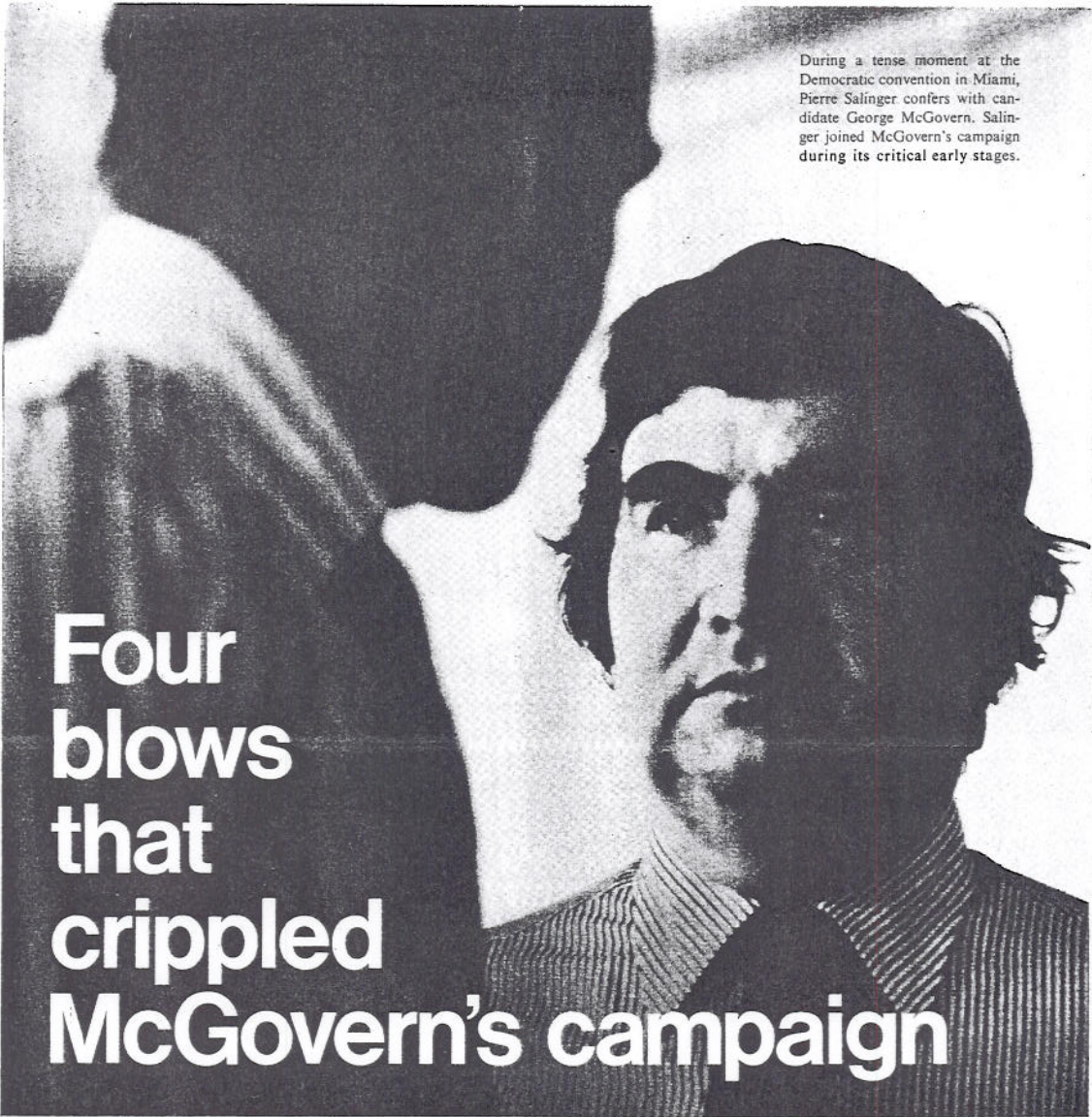


Lil read the last LIFE several weeks ago. When she finished she told me she thought I'd want to read the Salinger piece. I didn't get to the magazine until today. Several pictures are enclosed. After all that has appeared, it is still somewhat shocking. I think you may want to read it. If it might not uncharitably have been entitled The Accidental "on-President, it also seems that a subtitle would still be required, something like Watergators In the Swamplands. There is no suggestion in Salinger's piece that he suspects someone was working behind the scenes, but I feel it is hard to ignore the perhaps unintended case he makes for it. Someone who had enormous influence on McGovern in person...All in all, there is an astounding lack of even mention of Mankiewicz, the few just casual. Lil suspects him. I perhaps overcompensate because of my strong feelings about his statement about assassinations after Bobby got it. (What difference does it make, he's dead anyway.) No one may could make all these mistakes without stalwart help...I think you will find two things Plucky Pierre says that bear on my spot reaction after the Paterson fiasco, that his intimate knowledge of Dirtydickery was essential and his departure left the campaign without it...If you would like this, keep it. If you have no interest please return. I might want to cite in the future
EW 1/14/73



During a tense moment at the Democratic convention in Miami, Pierre Salinger confers with candidate George McGovern. Salinger joined McGovern's campaign during its critical early stages.

Four blows that crippled McGovern's campaign

by PIERRE SALINGER

It was the Saturday afternoon before the election when I finally permitted myself to believe what was all too clear to any unbiased political observer—that Senator George McGovern was going to suffer a shattering defeat.

The United Airlines jet which was taking me from Minneapolis to Boston was sitting in a driving rain at the Buffalo terminal. Since early February, I had crisscrossed the country campaigning 16 to 18 hours a day for Senator McGovern and I was on my way to a group of final appearances in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Peering out of the window of the jet at the pelting rain it

came to me with a rush that it was all over, and what made it all the more depressing was the haunting feeling it could have been different.

I am not here going to advance the theory that without mistakes George McGovern would have defeated Richard Nixon. The President had a lot of things going for him—some real, some spurious. But for those of us who had worked long and hard for Senator McGovern, the political miracle had become the rule, not the exception.

