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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
1/26/84

Keep

good
pieces for
paper

TO: MIKE DEEVER
FROM: MIKE BAROODY
Director of Public Affairs

Attached is a final copy of the domestic materials sent into the President tonight for tomorrow's interviews.

Focus for
paper

cc: M. McManus

Pull
other
questions
Pull Durall
memo.

NOTES FOR FRIDAY INTERVIEWS WITH TIME AND NEWSWEEK

Both magazines intend to probe RR for insight into the thought processes that led up to re-election decision and announcement.

Both will ask about the First Lady's views on this.

The materials below address other specific areas they intend to ask about.

The coming campaign -- how does RR see it?

- o Take nothing for granted. Assume it will be hard fought, tough campaign.
- o But that's good. Voters deserve full debate.
- o Don't know yet who the opponent will be but no matter which of the 8 Democratic contenders gets the nod, it will be a clear choice.
- o In many respects, it will be the same choice voters faced in 1980. Some of the 8 are talking about new ideas, but they aren't really offering any.
- o Americans voted for change in 1980 -- and they got it. In 1984 their choice is whether they prefer that change or do they want to go back to what they had before the last election.

o *will you debate?*

What are the issues?

- o Basic issue is that simple choice -- go back to old "government knows best" policy or keep going forward in the new direction we chose in 1980.
- o Know some things won't be issues in 1984 though they were at the top of the voters' list of concerns in 1980. Some examples:
 - high inflation and record interest rates;
 - economic stagnation;
 - energy shortages and skyrocketing fuel costs;
 - lack of respect for America in the world;

- o Also, the sense of drift we felt back then won't be an issue. It was a big concern in 1980 -- the feeling that nothing worked -- that we couldn't solve our problems. RR senses that self-doubt is evaporating.
- o The big issues are always the same: Are we safer and more prosperous now than we were -- and can we hope for an even better future for our children? RR believes the answers are yes and looks forward to running on those issues.

Didn't RR always plan to run? Was announcement delay just a game played for sake of political timing?

- o In the first place, definite decision to run was not made until very recently. No games being played on that score. ?
- o Second, RR did not feel need to make decision earlier, though some thought he should. Campaigns are too long, as it is. We want people to be involved in the campaign, not bored by it. *Better answer*

RR often said decision to run not up to him but up to the people. What tells you they want you to seek re-election?

- o Lots of specific encouraging signs:
 - campaign committee getting lots of support (money and volunteers) even before announcement;
 - Rollins, Laxalt, others involved say much support coming from grass roots and not just from Republicans but from independents and Democrats.
- o Most important, RR detects growing optimism among Americans of all backgrounds and a sense that if we keep working together America can solve its problems.

RR's remaining agenda -- what are the priorities?

- o Four great goals in State of the Union have highest priority:
 - ensuring steady economic growth
 - developing next frontier of space
 - strengthening traditional values
 - building a meaningful peace

- o None more important than building and keeping meaningful peace.
- o To that end, RR will continue efforts toward arms reduction while restoring U.S. defense capability.

Hopes and dreams for a second term?

- o RR feels American people -- together -- have come very far in just three years. Excited by thought of how much farther we can go in coming years.
- o Can make a beginning toward the end of the arms race and threat of nuclear war. We are ready for that -- our arms reduction proposals prove it. With sober reflection by Soviets on how much this is in their interest too, we can make real progress.
- o But don't want this to wait for a second term. We're ready now -- and would like talks to start again.
- o Also, can go from current economic recovery to prolonged economic expansion for U.S. -- and we haven't seen that since the 1960s.
- o Sustained economic growth has already put millions back to work (4 million in 1983) and we must keep the economy on steady growth path for the future so all who want work can find it in the 80s and beyond.

Reflections on politics and the Presidency -- as RR begins his last campaign

- o We've all relearned an important lesson -- never sell America short or underestimate her people.
- o In SOTU, RR singled out a few heroes for the eighties. Could have named thousands -- people from all walks of life who go about their business, do their duty and go beyond what they're obliged to do to give that extra measure of work, of caring and concern that makes America a special place.
- o Have tried, in last 3 years, to clear away some of the obstacles government put in people's way -- like high taxes, over-regulation, fiscal policies that led to ruinous inflation, interest rates. Once we got some of them out of the way, the American people did the rest.

- o RR rejects old saw that the "mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." In the first place, he doesn't believe in a "mass of men." America's made of individuals, men and women who make up the little communities of family, neighborhood.
- o And they lead lives of quiet honor -- most of them -- men and women, black and white, young and old. Government ought to help them when they need it, and get out of their way when they don't.

Some reminder notes on major accomplishments

- o Back in 1980, they were saying it couldn't be done but we have made a new beginning and brought more improvement, faster, and on many more fronts than most thought possible back then.
 - Inflation's down: From two years in double-digits to two years under 4 percent (1982-83).
 - Unemployment's falling: Fell more in 1983 than any year since 1950; 4 million found jobs in 1983.
 - GNP growth: About 6 percent last year, after virtually no growth for 4 years starting in 1979.
 - Tax rates cut: 25 percent for everyone.
 - Interest rates down: Prime only about half the post Civil War record of 21.5 percent.
 - Growth of government slowed: spending growth rate cut to about 2/3s the 1980 rate of 17.4 percent.
 - Regulation: burden reduced to save consumers, business \$150 billion in next 10 years.
 - Social Security: Retirement fund saved from bankruptcy while benefits for average retired couple rose more than \$150 a month (under RR).
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 - Education: Debate now focused on how much students learn, not how much government spends.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Keep

January 27, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR STAFF

FROM: MIKE BAROODY *MB*

SUBJECT: ATTACHED GUIDANCE

The attached is forwarded for your information and for INTERNAL USE ONLY. It was prepared as general information for the President in anticipation of the media interviews.

The brief list of 10 major accomplishments on the last page of the attached may be of particular interest.

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1/23

1:00P

The Washington Times

3600 NEW YORK AVENUE NORTHEAST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002 / 202-636-3000

Jan 14, 1984

Dear Mike:

I'd appreciate it very much if you'd give me about 15 minutes one day in this coming week to talk about some general subjects on which lies ahead. Background attribution, of course.

