INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 1, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: CECIL STOUGHTON

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Stoughton's office in the Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

Tape 1 of 2

F: Cecil, let's go back and bring you up to the 1960s very briefly: where you're from, what did you do, and how did you happen to get into the photography business.

S: Well, I was born and raised in Iowa for twenty years.

F: Whereabouts in Iowa?

S: Oskaloosa, Iowa. [I was] attending William Penn College and decided that I would see what the other side of the world was like and joined the Army Air Corps in 1940, which was before we were involved in the war and before there was anything going on except in England. [I] started to be interested in photography in high school and also in college, so when I had my choices of technical schools that I could attend in the training branch of the Air Corps, photography was one of them. It was the only one that tickled my fancy. So I put down for that and sort of stuck to it. The friend that I was with was more mechanically inclined. He put in for mechanic school; he went to mechanic school and he went on his way. I kept waiting for my name to come up on the list to go to photo school, and finally it did. I went to the photo school in Denver at Lowry Field for three months and was

there when war broke out in December of 1941. Was assigned to an Air Force observation squadron in Fort Riley, Kansas, which had departed by the time I arrived there.

F: All the glamour spots, huh?

S: Yes. So there was nothing there for me to do. The boss said, "I can send you to Panama, and you can catch up with them or better still, why don't you stay here and start a nucleus of a new outfit which we hope to have here, because we have this big lab." I decided to stay. So I stayed. A few months later, I took advantage of a training course that Life magazine was offering to photographers towards the journalistic-type presentations that they have, and went to New York for nine weeks and got this thing tacked on to my record, that I was duly trained by them. Little did I know at the time that the powers that be were starting to make up camera units to be assigned to numbered air forces, and I ended up being assigned to the Thirteenth Air Force in Guadalcanal. A few months later, I found myself down there with the Thirteenth Air Force.

F: Asking yourself whether this is advancement.

S: Yes, well, everybody had to do their own thing, and this was mine, and being, what, twenty-two or twenty-three at the time, why, that was pretty exciting. I served my time there and came back to the West Coast, which was the headquarters of these camera units; got a mutual transfer with a guy who wanted to come to California. I wanted to come back East. So we transferred, and I came back to the Pentagon, to the parent organization of the whole group. In other

words, this was the big office in the East. So I ended up being here at the time when the war was over and, by having been overseas, I had accumulated those magic points, and they allowed me to get out. There were a bunch of civilian oriented guys who would have traded their name, rank and serial number with me to get out, and they sort of euchred me out, thinking that this was the best thing that could possibly happen. I probably would rather have stayed in.

But I took a break in service, is what it amounts to. Got out for a year or thirteen months. And along with eleven million other guys who were unemployed, I found that it wasn't all that rosy. I came back to the service to get a little more experience and security, in reverse order probably, and was soon assigned to Hawaii. Meanwhile, I'd gotten married. I got assigned to Hawaii, and the Military Air Transport Service was formed over there. I was in the public information business, making pictures. I spent almost five years there, traveling around the Pacific, doing all sorts of photographic jobs, all news and journalistically oriented.

While there, I took advantage of another short course that they had back here in the Pentagon for service photographers, a thirty-day course, and came to the attention of the boss of that outfit. As it turned out, when he needed a replacement for one of his instructors back here, they sent for me. I was assigned to the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense. You know, all sorts of big, number one priority type wires and stuff came flitting around, and I ended up back here in the Pentagon in

September of 1951. I stayed in that job for a few months, but it soon got relegated to a newsreel job. I had picked up the movie business and got into newsreel camera business. So I was the Air Force's representative in the Secretary of Defense office as a newsreel cameraman and, as such, went out to various Defense installations and made movies. It didn't have to be Air Force, it could be anything. It could be jobs and Army and the whole bit, big pictures and so forth. So I did that until early 1957.

It's a little interesting story of a guy that I used to work with doing the same kind of work in the Army. [He] came into my office one day and he was wearing a first lieutenant's uniform. I said, "Hey, Charlie, what are you doing? You going to go on set today to make a movie or something?" And he said, "No, didn't you hear? I just got a commission in the Army. They're short on photographic officers, and they're passing these things out." I said, "Great. Have you got any more for me?" He said, "Well, go down and see Major Joe." I said, "Why not?" So I went down and talked to him, and he said, "Sure, we'll take you."

I got a direct commission from the Air Force into the Army as a first lieutenant. They wanted to make me captain because I was old enough, but they had just run fresh out of captaincies. So I figured I made my mark by moving ahead like that. So on May 1, 1957, I swore in the oath with Secretary Brucker. They had a big thing in his office because they'd never heard of an Air Force

enlisted man going into the Army as an officer. It's usually the other way around.

F: Right.

S: The Air Force is always more glamorous. So I had to take the usual basic officer's signal corps training at Fort Monmouth and, at the completion of which, I was assigned on orders to go to Germany and join the camera crew over there, and all this and that.

But again fate stepped in. They decided they were going to have one more class of officer photographers. They needed a honcho to run the course and was I interested, because I'd had some training in this type of thing,; nothing in the Army, but I'd had training in teaching a little bit. So they put me in charge of this ten-week course, thereby negating my overseas orders, giving me stability at Monmouth for two years. This made the family happy. So we dreamed up this course and put it down and finished it. And after that I had to finish out my two years, so they put me on regular instructor duty which was a real drag for me, because I ended up being a junior signal officer with no experience in the field, no communications. All I knew was how to turn the machine on and twist the rabbit ears on television, and that was about it. But I was teaching these young double E engineers out of all the eastern schools all about communications, and they had had it up to here with ROTC and they were shooting me off the podium every day. I began to get a pretty dull thud about that.

I attended a convention that we have in the service every year down here for pictorial officers. I walked in the office the first day, and the colonel in charge said, "Hey, Stoughton, what are you doing?" I said, "Well, nothing. You got something for me to do?" He says, "Yes, come in." He said, "Forget that thing. I've got this. It's the greatest thing." This was in spring of 1959, as I recall now. He said, "We've got a photographer down at Cape Canaveral who's been our in-house official photographer for our space business." The Army was shooting missiles then, Redstones, and Juno II's, and things like that, you know, just the Model T vintage of what we're doing now. But Von Braun and all of his Germans were doing it at that time; Medaris was the commanding general and there was a great hue and cry for all kinds of official pictures. The blockhouses weren't big enough to house all the people that wanted to get in. So they would have an official guy inside making pictures and then hand them out to the media across the board. Everybody got a fair shake. You could use whatever you wanted. Life played up this real big.

My boss at the time was General [Chester V.] Clifton. He was a brigadier general, deputy information officer, and it was through his auspices that this assignment was promulgated down at the Cape; pictures worked through him and he saw that they got proper dissemination. The kid he was using was a two-year guy; his two years were coming up and they needed a replacement and figured that I could take the job. So "Forget going back to Monmouth except to pack a bag,

go down to Canaveral on TDY for six months or so, and we'll work out your transfer. You go down and start shooting because we've got these big moon shots coming up," or sun shots or something.

