



## *The Nixon White House Papers*

### Memos on the Media

For the sake of identification, the following documents, variously classified as *Confidential*, *Secret*, *Eyes Only*, were written by, or to: H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, former chief of staff at the White House who resigned on April 30, 1972; Jeb Stuart Magruder, who worked for Haldeman at the White House before becoming deputy director of the Committee to Re-elect the President in late 1971; Lawrence Higby, who also worked for Haldeman and is still at the White House; Herbert G. Klein, former Communications Director for the administration; and Charles W. (Chuck) Colson, special counsel to the President until his resignation last February.

Higby to Magruder: As I indicated to you the other day, we need to get some creative thinking going on an attack on (Chet) Huntley (NBC) for his statements in *Life*. One thought that comes to mind is getting all the people to sign a petition calling for the immediate removal of Huntley right now. The point behind this whole thing is that we don't care about Huntley—he is going to leave anyway. What we are trying to do here is to tear down the institution. Huntley will go out in a blaze of glory and we should attempt to pop his bubble.

Most people won't see *Life Magazine* and for that reason I am asking (Pat) Buchanan to draft a statement for the Vice President to give. We should try to get this statement on television. Obviously there are many other things that we can do, such as getting independent station owners to write NBC saying that they should remove Huntley now; having broadcasting people

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*In our letters space today, White House aide Patrick J. Buchanan and syndicated columnist Tom Braden engage in a dispute over a column Mr. Braden wrote a while back. In it he asserted that a collection of documents he called the "Buchanan papers" was worth reproducing and distributing "free," owing to what they revealed about the Nixon administration's attempt to control and distort the free flow of information, via the press, to the people.*

*Mr. Buchanan contends that the particular documents cited by Mr. Braden should not have been named after him, since they were not his doing—and he is right: the documents should properly be called the Nixon White House papers. And Mr. Braden is also right in his judgment of their value as reading matter for today's concerned citizens. That is why we have reproduced lengthy excerpts from the documents in question below.*

*Lest Mr. Buchanan feel that we are only compounding Mr. Braden's original error in focusing on these memoranda, as distinct from those made public by the Ervin committee in connection with his testimony—34 documents that could go by the name of the "Buchanan papers"—we should add that we intend to reprint lengthy excerpts from the latter as well within a few days. They are very much of a piece with the "non-Buchanan" papers—and at least as illuminating for what they have to say about the mentality and the morality which have done so much to bring about the current crisis in Mr. Nixon's government.*

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look into this due to the fact that this is proof of biased journalism, etc. Let's put a full plan on this and get the thing moving. I'll contact Buchanan and forward copies of my correspondence with him to you so you will know what the Vice President is doing.

*Magruder to Higby:* The issue of Chet Huntley is fairly well played out. We leaked his letter of apology to the President and it got very good coverage.

We will continue to hammer at press favoritism on a regular basis. We will ask the Vice President to make this a standard fare while he's on the stump in the congressional campaigns.

We will keep tabs on examples of partisan press treatment and feed them into the Vice President (and Cabinet officers on the stump) on a regular basis. Now that Huntley is out, he is no longer the issue.

However, the general question can be kept in the news as we find more and more examples of unfair treatment by the press. This will simply be a continuing function.

*Haldeman to Magruder:* A couple of points that I did not want to cover in the general meeting but that you do need to move ahead on quickly. First, I'm sure you have studied that TV summary done by Buchanan, which is a devastating indictment of NBC, especially of David Brinkley . . . The need, probably, is to concentrate on NBC and give some real thought as to how to handle the problem that they have created in their almost totally negative approach to everything the administration does. I would like to see a plan from you; don't worry about fancy form, just some specific thinking on steps that can be taken to try to change this, and I should have this by Friday. Get Klein and Ziegler both involved in the thinking on this, and I would suggest also Nofziger, who could be very helpful, and perhaps get Pat Buchanan in. In fact, I feel definitely you should get Pat Buchanan in to work with you on it; but move quickly.

Another area is the mobilization of the Silent Majority, which we touched on briefly in the meeting today. We just haven't really mobilized them, and we have got to move now in every effective way we can to get them working to pound the magazines and the networks in counter-action to the obvious shift of the establishment to an attack on Vietnam again. Concentrate this on the few places that count, which would be NBC, Time, Newsweek and Life, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. Don't waste your fire on other things.

*Magruder to Haldeman:* We can achieve this goal.

