

RICHARD NIXON FOUNDATION

PROJECT: ORAL HISTORY WITH GEN. JAMES "DON" HUGHES (USAF, RET.)

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018

INTERVIEWERS: FRANK GANNON, JONATHAN MOVROYDIS

TRANSCRIPT:

Jonathan Movroydis: This is "Nixon Foundational History" with General James Don Hughes, United States Air Force retired. We were in Sterling, Virginia and it's November 10th, 2018. General Hughes, thank you so much for taking the time for this oral history interview. I just like to start off, what is your date of birth?

General Hughes: 7 July, 1922.

Jonathan Movroydis: Where did you grow up?

General Hughes: In the Hudson Valley. Basically, my home was Newburgh, New York and I lived there until I went on service with the army.

Jonathan Movroydis: And you attended the United States Military Academy at West Point?

General Hughes: That was in my front yard and they were very good to me so I went three years there and graduated in 1946.

Jonathan Movroydis: What made you want to join the U.S. Army Air Corps?

General Hughes: Well, my father was very active in the National Guard, he'd been on active duty with the Guard in France and Germany during the war and he just stayed in. And so I was exposed to at least the military life for a number of years and liked it very much and the Academy was right in my front yard and I really wanted to go there ever since I was six years old and finally got the opportunity for an abbreviated course during World War 2. That way it was a three-year course instead of four.

Jonathan Movroydis: Where did you serve in World War II?

General Hughes: I graduated from West Point just after the war ended so my only relation with that would have been later on, I was in Japan for the Army of Occupation for three years.

Jonathan Movroydis: For three years in Japan, what was your role there?

General Hughes: I was a fighter pilot in the 8th Fighter Wing and we located on Kyushu, on the lower island of Japan and we were there for three years, the war in Korea broke out just a few months before I was supposed to come home so I had to stay there till I have finish my combat tour.

Jonathan Movroydis: The commanding general was General MacArthur, did you have any observations on him?

General Hughes: Well, General MacArthur, of course, he was the prime figure but we didn't see much of him but we felt his leadership down through the 8th Army commander and the 10th Corps.

Jonathan Movroydis: Following your tour in Japan, where were you stationed after that?

General Hughes: From Japan, we came back to the United States and I was assigned to the 20th Fighter Wing which at the time had just been given the mission to carry the nuclear weapon on a fighter. So we trained up at Shaw Air Force Base in Carolina and then shortly after about a six-month tour there, we have transferred for three years to England over in Essex. Our mission was really to bring the tactical nuclear effort to NATO.

Jonathan Movroydis: Well, what year that was? That would have been in the early 1950s?

General Hughes: That would have...let's see, that was 1952 to 1955, yes. And we were, as I say, stationed in Essex. It was three wonderful years except for the weather.

Jonathan Movroydis: So when did you ultimately join the White House staff as the vice president's military assistant?

General Hughes: Well, I was in the Pentagon then in 1957 and I was having just finished a wonderful tour in the fighter business, I was assigned to the Pentagon which I wasn't very happy about. So about two years after I got there, I began to get some

strange phone calls about, "Come down here and don't tell anybody where you're going," which didn't go too well with my boss but I suddenly wound up talking to Admiral Radford and he said, "Well, you go home and wait for a phone call," and he said, "You will be selected to be an aide to the Vice President of the United States." At the time, no vice president had ever had any military assistance.

Jonathan Movroydis: Why did they decided they wanted to do that? Why did they decide they wanted to give the vice president a military assistant?

General Hughes: Unlike previous presidents who did not appear to take much interest in their vice presidents, President Eisenhower was very close and President Nixon were very close and he would already sent them...he had already sent the Nixons around the world and when he came...on this trip, the Nixons used Admiral Radford's airplane for transportation and when they returned, Admiral Radford's chief assistant who had made the trip came back and told the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that if anybody needed military aides, it was the vice president and actually no vice president before had any military aides.

So Admiral Radford took up the task of getting military aides over to the vice president who did not want them and nor did Mrs. Nixon want them but he persisted and they finally agreed to take two military aides on a trial basis for the trip around Africa. So the next thing I knew I was on my way to Africa with a marine colonel as the senior aide and I was a junior aide. He worked with the president, I work with Mrs. Nixon which was indeed a real honor and she was a teacher so I learned a lot about protocol and all of the niceties that went with the job. After the trip, the big day came and General Cushman went in to see the vice president and after a while he came out and said, "Well Don, you can go back to the Air Force but I'm going to stay to assist in the national security role."

I immediately grabbed a telephone to call my office to arrange to be transferred to the 31st Fighter Wing out in California. Rose Woods who was the chief secretary to the Vice President and they were very close and been together for a number of years. She stalked into his office and about five minutes later, came out and told me to put the phone down that I was now the Vice President's appointment secretary and military aide. It turned out that the vice presidential staff was very lean, they did not have very many people working and the workload was very high. So before I knew it, I was packed up and on my way to Africa for a visit to eight countries and that's how I started, and that's how Colonel Cushman, later General Cushman, and I spent four wonderful years in the Vice President's staff.

Jonathan Movroydis: When was the first time you met Richard Nixon? Do you recall that moment?

General Hughes: Yes, it was right after he reluctantly agreed to take us. We were sent over to meet him and he welcomed us and then we started. He wasn't very enthusiastic but I think as the trip progressed, he did see that there was some benefit to have us around.

Jonathan Movroydis: You had mentioned earlier about the vice presidency, Eisenhower paying attention the vice presidency more. Could you touch upon the idea that Richard Nixon was a more influential vice president than previous?

General Hughes: Well, I can only pass on what I have learned and I can't give you specifics but I do know that the Vice President...that this Vice President spent a lot of time at the White House. I understand it was much more than the previous ones and he was given responsibilities but I don't believe that his predecessors had in terms of political assistance and advice in foreign affairs and defense. He was on the National National Security Council. He was frequently called upon particularly in political matters but also on matters of national interest.

Frank Gannon: You mentioned Rose Woods, how would you describe to people who never met her because most people never met her, they only became aware of her much later during the Watergate? What should people know about Rose Woods?

General Hughes: Yeah. She was clearly the senior staff member, she ran the staff. She was very capable, she understood politics, she had worked around the hill before and they matched perfectly. She could type X number of words a minute and turned out a letter or a document in a heartbeat and clearly, she understood how things operated on the hill and she was a great value to him and to all of us on the staff.

Frank Gannon: What were your...the first time you met Nixon, you say he was somewhat reluctant to have a military aide. What were your impressions of him, just as a man, as a potential boss?

General Hughes: Of course, it was just as we would approach a senior officer, he was a senior officer and we treated him as such. Later on, the relationship became a little warmer and warmer and by the time the four years was up, we were very, very close, practically family because the staff was small and that workload was large and he was one wonderful boss. It really was one of the best four years tours I've had.

Jonathan Movroydis: You would talk about going on many foreign trips with the president, could you talk about some of the world leaders that he met? We talked earlier

and you mentioned that he met with Pope Pius XII, do you recall the president's demeanor on those trips and do you recall those experiences?

General Hughes: Well, yes, of course when he going around Africa, he met with the heads of the states of all the countries he visited.

General Hughes: The reason for the trip was to recognize the independence of Ghana. They has just been...up until then, it had been a British protectorate and they were turning it over and making it an independent nation and that was the reason for the trip, so he met a lot of the senior people in Africa and in Europe that have come down for the ceremony.

Frank Gannon: On that trip to Ghana, he met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. King. Do you remember that? Did you get to meet them too?

General Hughes: No, I didn't but I do remember the case for it. Yes, it was great, it went well but I wasn't involved in it.

Jonathan Movroydis: Some of the people on the Eisenhower White House staff...do you have any perspective on how President Nixon...or Vice President Nixon interacted with President Eisenhower?

General Hughes: Well, I know that from my standpoint it was a very close relationship, particularly involving political matters but again, he also provided information and suggestions on the matter of national defense.

Jonathan Movroydis: How about some of the other people on the Eisenhower staff, Chief of Staff Sherman Adams?

General Hughes: Okay. Well, he knew Sherman Adams and respected him. I'd say it was a very friendly relationship both for official business and for just friendship.

Frank Gannon: It must have been difficult then because when Sherman Adams had to be fired, President Eisenhower didn't want to do it and he assigned...I think he even called Nixon back from a vacation somewhere in maybe the homestead and the family was there. So I think that was an example where President Eisenhower used staff to...

General Hughes: That's a good one, I remember it but I don't remember all of the details. I remember the phone call that set it up and then, of course, he had to go out

and do it but it was again represented the way that the President was using the Vice President.

Jonathan Movroydis: A year into your tenure with the vice president, you went to Caracas, Venezuela. Could you tell us a little bit about that incident?

General Hughes: I'll never forget it. Yes, we had a trip that was originally to attend the president's...the inauguration of the president of...

Frank Gannon: Argentina?

General Hughes: Argentina, yes, Argentina, and it wound up with a trip throughout about eight South American countries and the first trip or the first visit to the inauguration went well except we were late and that was played up pretty much.

Frank Gannon: Why were you late?

General Hughes: I can't answer that. I know that at the time, we thought we were on time and we weren't. And then we went from there to Paraguay and then up to where you can't breathe, up in Bolivia.

Frank Gannon: Bolivia and Peru.

General Hughes: Bolivia and Peru and then down to Peru and on up the west coast to...the climax was, of course, in Venezuela.

Frank Gannon: And there had been a...there been a problem in Peru as the trip progressed, the communist demonstrators started to...

General Hughes: Yeah, well, the big issue there was whether or not to go to the San Marcos University. He had been invited and now they were trying to disinvite him and he kept pressing to go. The result was we went and that was when we first encountered physical problems. Our Secret Service agent lost a tooth it was not a serious encounter, that occurred later but that was a good warning.

Frank Gannon: Wasn't that where he told the protesters that they were cowards because they wouldn't let him speak?

General Hughes: Well, he did use that term. Yes, he took it and write down and he and his interpreter...

Frank Gannon: Vern Walters.