So this began a series of commuting between Canaveral for shoot; fly back to Washington that night with the raw film, process it overnight, make prints, distribute it to the wires and Life and everybody the next day. And go back to Monmouth for a couple of days with the wife and family; then get the silver bullet back down to Huntsville; pick up another package of film and a bag of money and drive down to Canaveral, and get ready for the next shoot thirty days later. This went on for a few months.

Then we got interested in the life support aboard these things, and the Able and Baker monkey program came along so I got in on the early training of monkeys. I went to Pensacola. I went to Fort Knox. And I watched the little guys get all their training, when to push and when to jab and all that, but the pictures were going to be on the other end. So I got assigned to the recovery ship out in the South Atlantic down below Puerto Rico and was there when the nose cone came down. When it was unbuttoned on board ship, I was the only one on board that made all the movies and stills of this. I'm sure I'm going much too deep into the details, but this is chronologically. It brings me up to the next step.

Space business then got civilianized, after a few other events took place. Medaris was retired from theservice; Von Braun went to NASA. My job at the Cape was [over when] RCA came in and took over

pictorial contract, and they didn't care whether they had any military people or not. So again I was looking for a job. I brought my last package of film up from the last shoot and, while here, I came in to see Clifton again; said they were getting ready to phase out my job down there. "What am I going to do now?" He said, "Come on back up here. I'll find something for you to do." So I went to personnel. We worked out the deal and I got transferred back to the Pentagon. I'd only been gone a few months or a couple of years at the most, since 1951, almost consecutive tour of duty. So I became the General's right-hand for industrial and VIP and special events. I photographed the early Zeus program when we were still trying to get money for that and other top secret things, just kind of a right-hand man type to the General.

At the end of 1960--I didn't know anything about this till I read it in Newsweek--somebody touted Clifton as the military aide to the newly elected President Kennedy. He didn't deny it or confirm it with me at that point, but on inauguration day, I noticed he was seated behind the President at the inaugural stand and, sure enough, he had accepted the job that day and was the man. I'd been assigned to the coverage of the inauguration, this being my third one, to do what I call the close-up type stuff, because I had the experience of having done it twice before, and I knew how to wiggle around people and could get up there on the stand. So I ended up on the inaugural stand and I managed to whisper a loud aside to the General and say, "Is there anything special you want me to do?" He says,

"Just make sure you get pictures of everybody doing everything as you usually do"--and blah, blah, blah--"and I want to see you tomorrow."

Tomorrow was Saturday, as I recall, so I came over to the White House. He said, "I've been thinking about some new ideas, and a lot of them have to do with pictures." He said, "Why don't you come over here and work for a while? I'll call over there and tell them that you're assigned to me for a little bit, and we'll work something out." So within a month or so, orders were cut and I was duly assigned to the White House communications agency, which is the signal communications outfit that supplies all types of communication to the White House. I was assigned as photographer and I began to do some rather interesting assignments. One which started me out meeting people was to make identification pictures of all the new people so that the guards and everybody who were held over from the last administration would know who these people were. We'd put their picture and name at all the guard posts and make a little book. I'd go around to all these offices and go in and just take snapshots and put their name under it.

F: You met everybody in the establishment, didn't you?

S: Yes, real soon. So this turned out to be the beginning of an in-house PIO job, [that] is basically what it was, because Clifton is a PR guy, and I was PR oriented. He convinced the President that there were a lot of things he could do with pictures that hadn't been done before. For example, behind the scenes when the President

would have a meeting with someone that the press did not need to know about, but it was somebody important to the administration and to him, a picture of this event was not only historical but, in many cases, very helpful. So I'd be called in to make a picture and process it.

F: Incidentally, did Clifton have any photographic background or is this just something he'd picked up?

S: Yes, through the years he was a photographer, too, in his early days. He worked with the New York Times, and he worked in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, so he was photo oriented and knew the value of pictures. He was a real sharp editor and knew pictures.

This thing just kept snowballing and, as it happened, it developed over the years into a very interesting job because Mrs. Kennedy got to using me for her sort of family pictures around the house, both the house [White House] and all their houses, Palm Beach, Cape Cod. I'd go with them on their boating trips, fishing trips and things like that, official trips. I traveled on all the official trips.

F: Did you make any with the Vice President?

S: I was just going to say, it was real early in that 1961 era that I felt that I belonged to the staff. I was doing everything for everybody. The military aide to the Vice President, Bob Jackson, called me one day and said, "Are you doing anything next weekend?" I said, "No, I don't think so." This was in the middle of the week. He said, "We're probing up this real quick trip to the Berlin Wall.

Could you go?" I said, "I don't see why not. Let me ask the General." They thought it was a good idea, and I went. This was in August of 1961.

So I made this quick, what, three day, four day trip to the Wall when they first put it up. That was my first trip with the Vice President, and I thought it worked out very well. We soon became first name. You know, I was Cecil to him and he was Mr. Vice President to me. That's the way it always was. But from then on, every time he would see me in the hall, and I was frequently outside the Cabinet Room or in the office, "How are you, Cecil?"--you know, and like that. It was a very friendly working arrangement.

F: Let's talk just a minute about that Berlin trip. We've got the press reports on it, but how did it seem to go?

S: Well, it was hectic as hell. They had never seen the Vice President, for one thing, and the flavor and the atmosphere of the crowds being so gigantic, we'd never seen any crowds like that. I'm sure he hadn't in Texas or anyplace. You just don't find five or six hundred thousand people milling around. But he just ate it up. He just jumped off the car and was down in the middle of the crowd, and we couldn't keep up with him. I mean, it was just impossible.

F: What did you do? Just kind of run with your elbows high?

S: Right. We were on a car or a truck, as I recall. The only thing that waved the coverage of it, actually--and I'm sure that Mr. [Y. R.] Okamoto has made this [known] in his report; if not, I'm sure he will--he was in charge of the foreign staff from offices here in

Washington, and he had his people in the field. He had the field officers stationed along the line of march and on top of buildings and everywhere where he figured the crowds would be. So they weren't involved with the crowds. They were just using long lenses and were able to get real excellent coverage of the whole event. And this, I guess, is one of the things that endeared him to the Vice President because some months later USIA presented him with a rather large album of pictures of his Berlin trip. Okie made the presentation and it brought him to the attention of the Vice President at that point. I think their relationship started around that time also.

As far as the Berlin thing goes, it was just so hectic that I remember very little about the minute details, except that in getting from place to place and doing the things we had to do, we were just completely surrounded by people all the time.

F: Did you get much opportunity to see the Vice President, or were you always at a little distance?

S: I stayed as close as I could, but I hadn't gotten that personal feeling with the security people that I soon began to get with the President. I was just another photographer to a lot of people; it takes a little while to get to know faces. After a while, I became just part of the crowd with the Secret Service and I could go any place I wanted. I could be right next to him. In fact, later on in the discussion, I can cite where he was looking for me not only to make pictures, but to hand him mementos that I carried a pocketful

of, because I was always as close or closer than anybody. I didn't dare to be too far away.

F: Yes.

S: But Berlin was a little soon for that relationship, and I think I was far away, in answer to your question.

F: Okay, you're home from Berlin.

