

**Writing For 37:  
White House Speechwriters  
Remember Writing For Richard Nixon  
Nixon Legacy Forum  
George Washington University  
April 11, 2011**

“Writing for 37,” features five distinguished wordsmiths who began working with Richard Nixon on his 1968 campaign, and were part of the original White House staff that collaborated with the 37th President on his major speeches and articulated his transformative domestic and foreign policy messages. The participants included Pat Buchanan, William Gavin, Ken Khachigian, and Ray Price. Lee Heubner, Deputy Director of the Research and Writing Staff in the Nixon White House and current professor of communications at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, moderated the forum; Geoff Shepard, former White House Domestic Council Associate Director and now coordinator of the Legacy forums, gave welcoming remarks. The discussion encompassed President Nixon’s major speeches including his keynote remarks at the 1968 Republican National Convention in Miami, the First Inaugural Address, his appeal to the Silent Majority, and the 1971 and 1974 State of the Union Addresses.

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## Panelists

**Raymond K. Price:** Ray Price graduated from Yale University in 1951. He served in the Navy during the Korean War and worked for several journalistic publications before joining Nixon’s campaign staff in 1967 as a speechwriter. He was the White House Director of Speechwriting from 1970-1973, overseeing the Research and Writing Office during that time

and famously known for drafting Nixon's first and last speeches as President. He died in 2019.

**Patrick J. Buchanan:** Pat Buchanan is a graduate of Georgetown University and the Columbia University School of Journalism before joining the editorial staff of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat at the age of 23. A staunch conservative, he joined Richard Nixon's staff in 1965 during the 'comeback years.' He was Special Assistant to the President from 1969-1974, working as a speechwriter. He was later the White House Communications Director for President Reagan from 1985-1987. Following this, he was a three-time presidential candidate, running in 1992, 1996, and 2000. He is the author of 14 books and resides in McLean, Virginia.

**William J. Gavin:** Bill Gavin, trained as a schoolteacher, joined the Nixon campaign staff as a speechwriter in 1968 after writing a fan letter to Nixon urging him to run for President. His time as a speechwriter in the Nixon Administration began his thirty-plus year career in the profession, writing for then-candidate Ronald Reagan, Senator James Buckley of New York, and House Republican leader Bob Michel of Illinois in addition to authoring four books. He died in 2015.

**Kenneth L. Khachigian:** Ken Khachigian graduated with his J.D. from Columbia University School of Law in 1969 and shortly thereafter joined the Nixon Administration research and writing staff. He later served as White House Chief Speechwriter during the Reagan administration and worked on a total of nine presidential campaigns. Currently a practicing attorney, he resides in Orange County, California.

**Lee Huebner (Moderator):** A Wisconsin native, Lee Huebner is a graduate of Northwestern University and earned his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University. Huebner went on to join the Nixon Administration as Deputy Director of the Research and Writing Staff. Described as a 'consummate generalist', Huebner's extensive resumé includes 14 years as

publisher and CEO of the Paris-based *International Herald Tribune*, two years as President of the American University in Paris, and 12 years as a Professor of Communications at Northwestern University. He is currently the Arlie Professor of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University.

## Timeline (With Links to Primary Documents)

### **1968 Republican National Convention Acceptance Speech**

["Ray Price First Draft, 7/19/68"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 91).

["Edited Second Draft, 8/4/68"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 91).

["William Gavin, The American Dream"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 91).

["William Gavin, Change and Continuity"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 91).

["Richard Nixon Acceptance Speech Annotated Reading Copy, 8/8/68"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 91).

### **1969 Presidential Inaugural Address**

["Ray Price Draft of Undelivered Radio Address, 5/17/68"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

["William Safire Compilation of Best Recent Nixon Quotes, 5/28/68"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

["Inaugural Speech Parameters"](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

[“William Safire Inaugural First Draft, 1/3/69”](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

[“Pat Buchanan Inaugural First Draft, 1/4/69”](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

[“Ray Price Inaugural First Draft, 1/3/69”](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

[“Ray Price Third Draft, 1/12/69”](#) (Richard Nixon Pre-Presidential Files, Speeches, PPS 208 Box 99).