General Hughes: Vern Walters, yeah, he was a lieutenant colonel at the time, that's where they faced him down standing up on a back of a car. And then that was...when we got back to the hotel, that's when one of the crowds spat in his face and I really believe the vice president was ready to deck him but Secret Service agent held his arm so the vice president laid a big kick in the shin which I know hurt because his shoes were big and heavy. And then we got in and went up and washed up, cleaned up and saw what we were facing and from then, it was Ecuador and...what's the other one? Colombia and eventually on into Venezuela.

Jonathan Movroydis: You have the bullet...you owned the bullets and the shard glass from that event, could you tell us a little bit about that?

General Hughes: Yes, when we headed into...when we started to go into Venezuela, I got on the radio and talked to my wife in Washington and she said, "Hey, you know, you're going to have a problem and I want you to be careful," and I said, "We hadn't heard anything about that." But we were on our way and we actually were rather let down when I was talking to her. When we landed, we taxi to a place that we weren't prepared to use and that required us to walk into the airport...into the terminal and that meant we had to pass under a crowd who welcomed us by spitting all over and by the time we got inside, it was a mess. Then as the ceremony progressed, the Vice President acted to cut it short because he could see the trouble was brewing so we got in the cars to go to the embassy.

General Hughes: Yeah, I was in the car with Mrs. Nixon and the wife of the foreign minister. The crowd was extremely unruly and as we progressed in, they got worse. The president was up front with the foreign minister, Jack Sherwood was the senior Secret Service officer, and back in our car we had the wife of the Prime Minister and also the Secret Service, our Secret Service guy, Dale Grubb. As we progressed, the crowd kept getting more and more unruly and finally, we realized how bad this was going to be.

There were rocks coming from all over, I recall watching a huge...actually, a brick, I watched it coming at the car and it kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger till it smashed into the window which shattered it, it shattered the window. The prime minister...or the foreign minister's wife was apoplectic, Mrs. Nixon was holding her and trying to calm her down. Dale Grubb was loosening his coat to make his gun at the ready and this was when we had been stopped by a truck that blocked us in the front

car, we were the second car and it just kept getting worse until someone, one of our Secret Service guys has managed to get the truck moved so that we could go ahead and get up to the embassy which was the residence. It was up on a hill and it was easy to secure.

And we got up to safety up on the mountain with the residence and the Ambassador said, "Well, we will get these damaged cars out of sight," the Vice President said, "We will not but we want it up there, we want to leave them there so the press can see them and take pictures of them, it'll show how that we were received here," and that's the way we got there. And then after his encounter with the junta, we got up there and went in and the vice president was furious and he and Mrs. Nixon and I went up to their bedroom where they were going to stay and he was furious and he started to take his clothes off.

He started took his coat off and was working on his tie and his shirt and I said, "The junta, the people who are running the show, they're downstairs waiting to see you," and he said, "Good," and he jumped down in his underwear and then he jumped on the bed and he said, "I'll take some nap," and he did. I don't think he slept but he did, he kept them waiting for 45 minutes and then he went down to meet the junta, there were four of them: Army, Navy, Air Force, and so forth and he treated them...he talked to them like as if they were children. He went up one side and down the other and to make it good, Vern Walters who was a very accomplished linguist and he would take on the attitude and the feelings of the Vice President.

If the vice president was happy, he was happy, if he was mad, he was mad so whatever the Vice President was doing, that was how Vern Walters was acting and he just took them one side and down the other. So the result was that they left with their tails between their legs and we went to talk to what we're going to do, with what we were seeing, what we're going to do? We couldn't do the trip, we couldn't do what we wanted to do there. So he was on the phone with the President who assured us that we had the country behind us. As a matter of fact, later that night the ambassador woke me up and...he got me up and said the rumor was that there were paratroopers landing in the north part of the country, so I said, "Well, that's great," and he said, "Oh, no, no, no, that's horrible," and so forth, so he said, "I must see the Vice President."

Well, I said, "You're not called in, sir, I can't let you do that," so we never did bother the Vice President. Turned out there was just a rumor but the final decision was made when President Eisenhower told the Vice President that he would like him to hold off his return to the states for a day to give him a chance to make up proper arrangements for a reception and so we settled on leaving Caracas and going to Puerto Rico and spend the night. Well, by the time we got to Puerto Rico, the governor had just turned the country into a carnival to welcome us and it was a wonderful day and the evening that we spent there, he had a big dinner for the Vice President and all of us were invited. But then, of

course, the next day we went home and President Eisenhower had arranged a wonderful welcome for us and the rest is history.

Frank Gannon: When did the bullets actually fly in Caracas? That was when the motorcade was stopped.

General Hughes: I don't remember any bullets flying. No, I'm sure there were none but I do remember...well, I wasn't there but Jack Sherwood said right after they got hit with a brick in the car... Anyway, I wasn't there but I found out about it later. He said he reached inside for his gun and he says, "It looks like we're going to have to kill some of these sons of bitches," and then he got thought it over...I mean, then the Vice President told him, "No, put your gun away," and that is true and that what he did. Dale Grubb did the same thing, only I didn't tell him anything, he got it and then he put it back.

But I don't remember any bullets flying, where that bullets came from was....when we got there, there was this captain, an army captain, Venezuelan, and I went over to him and I just said... Like, plainly, he knew who I was and I said, "Can you get me a pistol? Can you get me a gun?" and he said, "Well, take mine," so I had to...so that was right after we got up there, so I kept that weapon. I never had one, you know, normally, I've never brought a gun near him but I got that one from that captain and I said, "I'll give it to you...I'll give it back to you before we leave," and I did. The next day, we left, I gave it back to him but I took those cartridges and I said, "Can I keep them?" and he says, "Yeah, go ahead and do it," so that's where those bullets came from. I don't remember any shots being fired but that's where the bullets came through.

Jonathan Movroydis: Do you remember Mrs. Nixon's reaction to all of this in the car?

General Hughes: Yeah, I should have put that in before. One of the main things I remember was my feeling we were going to be seriously hurt, if not killed, because the faces of the people that were outside was pure hate and I've just never seen anything like it in my life. They were mouthing all the epithets they could think of and they throwing rocks and big projectiles, they tore off the flags, it was clear that if we got out, we were going to be in trouble. Yeah, but while this was going on there, I was sitting in the back on the jump seat and Mrs. Nixon and the minister's wife were on the... Mrs. Nixon had her arms around this lady and trying to calm her down, she was weeping and speaking incoherently but Mrs. Nixon had her throughout the entire thing. She kept that woman and tried to comfort her as best as she could. I tell you, she showed to me a lot of fortitude because I was really concerned that we weren't going to make it. What else can I do?

Frank Gannon: You described the Vice President at the embassy keeping the Junta waiting, did you see Mrs. Nixon at all on the...

General Hughes: Well, she was absolutely...throughout it all, she was serene. That's the best word I can take up. Her voice was the same, it wasn't shrill or...she was just as calm as she could be. In fact, she says, "Dick, what are you doing?" and he says, "I'm going to take a nap." And so I said, "Oh, yeah, yeah," and he did, I don't think he slept but he went down and I have never seen anybody taken to the woodshed as these four military junta people and he went up one side and down the other and he talked a little about freedom and "You were free from..." What the hell was it? Anyway, "You got your freedom and now look what you're doing," and he was furious and the interesting thing is that our interpreter, Colonel Walters, took on the exact mannerisms that the Vice President was showing. If Vice President was furious, he was furious when he was talking to them. Mr. Vice President raised his voice, he raised his voice. There was just no doubt about it and those four junta left with their tails between their legs.

Jonathan Movroydis: You had mentioned that you were detailed with Mrs. Nixon on many of the foreign trips, especially in Africa. Could you describe some of the time with her and traveling with her?

General Hughes: Yes, I can. As I said, we were still getting acquainted and Colonel Walters worked with the Vice President and I work when Mrs. Nixon and there was so much I didn't know about international protocol and she was well-aware of it, so she would help me. And it turned out that their room was next to the room that Colonel Walters and I were...I mean, that the Colonel Cushman and I were sharing and it was our first...Yeah, this was our first trip. So he and I were trying to get organized and we found out that we had left...that someone had left...the valet that was traveling with us have failed to bring the President's trousers to his full dress suit. So when we were...and that was left on the airplane some 50 miles away, so that led to our first crisis. Well, I guess the Marine foxhole and my cockpit, we used a little of unvarnished language, not realizing that the windows were open. Anyway, that happened and then afterwards, we were going over to a dinner, I got in the car and Mrs. Nixon said, "Well, Major, I'm glad you got the old man's pants back," and I said, "Oh." It was open, the window was open, she heard a lot more than I do but...

Frank Gannon: Did you call him "The old man?"

General Hughes: Oh, we always did, "I gotta deal with the old man."

Frank Gannon: Was that Colonel Cushman...Colonel Cushman, he became the Commandant of the Marine Corps?

Frank Gannon: Well, and you've been supplying also some very interesting and new things about the visit to Puerto Rico and some of the things in the embassy there, so you're doing just great.

General Hughes: We had to go somewhere and because the President didn't want us...he wanted to do it sort of proper.

Frank Gannon: What was that reception like...

General Hughes: Oh, he had everybody turned out...I mean, it's just a large group of people that came out to greet us and it was...I don't really remember much about it except that we were 10-feet tall and bulletproof, you know that? He just had the cabinet out there and treated... it was a wonderful reception.

Frank Gannon: Did Vice President or Mrs. Nixon talk to Tricia or Julie from either Caracas or San Juan? Do you remember?

General Hughes: I don't think it was Caracas, I'm not sure, I know they did talk... Let me put it this way: I know they made sure that they called home, that home was notified, you know, that all was well.

Frank Gannon: They were safe, yeah.

General Hughes: Yeah, and, you know, I'm not...I think she did talk to them but I'm really not sure of that but I'd say okay because you could do it. It was possible to do that.

Jonathan Movroydis: The Kitchen Debate in Moscow, you have the picture on the other room. Could you tell us where you were with the President and Mrs....