I remembered something else as well that day. Just before the Wisconsin primary, when it appeared that Senator McGov-

CONTINUED

Names like Cronkite and Hesburgh were considered for VP

CONTINUED

ern was going to win, I said, partly in jest, to Frank Mankiewicz, "You know, this campaign is not prepared psychologically for victory." We had all laughed, but that wry prediction turned out to be true.

I want to say at the start that by the time election night came around, my faith in George McGovern was restored, my admiration for his courage unlimited, and my sorrow at his defeat profound. I write this article not to exacerbate unhealed wounds but because two of the principal events of the McGovern campaign involved me as an unwilling participant. Before time dims my memory I wanted to state for the record these events as I saw them. I also feel that although some of these events may reflect on Senator McGovern's judgment, they do not diminish his deeply felt commitment to deal with the fundamental and divisive problems of America.

Between May 15 and July 15, four things happened to Senator McGovern's presidential campaign that made it impossible for him to win. The first of these four crises I will deal with briefly. It consisted of the successful effort of some of Senator McGovern's Democratic adversaries, notably Senator Hubert Humphrey and the high command of the AFL-CIO, to paint Senator McGovern as a dangerous radical. They succeeded beyond their wildest expectations.

In California, under the prodding of his close friend, Beverly Hills lawyer Eugene Wyman, Humphrey decided on the hard line against McGovern. Defense workers were deluged with literature telling them that a McGovern presidency would deprive them of their jobs. Jews were handed pamphlets saying that McGovern would sell out Israel, and in three TV debates Humphrey himself punched home the argument that McGovern's plans to end welfare would instead put half the nation on welfare. His economic program was labeled as irresponsible and his tax program confiscatory. McGovern's positions were shamelessly distorted beyond recognition and the damage was done. I am not saying that the Nixon campaign would not have done the same thing, but Hubert Humphrey had credibility with Democrats which Nixon never possessed.

Those attacks alone would not have completely undermined the McGovern candidacy without parallel events. The South Dakota senator's prime asset had been his credibility. And it was precisely that asset that was destroyed in the three other crises of the campaign: the selection of Senator Thomas Eagleton as his vice-presidential nominee; the selection of the leadership of the Democratic party the day following the convention; and the so-called Salinger Affair—the events surrounding my trip to Paris to see the North Vietnamese.