1. Begin an official monitoring system through the FCC as soon as Dean Burch is officially on board as Chairman. If the monitoring system proves our point, we have then legitimate and legal rights to go to the networks, etc., and make official complaints from the FCC. This will have much more effect than a phone call from Herb Klein or Pat Buchanan.

2. Utilize the anti-trust division to investigate various media relating to anti-trust violations. Even the possible threat of anti-trust action I think

would be effective in changing their views in the above matter.

3. Utilizing the Internal Revenue Service as a method to look into the various organizations that we are most concerned about. Just a threat of a IRS investigation will probably turn their approach.

*Magruder to Haldeman and Klein. (Tentative Plan Press Objectivity):*

Plant a column with a syndicated columnist which raises the question of objectivity and ethics in the news media. Kevin Phillips could be a good choice.—Klein

Through an academic source, encourage the Dean of a leading graduate school of journalism to publicly acknowledge that press objectivity is a serious problem that should be discussed. Also, attempt to arrange an in-depth analysis in a prestigious journal like the Columbia Journalism Review.—Klein/Safire

Have Rogers Morton go on the attack in a news conference. . . Have him charge that the great majority of the working press are Democrats and this colors their presentation of the news. Have him charge that there is a political conspiracy in the media to attack this Administration.—Klein/Colson

Arrange for an "expose" to be written by an author such as Earl Mazo or Victor Lasky. Publish in hardcover and paperback.—Klein

Produce a prime-time special, sponsored by private funds, that would examine the question of objectivity and show how TV newsmen can structure the news by innuendo. For instance, use film clips to show how a raised eyebrow or a tone of voice can convey criticism.—Klein/Magruder

Have outside group petition the FCC and issue public "statements of concern" over press objectivity.—Colson.

Generate a massive outpouring of letters-to-the-editor.—Magruder

Have a Senator or Congressman write a public letter to the FCC suggesting the "licensing" of individual newsmen, i.e., the airwaves belong to the public, therefore the public should be protected from the misuse of these airwaves by individual newsmen.—Nofziger

*Colson to Haldeman:* The following is a summary of the most pertinent conclusions from my meeting with the three network chief executives . . .

I had to break every meeting. The networks badly want to have these kinds of discussions which they said they had had with other administrations but never with ours. They told me anytime we had a complaint about slanted coverage for me to call them directly. Paley (William S. Paley, chairman of the board, CBS) said that he would like to come down to Washington and spend time with me anytime that I wanted. In short, they are very much afraid of us and are trying hard to prove they are "good guys."

These meetings had a very salutary effect in letting them know that we are determined to protect the President's position, that we know precisely what is going on from the standpoint of both law and policy and that we are not going to permit them to get away with anything that interferes with the President's ability to communicate.

Paley made the point that he was

amazed at how many people agree with the Vice President's criticism of the networks. He also went out of his way to say how much he supports the President, and how popular the President is. When Frank Stanton (vice chairman and director, CBS) said twice as many people had seen President Nixon on TV than any other President in a comparable period, Paley said it was because this President is more popular.

The only ornament on (Julian) Goodman's (president, NBC) desk was the Nixon Inaugural Medal.

(James C.) Hagerty (vice president, ABC) said in (Leonard) Goldenson's (president, American Broadcasting Companies, Inc.) presence that ABC is "with us." This all adds up to the fact that they are damned nervous and scared and we should continue to take a very tough line, face to face, and in other ways. . . . I will pursue with Dean Burch the possibility of an interpretive ruling by the FCC on the role of the President when he uses TV, as soon as we have a majority. I think that this point could be very favorably clarified and it would, of course, have an inhibiting impact on the networks and their professed concern with achieving balance . . . I am realistic enough to realize that we probably won't see any obvious improvement in the news coverage but I think we can dampen their ardor for putting on "loyal opposition" type programs.

*"Talking Paper" to Magruder (sender not identified):*

1. Put someone on The Washington Post to needle Kay Graham. Set up calls or letters every day from the viewpoint of I hate Nixon but you're hurting our cause in being so childish, ridiculous and over-board in your constant criticism, and thus destroying your credibility.

2. Nofziger should work out with someone in the House a round robin letter to The Post that says we live in Washington, D.C., read the D.C. papers, but fortunately we also have the opportunity to read the papers from our home districts and are appalled at the biased coverage the people of Washington receive of the news, compared to that in the rest of the country, etc.

*Magruder to Haldeman:* Here is a report on the talking paper given to me last week.

1. We have a team of letter-writers who are pestering The Washington Post from the viewpoint that was suggested.

2. I have asked Lyn Nofziger to work up the House round robin letter to The Post.

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