General Hughes: Well, I was on the outside of that little group, I didn't get in right with him but it was funny that it was all set up as I remember. And Khrushchev was there with his...and he immediately took the initiative and he was pointing out how much better they were doing than we were, you know, and he kept talking and finally I remember that the Vice President said, "Well, let's face it, you don't know everything." And that was when he put his finger out, "You don't know everything," and that sort of ended it but they were going at it just not friendly at all and I remember that...the only thing I remember hearing with a raised voice was, "You don't know everything."

Jonathan Movroydis: Did you get to meet Khrushchev?

General Hughes: Oh, I didn't meet him, no, no. No, I was there but...

Jonathan Movroydis: You didn't meet him?

General Hughes: No.

Jonathan Movroydis: You had mentioned a story about Khrushchev earlier regarding the airplane.

General Hughes: The airplane? You want that?

Jonathan Movroydis: Sure.

General Hughes: Well, we were leaving Moscow and it was a beautiful, beautiful sunny day and a big crowd to see us off, Khrushchev and a lot of his senior people and we were flying in the President's first jet. I think the number was 287 but anyway, it was a brand new jet and when we all got on board... You know, the President and Mrs. Nixon never buckle the seat belt and I talked to them and I finally gave up. Anyway, so the pilot called me up, "Hey, come up." Or the guy came back and said, "The pilot would like to talk to you," so I went up into the cockpit and he said, "You think we could do a max takeoff?" and I said, "Well, I'm sure but let me ask him."

So I went back and I said, "Sir, we'd like to make a max takeoff to demonstrate what this airplane can do." He said, "What's that?" and I said, "Well, we're very light on gas so he's going to climb very steeply but you're gonna have to buckle up," so I made sure they buckle up and he said, "Yeah, yeah, let's do that." So we did, we got it...oh, I knew I can't remember the kid now, he was a great pilot, so he just gave it full power and then just stood it right on its tail and we went home almost vertically. And the ambassador told us later, he said that Khrushchev had a large chunk of his aviation guy's butt, "How come..." Because then the press plane behind, it was the same kind, they did the same thing and they rub their nose in and the ambassador called him and said, "Hey, you really rubbed your nose in."

Frank Gannon: What was your impression of Soviet Union? You've been there before?

General Hughes: No, I've never been there.

Frank Gannon: What was it...so you were the first because that was the first visit to Moscow by a vice president?

General Hughes: Well, I think so, yeah.

Frank Gannon: What was it like? Did you have a chance to look around?

General Hughes: Yes, we did. When we went to, you know, the Kremlin and...what that big square that they've got there?

Frank Gannon: Red Square.

General Hughes: Yeah. But we were well treated and we went to Mass there, it was on a Sunday and Rose and I were Catholic so we found a place to go to Mass. Everybody was very friendly but we knew that...you know, we lived at the embassy and but even at the embassy, you know, the ambassador told us, "We think we're secure but we don't know," you know? So you felt that you were being eavesdropped anyway.

Frank Gannon: Did you go out with him? He got up early one morning and walked out into the market and...

General Hughes: I didn't, he didn't take me, he got...no, Cushman was the one...you know, Cushman was on that trip, yeah, he didn't take me or he didn't take Cushman. You see, by this time we knew him a little bit but he went out with Sherwood, the senior Secret Service guy, it's just by himself and Sherwood.

Frank Gannon: What did you call him? Did you call him Mr. Vice President?

General Hughes: Mr. Vice President.

Frank Gannon: And what did he call you? Did he call you colonel or major or...?

General Hughes: Well, for a long time, I'd say for about the first six weeks, it was "Major" and then it warmed up, you know, we got to know each other and so it was the beginning of a wonderful friendship. But it was about...it took about a month where they realized what they could do with us or not do with this us...you know, that was it but...

Jonathan Movroydis: You want to move on to 1960?

Frank Gannon: Oh, yes.

Jonathan Movroydis: You were still the appointment secretary on the 1960 campaign, you called it the toughest assignment, traveling with the president, the toughest assignment you've had. Why was it so tough?

General Hughes: Well, at the first place it was...at the first place, you didn't have...we didn't have much sleep. You know, we're traveling and we're preparing and so forth, like Rose would be typing your speech and then it will all change, it was night and it was... We started in August and we kept going until we did the full 50 states and it really was...we had go pill, stop pills, and hold-what-you-got pills, I mean it was that way towards the end in particular and that was why he took us afterwards, he took us down to Key Biscayne and then sent for our wives afterwards. But it's just hard to describe it, for example, the worst thing about it was the train, when you were on a train.

Lynn Hall had asked me, he said...it was early in the morning and he gave me the time, he says, "You're gonna go past St. Mary's or something," St. Mary's I think he said," and they're all going to be out there, would you ask just be sure to get the boss out on the back so he can wave to them?" So that's when I found out about any information you get from a train guy, don't believe it because we started out and I was gonna get this done for Lynn so I told them...I thought I told the right people that we need to be warned before we're going there so I can get the Vice President out to wave.

When I was told and we were off by about 20 minutes because I would ask, "What time we got to go to St. Mary's?" And the guy...I said, "Look," and I said, "Give me the time so I had the old man ready." But before I could get to him to take him out, I heard this dah dah dah, and we was gone and oh, he was furious, you know, and Lynn wanted to kill me. But, you know, when you get on a train, you're just a victim because there was no communication between the passengers and...at that time, there was no communication. So I was given the time but the engineer, they didn't necessarily bother him. And the worst thing was fatigue, you could just never get enough sleep.

Frank Gannon: Was it during that campaign...when was the kicking? When were you kicked? Weren't you kicked and you were in the front seat of a car? When was that?

General Hughes: Oh yeah, that was up in Michigan.

Frank Gannon: During the campaign?

General Hughes: During the campaign, yeah. It was early evening and I was seated between the driver and Jack Sherwood and it was sort of under one of those windshields and top down and we were driving into the event which was about...he was making a speech, it was about dust and all of a sudden, I felt funny and I looked up and somebody had lobbed an egg and it hit right over my head and broke, it just came right on my head. And Mrs. Nixon about fell out of the car laughing and he was too but she was hilarious, so I wiped it out and of course it's congealed so then I was the joke of the group but I got Rose to give me a shampoo in that little sink on a train. The problem was that I got my head down there and she was soaking it and the water was a little hot and I yanked back and cut my head open at the top, so now I got soap, water, and blood and so I hate trains but that was...we were a week on the train and that was enough.

Frank Gannon: Was there a time, though, in a car where he kicked you...he kicked the back of the seat?

General Hughes: Oh, yeah.

Frank Gannon: Because you were talking about the fatigue and, you know, what it was like but that story has survived as an example of...

General Hughes: Has it?

Frank Gannon: Yes, of his ill temper and of the bad way he treated staff.

General Hughes: Oh, no. no. That was the only time it ever came close to that. I was tired and he was tired, everybody was, it was towards the end and we pulled in and something that was my responsibility was not right and he was furious and so he kicked the back of the seat and it just jolted me a little bit but that was it. There were nothing, you know, more about it but it got a lot of play but...

Frank Gannon: The two examples are given of his ill-temper and the bad way he treated staff and one is that and the other is in 1974 when he pushed Ron Ziegler in New Orleans, so the two examples are separated...of his bad temper, are separated by decades. What was he like as a boss? Was he...?

General Hughes: Oh, he was fine, he really...no, he was an easy boss, he wasn't... No, that's the only...I've seen him angry but, you know, the way he really worked was if I made a mistake, he chew Bob Finch out so Bob Finch would tell...he would chew me out or we pass on his act. He didn't like to give you, you know, the [inaudible 01:01:52]

and I thought if Finch did that, I had to go tell Finch. No, that's the only time I have seen him do show any violence and it just jolted me, that was all, yeah. It didn't hurt anything but I didn't realize that was still alive.

Frank Gannon: Another thing that's still alive is that he drank off and, you know, to excess, indeed. What were your...I mean, you for many, many...for decades had observed him up close, what was his relationship with alcohol?

General Hughes: Well, I can talk better about the vice-presidential days. He couldn't drink, if he had two drinks, he was no more. We were out in Saratoga...not in Saratoga, out in Colorado, we were staying at the...what's that big hotel?

Frank Gannon: Broadmoor.

General Hughes: Broadmoor, and he had a speech to make outside, it was an outside thing at a baseball game I think and it was a relaxing day and we had a drink and he had a second drink and it hit him, I could tell that and it was late, we had to get going. So he was, you know, fine, he was happy and so forth but I told him, I said, "I don't think you ought to make a speech," so he said, "I'm fine, I can make a speech." Well, I can finally convinced him that he shouldn't and he didn't but that's the only time I've ever seen him...including the election night, you know, that's not... He couldn't hold it, I've never seen him take more than two and as I say, most of the time it was just one when I saw him.

Frank Gannon: That's a remarkable story, he must really have respected and trusted you to accept that advice and not to give a speech, that's a major thing.

General Hughes: Well, I had to get...I raise my voice and he listened. I mean, he wasn't bad but it was enough to sort it a bit and...

Frank Gannon: Well, and he was under strict scrutiny that he could feel the...

General Hughes: And we got away with it fine and I forgotten how...I think I've said something about laryngitis and worked it out.

Frank Gannon: But he never...in your observation or experience, he never missed work or never showed up in the morning or...

General Hughes: Oh, no.

Frank Gannon: It was not a problem in any way, other than the fact that he had a limit?

General Hughes: Yeah, in my opinion and I'd swear to that anyway. No, I can't remember any time other than that that he did, that he showed it. No.

Frank Gannon: Another thing from the tapes is his language because when the tapes were released, there were so many expletives deleted. What was his language like?

General Hughes: Well, and the only time I ever heard him...the only time I ever heard him go that route was when he's vice president and we were somewhere, it may have been Chicago, I don't know but he lost his temper. I can't remember what did it but yes, he fill the air with some expletives but normally it was not his...that was not his forte. I've really only heard him use vulgar language once or twice but he did, I mean he could but I think he did more of it when he was president.. In other words, it wasn't something that you could expect from him and, you know, Mrs. Nixon was a real lady and I don't think she would have put up with it either.