I have not been a drain on your time, by phone or any other way, since a long time ago in California. In part, this has been because I was embarrassed by what The Ear was doing to you and that is obviously out of my control. But, so far as I know, there is no reason for friction between you and me and I guess it's silly for there to be any barrier between two honest men who have no reason to stand at arm's length.

I'll call your secretary Monday afternoon to see if you can give me some time at your convenience.

Sincerely
Jerry O'Leary

Set-up Meeting

Yes No

election
campaign
faxes 636-3169

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
January 10, 1984

DB
let's do

1/23
10:00
a.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR MIKE DEEVER

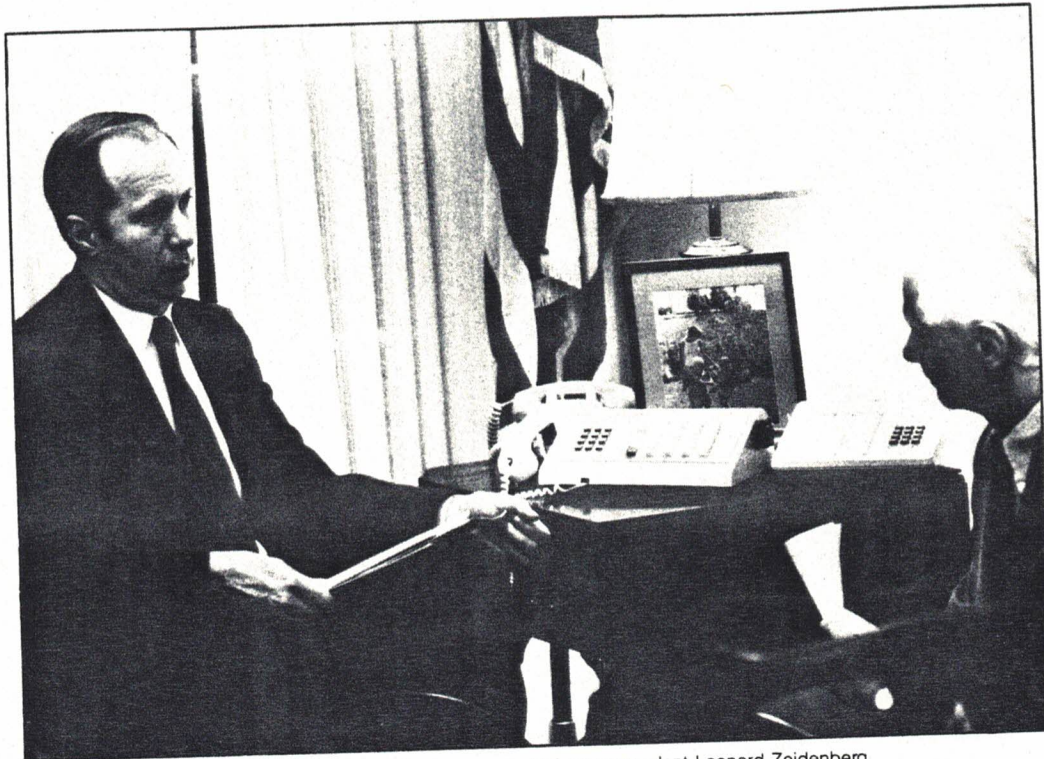
FROM: DAVE GERGEN *dg*

SUBJECT: Broadcasting Magazine

Broadcasting Magazine, the leading trade publication of that industry, this week printed a long interview that may interest you. We have marked a couple of sections of particular note. The remarks, incidentally, are generally in line with other departure interviews.

Len Zeidenberg of Broadcasting has requested a get-acquainted interview with you (I recommended to your office that you do it), and it is apparently on your schedule for the next several days. Len is a fair reporter, and this magazine is widely read by execs in television and radio. It is a good publication for you/Mike McManus to follow.

cc: Mike McManus



Gergen (at left) with BROADCASTING chief correspondent Leonard Zeidenberg

For three years, David Gergen has been at the center of the White House's communications effort. As assistant to the President for communications, he has helped "package" the news, as he once referred to it, served as a source for reporters, and mounted campaigns to counter developments in the media regarded as unfavorable by the White House—the nuclear-disaster, made-for-television movie, "The Day After," for instance. Thus, if the White House "manipulates" the news, as many journalists claim, Gergen is one of the manipulators. Yet, he has managed to retain the confidence and respect of at least most of the White House press corps. They regard him as honest and reliable. CBS News's Lesley Stahl describes herself as a Gergen "fan." And there are those who wonder whether relations between the White House and the press, which show signs of strain, will not deteriorate further with Gergen's departure, this month, for posts at Harvard and the American Enterprise Institute. In the "At Large" that follows, Gergen looks back on his service in the Reagan White House, discusses the state of affairs between the White House and the press, and offers some frank comments on the efforts the President's men make to put him in the most favorable light possible.

The two-way street between press and President

Where do you go next, and when?

In the next couple of weeks, I'll be reporting to Harvard as a fellow at the Institution of Politics and to the American Enterprise Institute here in Washington as a visiting fellow, both starting in January. The Cambridge appointment is for the spring semester and will provide a wonderful opportunity for reflection and rejuvenation. My plans after that are not yet settled.

Looking back, what would you say of the Reagan administration's actions toward the press during the three years you've been here? It started like a honeymoon—Reagan was well liked, seemed to like the press, the press seemed like puppy dogs. It's not that way any more.

It has soured some in recent months. I would like to think that's a temporary detour from a road we've been trying to follow most of the time we've been here. We set out in the beginning to have a good relationship with the press. The President was committed to an open Presidency and one that was accountable to the public through the press. And we intentionally sought to encourage good relations with the press. It's been my hope, and one that was shared by others—the President, Jim Baker and others—that one of the legacies of this administration would be to leave behind a greater sense of civility and professional respect between the White House and the press corps.

That was very important to us. During Vietnam and the Watergate days we created a very unhealthy climate in the press room, and there was too much of the "we versus they" and the "press-as-the-enemy" attitude that took over in the government. At the same time in the press corps there was a tremendous—it really went far beyond skepticism—disbelief, almost, in government, so we set about to see if we could put things on a different plane.