[“Richard Nixon Inaugural Address Annotated Reading Copy, 1/20/69”](#) (Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 46).

### **November 3, 1969 Vietnamization Address**

[“Richard Nixon Handwritten Brainstorming Notes, Uploaded in Five Files,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 53.

[“Pat Buchanan, Quotations for Reference,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“William Safire One-Liner Suggestions,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Richard Nixon Second Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 53.

[“Richard Nixon Third Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 52.

[“Western Union PR Campaign Miscellany,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Richard Nixon Annotated Reading Copy,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 52.

### **The ‘Silent Majority’ Responds in Support to Nixon**

[“U.S. Press Response to Speech,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“News Reception of Nixon’s Speech,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Correspondence Briefing, 11/4/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Phone Calls from ‘the Silent Majority’, 11/3/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Press Release, 11/5/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Correspondence Count, 11/5/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“Correspondence Count #2, 11/9/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

[“UNC Chapel Hill ‘Silent Majority’ Rally Memo, 11/10/69,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 140.

### **1971 State of the Union Address**

[“Lee Huebner Explanation of New Federalism,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 63.

[“Bill Safire—Ray Price First Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 63.

[“Patchwork’ Second Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 63.

[“Bill Safire One-Liners and Suggestions,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 64.

[“Richard Nixon Annotated Reading Copy,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 64.

### **1973 Presidential Inaugural Address**

[“Rodney Campbell Preliminary Inaugural Ideas,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Bible Verse Suggestions \(Two Documents\),”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Ray Price ‘Patchwork’ First Draft,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Supplementary Notes to First Draft,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Pat Buchanan Suggested Remarks,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Ken Khachigian Suggested Remarks,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Lee Huebner Suggested Remarks,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 37.

[“Inaugural Address Themes,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 183.

[“The Spirit of ‘76,”](#) White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, David Gergen Box 183.

### **1974 State of the Union Address**

[“Ray Price, Thoughts Toward a Theme,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 103.

[“Ray Price Short Address First Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 103.

[“Ray Price Second Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 90.

[“Long Address Sections,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 103.

[“Long Address First Draft Ideas \(Two Files\),”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 103.

[“Long Address Second Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 89.

[“David Gergen Watergate Insertion,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 90.

[“Ray Price Notes on Gergen Watergate Insertion,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 90.

[“Extended Watergate Draft,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 90.

[“RN Annotated Reading Copy,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 90.

## **Responses in Support of Richard Nixon**

[“Birthday Note to Richard Nixon,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 114.

[“State of the Union PR Campaign,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 114.

[“Memo, 1/31/74,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 115.

[“List of Telegrams Received,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 115.

[“Department of Labor Responses to SOTU ‘74,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, Speech Files, SP Box 115.

## **August 8, 1974 Resignation Speech**

[“Ray Price Draft, 5 Aug 1974,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 118.

[“Option B Resignation Draft for 5 August 1974,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 118.

[“Miscellaneous Notes,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 119.

[“Ray Price First Draft, 8/7/74,”](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President’s Personal File, PPF Box 119.



["Ray Price Fifth Draft,"](#) Richard Nixon Presidential (General) Files, President's Personal File, PPF Box 119.

## Additional Sources

### Books

*With Nixon* by Raymond Price

*Speechwright: An Insider's Take on Political Rhetoric* by William Gavin

*Advising Nixon: The White House Memos of Patrick J. Buchanan* by  
Lori Cox Han

*The President's Words: Speeches and Speechwriting in the Modern White House* ed. by Michael Nelson and Russell L. Riley

*White House Ghosts: Presidents and their Speechwriters*

*Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles that Made and Broke a Presidency and Divided America Forever* by Patrick J. Buchanan