But I know he could cut loose if he...but I've seen him do it, the whole time I've seen him doing maybe twice and it was usually something that just set him off.

Jonathan Movroydis: Were you there when he...you know, you campaign all 50 states, you were with him when he campaign in all 50 states and there was one instance where he banged his knee on the car and he got infected and he was sick in the hospital.

General Hughes: That was down in North Carolina and we used to use those Cadillac convertibles and we drove into the...it was a speech and I can almost remember the place but it was a town in North Carolina and it was twilight and he was in the back seat and when he got out... How did that go? I think I had to push my seat forward to get out. Anyway, it was an awkward situation and the door, the front door slammed and I couldn't get to it to stop it, I couldn't make it, but it slammed and it hit him right on the knee and I knew it hurt and he soldiered on through that speech and all of that.

But then the next day, he had a problem and we tried to get him to do something about it but he lasted about three or four days and then it was swelled up and everything and then we finally got Dr. Tkach who was the president physician. We got him to talk to the...we call him "The Boss" and he did it and he says, "We'll take him out to Walter Reed." Well, the old man, he was something else because he would say, "Okay..." The doctor would say, "We want you to keep your knee raised and elevated four hours a day," or something like that and he'd say, "Well, now look, maybe I could squeeze that

somehow and I'll take two hours now and then this evening two more but in the meantime, I can do this."

We weren't making any progress so I finally got one guy to listen to me and I said, "You got to tell him he might lose his leg," when he went in and that got him and he did. That was right before the speech, right before the first debate because when we got to the first debate, his collar was...he was paler and he had lost weight and his collar didn't fit and, of course, his beard, it was heavy and Kennedy came out looking like he stepped out of "Esquire" and, you know, the 12 days in the hospital had done that to him.

Jonathan Movroydis: Were you with him...after the first debate, were you with the Vice President?

General Hughes: Yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: Did he talk to you at all about his performance?

General Hughes: Well, no, he never...we just talked about it...yeah, we talked about it and I can't remember anything special other than he felt that he hadn't done that well but I don't remember anything specific. It's just that when you look at it now, you see that there's a balance of Kennedy who's, you know, he looked like he stepped out of a bandbox and the boss just...and people said that, you know, if you heard it on a radio, they tell you that he won but you see him and it wasn't that case.

Jonathan Movroydis: You had mentioned in the past that you have a pretty special story about election night with President Nixon, you and him went down to Mexico on election night and you...

General Hughes: No, it wasn't election night, it was election day. We finished the 50 states in Alaska and we came from Alaska to Chicago and Chicago was the night before election and we left Chicago and we got into...what was the name of that? It was the airport near his home.

Frank Gannon: Ontario.

General Hughes: Ontario, and it was about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning we got in there and there were 5,000 people waiting and he was beat to a pulp, I mean he just... And he almost cried really when I said, "I'm afraid we've got to win," but he sucked it up and did it. He called me and he said, I know, I promised there'd be nothing he said but it's here.

So he was really hurting but he sucked it up and went out and gave them a great big speech, a good speech and then he went home and we got up about 7:00 I think. He was at his home and we got up about 7:00 and went and voted and then when we came back, when we walked out of the voting booth or voting area, he said to me, "Get Sherwood and come with me. Send Mrs. Nixon home or send Pat home and then you and Sherwood come with me," so I said, "Okay."

So she went off and so we walked it over and I said, "Where are we going?" He said, "Well, I think it's time I showed some of you guys my hometown," and I said, "This is great." And so we had the driver was an old policeman from Los Angeles who drove him every time we came out and he had a car and so we had him...I forgotten his name, we had Sherwood, he had the President...the Vice President and me and he said, "I'm going to show you..." We voted, I've done my job and he said, "I'm gonna show you where I grew up and a few things that I did," so I said, "This is going to last about two minutes."

Well, we started and he took us around and showed us his high school and all of that and finally he said, "I'd like to buy you guys a drink," and then I said, "Well, yes, sir but you can't," and he said, "Why not?" I said, "Because it's election day." "Oh, yeah." And this is when he came to me and he said, "Let's go to Mexico," and so I said, "Oh, we'll look at the beautiful sunrise," you know, and he said, "No, no, no," he says, "Let's go to Mexico and we can get a drink." So I was talking to him and I realized, you know, I wouldn't get through and he said, "Just relax," and he said, "I'd like to drive." So he got in the seat and he drove about a mile and then that was enough, so we got him and I'm saying all the time, "Let me call Herb or let me call Bob." Bob Finch or Herb Klein.

And he said, "No, no," he said, "Just drive," and I said, "I've got to tell him where we are." "No," he said, "Just relax," so we kept...and then he fell asleep and then Sherwood fell asleep and by this time we're approaching...we're way out, we're down by where the that we stayed in later but we're on our way to Mexico and I had this thought. I was driving by this time and he was in the front seat and he'd doze off and then he come back and I had this thought. I woke him up and I said, "Well, sir, are you sure there's nothing in the Constitution that says if you're out of the country on the election day, you've got a problem?" He says, "Just drive." So okay, I drove. And so we came up to the...there we are...what's the town that...?

Frank Gannon: Tijuana.

General Hughes: Tijuana, we were there right there and the guy looked in, he says, "That's the Vice President," I said, "Yeah, that's the Vice President." And by this time, he woke up and he said, "Where's the best place to get some food?" so they said...he named the place, it was really a good restaurant. So we went in and we got there about

10:00, at 10:30 maybe and the place was closed but the proprietor came out and he saw who it was so immediately he opened it. So we went in and ordered food and margaritas and we were having a...by this time, we were all relaxed because we were there and I said, "Let me call Finch." No, he wouldn't let me do it. But then the next thing you know, the mayor came over so he came in and joined the party and then the press came over and the press said, "Could we take pictures?" and the boss said, "Sure, sure."

The press removed the liquor and then took the picture. The press did that, they removed it and took the pictures. So about 1:00 in the afternoon, I forgot, he said...and we had a great meal and we had a few drinks but it was just a...I'd say no more than two but we had a lot of food, so then he said, "Okay, Don, you can call Bob now." So I called Bob and I won't tell you what he called me but when I calmed him down and I told him we were in Mexico, there was silence for a long time. He says, "You're kidding," and I said, "No, I'm not kidding," so he didn't know what to do so I explained to him what had happened and I said, "I think I can keep you in the loop from now on."

So we started home about 1:00 I think and again, I was driving and I was speeding and I was pulled over by a policeman with a motorcycle and then he looked and he says, "Is that the Vice President?" and I said, "Yes, sir, it is." He said, "Well, everybody's looking for him," he said, "Hold it down, see you later," so I went around and I went on my way. It was interesting, you know, when you had a stoplight or something, people would look over and do a double-take who was in the other car. So we came up on San Bernardino...not San Bernardino, we came up on...

Jonathan Movroydis: San Clemente?

General Hughes: Not San Clemente, the one above it where the swallows come back.

Jonathan Movroydis: Oh, San Juan Capistrano.

General Hughes: Yeah, as we approach Capistrano, I was still driving and he said, "Hey, pull in here," and he said, "I'm gonna take...you're one of my only two Catholics on the staff," and he said, "Come on, I'll take you in here." So I drove in and we got out and we opened the wrong door and we went in and we stepped right into a classroom. Well, when you talked about flying nuns, we had a couple of them and so he made his respects and we went into the chapel and we were there about I'd say 10 minutes and we just sat...he and I just sat there about 10 minutes.

And finally he said, "Okay, let's go," so I went out and I was still driving but we approach the city limits and we've seen headlines and the headlines look like it wasn't too good,

beginning to look like the election wasn't too good. So anyway, we got to the hotel and I got him up to his room and then I figured I better get the hell out of here, they're going to kill me, Finch and Herb. So I went down to the massage place and I got a massage and I fell asleep and she let me stay. And so I woke up about an hour later and went upstairs, by this time, it was around 8:00 and I went up and took my beating and by this time, they realized I couldn't have called them. By this time, we also saw that we weren't going win but that was my day in Tijuana.

Frank Gannon: You mentioned that at one point during election day as you started out on this trip to Mexico, the American press found you and you evaded them. How did that happen?

General Hughes: Oh yeah, I forgot that. Well, after we started, the press picked us up and they were tailing us and as I say, our driver was a Los Angeles detective so he got to drive the car and they were tailing us quite closely until we came to a place where he had looked up ahead about four houses and there was an empty garage he could see and he whipped in there and we made it because the press went by and they missed us. I don't know whose house or whose garage we'd use but we backed out and we were on our own.

Jonathan Movroydis: After his defeat in 1960, do you have any recollections of the day after the election?

General Hughes: Well, the day after, I think we only stayed one day in Washington and then we went to Key Biscayne, the staff, all of us went down to get some...anyway, just to get some rest and about a week later, he called me and he said, "I want you to go over the airport and there'll be somebody there I want you to meet and bring back." I said, "Well, who is it?" and he said, "Well, you'll know. So he had...I mean my family, Bob Finch's family, and Herb's family, we're all on the...our wives were all on the plane and they stayed with us for another another week or 10 days and we were just... And during that time, of course, Jack Kennedy, President-Elect Kennedy came and visited and he started to conduct a little business having people...particularly good people who had made good contributions to the election, he would visit with them, bring them over for dinner or things like that. By this time, we were unwound and we were just recuperating.

Frank Gannon: How did he take the defeat?

General Hughes: I'd say he took it very well, I saw no weeping or...I don't know about Mrs. Nixon because I wasn't that close to her on but he took it pretty well. He said he had a good meeting with the President-Elect Kennedy and he was very pleased about

that. But all in all, I'd say, you know, he didn't go into blue funk, he just looked at it as something that he did the best he could, it was an effort that was tremendous.