S: Yes. Then another couple of events took place. The Vice President was selected to go out to the Seattle World's Fair and open up the Space Building out there. Jackson again called me and said could I go; I called the General and he said, "If you're not doing anything, go ahead. It's military oriented, so go ahead."

Well, it was on this trip that I was missed by the President. He asked for me. When I came back from that trip, Kenny O'Donnell made it known that "was I working for the Vice President or was I working for the President," and for me to make up my mind. Well, I didn't have to make up my mind. I knew where I was working. I thought I was doing him a favor by spreading myself thin like that; it was a loose couple of days. But it turned out that that was the way it was going to be. So I didn't make any more trips.

But another trip came up to which I was invited to accompany the Vice President, and I had to bow out gracefully and assign another man that I got from the military service to go with him. This turned out to be his aborted trip to the Southeast Asia thing, which continued on around the world. The fellow that went with him really got a bang-up trip. He shot five times as much film as he

intended to, that's for sure. But that was sort of the end of my travels with the Vice President, as it were.

F: On something like the Berlin trip, did you go with a sufficient stockpile of equipment that you could go on around the world if you had to, or do you have to start scrambling locally if the thing gets extended? In other words, how much are you restricted to? I know they don't hold you to any forty pounds.

S: No weight limitations; take anything that will fit the job. And if you find that you need something over there, [for example] on one of the trips with the President when he made his European trip, my movie camera broke down, and I had to get another one on site. Well, you know, I borrowed on just field expedience. You just make do. You repair or whatever. But if it came to a quick change of plans and I found myself short, money is no object. I would just spend and get it reimbursed.

F: You're supposed to get a job done.

S: Right. Just do it and there's no excuse. You can't go back and say, "Well, I didn't have any film." So, no, I never had that situation happen, although the camera breaking can happen to anybody.

F: Did the camera break in the middle of a sequence? I mean, was it an embarrassment?

S: Yes. Well, it started to act up. It was just a hand 16mm movie camera, and it started to chop up the film. I figured that something mechanically was wrong, because I was losing those frames. I would open up the camera, take out the beat up part and, I'd lose that

scene. Then I'd go back and trip to recoup, and it happened again. As I recall, he was making his famous "Ich bin Ein Berliner" speech. I was behind him, making the wide shots of him in the foreground and this five, seven hundred thousand people in the back. I got enough footage of that before the camera broke. From then on, it was a lot of repetition. Then after the speech, we had a long lunch break and I had time to call Washington and get them to send me another camera. They sent it to London and I picked it up there. But these are things that happened, too. We had daily couriers and all sorts of niceties that come in handy on things like that.

F: Are you competitive in a situation like that with the commercial news services, or are they pretty cooperative?

S: I never considered myself competitive because they knew what I was there for; I knew that what I was doing was not going to get to their editors unless it happened to be a rare picture that they didn't have a chance to get and knew that I got. Then they'd go complain to [Pierre] Salinger or somebody in charge and say, "What about the picture that he made in there of the conference? Can we have a copy of that?" Then they'd come running to me and say, "Give them a print of that." Well, you know, I've got to pull out raw film and hope I get it back. We can get into that a little bit later.

F: Right.

S: But competitive, no. I'm competitive to get as good a picture if not better than they're getting.

F: You're competitive from an artistic standpoint.

S: That's right. I'm competing shoulder to shoulder with the best of them. And they are the best when they accompany the President.

F: Did you have any opportunity during this period to see the President and the Vice President alone together?

S: During the time that they were in office together?

F: Yes.

S: Not where I was the third party in the room. There were occasions when I got pictures of them seemingly isolated, but I know what's behind me and around me. You know, you try to get pictures like that because they're valuable, to exclude all the chaff and just have the wheat there. But there wasn't that feeling of historical climate, atmosphere, in the Kennedy Administration, as far as the presidency goes, that he wanted somebody around. I was noticeably excused from a lot of things where I felt later after watching my successor operate that many things took place that I wish I had been able to make pictures [of]. Now, I couldn't have injected myself into that, because I would have been persona non grata.

F: Yes.

S: I was eyebrowed out or fingered out. I got the message, and I just wasn't welcome. So, needless to say, I left. The opposite holds true with President Johnson, because he didn't hardly do anything without--

F: If he raised an eyebrow, he wanted it captured.

S: He wanted to know where you were, not to leave.

F: Right.

S: But in direct answer to your question, I don't remember in my mind any time when I was privy to any private meeting that I recorded that is of any note, anyway.

F: Is there anything much more to say on the Vice President before you go to Dallas?

S: Well, nothing except what I would consider to be a very friendly, and cordial, and warm relationship, and I only attribute that to two things: one, his naturally outgoing friendliness, anyway; plus the fact that he liked pictures. I think I could have been anybody, not individually, but anybody with a camera, I think, was a friend of his, as long as he knew he controlled them. He didn't like the bad pictures which the newsies were always trying to make--the wrong side, and the finger in the nose, and all that.

F: Now on the times that you did the Vice President, did he exercise some kind of right of editorship?

S: Well, I made a portrait of him which he used and still uses. It's in one of his official papers and it was blown up thirty feet by forty feet at the convention. If you write someplace, I think you'll still get it as his official portrait. I made that in his office as vice president in the late fall of 1962. I had made a picture of the President during a time when he was having a tape recording or film made in the Cabinet Room, and I managed to catch an interesting expression and a pose that was very pleasing by riding the free lights that the movies had brought in. I was shooting available light. I had a lot of freedom that they didn't have. I could move

around. So I managed to get a good expression. The President autographed it and gave it to the Vice President. And soon after, the Vice President saw me in the hall and said, "Cecil, I want you to come over sometime and make a picture like you just made of the President." Just like it, same pose, hand on the desk, and everything almost identical because he liked it. So I made arrangements with Juanita [Roberts] and the people at his vice president's office on the Hill, took my lights and went up and tried to duplicate it, and amplified it further. We did all sorts of poses.

F: He posed actually?

S: Right.

F: You didn't catch him doing something else?

S: No, this was a posed type thing. He agreed to do it and, then after we got under the lights, he probably wished he hadn't because he began to be very anxious to be doing something else. I was scurrying to get enough frames.

F: Asking you how much longer this was going to take?

S: Right. That's right. I was lucky, however, and got a picture, a couple of frames, one of which, as I say, has been used and continues to be used. So he liked that and that situation. He moved over to the office across the street and I went over and did some there; didn't have as good luck there. I think there was a water pipe or something growing out of his head, which again in haste you don't see these things. But it was just one of those mechanical things that [happen].

So we used the other picture, and he was very friendly about it. I can't think of anything that would add to what I've said about our relationship.

F: Now, you went to Dallas. You made the whole tour, I presume.

S: Yes, right.

F: Starting in San Antonio?

S: Yes, we started. It was just a regular trip. We were going to end up at the big barbecue, and that's all we were waiting for.

F: Tell us about that trip.

S: Well, the trip started--

F: Did the President and the Vice President take separate planes?

S: Yes, they were on separate planes. In fact, the Vice President was in Texas at the time, I believe, and he flew into Houston the night before, in the afternoon of the twenty-first. . . Now you've got me confused.

F: You went to San Atonio, to Houston, to Fort Worth, to Dallas, and were going to come to Austin.

