WICKMAN: Yeah, well, I, you know--

MC CANN: But it--

WICKMAN:--personnel question--

MC CANN:--well, there's certain type--well, Mr. Truman was getting way on in years--

WICKMAN: Right.

MC CANN:--Lyndon Johnson is--he's a Texan.



WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: And Bob Schulz may not be the man. I just--

WICKMAN: Well, of course, the problem frequently, Kevin, is that the former Presidents--let's take Mr. Johnson for example:if he wants to talk to the White House--

MC CANN: He'd go direct.

WICKMAN:--he'd pick up the phone.

MC CANN: Oh, yes, oh, yes! Well, there's nothing wrong with that. It's just that you have to, there should be some provision that recognizes--

WICKMAN: I agree.

MC CANN:--they are a resource.

WICKMAN: Right.

MC CANN: And there should be an office that is concerned with their continuing presence in government--not executive but advisory and so forth.

BURG: Well, as Eisenhower probably would have said, in effect, one of the most knowledgeable kinds of staff that a President could call upon.

MC CANN: That's true, that's true.



BURG: Just almost impossible to imagine a better kind of staff--

MC CANN: Absolutely true.



BURG:--in the sense of an advisory staff.

MC CANN: Well, one of the, one of the, for me there's a great deal of faith, I'll say, with one of the most important photographs or pictures--photographs are fairly modern--in all of Presidential history is that of John Kennedy and Dwight Eisenhower taken from the back.

WICKMAN: Yes.

MC CANN: You remember their--

WICKMAN: We have this on our movie at Abilene.

MC CANN: Have you?

WICKMAN: Yes, we made a movie--

MC CANN: Oh, really.



WICKMAN:--of the Library and we used it.

MC CANN: I've seen, I've seen only that one single still photograph. I must go down to Abilene sometime if I live, I--

WICKMAN: I wish you could.

BURG: The photograph of both men with their hands clasped behind their backs.

MC CANN: Uh-huh. That's a human thing.

BURG: Yes.

WICKMAN: Let me ask you one more question on this post-Presidential period, then we'll get out of your hair, because I know you've got, you want to get back to lost this word.

MC CANN: Oh, no, it's, I--



WICKMAN: Did you work on, all of this--one of the things that characterizes General Eisenhower's post-Presidential period was this steady outpouring of writing; he did quite a bit, really. Did you get involved in, say, the Readers' Digest articles and the other articles he did?

MC CANN: Oh, no, Ben, Ben--

WICKMAN: Hibbs.

MC CANN:--Hibbs. I worked with him on the original Readers'  
Digest articles--

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN:--many years ago.

WICKMAN: That was after he, after he--

MC CANN: When he was at Columbia.

WICKMAN: Yeah, right.

MC CANN: Then, he was trying to raise money--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--for Columbia. He'd get twenty-five thousand dollars  
for Columbia--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--for an article. I worked on those. Ben Hibbs worked  
on all the sixties' articles, as I recall it.

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MC CANN: In only one case the General got a little bit unhappy, because it was just too compressed. He said, "This isn't--"

WICKMAN: Oh, yes, uh-huh. On this precis business, yes. 'Take it all.'

MC CANN: So, in, and he wanted to rewrite it. He and I together worked on the enlargement of it.

WICKMAN: Right.

MC CANN: It was never published--

WICKMAN: No.



MC CANN:--because before we were through with it, he was dead.

WICKMAN: Yeah, yeah.

MC CANN: Where it is now, I haven't any idea.

WICKMAN: I have it. I have because I have--

MC CANN: Well, what's the subject? I've forgotten.

WICKMAN: All right, it's--I can't remember the exact title of it--



MC CANN: Well, yeah, but what's it about?

WICKMAN:--something about American--

(Interruption)



MC CANN: And we never did get back to it. We were, well, we were still swimming around only three days before he died with a sequel to At Ease. And I don't know where that stuff is.

WICKMAN: What was he going to do with a sequel to At Ease?

MC CANN: Huh?

WICKMAN: What was he going to do with a sequel to At Ease?

MC CANN: Well, it would start with the Columbia period--

WICKMAN: Oh, I see.

MC CANN:--and personal sidelights on the Presidential years.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: The two books, Mandate, and what was it?

BURG: Waging Peace.

WICKMAN: Waging Peace.

MC CANN: Waging Peace--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--were official, really.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: And random, you know--

WICKMAN: Yeah. Wasn't there a project at one point that he used to--he mentioned it to me several times, but the only thing he ever called it was, 'on the coalitions'?

MC CANN: Well, that was part of the book.



WICKMAN: That was part of the book?

MC CANN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WICKMAN: I see.

MC CANN: Yeah, for awhile that was, that was going to be part of it--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--the management of coalitions.

WICKMAN: Yeah, the management, that's it, the management.

MC CANN: Yeah. In fact, it started out with that, and then, well, and I have no idea where that--John, I think, said that post-mor--Doubleday was ready to publish it--

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN:--as it was.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: But John said that post-mortem--and he's right--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--post-mortem books are--



WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--they're more advertising agency material than they are monuments to the writer.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: Because the--

WICKMAN: Yeah, and especially when they are not finished.

MC CANN: Uh-huh, yeah. But--

BURG: How far had it gone, Kevin? Had that book reached some kind of rough manuscript state, or--

MC CANN: Oh, yes.

WICKMAN: Yes, oh, yes.



MC CANN: Oh, yes! You know, Herbert Hoover used to come out with a book every six months. His, his were about a half-inch thick, composed of letters received from children and that sort of thing.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh, yeah.