Frank Gannon: On the election morning after you voted, you said when you finally came back, the headlines that you saw were not hopeful but, you know, the election was so close. That morning and sort of in the final week when the polls were closed, was the feeling that you could win or that you might win or would win?

General Hughes: The election night...but, of course, by the time we got back, the word was out that it looked bad and I know that...I remember one phone call that was made, Rose Woods' brother was the sheriff of Cook County and he called Rose and said, "Tell the boss that they're eating his lunch up there, they're stealing names from people who have been dead for centuries," it's an exaggeration and that was it, that's what we heard about Chicago and, you know, Illinois. So it was clear...I can't give you the time but certainly by the time we were talking, we had pretty well recognized that we weren't going to win.

Frank Gannon: Were you privy to the discussions about whether or not that he should demand a recount given that there was these irregularities in Illinois and in Texas?

General Hughes: No.

Frank Gannon: With President Eisenhower or the Senator Dirksen.

General Hughes: No, I was there but, you know, I didn't participate in that, it was Finch and Klein and he...and I know that he didn't want to try this recount or what he could do to challenge it, I guess. No, he figured that there was nothing to be gained about it for the good of the country.

Frank Gannon: A number of people sort of cut their teeth in that campaign, you mentioned Bob Haldeman was in the campaign, what was his nickname?

General Hughes: Oh, well, it wasn't a nickname, we called him the "frogman" because he was leaping ahead of us. He and I had were hooked up by walkie-talkies so he would be up ahead, he'd hop ahead and that's how they picked up the nickname.

Frank Gannon: Was Sandy Quinn in that campaign?

General Hughes: Not to my knowledge, he may have been but I didn't know him.

Frank Gannon: What was Bob Finch like because he was very close to Nixon?

General Hughes: Oh yeah, well, he was very close to me and he and I...in fact, I got a call to his wife right now, she's still alive and, in fact, I'll talk to her today. But what was the question?

Frank Gannon: Bob Finch.

General Hughes: Well, Finch was the most unusual guy. He went to Pepperdine University, he was very bright but he was...well, he couldn't wind his own watch, you know, he was very...if it wasn't politics, that wasn't his...but he ate and lived in the politics and the boss used to call him a political poet. He said, "He really..." and they would sit and talk for hours and Finch, he just was different but he really was very close to President Nixon and me. I mean, our families were very close.

Jonathan Movroydis: Herb Klein.

Frank Gannon: What about Herb Klein?

General Hughes: Oh, Herb. Well, Herb, he rounded the triangle out, yeah, the three of us are the families and we're together, we shared so much together and Herb, he's well-known particularly on the West Coast for what he was but I always admired him because you couldn't get him excited. He just didn't excite and the three of us plus Rose, we considered ourselves...well, we were and we worked the campaign really. I was responsible for transportation, airplanes and so forth, cars and so forth and Bob and Herb were of course into the political aspect of it but it was the four of us, we worked together very, very closely that entire election.

Frank Gannon: What about Mrs. Nixon during the campaign?

General Hughes: She was great, she really was. I never saw her lose her temper and there's plenty of times that it would have been appropriate but no, she was very calm and she took the loss hard, she shed a few tears but she was just a wonderful person, it's all I can say. I was privileged to give her eulogy at her funeral, I was honored that the boss asked me to do it.

Jonathan Movroydis: Upon leaving the administration, what was your next assignment?

General Hughes: Well, I was assigned to the air base right above San... Oh, boy. Apple Valley...

Frank Gannon: Apple Valley?

General Hughes: Yeah, Apple Valley, the George Air Force Base.

Jonathan Movroydis: George.

General Hughes: Georgia Air Force Base and it's near Apple Valley which was right above...what's that big town?

Jonathan Movroydis: Victorville?

General Hughes: Victorville is the little town, yeah, that's right. That's where I was assigned and then I broke my back...I lost an argument with an F-100 and crashed in the desert and broke my back, so I was recouping when he came up to do his book. I had a body cast on...

Jonathan Movroydis: This was for "Six Crises?"

General Hughes: This was for "Six Crises," yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: And did you help him out in terms...

General Hughes: Well, I was there, my wife and I would take the tapes from the bus, the unused tapes and take him out and have a meal with him and maybe have a drink with him and I let him write, I let him get bound the book and we'd go out every day and he was there about two weeks.

Jonathan Movroydis: Can you describe that taping process, how that...can you describe how that taping process worked?

General Hughes: Well, yeah. We would go out, my wife and I would go out and visit with him, take the tapes that he made that day and put them on a bus to go down to Los Angeles and then Rose would send the blank ones up so we could...see, it was sort of a

circle. She'd send up the tapes, we'd fill them up and then send them back to her, so that's the way it was...

Jonathan Movroydis: And she would transcribe them?

General Hughes: Well, yes, yes. Yeah.

Frank Gannon: Did you know John Davis? Was he there during...I think at some point in that Apple Valley. I haven't been able to find out much about him, I think he might have worked for AT&T but he was a local person who was...

General Hughes: The name is not familiar, the person we worked with...I didn't realize it until...I didn't realize that this Mr. Bass, Newt Bass, he was sort of the leader of the community, I mean, that's the best way I can put it. And when I went directly in and lined up a bungalow for him, well, then Newt found out about it and so he said, "That's not good," and that's when he took over. And the only thing he asked was if he could have dinner with us and so we had dinner with him the night before the boss left, we had dinner with him but he was a head man out there and he was a very good guy but whatever he said went, he said, "He don't want to be bothered," you won't be bothered and he wasn't.

Jonathan Movroydis: So what do you mean by took over, he found him a...

General Hughes: Yeah, yeah, my bungalow, that's no good, yeah. And he said...he goes out in that house in that grove and it was just wonderful for him, nobody got near it and he got the book finished.

Jonathan Movroydis: That was after, we're in the 1960s so he runs for governor of California in '62 and then in '63...he write "Six Crises" in '61, runs for governor in '62, then goes to New York in '63. During that period of time, I guess you were in Vietnam but you said you had dinner with him in New York.

General Hughes: Yeah, I had dinner with him in New York in '62 I think, I think that's what...I was over there in '61 and I'm sure that's when it was, yeah.

Frank Gannon: They were at 810 Fifth Avenue.

General Hughes: Right, yes. Yeah.

Frank Gannon: When did you find out that you were gonna rejoin the President at the White House in the administration?

General Hughes: I got a call from Bob Finch, I was in Germany and I had just been assigned to be the safety officer for Europe and when we settled in, I was really looking forward to four years in Germany and the next thing I know, we have election and he won and then the next day I got a call from Finch and he said, "The boss wants you to come back." So we went back, I was only there four months and then I went back and I worked up in New York on the...what they called...

Frank Gannon: The transition?

General Hughes: The transition team, yeah.

Frank Gannon: Did you vote for him for president in Germany?

General Hughes: Yeah, I voted for him in absentee, right.

Frank Gannon: I mean this is silly question because of the time but what did it feel like having a second chance to vote for him? You know, man you knew very well, unlikely to come back, the greatest and most unsuspected to come back in '68, you have a chance to vote him for president again?

General Hughes: Yeah, and Betty was even...you know, she was hard over and yeah, we stayed up that night, you know, that was something but that only lasted...I was there four months.

Jonathan Movroydis: When you became military assistant to the president, the office had expanded and you had included officers for the armed forces as well like a Marine Corps assistant, a naval assistant for the first time in history. Why did the administration decide to expand the military office during that time?

General Hughes: Well, you mean when he was president?

Jonathan Movroydis: When he's president, yes.

General Hughes: I didn't expand anything, we didn't expand anything. No, there's always been that all services have been represented including...I got the Coast Guard in too because they really were left out but I don't think that lasted too long, it was a personal thing but I'm not sure. But no, I took over as the military assistant to the president and then I selected...let's see, I got our friend Jack for the Marines and I got Vernon Coffey who's downstairs and Johnson said, "He was from the army," and the guy that was golden was...

Frank Gannon: Chuck Larson?

General Hughes: Yeah, Chuck Larson, he went very far, he wound up being the boss in the Pacific and he was twice superintendent of the Naval Academy and he was a water walker. He was a naval aviator and then he decided to change and whatnot, he became a submariner and then he had a job and then he was selected as a White House Fellow, so, you know, he was very unusual. I had him marked for the last guy in the world to leave on the job and he was the first one that asked to go, he was the first one that said, "I'd like to go back to the Navy," and so they got him back. He was excellent, a great guy.

Jonathan Movroydis: In the Nixon administration, how did the military office suit the needs of this particular president, a wartime president, someone who traveled often? And especially during a time...I mean, you guys had to work with Secret Service because the nation at the time was very, very divided. I guess what were the vision and mission of the military office in the Nixon administration?

General Hughes: Well, we actually being military, we had all services were represented but we handled...most of the things that we would handle would be operational or... Like, I had the airplanes, Navy had to...you know, we had the Sequoia then, the Navy had...the naval aide had the Sequoia and each one of them had a thing to do. I think Jack had the...I think he had the responsibility for getting the president into safety in the event of a nuclear war, we were responsible for moving the president. And as an aside, I don't think he should be there, I think that should be done by the military itself from the Pentagon because they've got much...but anyway that's neither here and there, it works, it works, so I think Larson had that responsibility for working it. And what was the other one, though?

Jonathan Movroydis: I was asking in general, you know, the duties of the military office especially under President Nixon given all the responsibilities and challenges that he had.

General Hughes: Well, let me see. Well, see, we would get into certain aspects. For example, I got a call from the superintendent of the Naval Academy and he said, "Hey,

I'd like to get a check with the president because I've got one of my...not cadet, but one of my midshipmen, they're suing me for..." What the heck? Damn it. "They're suing me for the requirement to go to church."

Jonathan Movroydis: Okay.

General Hughes: Yeah, so he said, "They're suing me because of the compulsory church attendance right." So I called up John Mitchell when he was the attorney general and he said, "Okay, I'll take it up with the boss," so then he took it up and the word came back to me, "Fight it, we're going to lose but fight it," so that's what we did and we lost. Actually, it's a real tough thing, I can remember the chapel they called it up there, it's really a cathedral, holds about 1,200 and it was compulsory chapel, they had the choir and all of that and every seat was filled. I was in there not too long ago for a service and there were 30 of us up in the corner over here and the rest of it's all... But yeah, things like that that would come up, I would channel it to the right place and then get your guidance on it.