That hasn't uniformly been the case, and there are feelings on the part of the press that we've been too restrictive and that we have not been as successful as we should have been. But I think that if you look back over the three years, generally speaking, the relations have been decent and there has been a feeling of respect on the part of the White House for what journalistic professionalism is all about and for the rights of journalists. I can't speak for the press, but it does seem to me that their coverage, at least, would suggest that, while they have been critical from time to time, they've generally respected the professionalism within the White House.

But you do get a lot of hostility on the part of the press—Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, is very down on the President. He has said that whereas Carter might have gotten mad at the press because of an occasional story, Reagan seems to have no sympathy for the role of the press. It seems that criticism is almost unpatriotic. There was something he said in a *TV Guide* article that was critical of the press's coverage of Vietnam, and similarly of the press coverage of El Salvador.

I think it would be unnatural for any President to feel the press was entirely fair or accurate. The press itself doesn't believe that. There have been instances of disagreement, but generally speaking the President has never taken it personally, nor does he form grudges. We have not gone to the kind of excessives that I think you've seen in some past administrations, and the President hasn't called network executives and threatened to pull a license or throw somebody out of the White House, or cancel subscriptions. Every President that I've known in the last 20 years has had moments of extreme irritation.

That's right. But journalists think this administration has been more subtle and more sophisticated and more clever in going after the press. Those other things you mention are reason to fight back. If Kennedy tells the publisher of the *Times* to get rid of David Halberstam, naturally he's not going to. But if there is the low-level pressure

of anti-press attitudes and activities, it's harder to fight against those. We discussed some of these before: the lie detector tests, the FBI investigation, the pre-publication censorship of employes, government workers who had access to classified information. That sort of thing is harder to rail against.

Well, I know people who complain about that, and we could talk about individual programs or efforts being made to deal with classified information, and, yes, we have had the lie detector test applied in some instances, but we have nowhere near the record of the Kennedy administration. In one year over 19,000 polygraph tests were administered by the Kennedy folks. And yet people look back upon the Kennedy administration as one with a love affair between the press corps and the administration. I think some parts of history are very quickly forgotten.

Well, why are you leaving? Is it because of a better offer?

Since January 1971 I have had the privilege of serving in the White House under three Presidents—Nixon, Ford and Reagan. It's been very rewarding, but after eight years of experience in even as supercharged an environment as this one, it's time for a change. Just ask Sam Donaldson; he'll tell you what it's like after several years in the saddle.

But let me go back a moment to that question of the difficulties the administration has had with press. We have had a rough spot here in the last three months. It's something we need to get over to return to the relations that we had. One of the ways that I think we ought to do that is to return to the schedule of more regular and more frequent interviews with the press. I am not particularly a fan of the big evening prime time press conferences. They have become unproductive over the years. We have 250 reporters in there. But I would strongly encourage that, as President, Reagan do something he did in California as governor—and that's meet with the press once a week. It worked out very well. He answered their questions, and it was extremely effective. I was not there, but everyone I talked to said it was very, very good. It would not have to be once a week here, although that could be a good thing, and would serve everyone's interest. The President has a lot to say. He has had many mini-press conferences—or availabilities, as we've called them in the past. He's enjoyed them.

Why haven't there been more? There have been 20 press conferences, big ones, production numbers, but—and I know there was talk of doing all kinds of things to supplement them—but have they been going on without my knowledge, or have they not been going on?

He's had a number of interviews at other times, and I think he's got a record of over 150 individual interviews of one sort or another in addition to his regular press conferences. But there is a lot to be said for going out and seeing the White House press corps periodically, especially in the mini-sessions and smaller, more intimate groups where he really has a chance to explain his policies.

But he hasn't. And that's probably part of the unhappiness and frustration on the part of the press corps. Press people I've talked to think that he doesn't want to do it because people around him think he's not good at it and makes too many blunders.

I don't agree with that. I happen to think he's first rate at it. I'm a firm believer in Ronald Reagan with the press, and I think that, when he does it with regularity as he did in California, when he's been out there on a regular basis—and we've gone through periods like that—he's been very good and very effective.

So why can't you just say, "Let's do it"?

It's the pressure of the schedule and other activities and a variety of other things. If you don't meet regularly, there's a tendency on any

particular day to say, "Oh, there's this story out there or that story out there, and why don't we have that story dealt with at the State Department or the Defense Department or Interior." That's why it's necessary to have a commitment.

Is there any chance of that happening?

There's some sentiment to go to that.

From what I gather, Mike Deaver is going to take over most of your functions—at least in the communications area.

He will have a very large share of the responsibilities.

How does he feel about the President being so available?

Mike is positive on that score. It hasn't been recognized just how much Mike has contributed to the whole process of communication in this administration. He's very creative—a master at many aspects of communication. With my departure he will not only continue his previous responsibilities but he will also take the lead on communications tactics and strategy, and he will be administering the public affairs office, the media relations office (which deals with the out-of-town press) and the White House television office.

That's a nice fit between his old duties and his new ones, and I can't think of anyone who is better qualified or will do a more superb job than Mike.

There's also a good fit between Mike's deputy, Mike McManus, and the new responsibilities. McManus, for example, is deeply involved in planning the China trip. And now he can work more closely than ever with the press, especially the broadcasting media, in figuring out what they may be doing over there.

What about your role—and this is not unique to this administration or the White House—as a packager of information?

Some people call it "putting a spin on it." Jim Baker, Mike Deaver, Larry Speakes and I do spend some time thinking about how we're going to lay out certain stories and how the President might want to handle a breaking news event. Is the President going to do something on the way to the helicopter? Is he going to say something to a reporter? What is the process going to be? How do we get the maximum bang out of a story, if it's a good story we want to get out? Some people say that's manipulative, and they accuse us of trying to manage the news.

There is an element of truth to that charge, but I've always felt that the press has ways it likes to produce the news. It's not unhealthy for the White House to be in a situation where we want to get the maximum play out of our story. We want to have the most unvarnished message go out, and have to find ways of doing that. The press is in effect a filter, and we want to get as much of our story through as we can.