I am convinced that once Senator Eagleton had been selected as vice-presidential nominee and the facts about his health problems became known, George McGovern could not have won whether he kept the senator on the ticket or dropped him. The 1,000% support statement proved very damaging to McGovern's credibility, but I cannot believe the senator would have been much better off if Eagleton had remained on the ticket, given the ferocity of the attacks on him in the press. It is therefore crucial to understand how Tom Eagleton was chosen. It is not hindsight to say that Eagleton was the candidate of last resort, chosen under pressure circumstances that should not have been allowed to occur.

The day the convention opened, it was clear to me no deep thinking had gone on about the vice-presidency. The McGovern high command had been preoccupied with fighting the California challenge. But more important still was the mystical belief of Senator McGovern and some of his top aides that once the nomination was nailed down, Senator Edward Kennedy would accept the second spot. This feeling existed despite Senator Kennedy's many disavowals of intention to run, particularly because of the impression caused by an article in the *Boston Globe* indicating that under certain circumstances the Massachusetts senator might accept the nomination.

Even with the California challenge won the first day of the convention, the Kennedy factor held up any serious discussion of the vice-presidency until just after McGovern was nominated in the early hours of July 13. From his room at the Doral Hotel in Miami Beach, McGovern made the final call to Kennedy—and Kennedy turned him down.

A brief and, as I remember, rather cheerless (for so happy an event) party took place at the Doral after the nomination and a meeting was called for 8 a.m. to start considering a running mate. With the convention set to start the vice-presidential nomination at 7 p.m. that same day, the pressure to produce a name urgently was enormous. Most of the participants in the meeting went to bed around 6 a.m.

There were some 22 participants, mostly men and women who had played key roles in the nomination drive of Senator McGovern. The meeting was presided over by Gary Hart, the national campaign manager, and consisted of sifting through a list of names provided by the participants. We each had been asked to submit four names. (My list included Sarge Shriver, Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut, Governor Pat Lucey of Wisconsin and Leonard Woodcock, president of the United Automobile Workers union.) As each name was read off by Hart, discussion went around the table. If no one present was willing to make a case for the potential candidate, his or her name was dropped. Not all the names were politicians. Included were Walter Cronkite of CBS (who had been named in a recent *Oliver Quayle* poll as the "most trusted man" in America) and Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame and then chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Both were thought to be fine gentlemen but impractical candidates. The finalists from this meeting were Shriver, for whom I made a strong case, Governor

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KENNEDY



HESBURGH



WHITE



MILLS



CRONKITE



RIBICOFF



MONDALE



NELSON



WOODCOCK



FARENTHOLD



EAGLETON



LUCEY

AND FINALLY,
NOMINEE SHRIVER



Shriver could have had it, but he was off in Moscow

CONTINUED

Lucey, Senator Walter Mondale of Minnesota, Mayor Kevin White of Boston, Senator Ribicoff and Senator Eagleton.

I don't remember precisely who pushed Eagleton's nomination. It is more my impression that he had no real champions in the room but it was the general feeling of everybody there that he should be on the list.

When Senator Eagleton's name came up, Gordon Weil, one of McGovern's closest aides, interjected that he had heard some disquieting information about Eagleton from Thomas Ottenad, a reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He could not remember the exact details but it was something about Eagleton having a "serious drinking problem." Eagleton's name was left on the list, but Weil was instructed to contact Ottenad to get additional details.

A second meeting was called in Senator McGovern's suite about 11 a.m. This meeting was with leaders of the black, Chicano and women's caucuses. During this meeting, attended by Senator McGovern, the name of Sissy Farenthold, who had been defeated for the Democratic nomination for governor of Texas, was advanced by Liz Carpenter, the former press secretary to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson. It was a sign of the political advances in the Democratic party that she was rejected not because she was a woman but because she would complicate matters politically in Texas, a state Senator McGovern had hopes of carrying. At that meeting, the only names which elicited much support were Shriver and White.

About 12:30, we went into the final meeting, which started out with a small group made up of Senator McGovern, Gary Hart, Frank Mankiewicz, Mrs. Jean Westwood, who was to become Democratic national chairwoman, and myself.

Abe Ribicoff had already told McGovern he did not want to run. At 62, Abe, having been a

governor, member of the cabinet and senator, having lost his wife four months earlier and preparing to remarry, felt no need for higher political office. Everyone agreed Senator Mondale would make an excellent candidate, but we all feared that a choice between a chance for another six years in the Senate (he ran and won) and an uncertain shot at the vice-presidency would result in a turndown. It did.