Jonathan Movroydis: There's a series of big events that you attended with the President, among them as monumental as the Apollo 11 moon landing.

General Hughes: The what? I'm sorry.

Jonathan Movroydis: The moon landing. Or I'm sorry, the return from the moon, on the USS Hornet observing that. Could you touch upon that a little bit?

Frank Gannon: Or you could maybe begin with the launch?

General Hughes: We went down and saw the launch and then we came back and waited a couple of days, I think, and then we started on a trip around the world and we went to Hawaii and then to Guam and then from Guam, we went out to the carrier and we were on the carrier that morning, we had Borman and he was in our party. Borman, he was the astronaut, Frank Borman and, you know, we were there that morning so we would wait for it and I tell you, I was at a thrill when I heard that sonic boom and then from out of the clouds...you hold your breath, then there's this big shoot comes out of the clouds and they landed and they went over and fished them out and brought them back and then they went immediately into confinement. You know, I think they were like a van, like a RV with no wheels and they kept them there for I think two weeks or so because they weren't sure what they were bringing back from the moon, some disease or that sort of thing but that was a thrill of my life and it was to see that thing happen.

Jonathan Movroydis: Did you see the president talking with them when they were in the quarantine?

General Hughes: Oh, yeah he talked to...oh yes, yeah, there should be pictures of that but he would bent down talking to them and yeah.

Frank Gannon: Have you been to a launch before for one of the earlier Apollos or was that the first time you saw a...

General Hughes: No, I think I'd seen one before, I forgotten.

Frank Gannon: It's a very impressive thing.

General Hughes: Oh yes, it really is and maybe it was a...I'm not sure, I'm not sure but it was good to see this launch and this movie they have now, "The First Man," they don't even cover that. They show you the launch but they don't show you the recovery which was unbelievable.

Jonathan Movroydis: Did you have a lot of interaction with Frank Borman? You'd mentioned him a little bit earlier.

General Hughes: No, I didn't know him until that day and he showed up in Guam and he joined...I think he came out on a Hornet but... Anyway, he was there and so the three of us: Borman...well, there was four, the Secret Service guy, and we've hooked up and then went out, we took the helicopter out to the Hornet to wait for the recovery. That was great, it really was.

Frank Gannon: It was on Guam that President Nixon announced what became known as the Guam Doctrine, it's a foreign policy strategy. Were you aware of that at the time?

General Hughes: No, I wasn't, I was too busy getting the rest of us...you know, the rest of the trip lined up. That was a great trip.

Jonathan Movroydis: What was the most challenging trip you worked on in the administration?

General Hughes: The what?

Jonathan Movroydis: During the presidency, during Nixon's presidency, what was the most challenging trip you've worked on?

General Hughes: Well, I have to say by far the campaign as a whole.

Jonathan Movroydis: During the '70s?

General Hughes: The one we lost.

Jonathan Movroydis: Oh, not the '60s but in the White House, during the Nixon administration, when Nixon was president, was there particularly challenging foreign trip?

General Hughes: Well, of course, that was...I mean, when you're going all the way around the world, yes, yeah. Because we went...let me see if I could remember, we went to Hawaii, Guam, and then I think it was Thailand and...

Frank Gannon: He went to Vietnam I think.

General Hughes: He went to Vietnam, yeah, and then Thailand...

Frank Gannon: Were you involved at all of the Vietnam stop? Mrs. Nixon on that trip became the first First Lady to go into a combat zone, Gene Boyer flew her up in the helicopter to the hospital.

General Hughes: Yeah, yeah, I was with her on that, yeah.

Frank Gannon: Oh, you were?

General Hughes: Oh, yeah.

Frank Gannon: What do you remember of that?

General Hughes: Well, that was a...actually, it was just that simple, we took her in and a lot of people weren't happy about that because of...and off the record if you want maybe but she almost lost it that day. You know, when the President is involved, he gets the attention and Mrs. Nixon sometimes was sort of left out, you know, they're not

intentionally but the focus was somewhere else and this time she had a little time and she was walking and Gene Boyer saw that she was headed right for the rotor and he got her. A lot of people don't know that but she came very close to...

Frank Gannon: Because there's a picture and we've often wondered what that picture was where he's sort of going towards her and the rotors are going right above.

General Hughes: Yeah. Well, she was just wandering, you know, and there's the noise and the chopper was moving...no, it's not moving but the engine was running and it's a noisy place and she was just sort of wandering and, again, the attention was focused on the boss and Gene picked it up.

Frank Gannon: My understanding on that trip too was that she was supposed to go to a school and then to a hospital to see our wounded men and I don't know whether she blew the school off but she said she wanted to spend the time at the hospital and there are those films and photographs of her there but she stopped and she would take messages...she would get the messages from the wounded and she would send it.

General Hughes: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Frank Gannon: Were you with her on that?

General Hughes: No, I'm but I imagine the Navy guy would be. I think he may have been with her on that trip. I mean on that leg of it, yeah, I think so.

Frank Gannon: Was that when you went on...do you go on to Romania on that trip and...Warsaw and Romania?

General Hughes: We went to India, I think we went from from Thailand to... I know we went to Romania but I think we had a stop in India too and another place. I think we did because we slept by the swimming pool because there was no air conditioning. Where would that be? What's next to India?

Jonathan Movroydis: Pakistan?

Frank Gannon: Oh, Pakistan.

General Hughes: Pakistan, yes, Pakistan, yeah, yeah. India, Pakistan, Romania I think and then the Pope.

Frank Gannon: Yes, because you are Catholic, did you get a chance to meet the Pope or did the President make any arrangements for you?

General Hughes: Yes, every time. I've got three medals in there, I got one...yeah, and the last one, it was...let's see. The first one was...

Frank Gannon: Pius?

General Hughes: Oh hell, I forgotten but they're over there and yeah, I went every time.

Frank Gannon: Which was the best Pope?

General Hughes: Well, I think John the Second I think. You know, he rattled a cage a lot but not enough.

Frank Gannon: On that trip where you were in Pakistan and the President used President Yahya Khan as a conduit to Peking and then in Romania, he used Ceausescu a conduit. So were you aware of any of that going on on those trips because that...

General Hughes: No, I was busy, you know, worrying about the mundane things, yeah. He was doing his own thing with Kissinger.

Jonathan Movroydis: But you were...as head of the military office, you prepared the trip to China in '72?

General Hughes: Yeah, well, that was my last thing.

Jonathan Movroydis: Your last thing?

General Hughes: Yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: Did you go on both the July and October trips?

General Hughes: No, I didn't, I did the July trip and then...no, it wasn't July, it was October, we went to...with Kissinger, we went over and did the advance, sort of. We were there...it was supposed to be a week but we wound out for about 10 days. It was a tremendous that we were...you know, that's a big thing with Mao Zedong and...

Jonathan Movroydis: Zhou Enlai?

General Hughes: Yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: I'm sorry? Who's with you on the trip? Henry Kissinger?

General Hughes: It was Kissinger and...I just mentioned his name a little while ago.

Jonathan Movroydis: Winston Lord?

General Hughes: Winston Lord...let me see who else. Winston Lord, I think he was...they were the only ones I can think of.

Jonathan Movroydis: Dwight Chapin, maybe?

General Hughes: Oh, Dwight, yeah, Dwight, and then we had some communication guys and then I also had...who did I have with me? I think I had both...I think I may had all three aides, I'm not sure. I know we had Vernon Coffey and I know we had the one that I just mentioned...

Jonathan Movroydis: Chuck Larson?

General Hughes: Yeah, and I think there are three of them.

Jonathan Movroydis: So, Zhou Enlai has given you...

General Hughes: Yeah, he gave it to us in the name of Mao Zedong, you know, but Kissinger wanted...he wanted that one. He got a vase, yeah, I'm not going give it to you, I want that?

Frank Gannon: How do you meet Zhou Enlai and what was what impression...?

General Hughes: Yeah, he was good, he was just a a real gentleman. I mean, that's all I can say, I didn't have that much to do with him but we had a good reception and that was a wonderful visit.

Frank Gannon: Did you smoke? Did you smoke cigarettes?

General Hughes: I quit back in 1951 I think.

Frank Gannon: The Chinese smoked all the time, didn't they?

General Hughes: Well, they seem to, yeah. Well, I know you see a lot of it but no, I gave it up a long time ago but one of the interesting of the small things...we got the time?

Jonathan Movroydis: Yeah.

General Hughes: One of the small things, our group was about 8 or 10 people and we got our first morning breakfast. We went over and sat down, everybody had an egg meal or an egg dish. I didn't and I hate eggs. Now, how they found out about that, I'll never know but I sat down and mine was egg-less and I thought that was pretty sharp, yeah.

Frank Gannon: You know how they found out, the night before in your room and you said, "I hope I don't get eggs," and they were listening.

General Hughes: Yeah, probably but it was funny, I looked down and everybody else got it. That was a good trip, a very good trip.

Jonathan Movroydis: What was working with Henry Kissinger like?

General Hughes: Well, working with him was a...and he and I are great friends, we fought like cats and dogs because he couldn't understand why he couldn't...when he went to New York, for example, which he did frequently, he couldn't understand why he could just order an airplane that go to New York and go out and get in it and go. He and I tangled on it at several times because he saw what the president did, the president got in the airplane, we closed the door and left. Well, he didn't like that so he would say he wants to go to New York at 7:00, so the pilot...I sent him on the JetStar all the time because he had to ride with security. Anyway, he expected to do that so he walks out of

the door at 7:00, he's going to go at 7:00. Well, New York is a pretty busy place and the only one they do that for is the president and he couldn't buy that and so he would raise all kinds of hell with the pilots because he had to wait sometimes two hours because, you know, it would clog up there. If I'm talking too much...