I think some White Houses have gone too far; they've been preoccupied with press play. But in every modern White House there's going to be competition with the news media to see how the White House itself can get the right story out. If it doesn't, it has no way to persuade people about its policies, and to build majority support for what it's trying to do. That's part of our democratic process.

On the other hand, there are things like the television picture of the President going to the front lines, the 38th parallel and services with the troops in Korea.

No one liked that better than the networks. One of the reporters from the networks came to us and said that was the best story we've done since we've been here. Mike Deaver and Bill Henkel, our advance men, deserve a lot of credit for that. It was great television. I think every White House would rather see its President in what amounts to a heroic situation—there also was an element of courage there. And [Reagan's] being out there sent an important message to a lot of people in the military as well as people back home, and it sure is a hell of a lot better picture than a guy like Carter, stumbling up in Camp David when he's jogging around up there, falling down. One picture builds support for the President. The other, I think, destroys him.

It wasn't planned that way for them.

Sure it was. There's no secret about the fact that advance teams spend enormous time planning out every moment of a President's time. But meticulous planning, combined with a creative flair, pays enormous dividends—and in the long run helps a President govern more effectively.

As much as the press joshes the White House for the various ways we create events, there is frequently a greater degree of respect, even if they feel they've been had occasionally. We try not to fool them in that sense. When Nancy Reagan came out in front of television cameras with a birthday cake, we didn't tell the networks in advance. Frankly, we thought it would spoil the surprise if we told them. We were worried that the word would get out there was going to be a surprise, and the President wouldn't have any spontaneity. We did not expect the event to go on as long as it did, and I called the networks back and apologized. They were caught in a situation where they couldn't break away and go back to regular programming as quickly as they wanted. They said, in effect, that they'd rather put on their game shows than our game shows.

Getting back to the question of why you are leaving. Is it a case of burnout or a matter of unhappiness with the way the White House is dealing with the news?

As I said, there comes a time when you need a change. That's the main reason. Secondly, I came here because I was concerned about the state of the country and of the Presidency. I thought those were in a state of decline. I think this President has turned that situation around a great deal over the last three years. Now, as we go into a more political year, there are the kinds of responsibilities and challenges that others are extremely well qualified to handle. There are a lot of very good political people who can come in. I really came to help him get the Presidency rolling, and he's doing so well that I feel very comfortable in leaving.

It's also no secret that on some issues that relate to information policy I've lost a few battles. I think it's terribly important for this President to maintain the original commitment to openness.

And there are some that are going the wrong way?

There are other competing interests that have to be recognized and taken into account that have succeeded on occasion. For instance, on the Grenada issue, I'm very glad we have a commission that's taking a look at how to deal with those kinds of situations.

But to come back to the point, I am leaving here in a very positive frame of mind about this administration and about what this administration has accomplished. Ronald Reagan has done an extraordinary job here.

After three years dealing with the media with this tour, how do you think the media and the press, television and radio have handled the coverage? Clear, unclear, sloppy, accurate, responsible?

It gets a little tiresome, frankly, to see some folks lash out at the media every time there's a problem in an administration or a slide in a President's polls. Yes, there are certainly those in the press who are guilty of the indictments you hear all the time—arrogance, intrusiveness, bias, sloppiness, etc. But all of us need to step back from the fray a moment and recognize that the great majority of those who cover this White House are highly educated, honest men and women who try to be objective.

President Reagan believes that, on balance, the press has treated him with reasonable fairness. There has been one line of stories to which we have objected a great deal—the line that he is insensitive and his programs are biased against blacks, women and the poor. And we also object to the misperceptions that have been spread about his nuclear policies. But looking across the broad range of reporting over the past three years, I would have to say that the administration has generally met with fair treatment.

You know, the *New York Times* did an interview with [Dan] Rather a few weeks ago and talked about the unrelenting pressure from this administration.

Yes. He and I talked about that both before and after the article.

And a lot more calls are directed from the White House to CBS than to any other network. There's also the time when the President himself picked up the phone and called Rather himself during the broadcast. Could you discuss the situation?

I think it is true that among the networks, CBS is the hardest-nosed and the hardest-edged in its coverage, and I think it intentionally sets out to be a hard-hitting news organization. If we were a wildly liberal administration, I think they would have that same hard edge, to tell you the truth. Some of my friends disagree with that, but day in and day out they are just tougher, and we do keep an eye on that. If we find that the story is wrong factually or that it's totally unbalanced, we have no objection to calling them and saying, "Gee, we have a real problem with this." And I have to say that on their part, they have tended to be responsive, although not in every case. We have had a particularly difficult problem trying to deal with Bill Moyers. His commentaries, generally speaking, have been very hard slashes at the President, and we would like to see more balance in those commentaries.

But we certainly don't call them every night, or even very often. Dan Rather probably calls me more often than I call him.

Why would that be?

He has called for information, or to talk. And I'll say this—and it ought to be said—that my relationship with him has always been

think that's good journalism, I think that's heads-up journalism. They're not afraid to say they're wrong, and if they think we're wrong they stick it to us. We're not asking for favorable treatment; we are asking for balanced and accurate treatment.

You have said that some Reagan people want war between the White House and the networks.

Some of the President's most ardent supporters do, as do some strong, conservative columnists. Take Pat Buchanan. He has never thought there is any love lost between the press and this administration. He thinks that the press is basically liberal and we ought to be in hand-to-hand combat with them. And we haven't felt that was the right way to go. I happen to disagree with him for a variety of reasons.

What are your reasons for thinking it's not a good idea?

Well, I witnessed the Agnew period, and there's no question that if you go to the country and you launch an assault upon the media, that is immensely popular in some quarters. But over time, it's very destructive to the credibility of the administration and the relationship that exists between the administration and the press. The relationship deteriorates and degenerates into a very nasty situation, and I think that over time the press becomes even more unbalanced in its coverage. Sure, there may be occasions when an administration



extremely courteous and extremely professional, and it's always been a learning experience; there has always been something new to learn about how people in the networks see reality.

And I would venture to say that's been true of the other executives in CBS. I talk most frequently with Jack Smith, the Washington bureau chief, a first-rate individual, very professional, extremely responsive. We've spent a lot of time together over the last three years, and in more than one instance I've called him, he has checked into something, and if he says, "You guys are wrong," they don't change it. If he calls back and says, "Hey, you're right," they change it.

