Writing for the Great Communicators:
Writing rhetoric with Roosevelt and Reagan

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Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan dominated the airwaves in a way that no politician has done since. Roosevelt's command of radio and Reagan's mastery of television illustrate the potential of presidential communication in the twentieth century. The link between Roosevelt and Reagan is not entirely accidental. Reagan spent his political adolescence admiring Roosevelt and although Reagan would eventually shed his fondness for his hero's New Deal, he remained a fan of Roosevelt and his radio performances. According to historian Douglas Brinkley, "whenever Reagan was in a really tough situation he asked himself a simple question: What would FDR have done?"[1]

While Roosevelt and Reagan both created political legends defined largely by their speeches, their reputation for ownership of the words is often dramatically different. Roosevelt is consistently portrayed as a master of his policy and prose; Reagan is often described as being little more than an actor reading his lines. This paper uses archival materials from the Roosevelt and Reagan presidential Libraries, interviews with Reagan speechwriters, as well as memoirs and other accounts from these administrations to explore the origins of these president's speeches. While the analysis of the processes detailed here points to some similarities between the approaches of these two great communicators, subtle differences in the process reveal a closer personal connection between Roosevelt and speechwriting that distinguishes his contribution to that of Reagan.

Beyond documenting the development of some of the most powerful political rhetoric of the century, a comparison of speechwriting for Roosevelt and Reagan illustrates the transformation of speechwriting that occurred during the modern presidency. While all presidents have received some assistance with their speeches, it was not until the rise of the modern White House that speechwriting as a specialization would appear. By the time of Franklin Roosevelt, the speechwriter had become a standard feature of the White House. And, by the time of Ronald Reagan, the speechwriting office had become fully developed and institutionalized. Thus, the Roosevelt-Reagan comparison illustrates the transition quite fully.

Early speechwriting

The "ghostwriting" of presidential speeches goes back to America's first president. George Washington's Farewell address was written with the help of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. Madison drafted a speech for the President when he considered retiring after his first term. Four years later, Hamilton would expand upon the ideas of Madison's draft and add much of the specific language that Washington would use in his Farewell address. This left Washington himself to fine-tune the speech to fit his personal style. Later, some of Hamilton's friends withheld some of Hamilton's papers including an original draft of the address in his handwriting because they believed the public should not be disturbed by doubts about Washington's authorship of his speech.[2] So, with the

first presidency the practice of ghostwriting was established, as was the extensive efforts to keep the contributions of these "ghosts" a secret.

Judson C. "Jud" Welliver was the first ghostwriter to serve on the president's staff, although he was officially on the payroll of a cabinet department rather than Warren G. Harding's White House.[3] A former journalist from Harding's home state of Ohio, Welliver stayed on after the campaign and wrote drafts of minor speeches based on a general outline and some key phrases provided by Harding.[4] Like many who would come after him, Welliver's work went beyond speechwriting, providing general political and policy advice, and assisting with press relations.

The growing demand for presidential rhetoric was responsible for the ghostwriters' permanent place in the White House. Elmer Cornwell's analysis of Coolidge's presidential papers show that "The White House mimeograph machines were obviously made to ground at double what was to become the normal rate in order to help keep the man from Vermont continually before the public, and allowed to slack off once the election was safely won."[5] Cornwell links the existence of ghostwriters to the expansion of presidential speech since, "The ghost writer was obviously essential to make this step-up in output possible."[6] While Herbert Hoover did write his major speeches, French Strother and later George Hastings provided editing help and wrote minor addresses. [7]

By the time that Roosevelt came to office, the communication demands on the president were already felt and the ghostwriters' place in the White House already established. The need for speechwriters would only continue to grow as the presidency tried to keep pace with the rising expectation of a public expecting to hear from its president and Roosevelt's wish to use speeches to bring the public to his side as he struggled with the profound challenges of the depression.

Writing with Roosevelt

Rivaled only by Lincoln's need to bind together a nation torn by civil war, it is hard to image a president for whom the spoken word meant more than Franklin Roosevelt. His inaugural address assured citizens that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," his declaration of a banking holiday calmed nervous depositors, he proclaimed that America was the "arsenal of democracy," and he responded to a "day of infamy" by guiding the nation through a war. Through his speeches, Roosevelt helped put the United States back on its feet and into the leadership of the world. In their study of Roosevelt's speeches to the nation, Lawrence and Cornelia Levine describe Roosevelt's legacy in communication as "a revolution in the pattern of communication between Americans and their Chief Executive."[8]

FDR was the first modern electronic president. The rise of radio allowed Roosevelt's words to instantly reach the American ear on a regular basis. While earlier presidents could be heard and seen at large rallies or in movie theaters through recordings such as newsreels, Roosevelt routinely spoke directly to the American people in their homes.[9] While his ability to reach a national audience supports a comparison to more recent presidents, Roosevelt's speechwriting process makes the workings of his administration an excellent contrast to the more elaborate, formal

structure found in the White House today. Roosevelt's ghostwriters were often general policy advisors who enjoyed a close working relationship with the President and status within the White House. This stands in contrast to the specialized speechwriting staff of modern presidents who by the time of Reagan had much less contact and influence with the presidents they serve.

