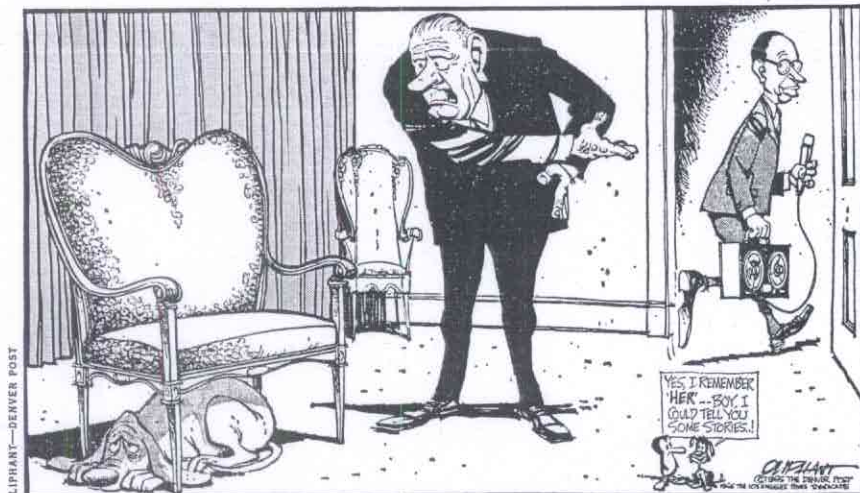


THE PRESS



"WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT TALKING TO ARTHUR SCHLESINGER?"

Bobby had his version too.



"THEN HE SAYS TO ME, 'I'M GONNA DUMP SCHLESINGER AFTER THE '64 ELECTION' "

CURRENT HISTORY

Trials of an Instant Author

Historians seldom make much news in the nation's capital, but Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has recently been vying with Viet Nam as Topic B (Topic A, of course, is Lyndon). The more some people think about it, the more annoyed they seem to get with Schlesinger's reminiscences of the Kennedy Administration, especially with his remarks that the Kennedys, Bobby as well as Jack, didn't really want Lyndon as Vice President, and his disclosure that Jack thought Dean Rusk was a nothing and was going to dump him.

Stern Rebuke. Ever since the articles, which are excerpts from his forthcoming book, appeared in *LIFE*, Schlesinger has been subjected to a barrage of snide cracks and serious criticism. Both have grown in volume rather than diminished, and now cartoonists are having a certain amount of acerbic fun with him (see cuts).

President Johnson, in an emphatic press-conference statement, came to the defense of his Secretary of State, and Schlesinger's onslaught seems to have left Rusk more secure in his job than ever. At a briefing for more than 130 Congressmen last week, Rusk got an unexpected standing ovation; and at a White House dinner for 100 businessmen, he got by far the greatest salvo of applause.

Schlesinger, in the meantime, was taking more and more lumps. Said Republican Congressman William Widnall: "I have always thought the mark of a truly liberal mind was supposed to be fairness to the individual, dislike for kicking a man when he is unable to answer because of his office, and distaste for commercial profit at the expense of others." Added Democratic Senator Gale McGee: "This is startling from a man like Schlesinger." Vice President

Humphrey joined the chorus and offered his own stern rebuke: "I think it has been harmful. I think it has been mischievous. I don't think it has helped the country."

The most severe scholarly criticism came from a fellow chronicler of Presidents, Political Scientist Sidney Hyman, who did much of the research for Robert Sherwood's *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, an intimate book about another President, based on his aide's notes and published after both were dead. To Hyman, Schlesinger's use of "the casual chitchat of a dead man" was "the height of historical irresponsibility." Said he: "A husband and wife can quarrel like cats and dogs and then make love and forget it. To build the incident into a historical thesis is unrealistic."

Discreet Deletion. When Schlesinger's articles first appeared, his rival Kennedy memoirist Ted Sorensen congratulated him in a letter: "I read your articles with admiration and envy. No one has shown that you impaired in any way the national security or even our national interest." Later, Sorensen apparently changed his mind and joined the chorus of critics. "It is not in the national interest," he said at a press conference, "to destroy a man's influence and usefulness." To show that he was as good as his word, Sorensen promptly deleted from the galleys of his own book a remark of Kennedy's which made clear that he was thinking of changing his Secretary of State in 1964.

Schlesinger, writing furiously to complete his book, was impervious to all the criticism. "I couldn't care less," he said. "I do not comment on impetuous reaction."

Bobby Kennedy's relations with Lyndon Johnson were none too good when the Schlesinger articles appeared. And Schlesinger's account of the Kennedys' dismay when Lyndon accepted the vice-

presidential nomination did not improve them. He quoted Bobby as saying: "My God, this wouldn't have happened except that we were all too tired last night."

But Bobby is fully capable of writing his own version of history. Last week, in a speech at a Democratic dinner in Milwaukee, he denied that he and his brother had ever been cool to Johnson. "He's fulfilled all our hopes," said Bobby. "President Kennedy knew that Lyndon Johnson was committed to his programs, that he shared his dreams, that he was the best man to carry on this fight."

Puzzlement at the Times?

Verbatim lead of a story last week to the New York Times from its Washington bureau: "The report of a major success in Vietnam has underscored a question that has puzzled Washington this summer: Why is the war not going as badly as had been predicted?"

REPORTING

Confusion at City Hall

At 73, Cincinnati Post & Times-Star Reporter Charles Rentrop can more than keep up with his youngest competitor. He has been covering city hall since 1944, and there are those who claim he is the most influential man in the building. At meetings of the city council, he sits beside the mayor; and when the mayor is confused about something, Rentrop straightens him out. With an unflinching memory for names, dates and bills, Rentrop often corrects the council in debate, objecting that some proposal has already been enacted or is patently illegal. In the paper's city room, the only complaint is that he gives too many facts when he phones in his story.

Yet even Charlie Rentrop cannot keep up with the flood of news in to-