In looking at things, it's been my impression—my very strong impression—that CBS makes more changes between its first and second evening news feeds than anyone else. They rewrite a fair amount of their copy so that, in fact, if you're on the ball and you see that first feed . . .

Oh, I see. That's when you do it.

Well, frequently; not always. A lot of times our calls will be late in the afternoon, and sometimes we won't know there's a problem until the next morning. But on a number of instances, when something has come across on the 6:30 news, and it's been factually incorrect, and we've called the correspondent—say Bill Plante or Lesley Stahl—and they've checked into it, then when the 7 o'clock feed comes on, if it was incorrect they've changed it. And I respect them for that—I

should make a frontal assault on press bias, but we shouldn't be out spoiling for a fight. That doesn't serve anyone's interest—government, press or, most assuredly, the public.

I was talking to Fred Friendly, mainly about the Grenada situation, and he said basically there are two large institutions in the society—the government and the press—and they are mistrustful of each other. There's always that friction—that tension. It can perhaps go too far, as with Grenada. But there is a feeling that this administration does not trust the press, and maybe it shouldn't—maybe it even has reasons for it. But there have been cases where you could have taken in a pool of reporters and said, "Now look, this is what's at stake: there are lives at stake here, and we don't want to risk that, but we're going to take you in because that's the thing to do."

There are some in this administration, just as there have been some in other administrations, who do not trust the press. If you took a cross-cut of the American population, you would find that many in the general public share that view, and when some of those come to work at the White House it is not surprising that they share some views that are very popular.

But I think that has not been the predominant view in this administration. My own personal opinion, for what it's worth, is that there are some members of the press whom one comes to trust and admire, and you can trust absolutely, and there are others that you can't trust worth a damn. There are members of the administration who,

through trial and error, learn who the good ones are—they can spot them—and whom not to trust.

There is an element of yellow journalism that still exists in the press. There is an element of investigating to excess. It's absolutely shameful the way some members of government are subjected to pillorying when their names are linked—even indirectly—to stories of possible wrongdoing. Too often, reputations are unfairly damaged. I've seen it in this administration and we've seen it in past administrations.

There is a responsibility on the press to police itself, and I think it doesn't always do it. The press is saying it would like to be loved. I don't think that's the issue. The press shouldn't want to be popular. There is something to be said for the old adage about the press comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.

However, it ought to want public respect. That's the only way it will be taken seriously.

Whether it's loved or not, it's certainly not respected by the public. Not as it should be.

A few words for civility

Not all of David Gergen's journalistic concerns have to do with the freedom of the press issues, or balanced media coverage. One of them—it may come as a surprise to the newspeople concerned—has to do with the environmental comfort of the press corps itself. Acted upon, it could be the most revolutionary of all Gergen's ideas for improving the state of the art.

I wish there were a way to improve the general physical conditions under which the press works. In Williamsburg [Va.], when we went down there for the economic summit, we had outstanding physical conditions: nice layout for them to work in, there were good phones and communications services. Coffee was easily available. They were treated more as professionals. And the quality of reporting was superior.

There are so many people in the press corps now that when they go places, they tend to be herded like cattle. The conditions are not as good as they ought to be. I know that journalists are supposed to be tough—always with the porkpie hat and very able to take all that—but I wish there were a more civilized way to treat the press. I think it would make a big difference in the environment and the way the government is covered.

The more professional they can be treated, the more profes-

That's one of the greatest frustrations of the good reporters.

Why would you say this is the case? Why would you guess the public feels as it does about the media? I'm giving you a free ball there.

The press is beginning to suffer from the same kind of criticism and loss of confidence that other major institutions have experienced in the last 15 or 20 years. The American people tend to distrust large and powerful organizations that are seen as trying to serve their own ends. Not only has the press become a huge institution within our society, but too many who now work as journalists are seen as serving not the public but their own private interests—trying to make a buck, attract an audience, grind an axe and the like.

If the press were like a hospital or a charitable institution, people would respect it, but it's seen out there as serving its own ends too often, and that is not a healthy situation.

They have a number of other problems: the arrogance that you find in some reporters, the techniques that are used to intrude upon people's private lives. There is a whole litany of what some people call "abuses"—others would call them problems—that needs to be addressed.

You occupy a bit of an unusual situation. You came here to do this particular kind of job, and I don't remember anybody in the previous administration who came in with the same attitude, the same hopes, the same ambitions for the job. Maybe Herb Klein, but I don't think he had the problems that you do. You wanted to help the Presidency and

the institution improve relations with the press. What happens now when you leave? Have you created a situation that is going to prevail, or is it going to collapse? It's a day-to-day battle, isn't it?

It is indeed, and please don't allow me to leave the impression that I was alone here in those views. There are a number of people who feel as I do, and let me just cite Jim Baker again.

I think it's overstated to say that the President is antipress, because it's not the case. He has a healthy regard and respect for the press—and as an institution, he rates it well.

As long as people keep their eye on the main ball—the need for open and frank relations with the press—things will be fine, and I am optimistic about the future here.

The President has talked—and I've got to ask this question to hold my franchise—but the President has written a number of letters and has made a lot of statements about First Amendment rights for broadcasters. That's one day. The next day he'll say something that seems to take it back. But never mind. Let's say that he believes what he says about the First Amendment. Why doesn't he do something

sional they are. They'll have more self respect and there'll be more respect for them. We have very cramped quarters at the White House [and] I do think the physical conditions and the difficulties of working under the kind of pressure that they have have something to do with the way the press reports and the way they behave. You take a Sam Donaldson [of ABC]. He feels all those frustrations. He appears to most people to be rude and eccentric, while his reporting is straight and I think he's one of the best. I think this is something that needs to be addressed over time. When you talk to some reporters in person, there is a problem. And it ought to be something we can work out with the press associations.

There are some things over which you have no control, obviously.