MC CANN: No, this was, this was already a substantial book, and I think it was going to be--if he had been given another year it would have, I think it would have been the best of his books. And the man then was seventy-nine, is that right?



WICKMAN: That's right.

MC CANN: He would have been eighty when it was published, or approaching eighty.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: And in his last years he was far sharper in mind than any of the twenty-five years before that that I knew him.

BURG: Really?

MC CANN: Yes.



WICKMAN: Why do you think that?

MC CANN: Huh?

WICKMAN: Why was that so? The time?

MC CANN: The physical man had worn down--

WICKMAN: I see.

MC CANN:--and the mental man had come to the top.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: I think that's it.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN: It was something of that sort.

WICKMAN: Yeah. I know he was incredibly--

BURG: That's interesting.

WICKMAN:--he was incredibly sharp in the meetings I had with him. For someone his age, he just had a fantastically sharp mind. He didn't, I have no way to describe it, but he was--

MC CANN: Yeah, well, that's--



WICKMAN:--not the person you'd expect to find at seventy-six or seventy-seven. He just--

MC CANN: Well, but he was seventy-nine when he died.

WICKMAN: Yeah, right.

MC CANN: Well, he was approaching seventy-nine when he died. He was a great man, and a good man. And sometimes a wild man.

WICKMAN: A wild man.

MC CANN: On the other hand, I must say I read about all this, these people who talk about him blowing up and turning the room blue with profanity, and I never--that's an aspect of the man I never encountered. Absolutely. I, now, so that if those people are right, and I don't want to call them liars, there's one side of Dwight Eisenhower--

WICKMAN: You never saw.

BURG: Yes.

MC CANN: On that side I'm completely ignorant, because I never encountered it.

BURG: Kevin--



MC CANN: So I cannot be called a--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: I wanted to ask a question that I, I know is appearing among young scholars now. It's an interesting kind of thing; they seem to be coming to the conclusion that the stories they

have heard from various historians that Dwight Eisenhower did not often make the decisions, that these were managed for him-- many young scholars are now questioning that. Their view is--

MC CANN: They should.

BURG:--their view is that during the war he made decisions, and they can't believe that this man did not make decisions.

MC CANN: Look, I lived with him for almost twenty-five years, and when I say lived, my Lord, that guy has gotten me awake at 5:30 in the morning, and there have been times I didn't get to bed until 2:30 the following morning. He made decisions! And sometimes they were extremely abrupt. About people who made, who would spend days worrying out a small or a major decision he has more than once told me, 'Well, so and so makes his mistakes slowly.' And there's some senior character still on the American scene about whom he has said just that.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MC CANN: No, he was a decisive man, and he, and he played second fiddle to no one, least of all John Foster Dulles. Now, I'm,





John Foster Dulles was a great man in my opinion--a great bore, also.

WICKMAN: He was a Puritan.

MC CANN: We giggled at him when he became pontifical, and I think, I think the General would agree with my assessment there.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

BURG: Uh-huh.

MC CANN: Because he did not know John Foster Dulles, and to get the first evaluation of him when John Foster Dulles came to France in 1952, at the luncheon there the General sat me next to John Foster Dulles so that I could give him, the General, my evaluation of the future Secretary of State.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.



BURG: I see.

MC CANN: And I got the word, "bore" in that.

WICKMAN: There's going to be a book out in September that I, I certainly hope you'll read, and as soon as I get hold of a copy I'll send it off to you. There's this book that has been done

on the Eisenhower administration by a fellow who has researched out in Abilene--his name is Herb Parmet, Herbert Parmet, he's--

MC CANN: How do you spell that?

WICKMAN: P-a-r-m-e-t.

MC CANN: P as in Patrick?

WICKMAN: Uh-huh. And he's done a couple of other books--he did one on Alexander Hamilton and won a prize a couple of years ago. And I can't, I don't remember what the second book was on, but he is a very, very thorough, very, very interesting kind of historian, and still teaches--one of the few writing that I know of who still teaches.

MC CANN: I've read most of the Hamilton books; I don't remember that one. Hamilton--

WICKMAN: It will be interesting--

MC CANN:--Hamilton was a God-awful phony.

WICKMAN:--to see what he says about the administration.



MC CANN: In fact, in this American-Irish thing, I had to point out that the Hamiltonian doctrine was expressed by Alexander Hamilton, himself, for only, less than two decades. But the two Irishmen--an Irishman named Mathew Carey became the chief spokesman for it--



WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

MC CANN:--and his son, Henry, was the real Hamiltonian. He didn't, they didn't triumph until 1861 when the Congress, a Republican Congress, for the first time finally passed into law what Hamilton was talking about in protectionism. But it was due to the Careys, not to Hamilton. Hamilton was a man of minute influence. He was great at skulduggery but he was a lousy dueler.

BURG: Yes, he sure was.

MC CANN: And a miserable politician. They Careys, I don't know whether they could duel or not, but at least they, they knew. Well, John, I can, as I say, if you're going to do it here, I would have to have, if you're going to do something like this with me--

WICKMAN: Yeah.

MC CANN:--I'd have to have a long list of questions--

WICKMAN: Yeah.



MC CANN:--and I might write back saying, "Look, I just don't have the material to, or the resources to answer these." I can give you the flavor and the taste of Dwight Eisenhower fishing.

WICKMAN: Well, you know, Kevin, that's the sort of thing, really-- I, I had to say this to Mrs. Eisenhower this morning, that really is the kind of thing that a hundred years from now is going to be important.