Jonathan Movroydis: No, it's perfect, this is great.

General Hughes: And I'd say I really like him and respect him very much but he and I did have a little furor. Anyway, this one time he was two hours late and the traffic at New York was stacked up so they were up in the stack working their way down and Henry had a new assistant, I forgotten who it was but it's some new guy. And he kept bothering us, you know, "I need you to get down, you've got to get down," and the pilot kept working his way down. So finally after...I guess he was beaten up by this kid, he sent him up to the cockpit and listen to him but then he went back and pretty soon he come up to me and he says, "Henry wants to use the code word," and I said, "Code word?"

He said, "Yeah," and I said, "Good, well, that's the pilot." He said to the pilot, "Henry wants to use the code word," the kid then, "Well, tell Henry the only code word I know right now is emergency and I'm a son of a bitch if I'm going to use that." I'll never forget that but no, we used to argue about it because he never could get there on time and when he did, he expected to go. Well, you can't do that but we were very good friends and I just respect him very much.

Jonathan Movroydis: What are your impressions of Al Haig, Alexander Haig?

General Hughes: I didn't know Al all that well, he was about four years behind me at West Point. I didn't know him socially at all. Occasionally, he would come over and have a cup of coffee with me and smoke his...he always smoked cigarettes and when Henry would get on his back, I guess he'd come over and sit and take some of it out on me, he want some sympathy. But no, I didn't know him all that well. He had an excellent record in the army, I know that, but I didn't know him as a person very well.

Jonathan Movroydis: How about Vice President Agnew?

General Hughes: Who?

Jonathan Movroydis: Vice President Agnew.

General Hughes: That was a strange one too, I had really nothing to do...I think I only had one call with him...his aide was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, forgotten his name but I didn't have much to do with him at all.

Jonathan Movroydis: Ron Ziegler.

General Hughes: Oh, Ron, well, he was a real... He and I tangled a lot initially but all of a sudden, we found ourselves being good friends. Really, I thought he did a good job. He had a tough job and, of course, I could help him...I mean we could help him a lot on certain little things and did but he was a little demanding in what he wanted. But I could tell you there was a...was it that one? I don't think you can use this for anything but when we first got out to Key Biscayne...not Key Biscayne.

Jonathan Movroydis: San Clemente.

General Hughes: San Clemente, you know, we used to have the press meetings all outside and our speeches, they're meeting at the outside and we always had a nasty note from Haldeman because the wind would would make a noise, and he beat me on the head about that and I'd beat it on WHCA. Anyway, this one time we went out there and the old man would...the President would get upset about it because you came and you fix it. So this one time we went out and WHCA had a new guy, a new sergeant and we came out and we're going to do whatever it was, a presentation or something and the wind was whistling and whistling.

And so the guy running the place...running the WHCA, he was going crazy and they finally said, "Well, we got a new guy, he is new in business but maybe he can help because he's got that kind of stuff." So we went over and we got this sergeant in civilian clothes and he came over and he looked at it and he said, "Oh, well." He took his wallet out and he pulled a condom out of his wallet and he unscrewed the hedge of this...and he put the condom on it and put it in, it worked like a champ. I'll never forget that, that was one that goes down in history.

Jonathan Movroydis: John Ehrlichman?

General Hughes: Oh yeah, John, I didn't know much..I knew him from...Haldeman introduced him to the Vice President...he showed up at the end of the Vice President's term and I met him a few times and that was when Haldeman was showing him the ropes about how the frogmen work and so forth but I didn't know him intimately. I didn't know him.

Jonathan Movroydis: How about Bob Haldeman?

General Hughes: Well, Bob and I were...at one time, we were very, very good friends and it kind of cooled off a little bit but I admired the way he ran his job, I thought he was excellent but he and I were...we got to be very close on the Vice President's staff. It cooled off considerably when we were there but the thing was Bob knew that if Rose or Bob Finch wanted to see...or Herb wanted to see the boss, we're gonna see him but that's the way it was. It cooled off considerably because he had a tough job, no two ways about it but I always consider him a good friend but that's about all I can say.

Jonathan Movroydis: The President appointed you the coordinator for the POW/MIA. What was your role and what was...I guess what was President Nixon's position on that issue?

General Hughes: Well, of course, his position was, to my knowledge, was "Let's get them out" or "We want to get him back." Anyway, they weren't really organized although they did have an organization but a lot of people were just didn't bother with that, they would come to the White House. And I just suddenly found myself with the job and what it amounted to is I arranged for any of the families to make a call to the White House, you know, "No charge on that, just called and I would take any of the calls day or night or my office would," so that we could get the handle on it because they were calling other people, like, they call Haig and so forth.

So it became an organization and I worked with several of the leaders of it and I'm going to have a problem with the names now but we found out that most of them were great. They understood what was going on that you can't just go get them out, some were not, some just... Well, I'll give you an example and strangely enough, her name was Mrs. Hughes and she would send...you know, they were allowed to send boxes like a shoe box or something a month to the...they were allowed to send that. Well, every time she sent one to her husband, she sent one to the president and she would call me all times day and night and she always opened it up with, "Well, Col. Hughes we both know that the President is a no good SOB and let's take it from there,"

Anyway, she called up one night and she said that she had just bought a new house and they have closed on the old house and left the new house, she didn't realize it but the sewage wasn't hooked up and wouldn't be for over the weekend or something like that. So I said, "Okay, I'll see what I can do," so I checked in...gosh, she was in Representative Jerry Ford's district. Well, I knew him so well from the years that I was with the Vice President. In fact, he insisted that I call him Jerry. So I called him up, I told him the story, and he said, "I'll call you back."

So he called me back about two hours later and he says, "It's all set, they're on the job right now." So I called Mrs. Hughes and told her, she said thank you. The next day or the next trip, a box arrived again. It didn't make any difference, yes. She was one of the ones that was incorrigible, you just could not do anything...please don't use these names if you're going to do it but I keep going to do it but most of them I found were understanding, very few were not.

Jonathan Movroydis: These are the POW wives?

General Hughes: Yeah, the wives and we arranged for transportation for them. For example, I arranged to have...if there was space available on a plane that could take passengers, they had a priority so that if there are any space, they could be...that anyone to use it, they could do it. Those are the two things that come out and they beat up on...they tried to get Kissinger and Al Haig intercepted there but I was the one that was really responsible for it. I just picked it up, I didn't look for it and I worked with the organization and the president and secretary and the staff of that organization, they were very understanding and very helpful to ease some of the people who were just unreasonable, nothing you could...you couldn't satisfy them. But most of them were fine and they knew that we were doing everything we could.

Jonathan Movroydis: I recall the administration more than the previous administration doing more to raise awareness on the POW issue including encouraging the distribution of those POW bracelets. Do you recall anything like that?

General Hughes: Yeah, just do it again. I know the bracelets, yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: Yeah, I was just saying is that I recall the Nixon administration more than the previous administrations promoting awareness on POW issue including encouraging the distribution of the POW bracelet.

General Hughes: Yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: Were you a part of any of those efforts?

General Hughes: Well, just that I was aware of it and I worked with the president of the organization and the secretary so I was involved in that way, there were things that they'd asked me to do that I could do and I did and I had a very good working deal or arrangement with the officers of that organization. In fact, they gave me a going away luncheon but everything that could have possibly been done had been done for that, yet there are certain things you just couldn't do.

Frank Gannon: Later on after they returned in '73, the spring of '73, did you get to meet any of them, any of the returning POWs?

General Hughes: Well, as a matter of fact, I was back in for another long tour in Vietnam, it was a 15-month tour and I was down in the Philippines which was one of my jobs and they were coming home that day. The first loads were coming in and I was there when they did. What was your question?

Frank Gannon: Did you get to meet any of the POWs when they were returned? You were literally present when they returned, was that at Clarke?

General Hughes: Yes, that was at Clarke. I was there but I didn't go...they'd asked us not to go near them because...but we were there and I could wave to them and so forth, that's when they first came in. But if you got a minute and I'll share another one with you but at Clarke, there was a colonel who looked like a cadaver. He was totally bald with sunken cheeks and he really looked like death itself and he was a swinger, he was not, he was a bachelor, he was a great guy but he just looked terrible. And he was in charge of personnel so he got to go with the airplane, he would have to pick them up. Well, when he came back, of course, there's a big crowd around, he came off first and the crowd goes, "Oh." Poor guy, he just struck over the dead one. They look and, "Oh, no," people thought that was the result of his torture. But anyway, it was a very good job but it just was one of those frustrating things that you couldn't do what...you might not be able to do what you wanted to do with it and I think that we did a hell of a job.

Jonathan Movroydis: In the days around Watergate and the President's subsequent resignation, did you have any correspondence with him during that period?

General Hughes: No, I didn't, not then. Let's see, I had gone. I came with him when he first came in and then I had a...the job was a good one, I liked it very much but I had three years of it. If I stayed any more, I'd be promoted again probably but if I stayed until he left or I stayed too much longer, if I went back to the Air Force, they weren't going to do anything for me and I felt that I had done all I could really do and I just had to make a choice. This is before Watergate and I went to the President and I told him that I'd like to leave and we talked a bit about it and so forth.

And so then he said, "Okay, if you really want to go," he said, "That's okay," and I said, "I'll get you a good replacement." And it almost cost me my wife..military aviation was my life and I couldn't stay out of it any longer and do any good when I went back. I mean, they'd give me a job on some mountain or something like that so I went back and

my penance was 15 months in Vietnam but it was a war so it was good but no, that's about all I can say on it.

Jonathan Movroydis: Going back to POWs for a second, did you attend the POWs dinner in 1973?

General Hughes: No, I was in...again, I was in Vietnam and I didn't. I was just so well pleased but I didn't.

Frank Gannon: Did you have a leave taking? Did you actually...you talked to him about whether...to the President whether you would leave or not, was there actual ceremony...not a ceremony but did you say goodbye to him then?

General Hughes: Oh, sure, sure, I think there's a picture out there. I left in July or June, I forgotten exactly when I left but it was all fine and then we were very close afterwards when I retired because he was in New Jersey and I was about 30 miles away in Newburgh, so I'd see him at least once a month.