Yes, there are things over which you have no control, but we ought to be erring on that side. You can take the wrong attitude initially, if you say they're all animals. If you treat them like animals, they will act like animals. Or you can treat them like professionals—and they are, they're damn good professionals. More than half of our press corps has masters degrees. They're very well educated. They are sophisticated people for the most part, if not all of them. But there ought to be a way to improve the conditions and I do think everybody would be better off.

about it? Why doesn't he get out there or send his people up on the Hill to support legislation that would really support deregulation for broadcasters, and repeal the fairness doctrine and equal time?

It would be my hope that in a second Reagan term those on the domestic policy side would take a harder look at a series of issues that deal with the communications industry and telecommunications. It seems to me that we've had an awful lot of to-ing and fro-ing in this administration about where responsibilities lie—who's in charge of what?—and government as a whole is not well organized to deal with the overall question of telecommunications policy. And that ought to be one of the commitments of the second term, to deal with that.

In the coming month, I'll be joining the American Enterprise Institute, and they are setting up a center on communications to study telecommunications policy as well as the press. And it's my hope that this will be one of the important forums for taking a serious look and trying to resolve some of these telecommunications issues for they certainly need to be addressed in an extremely serious way.

On the subject of financial interest and domestic syndication. The President, you feel, to back up a minute on the First Amendment and deregulation issues, came back apparently favoring retention of those rules, which seems to run counter to everything else he supports, in communications regulation and deregulation. How does he square that?

In his view, the danger presented on repeal of the syndication rule and the financial interest rule was that the networks would acquire a monopolistic position with regard to the producers. Therefore, from his viewpoint, it's quite consistent to talk about deregulation and at the same time talk about a system that does not allow monopolies. It's almost an antitrust-type viewpoint. What he really came down in the end and said was let's hold off on a final decision on this and let the dust settle.

Getting back to the relationship with the press, the networks anyway. You mentioned Bill Moyers, who a year or so ago did that documentary entitled *People Like Us*. The White House reacted quite strongly to that. You did yourself.

Some in the White House thought I overreacted, that we shouldn't have taken him on.

Yes, but you did. You thought it was necessary then [to take him on]. Do you still think it was necessary.

Absolutely. Just as press criticism keeps the government straight if we attempt anything phony or dishonest, then I think if the White House cries foul, it will keep the network people honest. We never threatened them with loss of license. We made no institutional threat.

The administration also reacted very strongly to ABC's *The Day After*.

We did. Again, some people thought we were overreacting. Two things about that. I noticed that the British government reacted the same way when it was aired. The Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hazel-tine, tried to go on the air as soon as the show was over to answer the program and he was kept off the air. They let him tape something and it was presented later. I found it interesting that the conservative government in Britain did precisely the thing we did.

Well, of course they're in the middle of the missile business.

So are we. We thought—let me just put it this way—there was an enormous amount of media hype before we got involved in this issue. In one day in the *Los Angeles Times*, there were six stories. Six stories. It was on the cover of *Newsweek*, on the cover of *TV Guide*. It was in a segment of *60 Minutes*. I have a stack of clippings two or three inches thick that all appeared before we said a word. That guaranteed a large audience.

We were concerned that with a huge audience, such a depressing film would have an emotional impact, an emotional impact that would turn into very negative feelings about the President's policies and that, in effect, would make it much more difficult to carry on those policies. It did have a large audience. One of the largest ever. And for the public affairs program that followed—a public service for the viewer—they had an audience of 50 million to 60 million people. Contrary to what some people think, the audience for the movie built over time. The Nielsen study showed an increase in the size of audience and they held 50 million-60 million people for a 10:30 p.m. hour-long show.

The emotional impact is more uncertain, but I think it was there. Just look at the way concern over nuclear war has shot up to the top of public concerns in recent weeks. We also have one survey on the movie, taken by Qube out of six metropolitan areas, which seemed to be fairly representative demographically. In the survey, 5,000 to 6,000 people responded. The interviewers asked the question before and after, "Is nuclear war something you feel strongly about because it's a very serious issue and you're very worried about it." And the number of people in that category started at 26% before the show and went up to 48% after the show. So it did have an emotional impact.

We, of course, had a small army of administration spokesmen on the air after the show, led by George Shultz. And although there was an emotional impact to the show, there was a slight increase in support of the President's program after the show. There was not a negative impact. There was a positive impact. And the predictions that people had that we might go down the tubes over the show never panned out.

Now, I would have preferred not to have been so public in our response—everybody knew exactly what we were doing. That didn't

help us. But I would argue—and the President agrees, he and I were talking about this and he said we did the right thing. In fact he called one of the people who spoke out very effectively for us, Kathy Troia (assistant secretary of public affairs), and thanked her and said she was doing the right thing. I'm really glad we were out there making our case. Under similar circumstances we should do exactly the same thing again.

Now a question that plays off Grenada. At the same time that was going on, UNESCO was meeting to talk about the New World Information Order. The Third World countries, backed by the Soviet Union, were trying to get resolutions passed in favor of licensing journalists and bringing them under the control of governments. And the United States is out there leading the charge against it.

A lot of the critics are saying that the Grenada-type thing really weakens the United States position in international bodies when you talk about the free flow of information, the honor of the press and the responsibility of the press and when you shut them out it doesn't do much good. I guess that was the fourth or fifth thing down the list to think about at the time.

It was.

But it really does cause a problem.

Trying to link Grenada to proposed press rules at UNESCO is mixing up apples with kumquats. The press rules that have been under discussion by some countries at UNESCO would be a terrible impediment to the flow of international information. The *Newspeak* of George Orwell would be arriving right on schedule.

In Grenada, journalists did find they could not reach the island for approximately 48 hours. But once it was opened up, no one in government tried to dictate who could come or what they could write.

I am not trying to suggest that the Grenada experience is unworthy of debate. My own view after that episode is that in nearly all cases, representatives of the press ought to go in with the military on "the first wave." If that proves impossible, then the government ought to open things up for the press just as soon as there is a plot of ground big enough to hold a reporter, a pencil and, hopefully, a camera. The press needs to let the military do the fighting, but we ought to let a free press do the reporting.

We talked about this briefly before. Under the general heading of pre-publication censorship or polygraphs or whatever—you said all those things are related to security matters. But have there been any leaks that warrant that kind of attitude? Those policies?