S: Right, we spent the night--

F: It was in Houston where Jackie spoke her Spanish.

S: Right. The San Antonio trip, the Vice President was there, because we went out to the air base medical center. I made a number of pictures there. So that's where they came in together, in San Antonio. They joined up there; then went in their separate cars in the motorcade down to the air base for the medical center dedication, and then to the airport and took off for Houston. They were in

separate planes there. Again, I was always behind in what we call the still car. There's a still car, and a movie car, and a reporters car, in reverse order. Merriman Smith and the writing press are usually the first car behind the follow-up car of the President, which makes them the third car, and then the movie car and the still car change places every other place, sort of an unknown, unsealed arrangement. Neither one of us can do anything without the other anyway, but we're just together.

F: Had you become completely still by this time?

S: Yes, I was still on official trips like this where there was [a movie car along]. When Mrs. Kennedy would go, or in the case of the overseas trip, I took on the added responsibility of making movies, too. I would end up with a movie camera and three still cameras around my neck, and I was trying to do some of each. And, as you probably know, you don't do the best of everything, but you get some of everything. So I ended up on the European trip, to digress, shooting about thirty-five hundred feet of Kodachrome and countless hundreds of stills that ten-day trip. But the official trips of this type, motorcades, speeches, and so on were innocuous to the point that movies weren't necessary. We could always get them from the reels, and I didn't burden myself with trying to capture that. Dave Powers took care of that. He had become a movie nut and was taking his own little 16mm films; he was ex-officio movie photographer for the family. If you haven't gotten to him yet, he'll probably talk about that. But the motorcades,

and the speeches, and so on we did in San Antonio and Houston. Then we had the big banquet in Houston for Albert Thomas night. And that's where I first met Jack Valenti. I didn't know what a Jack Valenti was until then, and there he was behind the podium running around doing things for Mr. Johnson. I didn't know who he was, but he became very important to me the next day, because we spent the night there in Fort Worth. Went from Houston to Fort Worth. Spent the night there and left in the morning and had the early morning press breakfast downstairs and the meeting out in the parking lot across from the hotel, where the President said, "She's up there getting ready, and it takes women longer to get ready." I got some great pictures of that. These pictures have become priceless now and have already been published, too, in some books.

So the motorcade, then, to the airport through Fort Worth; the short trip to Dallas; off the plane at Dallas, and there was going to be another usual motorcade. You make pictures handshaking at the fence and waving signs, "Hi, JFK" and all this stuff. You get in the car; you start down the road; and we were in the middle of town, going down the middle of the street. We're five cars behind, now, because the Vice President and his security car have been interjected in between and also another car filled with the overflow senators and Yarborough and people like that who had gotten into other cars. Then the writing [press] cars and then the still car. So the motorcade was still seven or eight cars long in front of us by the time it turned the corner going up Elm towards the Book Depository building.

We hadn't gotten to the corner yet. When we did get to the corner from Main turning onto Elm, the President's car must have just rounded the corner, and by the time we were halfway up that one block street, we heard these shots, which were obvious shots to my compatriots and I, sitting on the back of a convertible, wide open. We all looked around, and I made a remark to the extent, "These Texans really known how to give you a salute. They're probably firing off their .45s or firecrackers or something like that." It's just some kind of a noisy thing. But they were so definitely shots that it just worried me for a little bit. I didn't know why, but I just automatically reached in my camera bag and put on a long focus lens; took off my normal, had a Hasselblad. I took off a 80mm lens and put on a 150. I'll never know why, but that's what I did. Then when we got around the corner, there wasn't anybody in front of us. All the cars had dissipated; they were gone. But the people were scurrying around. There was a motorcycle policeman's bike, who had jumped off of it and the wheels were still rolling; he was running across the green with a pistol in his hand. A man was hovering over his child in the grass. One of the still guys, Frankie Cancellare from UPI, jumped off the car while it was still running and dashed over to get a picture of this guy cowering in front of his child. I made a picture of them making a picture from the car. I didn't leave the car; my long focus lens came in handy. I was kind of nominally in charge of the vehicles that I was assigned to because I was the White House man. The other people were press

and didn't have any official status. The driver was a detective sergeant from the local police force. I said, "Let's get the hell out of here. Something's gone wrong." And we left Cancy back there because he was making a picture. We wouldn't have done it to anybody, but we just had to go. As it happened, he got on a motorbike and almost beat us to the hospital anyway, because he's that aggressive.

F: Did you know where you were going?

S: Not at that time. We had one extra added feature on this trip that we'd never had before and that was that a local photographer was riding in the White House car. We had picked up a Dallas Times [Herald] photographer in Washington and, because he had been with us all the time, he rode in our car rather than in the local still car, which was the third car back. So we had this home town boy there, and he recognized a lot of faces of people along the way. As he saw a friendly policeman or somebody he knew along the road, he'd say, "Which way did they go?" and "They went thataway." That type routine like in the movies. And they just kept pointing thataway. Finally one guy said, "They went towards Parkland." He knew what Parkland was, and we didn't. So we tore to the hospital and got there maybe three or four minutes behind by the time we had slowed down to make these inquiries. By the time we did get there, I know the wounded had been taken out of the cars. The cars had been parked up along the ambulance ramp. All sorts of things were going on outside the building. I jumped off the side of the car.

F: You still didn't know who had been shot?

S: Didn't have any idea what had happened until this next instant. As soon as I jumped off the car, Malcolm Kilduff, who was Salinger's representative, came running out of the ambulance room and he was crying. I said, "What's wrong, Mac?" He said, "The President's been shot and we think he's dead." You know, just like that. That was his immediate [thought], because he had helped carry him in. And he was crying.

I went on inside the hospital. Nobody stopped me. There was no security at that point. I just went on in with my camera bag. Everybody else stayed outside. I didn't know whether they were going to want me inside or not because pictures sometimes are going to be helpful and I wanted to be there. So I went inside and stood outside the operating room one door for maybe fifteen or twenty minutes. Meanwhile General Clifton showed up and we stood there together just in shock, literally, and we watched the panopoly of people: the priests came in; we saw bloodied interns or guys in white suits coming by with whole bottles of blood, and all going into this room.

F: There wasn't anything you could do but just stand there.

S: I couldn't do anything. If I could have gone in, what could I have done? What could you do with pictures like that? Except now, you know, you really wonder. But I didn't, and I stayed outside.

Then somebody came and said, "We're going to have to clear this hall," because they were getting ready to move people around,

I guess, on stretchers. So Clifton and I moved down to the end of the hall where there was a little in-take desk. I ran into a Signal Corps warrant officer who was in charge of the communications at that particular stop. There's one at each stop. He was holding a phone; he had a direct line to the switchboard in Washington. He had some other things he had to do, but he wanted to keep this line open. And I wasn't doing anything, so he said, "Cecil, would you hold this line? Just keep talking every once in a while so they'll know you're there. Keep it open because we've got some information." So I did that; took it from him. He had just started to go away, hadn't gotten too far away. And out of the corner of my eye, I saw Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson, Rufus Youngblood and a couple of other people making mad dashes towards the door, which was behind me. And I think his name was Gearhart, I can't think of his first name, but anyway, I kind of nodded. "Where's he going?" And he said, "The President's going to Washington."