It was then that I pressed home my case for Shriver. My arguments were that he was strongest where McGovern was weakest. He had substantial administrative experience as head of the Peace Corps and the poverty program, he was a Catholic, he was attractive. He was an indefatigable campaigner and had good credentials with Democratic regulars.

Senator McGovern appeared impressed with my arguments and I was strongly supported by Frank Mankiewicz. McGovern halted the meeting and told me to get Shriver on the phone.

I telephoned his office in Washington from the other living room in the suite.

"Could I speak to Mr. Shriver?" I asked.

"I'm sorry, but Mr. Shriver is out of the city."

"Is there anywhere he can be reached?"

"Well, he's in Moscow."

I mumbled a thank-you and put the phone down. Shriver, who had made an active effort for the vice-presidency in 1964 and 1968, feeling that he had no chance in 1972, had gone to Moscow with Dr. Armand Hammer of the Occidental Petroleum Company to help him negotiate his accords with the Russians.

When I reported to the meeting that Shriver was in Moscow there was a moment of silence. It was already 1:30 in the afternoon in Miami. Everybody agreed that if you couldn't get the candidate back to Miami Beach in time to appear before the convention that evening there was no use pursuing his name.

I am absolutely convinced that if Shriver had been in the United States at the time, however, he would have been the nominee in the first place.

With Shriver's name out, Gary Hart pressed his case for Mayor White of Boston. The meeting finally decided that though he was relatively unknown nationally, he would fit the bill—a Catholic, a big-city mayor, an easterner. I was told to locate White so that Senator McGovern

could speak to him. I found him at his summer home on Cape Cod.

McGovern had a brief conversation with White during which he told him that he was being considered for the vice-presidential nomination. He ascertained that White would accept if asked and said he would call back in five or ten minutes.

McGovern then put in a call to Senator Kennedy to discuss the White nomination with him. While that call was going on, I was asked to go into another room and call White back to get his biography so that a press release could be prepared with the announcement of Senator McGovern's choice.

When I returned to Senator McGovern's suite he had finished talking to Senator Kennedy. Senator Kennedy had praised Mayor White but had said that others would serve the ticket just as well. His first choice was Wilbur Mills. The consensus in the room was that the delegates would not go along with the choice of Mills. Senator McGovern interpreted Kennedy's remarks as indicating a lack of desire to see White on the ticket. Gary Hart and Jean Westwood stressed the advantages of White and Senator McGovern decided to call Senator Kennedy again, telling him he was going ahead with the White nomination.

When he came back into the room to report the conversation, Senator Kennedy's response was a bombshell.

"He says if we want to go ahead with White, he'll have to reconsider his own position. He's asked for half an hour to think it over," Senator McGovern reported.

There was a look of incredulity on most of the faces in the room. The original meeting had now been expanded by the arrival of John Douglas, a former Justice Department aide of Senator Robert Kennedy's; Fred Dutton, a former aide of President Kennedy's; Dick Dougherty, the senator's press secretary, and Lieutenant Governor Bill Dougherty of South Dakota.

During the almost 40 minutes that elapsed, the room was full of speculation. Was it possible that after saying no so firmly to the vice-presidential nomination, Senator Kennedy was about to change his mind? Those in the room who knew the senator considered that a remote possibility.

There was also news during those 40 minutes of a revolt in the Massachusetts delegation. Ken Galbraith called to say that he and Father Robert Drinan, the head of the Massachusetts delegation, were against White's nomination because of the mayor's adamant opposition to McGovern during the Massachusetts primary, and that if his name were submitted to the convention their delegation would walk out.

The telephone rang. It was Senator Kennedy calling. Senator McGovern took the call. It was a brief, one-sided conversation and the presidential nominee put down the phone.

"He still thinks Mills would be better. I don't think if we go ahead with White we'll have Senator Kennedy campaigning for the ticket with any

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In an emotional speech, Larry O'Brien tells the Democratic National Committee he will not serve again as chairman. McGovern had asked him to resign in favor of Mrs. Jean Westwood.

Finally only one name was left—Eagleton

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enthusiasm, and we need him." That and the incipient Massachusetts revolt brought an end to the White candidacy.