With one exception, I've never been aware of any FBI investigations or polygraph tests within the administration that dealt with anything other than national security. The exception was the investigation that Secretary Baldrige ordered into the leak of new economic statistics hours before their release date. He rightly felt that premature release could allow the unscrupulous to make economic profits, and he has tried to cut off the leaks.

You mentioned something about the size of the current press corps and the competition getting so fierce. Has that become a problem?

Over the past quarter century, there's been a virtual explosion in the size of the press corps covering the President, and that's caused a number of problems. Not only does it increase competitive pressures, but it becomes more and more difficult to develop personal relationships of trust between the White House and members of the press. No one on either side has enough time to spend with everyone they should, and reporters find they no longer can develop the kind of intimacy with a President that existed some years ago. Naturally, then, there are frustrations and some of the trust between the White House and the press is destroyed. But again, if both sides recognize the problem, you can make some progress in overcoming it.

I still hope that one day people will look back and say that in the 1980's, both the government and press began to restore the spirit of civility, professionalism and honesty that should exist between the two institutions.

Editorials

Bulls

The newsroom calculator was put to a stern test last week when asked to total the trading in broadcasting stations and cable television systems in 1983. The figures came to \$2.8 billion, yes, billion, for radio and television stations and \$1 billion, probably an underestimate, for cable systems. Time to retire the calculator and bring in an IBM main-frame.

Is there a ceiling in sight? An affiliated VHF in Boston fetches \$220 million. Wow. Followed by an independent V in Los Angeles for \$245 million. You must be kidding. Mere warm-ups for an affiliated V in Houston at \$342 million, about the price of the whole Combined Communications group when it was merged into Gannett not so long ago.

Have buyers lost their minds or been suckered? Not likely.

Boston went to Metromedia, where John Kluge has presided as a wizard of the parlay too long to be taken in. Los Angeles went to New York investors who have perfected the leveraged buyout. Houston went to A.H. Belo, a Dallas landmark expanding into the widening electronic world.

The only conclusion to be drawn from the escalating prices of electronic properties is that some very successful venturers with very professional financial advice at their command are betting fortunes on a long future. There'll be no bets against them on this page.

Insider's account

This issue's "At Large" with David Gergen is commended by the editors to the readers with even more than our usual fervor. Indeed, several readings of those pages leave us with the impression of a most unusual document, dealing candidly and straightforwardly with the front lines of the confrontation between President and press. Moreover, they leave one with the impression of a most unusual public servant, who could serve one man loyally while remaining true to an even larger commitment to the country itself. The more we came to know Dave Gergen, the more we wished he were staying put.

Considering the present state of affairs between the Reagan White House and the press corps—which is to say, sorry—one must hope that Gergen's successors will heed his injunctions for civility and comity. It is sobering to realize, in light of Gergen's assertion that Reagan and company came into office determined to do something constructive about the administration-press relationship, that things have gone so awry—or, as he puts it, that they have so "soured."

Speaking specifically, we endorse enthusiastically his suggestion that the President make more frequent appearances before the press, broadcast and otherwise, whether in mini-sessions or the more formal appearances. And we agree with him, too, that newsmen should be in the "first wave" of any future military actions, although we would not qualify such a policy by having it apply only "in nearly all cases."

Gergen's suggestions for improving the conditions under which newspeople ply their trade catch one unprepared: to treat the press in a civilized way is so revolutionary a suggestion that it is almost certain to be resisted by a suspicious press corps. Are they trying to lull us to sleep? Many cynics will wonder. But it is of a piece with his overall thesis that administrations and press behave and treat each other in a responsible manner.

It is apparent that Dave Gergen will continue to be an important partisan in the ongoing war to extend the First Amendment's protections to all media and all times. The Fifth Estate is fortunate to have the likes of him around.

All the way

By closing time on Jan. 19, the deadline for comments, the FCC will no doubt have been given a load of advice about what to do with its multiple ownership rules. (This page will forbear, at least for the moment, from suggesting the first disposition that comes to mind.)

The advice is certain to be contradictory. There will be those who favor retention of the present rules, a school that sees miracles in the number seven: seven AM's, seven FM's, seven TV's; seven lean years and seven fat; seven brides for seven brothers; seven come eleven, baby needs a new pair of shoes.

There will probably be proposals of other formulas—indexing, for example, as in the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index, or was it the Hirschman-Herfindahl, that the Justice Department uses to multiply the squares of a lot of numbers to decide whether a merger is good or bad.

On still another tack, the National Association of Broadcasters, where the membership is divided on the question, is expected to propose that the rules be liberalized but leave it pretty much up to the FCC to decide how.

Will anyone come right out and tell the FCC to give up its numbers game? Tinkering with arbitrary limits will lead only to the same dead end that the FCC reached in its rule of sevens. Nowhere in the Communications Act is the FCC instructed to set any limits on multiple ownership. Why not leave broadcasting to the same restraints imposed on other businesses by the antitrust laws?

There will be those who predict that a rash of consolidations would follow elimination or moderation of the rules. They will ignore the realities of the marketplace which has already imposed tighter limits than those of the FCC. No more than two companies have attained the full portfolios that the FCC allows in all the years that the rule of sevens has been in existence. True, Taft Broadcasting has said it will enlarge its holdings under looser regulation, and others no doubt have similar plans. They will, however, be restrained by the same factors of station price and probable revenue that have kept all but two portfolios from being filled so far.

Following the example of its other movements toward deregulation, the FCC in its multiple ownership rulemaking ought to free the marketplace to act.



Drawn for BROADCASTING by Jack Schmitt

"If you ask me, they're carrying customer relations too far when they make us dress up to cable the castle."

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 23, 1984

MEMO TO LAURA EDDY

FROM: Gail Ledwig

SUBJECT: Magazine Request

Now that Mr. Deaver has taken over his new responsibilities in the area of Communications he would like to receive each week, Broadcasting Magazine. It is the leading trade publication and they cover the White House and have recently interviewed Mr. Deaver.

Thanks, Laura.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

JAB
771

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Mr. Deaver:

This is just FYI.

I checked back over your phone logs for calls from Saul Friedman (Knight-Ridder) dating back to September. He made one call to you on December 19th asking to see you early this year.