That was my clue that the President I came with was no longer there and I said, "Well, so am I." I gave him back his phone. I picked up my camera bag and I went outside and, by that time, they had gotten in their car and had moved out, quickly. Then I ran across Jack Valenti, who now was a name to me and a face, and the other Secret Service agent with Rufus Youngblood, from Texas, Lem Johns. And the other guy was Cliff Carter. There were three people

there trying to commandeer the next car, and they did get it.

F: Was it some kind of a public car, or were they just trying to get any car?

S: No, it was a police car. We got into a police car.

F: Policeman drove you out?

S: Yes, a policeman drove us out. There were four of us in the car. We made a mad dash to the airport using a different route because you didn't know which way they had gone, really, and they were under security cover anyway, no radios. So we came up to Love Field and we came in the wrong entrance. It turned out that we came in towards the active runway and, actually, we crossed the active runway and came barreling down this active runway, under the guns, we found out later, of security guys who had been posted there just in the last five minutes. We almost got shot, because, "What's this black car?" It might be official and all that, but here it comes charging towards Air Force One. Well, we lucked out, and some other reporters have written this up.

F: "If there's a conspiracy, here's the rest of it."

S: Right. We could have just been machinegunned out of the place without anybody asking questions. But, as it turned out, we drove up to the nose of the plane and disgourged. They dashed upstairs, and so did I. My first thought was, "I've got to see Jim Swindal," to make sure that I can ride jump seat or ride in the can or ride someplace.

F: Who's Jim Swindal?

S: The pilot of the plane. I didn't come on Air Force One, and to get on it--you know, weight limitations, and security and all that. I immediately turned to my left as I got up to the head of the stairs and I said, "Jim, can I ride back with you?" "Yes. No problem. We'll work it out." If they had had twenty overloaded, I would have been one of them. It was as simple as that.

Then I turned right and went down the corridor of the plane. They had meanwhile pulled all of the shades. It was dark. All I could see was just dull images and hear the sniffing of ladies crying. Because a number of the ladies had come out: Mrs. [Evelyn] Lincoln was there; Liz Carpenter was there; Pam Turnure was there; and Marie Fehmer and other gals were there. They were all doing what I should have been doing, just sitting down and crying. But I was busy. I got met halfway in the aisle by Malcolm Kilduff again who said, "Thank God, you're here, Cecil. The President's going to take the oath on the plane, and you're going to make the pictures." There was no room for anybody else, and there wasn't anybody else there. So Clifton had gotten there just almost at the same time.

F: The President had beaten you back to the plane?

S: Right. He was on the plane, back in the cabin at this time, and I was still in the main part of the cabin. I hadn't gone into the private part of the cabin. So my first thought was, "Am I going to shoot this in color or black and white?" Which is kind of a nutsy-boltsy thing to be thinking about at that time, but if I was going

to do it for everybody, I knew that they couldn't process Kodacolor and I knew they couldn't process Ektachrome like right now.

F: Right.

S: This is a wire service job, and it had to be black and white. So I stripped the Kodacolor out of my Hasselblad magazine and loaded it with Tri-X; I loaded a 35mm camera with Tri-X also. In case one didn't work, I'd have another one.

F: You had two cameras ready.

S: I had two cameras around my neck at the time; one, I had synchronized with flash and the other one, with available light which, in the cabin of Air Force One, with a low ceiling and banks of flourescent light, the lighting was adequate for a 60th at 4, or something like that, which is probably what I shot. So I was ready to go.

Things began to shape up at that time. The Judge, Mrs. [Sarah T.] Hughes, showed up right about that time. Meanwhile, I was in the cabin trying to figure out where I was going to do this. If you have been in the plane, you know that it is very narrow and there's not much space for a lot of people, but I knew that I was going to have to have at least four people in the picture: the Judge holding the Bible, and Mrs. Kennedy, and Mrs. Johnson, and the President, all things being equal. We weren't sure about Mrs. Kennedy at the time.

F: Was there kind of a general confusion or were things pretty well understood aboard the plane?

S: As far as I could remember, things were understood that there was a method. First, we were going to take this oath; then they were going to leave. As far as the confusion was concerned, I don't think there was any confusion about that. It was just a matter of when.

The President then said, "Let's get everybody in here that can get in." Well, they began crowding into the room and when you get eighteen or twenty people in that small room, standing up, there tends to be a little confusion.

F: Must have frozen a few people out of the cabin just out of sheer number.

S: Well, there were some people out in the main part of the cabin who couldn't get in. I mean, you can see them in the picture that I made. You can see a couple of people: the pilot, for example, I can recognize his face back in the darkness and the aforementioned warrant officer, Gearhart, his eyes are up in there. But I don't remember any confusion except on my part, that is, I've got to get my back up against this wall. Then I began directing the people because Mrs. Kennedy did come on the scene; Larry O'Brien was there and Kenny O'Donnell was there. I told the President, "You're going to have to back off just a little bit if I'm going to get you all in." So they moved back. And I was leaning up against the wall with, fortunately, a semi-wide angle lens. If it had been a little wider, I would have been safer. But as it was, I was trying out a new Hasselblad lens, and it couldn'thave come at a better time--50mm.

So it gave me the wide scope. If I remember right, I could reach out and touch Mrs. Kennedy on the shoulder; I was that close.

F: You stayed with the Hasselblad exclusively?

S: I shot about twelve or thirteen frames with the 35 in between. I'd shoot off a couple of flashes because, during the oath, it takes seventeen or eighteen seconds to read that and reread it. And I'd click off one or two flashes.

F: You didn't pose anybody?

S: No. I only posed that Mrs. Hughes was in my lower left and the other three were in front of me, so that I could see his hand and hand on the Bible.

F: But I mean, they weren't posing for you?

S: But other than that, no. That's right.

F: That was just your manner of positioning yourself.

S: Right. I only wanted to make sure that the three were in front of me and I had Mrs. Hughes in the left foreground.

F: Right.

S: There was hardly any other way to do it in that room. Then I just sort of sprayed the room with my 35, so that I got pictures of everybody in there because I was always famous for giving pictures away if anybody was in a picture, a frame. I got Dr. Burkley and Pam Turnure and a lot of lesser important people over behind in the corners: Liz Carpenter, Merriman Smith, Chuck Roberts, the news guys. They all show up in frames.

F: I got a good interview with Chuck on that, incidentally.

S: Yes, he would have given you a good one. Of course, he and Merriman wrote a very descriptive [account], much better than this type of thing.

F: Merriman Smith died before I got to him.

S: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. You can get his deposition out of his wire service reports, I guess.

Well, anyhow, the pictures were made, and the famous, "Let's get this plane going" type of sentence was made. I don't remember the exact words. I wouldn't want to be quoted. But there was something to that extent, "Let's get out of here." I took the tape.

F: Were they conscious of you?

S: I don't believe so. I don't have anybody looking at the camera, except Doc Burkley.

F: Now then, you've got a problem with this short range of focus, because you're going to blur somebody. Whom did you decide or did you?

S: The thing that saved me was this 50mm lens.