It was close to 3 o'clock in the afternoon and still no choice in sight. McGovern was exasperated. "I'm going to offer the vice-presidency to the man who is closest to me in the United States Senate," McGovern said with an air of finality. "I'm going to call Gaylord Nelson."

He stalked into his bedroom and closed the door behind him. Ten minutes later, the door opened. "Gaylord says he can't do it. He says he has made a pact with his wife he wouldn't run for the vice-presidency if it were offered to him."

"Who's left on the list?" someone asked. There were still Governor Lucey and Tom Eagleton. Somebody brought up the recent incident in which Governor Lucey had locked his wife out of the bedroom of the governor's mansion in Madison, Wis. A short discussion eliminated him. And then there was only one name—Senator Thomas Eagleton.

All eyes centered on Gordon Weil. "I called Ottenad and he told me there was nothing serious in Senator Eagleton's past," he said. "Apparently the story about his drinking problem is false."

It was all over in a matter of minutes. No further investigation was made into Eagleton's medical history. Senator McGovern asked for someone to get Senator Eagleton on the phone. While he was in the other room talking to Eagleton, Mrs. McGovern walked into the room. She leaned over me and whispered, "Who is it?" I told her Eagleton.

"That's not possible," she cried out, hurrying from the room to find her husband. But it was too late. McGovern had already asked Eagleton and he had accepted. Frank Mankiewicz was on the phone talking to him and McGovern was in one of the bedrooms when she found him. I never did find out what had caused that uncharacteristic outburst by Mrs. McGovern. Throughout the campaign her political judgment was frequently the best.

The fact that the selection of Tom Eagleton was going to turn into a major disaster was not yet evident on Friday, July 14, the day that the chairmanship of the Democratic party was decided.

As early as April, in conversations with Frank Mankiewicz and Gary Hart, I had expressed a desire to be considered for the post of national chairman of the party should Senator McGovern win the nomination and not want to continue Lawrence O'Brien in that post.

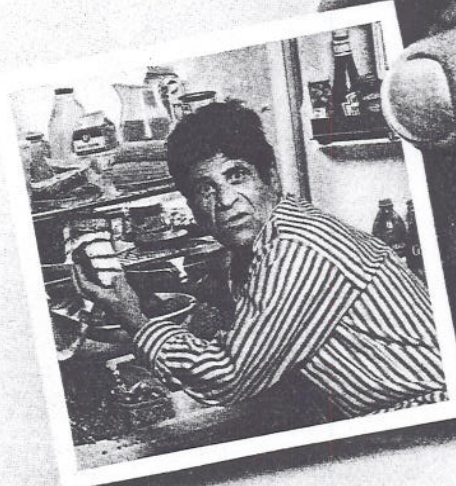
I told both of them I was only interested in the job for the duration of the 1972 campaign. It was my feeling that it was going to be a mean and tough contest against President Nixon, that he would campaign very little and that the principal attacks would be launched by surrogates acting for him. I felt that from the strength of national chairmanship I would be in a position to blunt some of those attacks as well as launch some of my own. Both Frank and Gary encouraged me to talk to Senator McGovern about this, and my opportunity came on June 9 when I flew with the senator from Washington to New York.

I explained my feelings about the job, adding that I was interested in the chairmanship if he decided to replace Larry O'Brien. Senator McGovern said he had not made that decision yet. But our conversation terminated when he said: "You have my commitment that if we decide to replace Larry you'll be my choice for the job."

June 10 was a busy day. I spoke all over the state of Utah at various county conventions. I was accompanied from place to

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GTE SYLVANIA

Jean Westwood and I were promised the same job

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place by our Utah coordinator, Chuck Nabors, and by the national committeewoman for Utah, Mrs. Jean Westwood. During one of the long drives, to make conversation I asked Mrs. Westwood what she thought we ought to do about the national committee. To my astonishment she replied: "Oh, that's all been settled. I have a commitment from Senator McGovern to be the national chairman." Only years of poker playing allowed me to conceal my emotions as I mumbled something like "That's good to know" to Mrs. Westwood.

I called Frank that night to tell him there was a problem. One job. Two commitments. I also told him that I had not told Mrs. Westwood of the senator's commitment to me and that the best thing for the moment was to let the matter ride and we would solve it at the convention.