I called him on January 3rd and scheduled the appointment he has with you on January 13th at 10:00 a.m.

DB

DONNA L. BLUME

10/27
Meeting
2:30 p.m.

10/27
2:30

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 22, 1983

DB
set up notes

MEMORANDUM FOR MICHAEL DEEVER

THROUGH: DAVID GERGEN *YG*

FROM: KARNA SMALL

SUBJECT: BRIEF MEETING WITH YOU AND KEVIN O'BRIEN

Kevin O'Brien is the Vice President and General Manager of Metromedia's WTTG-TV here in town. He is a strong Reagan supporter and is proposing that Metromedia produce a documentary on the President -- emphasizing his warm personality, sensitivity to issues (especially of concern to women), etc. The program would be broadcast on the seven Metromedia stations (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Washington, Houston and Cincinnati) as well as on a "network" of other stations nation-wide put together through their syndication arm. They could run it twice -- once in prime time and again during the day to maximize viewing by the female audience.

Kevin and I have been talking about this project for several months and tried once before to get some time on your calendar to discuss it. But with summer travel and all, we weren't able to work out a convenient time.

Now he would like to pursue it again if we could have 15 minutes of your time. He would like to explain the project to you in person. Would you be available on any of the following days?

- October 27
- October 28
- Or anytime the week of October 31.

Please let me know and I'll set it up with Kevin, you and Dave. Many thanks.

(A copy of his proposal is attached)

Mike -

Would encourage us to move earlier rather than later because stations will begin to get journey over equal time issue -

Dave J

KEVIN P. O'BRIEN
Vice-President and General Manager



July 25, 1983

Ms. Karna Small, Director
Media Relations and Planning
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Karna:

May I begin by offering my thanks for allowing me the opportunity to present you and the Administration with what I consider to be a very creative and beneficial program about the President.

BACKGROUND

It has long been my view that the President and The White House see themselves as captives of the networks. It would be foolish of me to state that their coverage is not very pervasive and important. However, there is a whole other industry available in commercial television that reaches the same number of homes as the networks. The White House should utilize this as an alternative communications source. This source is all the non-network-owned stations in all markets that account for 99.9% of all the television stations in America. The other small percentages are the few owned and operated stations in the network. I think an ancillary rub-off (besides exposure) is to put the networks on notice that The White House will use this alternative source on occasion to present its policies to the public; this can only be beneficial.

CONTENT

To no one's surprise in every Administration, there are certain segments of the populous that each Administration has problems with, real or imaginary. In the Reagan Administration, I believe it's the female segment and blue collar workers. There is a tremendous misconception on the part of these groups that President Reagan is cold and insensitive to their problems. Also, there have been constant rumors that the President has a short attention span and not totally in control of day-to-day management of White House affairs. Please realize that these misconceptions exist in spite of the numerous interviews, press conferences and network interviews that have been conducted with the President over the past three years, yet these misconceptions still exist.

Ms. Karna Small
July 25, 1983
Page Two

I don't believe the President's qualities -- his humanity, as it were -- have been properly showcased. Of course, the majority of his coverage has been by the networks and liberal press, which gives a jaundiced view of what has obviously been a dynamic administration and, one of the most productive administrations in memory. My proposal is to produce either a one or two hour documentary in the manner of an "up-close and personal" view of the President.

The White House could choose the dates and exact times of our camera coverage and we would follow the President through a typical segment of his daily work environment, whether it be at The White House, Camp David, or his California home. The manpower requirement would be one journalist (who would double both as a field producer and the host). Gene Pell would be a fine choice. Also, a cameraman and audio person. I am talking about a small group, limited equipment, shot with ENG equipment. It would be flexible and unobtrusive.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing a cassette of a program done by our sister Metromedia station in Boston, WCVB-TV, entitled "Heritage of Power" This is not exactly what I had in mind, but I think this gives you an idea of the quality of work that we are capable of doing and this program is similar, in that much of the footage was of Ted Kennedy in settings other than his political workday. I think it is very effective and, as a matter of interest, Ted Kennedy was extremely pleased with the effort and felt that it was the best program that he has seen about himself and his family, one that he enjoyed very much.

PLACEMENT

Karna, the program would air in prime-time on all the seven Metromedia stations: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C., Houston and Cincinnati (if our Dallas station is approved and Cincinnati sold, substitute Dallas for Cincinnati).

These seven stations comprise the largest broadcasting group in America and reach over twenty-two million homes a week. We would also, through the auspices of our syndication arm, Metromedia Producers Corporation, syndicate this special to stations around the country. Since this would be a unique program, I feel confident that we would have maximum exposure. We could arrange it that we would make a two-run deal. One run would be in prime-time, so that we could maximize exposure and revenue and, the second, at least on the Metromedia stations, tie in with our afternoon talk shows (similar to Panorama in our market) and make the entire block, both the special and the regular program, tie into the President and his fine administration. I think in this way we would be maximizing our exposure, as well as pin-pointing in on the female audience with the second run.

Ms. Karna Small
July 25, 1983
Page Three

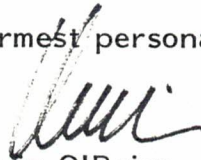
CONCLUSION

Karna, simply put, it would be a special that would exposure the real Ronald Reagan. His good humor, his excellent management style, his sensitivity, concerns for his fellow American and, demonstrate that Ronald Reagan isn't in an ivory tower, but a hardworking, objective-oriented individual, who is constantly striving to find better ways to serve his constituents. What a better way to do it than through syndication, by-passing the networks and, if nothing else, put the networks on notice that the Administration has the ability and the wherewithal to pursue an alternate course of action utilizing the most powerful communication system ever devised -- your local television station.

I hope this proves of some value to you. I am quite excited about the project, as I feel it will do a tremendous amount for the President and his administration. I think it would be an excellent experiment to prove, once and for all, that you don't need the networks when there are all those local commercial stations out there waiting to expose the merits of the Reagan Administration.

If you have any questions at all, or would like further amplification, please feel free to call at any time. I look forward to hearing from you and hope this effort will come to some fruition.

Warmest personal regards,



Kevin O'Brien
Vice President and General Manager
WTTG 5 - Metromedia