F: Was the 50mm lens.

S: I was so close, and I bounced the flash off the ceiling, that I stopped down to 16. So I had no depth problem. I was sharp. Mrs. Hughes, on my left, you can see the nubbies in her wool dress she had on. I mean, it's that sharp. You can see expressions on faces fifteen feet away. Well, we lucked out there. If I had had a 80mm lens or a different lens, not only would I not have been able to do it, there would have had to have been some changes made.

F: Yes.

S: So everything worked out to the best there. I excluded one little sidelight, which is very important, and that is the audio problem of the oath. Kilduff was running around like crazy trying to find one of our Signal Corps guys who should not have been there because he had no reason to be there. He should have been at the merchandise mart [Trade Mart] doing his job. We only had one man on assignment like that. As it happened, he hadn't come out because he hadn't heard what happened. I said, "There's a dictaphone on the President's desk. Why don't you get the crew chief to make it hot for you and then use the little mike." So, based on that information, he did go and get the crew chief, and the picture shows Kilduff kneeling down in the left corner holding up the dictaphone mike, almost close enough to even make a listenable recording, but certainly not clear, not pure. It was on the red, endless tape type, the plastic discs. When I got off the plane, I stretched this plastic tape between my fingers, like this, and I had the film in my camera. And when I walked down the steps, I was the only living, breathing person who knew what happened. Not only that, I had the whole record of it in my hand. When I arrived at the foot of the stairs, I ran into Colonel McNally, who was the head communications man who had been in the area and since gotten the word and he was there. I said, "Colonel, I'm going to give you this and make you responsible to see that it gets dubbed by our Signal Corps guys and given to the networks, because it's the oath, and I've got to take care of the

pictures." So I spread his fingers and we changed hands; he took that disc and I've never seen it since. I don't know what ever happened to it.

F: There's no kind of a darkroom or even the most elementary developmental process aboard Air Force One?

S: No. Nothing like that.

F: So all you could do was just sit?

S: Well, I took the film. Meanwhile my buddies that I had been with, the AP and UP guy, Henry Burroughs from AP and Frankie Cancellare from UPI, had arrived; hadn't made any pictures of any kind because we were all locked up in the plane. I was the one that told them what had happened when I walked out, because Smith and Roberts and Sid Davis flew back on the plane. Besides the Judge and Police Chief [Jesse E.] Curry getting off the plane, I think we were about the only three that left. Everybody else immediately took off.

So I gave them at that point initially what happened and I said, "We've got to move these pictures. Who's it going to be?" We flipped a coin as to which lab we would use for a pool, AP or UPI. And to explain the pool situation, that representative processes and makes prints of the same picture, and both of them use the same picture at the same time in any event; certainly not only an earth-shaking event like this, but just on any event, so that nobody gets a break on the other one. Well, it's a rather involved story. I don't know how far or how deep [or whether] you want to go all the way.

F: I want to go. Yes.

S: We flipped a nickel; AP won or lost the toss, depending on how you look at it. But we went to the AP lab in the Dallas Morning News or whichever newspaper it is that has the AP offices.

F: I don't know myself.

S: Anyhow, we went to their lab.

F: I'd guess the News.

S: Yes, I think it is. It's right near the Book Depository building.

F: Yes, that's the News.

S: I had a roll of 120 Tri-X and a roll of 35 Tri-X black and white. I went into the darkroom with the guy which is very unusual. I could do nothing to help them. I just wanted to be there because that was it, until he got them out of the soup and into the hypo, and we spread them out before a transparent light in the darkroom and saw that I had images. And then I breathed. I hadn't breathed until that point because I was sure that something had gone wrong.

F: Yes. This is the time to make the most elementary mistake: leave your lens cap on.

S: I guess somebody remembered that the first flash that I flashed didn't work. So I wondered if the ones that worked afterwards were going to be synchronous and if I did get it. It was just a temporary thing. I didn't have it pushed in far enough. But I pushed it in and made it again. So I had to breathe at that point. Even with a wet negative then because they print wet, we selected

the picture, the one that's been used many times since. And they immediately made two prints, one to put on their drum and one to give to the UPI guy. Meanwhile, the telephone connections with their New York relay offices or main offices in New York were wide open for around-the-world distribution. I mean they had everybody standing by for these pictures. So as soon as the print was out and was out of the hypo and washed off a little bit, we gave this one print to the UPI courier, with helmet and goggles to boot. He had to go about ten or twelve blocks or wherever the UPI wire photo service is. And I was going to be in touch with them by phone, so that when they got their print on the drum, I would give this 3-2-1 countdown and say "Roll your drums." Because just a few seconds in a case like that on a worldwide network means that one guy's going to get--

F: A clear beat there.

S: --a clear beat. So I was the honcho on this thing. I was holding two phones, one to New York, AP, and one to the office here in Dallas with the UP guy. I said, "OK, UPI's got theirs on the drum, standing by." I counted down and I watched the AP guy push his. I only hoped that the UP guy had been honest with me and hadn't started his ten seconds before, but I presume that didn't happen.

F: You would have heard from them.

S: Yes. Everything began to move. I had written the caption while the UP guy was getting back; I took care of historically annotating the fact that I made the picture. From then on, I began to lose

contact with the picture because once it moves on those wires and it is a handout, as it were, the wire service involved takes ownership of it, and it becomes an AP picture or a Wide World picture or a UPI News Feature picture.

F: Yes.

S: The name Stoughton soon gets divorced out of the caption. And living with my wife over these last eight years, every time we see the picture printed as an AP picture has not been easy.

F: Right.

S: But you understand it, and I understand it. And there is another side bar to this that clears the air historically: Everybody that knows the situation knows that I made the picture and that's that. But at that particular time, I made sure that my name was in the caption and that's the way it was printed.

F: Did you photograph the plane taking off?

S: No, I don't believe I did. We were on our way in the cars, leaving.

F: Yes, you were getting on about your business.

S: Because it took them five or six minutes to make their final plans to take off; they had to taxi down to the end of the runway.

F: Was it any problem getting away from there and back downtown?

S: No. As I recall, we got on that parkway, whatever it was, and beat ourselves back downtown.

F: Yes. Scooted on down.

S: But the air was electric. From then on, the rest of the afternoon.

F: The newspaper office itself must have been something to see.

S: Yes, because they had gotten the picture in that their man had made. Their AP guy had made the real famous picture of the shot, you know, everybody turning around and the President sort of leaning over. This picture far transcends mine from the standpoint of historical documentation. I mean, that's the picture of the world.

F: Yes.

S: You just can't beat it. An impact, which must have been just a fraction of a second after that. Anybody can make a picture of four people standing in a plane taking an oath. As it happened, I was that anybody. But we'll never forget the picture that that AP guy made, and I wish I could think of his name.

F: I don't think we'll forget the other one either.

S: Well, Mrs. Kennedy, I think, made that picture more warm than anything else, because you can just read in the expression on her face what has happened. You don't have to know what has happened; you can see it.

F: Almost a total disbelief there.

S: Right.

F: If you ever had to photograph shock, I think that was it.