When Frank and Gary both arrived in Miami Beach we arranged a meeting. I told them there was only one solution if Senator McGovern decided to replace Larry O'Brien—to name cochairmen of the party. Mrs. Westwood could deal with party affairs throughout the country and I could act as the spokesman for the national party. Both Frank and Gary thought this was a good solution and Gary promised to take the matter up with McGovern and with Mrs. Westwood.

I heard nothing more about it until the victory party following Senator McGovern's nomination, when Mrs. Westwood came up to me and said she was happy to hear we would be "working together" at the national committee. We had a brief meeting with Senator McGovern after the

selection of Tom Eagleton, where the arrangement was confirmed.

The traditional time for the party nominee to make his intentions known about the direction of the national committee is the morning following the acceptance speeches. This was Friday, July 14. Larry O'Brien had already told Senator McGovern he did not want to stay on the job as national chairman. I piled into a car to go over to the Fontainebleau Hotel for the Democratic unity breakfast. It was Senator McGovern's intention to announce his choice of Mrs. Westwood and myself at this breakfast. In fact, the news of our impending appointments had leaked to the press and we were surrounded by photographers as we reached the hotel.

Driving over, Senator McGovern told Frank that he should call O'Brien when we got to the Fontainebleau to tell him who his successors were. Unfortunately, O'Brien was nowhere to be found and the unity breakfast passed without McGovern making an announcement. We piled into the car again to drive to another hotel where a breakfast of the Democratic party finance committee was taking place under the direction of retiring finance chairman Bob Strauss. Again Frank tried to get O'Brien on the phone and again he failed.

We drove back to the Doral and went directly to Senator McGovern's suite, where again a call was put in to O'Brien. This time he was reached. I was standing by Senator McGovern as he started to speak to O'Brien. I had expected him to thank O'Brien for his loyal service to the party. Instead I heard the senator say: "Larry, is there any way to get you to change your mind on this chairmanship?" He listened for a few minutes. "Fine, Larry, I'll get back to you right away." McGovern put down the phone. "O'Brien says he'll be glad to serve again."

Trapped by his own question, it now took two hours to unravel the situation. First, McGovern proposed to O'Brien that he accept Mrs. Westwood as his cochairman. O'Brien refused and said

that besides, party regulations did not provide for a cochairman. There had to be a chairman of one sex and a vice-chairman of the other. The meeting of the Democratic National Committee, which was waiting for the choice of the nominee, had to adjourn for lunch while O'Brien came to McGovern's suite for further conversations.

Gary Hart and Mrs. Westwood were adamant that O'Brien could not continue. It was suggested he be offered the campaign chairmanship with the same financial deal he had at the national committee. O'Brien refused the offer. Finally, McGovern told O'Brien he had to resign, that he hoped he would play a key role in the campaign which they could discuss in several days, and that he was going to name Jean Westwood as chairman of the national committee and me as vice-chairman.

We drove back to the Fontainebleau, where the national committee had reconvened. After a short speech, Senator McGovern proposed his choice for chairman, Mrs. Westwood. She was quickly nominated, seconded and elected. Now McGovern said he wanted my election as vice-chairman. I was standing by the back wall of the room next to Gary Hart. My name was put in nomination and seconded and the chair asked for any other nominations. In the room's gloomy light, I saw Charles Evers, the mayor of Fayette, Miss., rise.

He put into nomination the name of Basil Paterson of New York.

Aaron Henry, the head of the Mississippi Democratic party, rose and asked if he could pose a question to Senator McGovern.

"Has your choice of Mr. Salinger been cleared with the black leadership?" he asked. Senator McGovern replied that all of the decisions he had made at the convention had been cleared with the black leadership.

The chairman then asked if either of the nominees wanted to pull out of the race. When no one answered, Senator McGovern rose.

"I just wanted you to know that these are both fine men and I would be pleased to have either of them."

I couldn't believe my ears. The man who had made a commitment to me to be the national chairman was not even supporting my nomination for vice-chairman. I tried to control my amazement and I put up my hand and demanded recognition. I was determined not to get involved in a contest for the job unless I had the wholehearted support of the senator. In a short speech which stressed party unity I pulled my name out of contention and left the hall.

I took a cab back to the Doral, packed my bags and headed for the airport to take a plane for Boston and then to Hyannis Port, where I planned to spend the weekend as a house guest of Mrs. Robert Kennedy before going back to France. I was totally exhausted and my legs were numb from the long hours of standing with a bad back on the convention floor.