Frank Gannon: Where were you when you heard...when he resigned, when you heard when he gave the speech on August 8th of '74?

General Hughes: Oh, let me see, August of '74. I would have...in '72, I've been over there, I think. Let's see, I was at...'74, '69. That was '74, that would...no, '81, so I would have been commanding 9th Air Force here. 9th Air Force down at North Carolina, that's where I was when I heard that speech.

Frank Gannon: Did you watch the next day when he left and he spoke to the staff in the East Room...

General Hughes: Yeah.

Jonathan Movroydis: What were your...?

General Hughes: Well, it got a little teary because it didn't have to happen in my opinion. You know, one of my best friends had a problem. Well, I saw him quite a bit afterwards, I used to...see, it was just a short hop down from where I was and...

Frank Gannon: Did you come out to San Clemente? Did you see him out there after the resignation and before the move to New York?

General Hughes: No, no. No, I didn't go out there. That was probably when I was overseas I think, I'm not sure but no, I saw him quite a bit when I was in Newburgh, when I was living back in Newberg because was only about 30 miles, 30, 40 miles.

Jonathan Movroydis: Do you remember the last time you saw President Nixon and what you talked about?

General Hughes: The last time I saw him...when the heck was it? When did he die?

Jonathan Movroydis: '94.

Frank Gannon: April of '94.

General Hughes: '94. All I know is I saw him in...in that period, I'd see him about once a month usually, I just drive down and see him and occasionally he'd have a dinner or something and invite us down but I didn't see him all that much but I did see him occasionally.

Frank Gannon: You mentioned then you gave eulogy for Mrs. Nixon, can you describe how he asked you to do that and how you wrote it?

General Hughes: Would you like a copy of it?

Frank Gannon: Yes.

General Hughes: All right, I've got one. Yeah, he called me and asked me if I would do it.

Frank Gannon: Did you know she was sick?

General Hughes: Yes, I know it and so he called me and said that he'd like me to do it and it was a privilege. I'll give you a copy of it if you like it. It was a real honor to do it.

Frank Gannon: What was it like both to write and then to...we're talking about an emotional thing, to deliver eulogy for somebody you had known so well, you know, from a young...both young ages and what all she'd gone through?

General Hughes: Well, I had my wife with me and she keeps me pretty well on the straight lane but I did... It was very, very emotional because Billy Graham, he was running the show and he and I had met before and over the time I gave the speech, I was pretty much into it. Anyway, it was really...I was the first one to give the eulogy and the other...there were three or four more and they did it later right afterwards.

Frank Gannon: Well, that was the...the photographs and the films of her funeral is very hard to watch because the president broke down.

General Hughes: He did.

Frank Gannon: And that was...did you see that before you gave your eulogy because it's hard to watch it now without breaking down?

General Hughes: I didn't but when I went back, he was there and he was crying and I put my hand on his shoulder and I started... Because she and I went through a lot together, I'll never forget the back of that automobile when she's nursing this foreign minister's wife, keeping her from going hysterical which she did. You guys are really tapping the reservoir.

Frank Gannon: Well, it's a very deep reservoir.

General Hughes: Well, it was a lot, it was unusual. You know, when you think about it, I just don't know...to this day, I don't really know how I got selected but I didn't argue.

Frank Gannon: You mention did you brought Jack in, Jack Brennan, as the Marine aide. Did you know...did he just come up through the ranks of the Corps to you or did he...

General Hughes: No, no, no, what I did was I called all the services and asked them to send over four or five of their best guys for the job and then I just would screen them and, of course, the Navy guy, he careened right to the top initially and then Vern Coffee just flat out of...just fresh out of combat and Jack Brennan, when I read his, it was great and, in fact, he would have had a very good career in the Marines. And then who else? The Navy guy...the second Navy guy we picked was a mistake, I didn't realize it but he was a mistake so we had to...he resigned, I mean, he left. The Marines, Jack, of course,

was not going to leave and didn't, as we know how the Navy guy rotated through. That's all I can do on that one.

Jonathan Movroydis: I guess, an overall impression of both president and Mrs. Nixon and what kind of people they were, you knew them personally, what kind of people were they?

General Hughes: Well, they were like a very ordinary couple. I mean, the family was good, the family was close, the kids were well raised. They didn't attempt to pull rank or anything on me and all of that, they were a very good and close family. But it's like the same as being an Air Force wife or husband, he got things that make you...you have to sacrifice to do it because you have to...you find that the mother is the one that's going to really keep things straight and that was certainly the way, in my opinion, and it applies to the Nixons. I never saw...they were always good kids and Mrs. Nixon did that, Pat Nixon did that.

And I can remember that the kids did...particularly when we fly commercial, I always bought my flying jacket which I would put it on, instead I keep my other coat on. Well, if we ran into a turbulence, the kids would get scared so they'd want my jacket, I'd go get my jacket and put it down and sit between them and hold their hands and we made it but no, I was very close to them. Tricia is a little harder to get close to than...but I rate them very high as a family, recognizing the pressures that were on the President and Mrs. Nixon but she managed to keep it so nobody was spoiled. I gave her a great credit particularly since she raised me too, I mean, she's the that really helped me. Sometimes I thought that she was my aide... she was great.

Frank Gannon: We have a lot of young visitors to the library for whom Nixon is ancient history. What do you think...what would you want a young person or any person to know about Richard Nixon? What should they know?

General Hughes: Boy, that's a good question. What should they know? It's so hard to get by the bad one, you know, it's just hard to do unless you know him personally and, you know...

Frank Gannon: How do you explain the bad one?

General Hughes: Well, I would...this is just me. You start with people like Colson and the idiot from Poughkeepsie, what's his name? The guy that holds his hands on candles?

Frank Gannon: Liddy.

General Hughes: Liddy. When you get people like that, every time I used to...if I had to shake hands with Colson, I'd go wash. I disliked him, it was people like him that were able to get...in my opinion, that were able to have the freedom to do the things that he did, in my opinion. And, unfortunately, I gladly put Ehrlichman in that place. For Bob, I just think he was a very bright guy and he got the wrong guys around him and that's about the only way I can put it. It was a mistake, he made a bad mistake, a very, very bad mistake but I can't help but think if he had at least a couple of...well, he had Rose but then Rose was moved aside.

And Finch left, Klein left, who was the other one? I left. And so we didn't have that in the old... I always prefer the Vice Presidential days, it was like a family, it really was. That's about the only way I can put it. And Finch and Klein would never go down that ride, that is true, but when you get people like the ones I mentioned, you're going to have that and, unfortunately, he listened to them, he listened to them.

Frank Gannon: Putting that aside because I think that's the explanation, considering his end...and everybody knows that, I mean even the people who don't know anything about him know Watergate but considering his accomplishments and considering his intellect and all those things, again, what should people know about Richard Nixon?

General Hughes: Oh, that's a tough one, where do I go?

Jonathan Movroydis: Is there a particular attribute of his during your time with him that you feel as if that's not really that known?

General Hughes: That's a good one. I think that he...I'm going try to say this. I think that he really wasn't comfortable in what he's done and I think... Like, a simple thing like I watched him before he's going to make a bigger speech and he sort of put it all together and then he walked out with the...you know, yeah. But I think given his druthers, deep down he'd rather not be doing that but he had a gift up here that made him...that he just lived up to it.

I don't really have an answer, I just can always remember that I thought, "There's somebody that really would prefer to do something else because he really..." It's like if the one who was really bad, I would've take a couple of deep breaths before I got into the airplane, I'd much rather doing that and that's not... I'm not making much sense on that but I like...you know, he meant so much to me because he's a very kind person, at least he always was to anybody I knew that knew him, at least when I was there. And so, you know, you really can't get a good grip on it when he's president because...

Frank Gannon: You're exactly right and the thing that's fascinated me and a lot of people, he was ill-suited to the profession he chose.

General Hughes: Yeah. Well, there you go.

Frank Gannon: He was an intellectual, he wasn't a glad-hander, he wasn't an instinctive politician.

General Hughes: As I said, I could see him take those breaths.

Frank Gannon: Yeah, no, he had to work in and goose himself...or not goose himself up but to screw himself up to do this thing.

General Hughes: That's the way I feel and he was good at it.

Frank Gannon: And I was interested at one point, the reporters I think in the '60 campaign asked Mrs. Nixon about why she went through things with him and she said, "I love him and I believed in him," and they had...I think they had a sense of a mission that it wasn't something they really wanted but it was something... They had a mission because he wasn't in it for the money, he wasn't in it for the ego, but what drove him?

General Hughes: I can only describe it in the same way, I guess, that he'd rather be doing something else but it can't happen because he's not built that way. There was another and maybe if I think of it, I'll call you and tell you but I just have him in the highest regard. He did a wrong thing, there's no question about it but he had help, he had a lot of help of... In my opinion, if Klein and Rose and...it would never have happened. If it's different people, it would never have happened and that's my opinion.

Frank Gannon: One last question along these lines. His quality of resilience, he knew defeat but he always came back, he never gave up and he never quit, as he said, "I'm not a quitter." I mean, you had to observe that that he just picked himself up and even after he resigned and got very sick and almost died, when he could have just disappeared, become a private citizen, he continued to work and to write and to advise presidents. What was the basis of that physical resilience?

General Hughes: Well, that's a lot to get your arms around. I just can't say it any better, I agree that he... I just can't get anything more out than that. I know him...or I knew him so well, how he handled people and...I'm not making any sense but because I'm too

close to it, I just can't...you know, it's unfair to say, "Well, those were the good guys and then these other guys had been there," but it's just my sense that he just got hooked up with the wrong crowd later and that's all I can say to it.

That's not good but that's just the way I feel, I feel very badly. And I'm proud of him, I've seen him, you know, come back from getting his butt kicked and he did all right. If I think of something else...I want a different way to say it, I can't, but I still say deep down I think he'd rather been doing something else but he couldn't because his whole makeup was laid out for him.

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