S: That was it. Well, then, let's see, where were we? We were in the lab; we got those pictures moving. Then they went back into the negatives again and started selecting a couple of others, because there were others that had some import. One was the President comforting the widow. He had his arm around her and [was] sort of patting her on the back. This moved, and moved a

lot of people and it got a lot of play. There was another shot of him standing, waiting for the event to take place, which, when cropped, could be the newest portrait of the man: "this is the way the new President looks today" type of thing. So they moved that as a single on one frame or a one column picture for a new portrait. Then I had to wait for the negatives to dry because I wasn't about to leave them there hanging in the office. We put blowers on them and dried them.

F: Yes. One question there: President Johnson did not insist you go back with him?

S: No, he mechanically didn't get involved in my actions at all. I think if Kilduff had anything to say to him or if the subject had come up at all, he would have said, "He's got to. . . ." I could have given the film and gone, and maybe I should have done that.

F: Or taken it and made the world wait two hours.

S: Well, there's two ways of looking at it. I would have rather have done what I did.

F: Yes.

S: But I would have, for my own sake, rather been on the plane to record in some way some of the confusion that has [been bandied] about. Because I would have had freedom to roam, I'm sure, minus the private bedroom.

F: Some priceless portraits.

S: Yes, of who was sitting next to who and who did say what to who and so forth. Maybe it's better that we don't know that.

But I think, for my part of it, I protected my priceless negatives. I got them in my pocket. And shortly before this happened, by the time they were dried and we'd made all these other selections and so forth, the plane had landed at Andrews one hour and fifty-two or three minutes later; fastest time in history, I guess, from Dallas to Andrews because they got into a tremendous tail wind.

F: I bet they really blew that thing through the air.

S: By the time they got there and they were taxiing on the ground, someone told me that was on the plane--maybe it was Chuck Roberts--that they put the pictures on the screen. AP had moved them. They put them on the screen and the new President then saw himself being sworn in just two hours ago. He made some rather nice remarks about me and how I took care of this thing; I don't know what the exact words were, probably never will know, but I got complimented by my acuity at that point, and things worked out nicely.

But Kenny O'Donnell also saw the pictures and was disturbed that I had exceeded my responsibility by putting out pictures without anybody approving them. So he immediately got on the phone and wanted to know who the hell told me to put those pictures out. I said, "Kilduff said that, a, I should make the pictures and see that the wires got them and, b, I selected the right ones by virtue of what I'm sure you're going to talk about and that is, what was Mrs. Kennedy's condition?" Because he was sure that she was blood-

splattered from head to toe and all this was going to show in the pictures.

F: Did he call you in Dallas?

S: Yes, I was still in the newspaper office. He said, "I want you to get back here; bring all those pictures back and get back here as soon as you can." I said, "Can you arrange to have me flown back?" He said, "Yes," and he got hold of Andy Hatcher, who was the third press secretary, who was on duty in Washington. They got with the Air Force in San Antonio and they sent a plane, fighter-bomber type that seats three, that they had made up into a passenger type plane. And by the time it got into town around 8:30 or 9 o'clock, my two friends, the AP and the UP guy, we were together and they flew us all back to Washington together. I had my negatives with me at the time. So we flew back in an hour and fifty minutes also.

F: Small thing, but did you ever get any lunch.

S: We stopped at the airport. No lunch, but we stopped at the airport and had dinner while we were waiting for this plane to come in. But the hour and fifty minutes from Dallas to Andrews was the fastest and the slowest time I think I've ever gone. It was just unreal. We just couldn't believe it. We landed. I was picked up by a White House car and driven immediately to my lab down where the Kennedy Performing Arts Center is now, that's where our lab used to be. My crew was standing by and I gave them all the negatives; they made two or three prints each of everything. I waited for them to dry and within a few minutes--I mean, we just gave them a minute in the

hypo and within a few minutes--I mean, we just gave them a minute in the hypo and ran them through the dryer--I dashed off to Kenny O'Donnell, all this happening at maybe one-thirty, two o'clock in the morning. It had been going all the time now.

When I got up there, of course, I just saw all the attendant confusion and everything that was going on. People were waiting, and I didn't know what they were waiting for, but they were going to bring the President's body back from Bethesda to lie in state. So I arrived in time to cover that. After I got rid of the black and white details, I loaded color again and I stationed myself in the main lobby of the White House in the East Wing and made the only picture of that entourage coming into the house. National Geographic played those real well in their special that they used.

F: Did you see the new President at all in this long weekend?

S: Well, that was Friday night. During Saturday he was greeting the dignitaries--President Eisenhower and all the people who came into the house then. He greeted them in the Red Room.

F: You were there.

S: And I photographed most of that.

F: Did he seem terribly tense, or what's your subjective impression?

S: I thought he carried himself very calmly, very cool. I just couldn't help but think that if it had to be this way, this is the only guy that could have done this. I really felt that way.

F: There was a general impression that continuity had been preserved, that things were going on.

S: Right. That's exactly the way I felt, although I didn't know I was feeling it at the time. I wasn't shook up that something new was going on, because he handled it so well. Of course, everything was done so diplomatically and discreetly and subliminally. Everybody was overcome with grief, and it obviously showed in all the pictures.

F: Did you take a picture of each dignitary he greeted, with him?

S: No, I tried, but couldn't possibly do them all. And of course, Mrs. Kennedy, later on, after the--in other words skip two days, we'll get into Sunday now--when she entertained De Gaulle and the other leaders that came to pay private respects to her, we weren't allowed in there. I almost got to the third floor once, but I didn't. Again, some moments of history have slipped by us.

F: Did she receive them on the third floor?

S: Yes. De Gaulle anyway, in private.

F: What did you do the rest of the weekend?

S: That's kind of a lost weekend, because we're into Saturday now. After the President's body was lying in state, then nothing was going to happen for a while. There was going to be a private mass, and I stayed for the private family mass and made some pictures of that. Then I was free for a little while, so I went home. I hadn't been home now since I had left four days before. So I went home.

Tape 2 of 2, Interview I continues on tape containing Interview II

F: Now we're on Saturday and the rest of the weekend.

S: Right. I just went home to change clothes, grab a couple of hours sleep on the couch and get a bite to eat.

D: Had you gone to bed Friday night?

S: No, I'd stayed up completely all the way through. From early Friday morning at Fort Worth, I had gone until Saturday morning about seven-thirty or eight o'clock I guess.

So I took a short nap, changed clothes and took a shower; then went back to the White House to photograph some of these dignitaries we spoke of earlier. Because that was the only action taking place, and I did that most of the day, as I recall. Saturday is kind of a lost day, but I think that was really all that happened, although I think the President began to meet with people in his EOB office, Executive Office Building, and that was the beginning of his time in office. He met with the Secretary of State and other people over there. I think I sort of hung around outside that office for a while, along with the press. We were allowed periodic glimpses of these people together. I'd have to look at my negative file now beginning with that particular day, just to see what I really did on Saturday.

F: That can be resurrected from pictures.

S: Right. The chronology begins with the swearing-in picture; that's negative number one. And from then on, it goes on right down the line. Sunday was the transfer day from the White House to lie in state, at the Rotunda in the Capitol. I felt that my jurisdiction, or my responsibility, ended at the White House gate. So I just covered the departure of it. I don't know at this point why I didn't

go farther. But other department agencies and certainly everybody that had a camera was doing it and I figured that there really was no White House need for me to go.