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An angry Salinger stands beside Jean Westwood as he withdraws from the race for party vice-chairman because George McGovern failed to give him promised support for the job.

We hoped to get Hanoi to free some POWs

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By the time I reached Cape Cod it was after 8 p.m., and after a short dinner I went to my room to go to bed. I had barely dozed off when someone knocked at my door. It was Mrs. Kennedy. She told me Senator McGovern was on the telephone wanting to speak to me.

I picked up the phone and heard the senator: "Pierre, I'm sorry about what happened in Miami today. But you know I had no choice." I mumbled something about understanding his problem.

"Pierre, I'd like you to undertake a delicate mission for me," he continued. "We've gotten word that the North Vietnamese have asked us to send a representative to Hanoi. You're going to Paris next week. Would you mind exploring the matter with them?"

I replied that I would go. "It's very tough politically, but if we could get them to release some prisoners it would be worth the risk," McGovern added. I agreed and he asked me to fly to Washington Monday morning to be briefed by his assistant, John Holum, who specialized in Vietnam problems.

I met with Holum for some four hours on Monday. The message to Senator McGovern had come to Holum from a well-identified figure in the peace movement. The North Vietnamese wanted a representative of Senator McGovern to take a first-hand look at the damage they claimed had been wrought by U.S. bombers on their flood-control dikes. Holum suggested that I propose to the North Vietnamese that I take a highly qualified engineer with me.

Both Holum and I agreed—and he told me it was Senator McGovern's view as well—that a trip to Hanoi would be inopportune if it did not include the release of a number of American prisoners of war. We agreed that I would not go to Hanoi unless there was a prior commitment for such a release. In addition, I told Holum that it was important to tell the North Vietnamese that my visit had nothing to do with any peace efforts which might be under way at the time, and that Senator McGovern preferred peace in Vietnam to having it as an issue in the campaign, even if it meant his defeat. Holum agreed that such a declaration would be important.

I caught the evening plane to Paris from Washington and at 9 a.m. next morning, July 18, I called a number in Paris given to me by Holum and asked for Mr. Pham, a member of the North Vietnamese delegation. Mr. Pham expected me. I suggested a meeting in the afternoon, but Mr. Pham said it was urgent we meet immediately. "We have important meetings this afternoon," he said. Our meeting was fixed for 11 a.m.

I drove across Paris to the suburb of Choisy-le-Roi, where the North Vietnamese delegation lives and works in a series of houses surrounded by a high stone wall. There I met Mr. Pham and Mr. Nguyen Mai. I had seen both of them nine months earlier when I had attended a meeting between Senator McGovern and the North Vietnamese.

Mr. Mai opened the meeting by saying he was pleased to see me and that, as he had told "our American friends" in the peace movement, he hoped I or some representative of Senator McGovern could go to Hanoi.

Mr. Mai said his government was particularly interested in showing us the damage to the dikes. I said that if I went I wanted to take along a hydraulic engineer of our choosing.

I then told Mr. Mai that things had changed since our meeting nine months earlier. Senator McGovern was now the candidate of the Democratic party. For me or any other representative of the senator to go to Hanoi at this time would be extremely difficult politically. Despite the difficulties, I went on,

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The Eagleton and Salinger affairs together were fatal

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I was prepared to go to Hanoi and Senator McGovern was willing to send me if such a trip would result in the release of a number of American prisoners of war.

"How many?" Mr. Mai asked.

"Thirty or forty," I responded. I privately did not hope for any such number, but I thought I would start high.

"Is the release of the prisoners a condition of your visit?" Mr. Mai pursued.

"I do not want to set any conditions on the trip," I responded. "But without some assurance that some prisoners of war could be released, my trip would become impossible politically."

"We will take up the matter with our friends in Hanoi and let you know," Mr. Mai said without any hint of his own reaction.

He changed the subject. "We have been watching with a great deal of interest the recent political events in your country," he said with a smile.

I saw an opening. "It is important for you to know that Senator McGovern's primary interest is peace. If there is any way you can make peace with the current administration, you should do so without regard to the political events in our country." I told them. "Senator McGovern would prefer peace in Vietnam today to being President, if that is the choice."