F: I would say there was no paucity of photographers there.

S: I hadn't made arrangements to get any of the dramatic type pictures that National Geographic had done. They had gotten a man in the Rotunda ceiling. You know, the real gutsy kind of pictures were already taken care of and there was no need for me to do that. So I just stayed at the [White] House. My family was there; they came down. I made pictures of the departure of the motorcade.

F: Where did you office in those days?

S: I had a small office just beneath the President's office so that when Mrs. Lincoln would push a button on her desk, I would run up a flight of ten stairs and be at the Cabinet Room or in her office in eight or ten seconds--just a small office about the size of this actually eight by eight, ten by ten. All I needed was space to sit and a desk and a phone and a camera and film. Everything else was done in the lab down in another building.

Sunday, then, was lost also from the standpoint of the President's cortege, but I don't remember what I did on Sunday officially. But I'm sure there must have been other things going on, more meetings, I'm sure, with dignitaries and staff people in the EOB. As I recall, I went home Sunday night; got maybe a full night's sleep or at least a regular, regulation night. Monday then was the return trip from the Capitol and the subsequent burial at Arlington after the stop

at St. Matthew's. Is that the way it goes?

F: Yes.

S: We passed through the White House again and picked up the walking entourage, and walked up the street.

F: Did you walk with them?

S: I walked to the end of the gate. Then I think I hitched a ride with somebody in the motorcade and rode up because I was carrying a heavy bag of cameras. As I recall, I was kind of beat. But I went to St. Matthew's, and I was the only one allowed in, besides somebody that had made arrangements to get in earlier and made a picture from the ceiling. They had this great nave picture that shows the whole inside of the church. But they allowed me in.

F: Did you have free movement or were you restricted to a corner?

S: Well, I was kind of restricted. I restricted myself.

F: But that was under the restriction of good taste?

S: That's right. I just didn't allow myself to be obnoxious.

F: No flash on these.

S: But I think it's important to me to be recorded that I finally broke down. There was a time when it finally got to me.

F: Up till then you'd been numb.

S: I'd been numb; I'd been just working constantly and it hadn't gotten to me yet. I got to the steps of the church prior to the casket being off-loaded, and I was kneeling down about the third or fourth step up and I had made pictures of them picking it off and pushing it, blessing it and so forth. I got that series of pictures very fresh

in my mind. Then there weren't any more pictures because right about that time the casket moved directly in front of me, where I could reach out and touch it. When it got that close and all I could see was just that, I just collapsed. Physically, I just broke down and bawled. My cameras were useless to me. I wiped my eyes; I just sat there on the steps, and people would go by and I think somebody patted me on the head, you know, and like that. In a few seconds I recovered enough to get up anyway, and by that time they had moved on in the door. I was allowed to go in without any difficulty, still feeling that I didn't want to be there but had to be.

F: Yes.

S: But I certainly didn't want to go down and make any tight close-ups of the family kneeling there. I stayed back in the back, and I made a few interior, available light--[of] which there isn't much in that church--color pictures, some of which are rather dramatic.

F: Did you have a tripod?

S: No, this was all hand-held. I was shooting like a 15th of a second or something, wide open, with again my Hasselblad. I made a picture of De Gaulle standing next to Presidents Luebke and Erhard. So I've got the three heads, this one tall head and two little bald German heads, and that's all I've got. But the backs of them, at this time, were so depictive of who they were, you knew who they were. And this, to me, just tells a lot. Then I made just a couple of general scenes. I leaned up against a pillar to give me some stability. But I didn't move and I didn't cover that phase of it

as journalistically as I would have if I were competing with somebody. I only wanted the record to show that I was there and that if anybody wanted any pictures of that kind, they'd have to live with these.

When they moved out again, I moved along with the crowd, got caught up in it, and by the time I got to the door, the casket had been moved down the steps again and was being placed on the caisson. It was there that the very tremendous picture of John-John saluting took place. Because all the press were across the street on press stands shooting with long lenses toward us. I was behind and my pictures made from behind usually were more important to the family, because I was seeing what they were seeing. That's what they wanted. I saw the back of all this, except John's face and figure were kind of covered, being so little, with legs and stuff of other people. But I do have him down in some of my frames, when I'm making pictures of the same event that's going on, from the back. Then they left and I made pictures of people getting into their cars. I got one picture with Truman, Eisenhower, and Johnson all in the same picture, if I recall; at least Truman and Eisenhower for sure and a couple of other grab shots. Then I looked for a ride again, because naturally I wanted to go to the cemetary. And from then on, it was driving all the way.

F: Johnson, in a sense, during all this, was just about as much in the background as a tall president can be?

S: Right, right. He certainly was. At the gravesite, he shows up--the only way you could recognize him is, if you didn't know him, you'd see a couple of Secret Service guys hovering around. Rufus [Youngblood] was there, of course and Lem Johns. And Cliff Carter. Those three names then, Valenti, Carter and Johns and I, commandeered this car. But you're right. When we got to the gravesite, it was just a mass of people, and everybody moving into as close a position as they could. And protocol came into play here. We had Haile Selassie, and all the other number one dignitaries, Queen Wilhelmina, I guess, from the Netherlands, and whoever all the other people were.

I again had a free run of the place. All the other assembled hundreds of photographers by this time were restricted by ropes on this hill. Of course, if you recall the time of day, it was beginning to get late, the shadows were falling, and the light was a problem. I was still shooting color. You always worry about failing light and color, and "Have I got the wrong film?" And I end up having regular Ektachrome instead of high speed, or Kodacolor that only has a rating of 80 when you wish you had 160 and things like this. So I moved around as freely as I wanted to, again, with decorum--I didn't get close to the family as I could have--and recorded the interment and the flame-lighting. And that was the end of that day.

We went back then to the White House. That was when Mrs. Kennedy entertained privately De Gaulle and two or three other people in her rooms. And I wasn't invited to participate in that, but

I was ready. In fact, I stayed by the elevator, thinking that I should get a call to come and make one more picture. That was Monday night.

Tuesday, I think, began a regular presidential day, except they were far from regular, very busy, very hectic and meetings all the time. We're in EOB all the time, moving in those offices. I didn't get any urgent calls to be the only one to do this or be the only one to do that type of thing during these early days, because everybody was doing it. It was still news and still new. If there was going to be a picture of any kind, everybody did it. There was no behind-the-scenes stuff.

F: Every time the President tugged at his tie, there were fifteen people there to record it?

S: Later on, there began to be a series of inner-office type pictures similar [to those] with President Kennedy that no one was privy to except the President and his guest and in this case, myself. Later on, it became Okamoto. So now we're into the new administration and a whole new ball game, so to speak, except the old people were still there. The President brought in his staff, secretaries and people like that, but for the most part, friendly faces were still around, and I just sort of went along with them. But I was still doing the same job.

Oh, let me see. Where can I go now, transition-wise?

F: Well . . .

S: [Shall we] stop?

[End of Tape 2 of 2, and Interview I]

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