The meeting came to an end on that note. It had lasted about 40 minutes. I told Mr. Mai I was going to take a short rest with friends in St. Tropez and he should call me if he had word from Hanoi. I would return to Paris immediately.

Two days later, as I headed for St. Tropez, I picked up the morning *Paris Herald Tribune*. There was a big headline. Secret talks had begun the previous day between the North Vietnamese and Henry Kissinger. Now I understood what Mr. Pham was talking about when he had mentioned "important meetings" in my first conversation with him.

On Aug. 2, Mr. Mai called me and said he had word from Hanoi. Could I meet with him on Aug. 9 in Paris? We fixed a time for 5 p.m.

After tea, Mr. Mai said he had heard from Hanoi and they would welcome me there at the earliest opportunity. I asked when and he said immediately. Mr. Mai stopped talking. I waited, expecting him to say something else, but there was a quiet in the room.

"What about the prisoners?" I asked.

"I'm sorry, but we can't do anything about the prisoners except in the context of a full settlement of the war. When we have previously released prisoners, the U.S. government has used them for propaganda against us. We don't want that to happen again."

My decision was made. I told them there was no way I could go to Hanoi under the circumstances, particularly since the conversations were going on with Dr. Kissinger. And that was it. Several hours

later I reported by telephone to Frank Mankiewicz and John Holm that I had aborted the trip and the reasons for the decision. Little did I know when I hung up the telephone that just a week later the two short visits with the North Vietnamese would erupt into another major issue of the campaign affecting George McGovern's credibility.

On Aug. 16 I took my leave of Paris to go back to the U.S. to rejoin the campaign. I was still annoyed by the national chairmanship incident but, having played a role in nominating Senator McGovern, I was not going to sit out the campaign in a fit of pique.

When I emerged from customs at the New York airport an AP reporter was waiting for me.

He told me there was a UPI story out saying I had met with the North Vietnamese on George McGovern's instructions to tell them to settle immediately with the Nixon administration.

I told him no comment and hustled into a car a friend had sent to the airport.

When I reached the Carlyle Hotel half an hour later, I put through a call to Senator McGovern in Springfield, Ill. Fred Dutton answered. He told me the senator had just gone out.

"What is he going to say about the UPI story?" I asked.

"He's just gone out to deny it."

I exploded into the telephone: "That's not possible!" Dutton promised me he'd have Senator McGovern call me the minute he got back.

When the senator called 15 minutes later I was reassured. He told me he had not denied sending me to Paris, but merely the tenor of the UPI story. In other words, he said he had only denied giving me instructions to tell the North Vietnamese to make peace with Nixon. We agreed on a two-paragraph statement dealing with my efforts to bring about the release of prisoners of war. I told him I would not talk to the press until the statement had been released.

Some 40 minutes later, press aide Kirby Jones phoned me that the statement was out and I replied to the number of press calls which had piled up by then and held a small press conference.

It was while watching the television news shows that night that I became aware of the fact that McGovern's first statement had been worded in such a way that it indicated Senator McGovern had never sent me to Paris. "Pierre Salinger had no instructions whatsoever from me," he said. "He told me he was going to Paris and he said while he was there he might try to make some determinations of what was going on in the negotiations. But there wasn't the slightest instruction on my part to him." I know from my conversations with the senator in the weeks that followed that such a sweeping denial was never his intention. But the damage had been done. On top of the Eagleton 1,000%, the Salinger affair became another destructive blow to the McGovern credibility. Without the Eagleton affair it might not have mattered much, but the two of them together were fatal.

With this recital, it can be fairly asked why I persisted in working for George McGovern and considered him the best candidate for President.

I have never met an infallible man in politics. They all make mistakes. I've made my share. But in a time when there are truly two Americas, I still believe George McGovern could have brought them together. Political leaders advance by appealing to either the best or the worst instincts of men. I believe George McGovern was one of the former and Richard Nixon one of the latter. That was the choice. And it reminded me many times of something Franklin Roosevelt said in his second-nomination acceptance speech:

"Better the occasional faults of a government living in the spirit of charity than the constant omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference."

In happier days, the inner circle of advisers, fund-raisers and speechwriters gathers in McGovern's suite in Miami Beach to discuss strategy for the convention. Seated to Salinger's right is Frank Mankiewicz, McGovern's political strategist.