FDR's speechwriting staff

During his first two years in office FDR was aided by Donald Richberg, Louis Howe, William Bullitt, Felix Frankfurter, Hugh Johnson, and Rex Tugwell. Tom Corcoran and Ben Cohen joined FDR in 1934, initially to deal with initiatives to regulate securities and public utilities, but eventually their role expanded to general speechwriting and troubleshooting. From 1937 to 1940, Judge Rosenman, Tom Corcoran, and Ben Cohen were the regular speechwriting team.[10] William Bullitt worked occasionally on speeches from 1933 to 1941, although he preferred to work alone and not as a member of a writing team. These men were much more than speechwriters. Often, they were key architects of the policies of the New Deal. As Roosevelt was with other tasks, he looked everywhere for help with speechwriting. Sometimes, the White House would call in Archibald McLeish, the Librarian of Congress, to help polish a speech.[11]

While FDR was actively involved in the creation of his speeches, he delegated much of the work to his ghostwriters who worked together to draft and refine speeches. These speechwriters gave Roosevelt the ultimate credit for his speeches, but they were also clear that the demands of writing a major speech made ghostwriters an essential part of the White House. One speechwriter wrote that, "Obviously, for him to undertake so exhausting and time-consuming a task from beginning to end was impossible if he wanted to continue to carry on his other duties."[12]

Roosevelt's relationship with Harry Hopkins, who served as general advisor and speechwriter in the 1940s, reflects the common characteristics of presidential ghostwriters before the advent of specialized speechwriters. According to fellow speechwriter Robert Sherwood, "Roosevelt deliberately educated Hopkins in the arts and sciences of politics and of war and then gave him immense powers of decision for no other reason than he liked him, trusted him and needed him."[13] In contrast to modern speechwriters who have little history and interaction with the president, the ghostwriters of FDR's White House were often political protégés of the President, selected and guided by the President and working closely with him. In contrast to modern speechwriters who are generally strictly limited to the elaboration of policies constructed by others, FDR's ghostwriters were actively involved in advising the President on a range of issues. Hopkins and Sherwood traveled extensively on behalf of Roosevelt, often representing the President on missions of great importance. They were also at Roosevelt's side throughout the election and the war, aiding him in both political and military campaigns. The broad portfolios and their importance to the President often led them to official travels and functions that took them away from their speechwriting. Because the staff was small already, these duties (especially during the war) often left Rosenman alone in the White House to help with speech preparation.[14]

Prior to the war, Sam Rosenman would occasionally serve as FDR's "ghostwriter," albeit a very prominent ghost; since he was a member of the New York Supreme Court. From Pearl Harbor until formally joining the White House Rosenman had commuted weekly between Washington and New York. Eventually, health considerations forced him to give up the double careers. At FDR's request, he left his judgeship to devote himself to speechwriting in October 1943, taking a pay cut of about 50% and giving up the possibility of a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court in the process. In order to match his background, Rosenman had to be given the quasi-legal "Counsel to the President," the first White House staffer to hold the title of "counselor" previously reserved for the Attorney General.[15]

Compared to his successors, FDR's team of ghostwriters was relatively stable. Over FDR's lengthy tenure he relied on very few writers. He did change from time to time, when, according to Judge Rosenman, the President found a speechwriter's views were becoming too different from his own. Rosenman insists that FDR was not influenced on fundamental principles. "A hundred isolationist speech writers could never have changed his views on foreign affairs after 1937. No speech writer could ever have made him compromise on the fundamental principles of social security or water power development."[16] Rosenman and the other speechwriters believed "violently in anonymity for speech writers" and generally succeeded in avoiding publicity about their work on presidential speeches.[17]

Harry Hopkins enjoyed one of the most unique relationships with a president. After serving in other offices in the Administration, Hopkins came to work *and live* in the White House, inhabiting a suite on the southeast corner of the second floor. According to Robert Sherwood, Hopkins could "traipse down the upstairs hall in his old dressing gown to the President's room and ask what his chief wanted done or not done about any given problem, and then act accordingly, without having to reveal to anyone that he was guided not by his own prejudices or hunches but by Roosevelt's express instructions."[18] Hopkins was not the only speechwriter to stay in the White House. Rosenman sometimes stayed for short periods while commuting between his judgeship in New York and his speechwriting in Washington. He also had an extended stay when he and his wife initially moved to DC.

Rosenman described Hopkins as "unquestionably the most influential member of the White House staff in the last 5 years of the Roosevelt presidency in part because he could inevitably get the last word with the president, being able to take his case to FDR long after everyone else had left.[19] Hopkins served as FDR's liaison with much of the political world and he was capable of standing between the President and even some of his most important allies. Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes blamed Hopkins because he could not get a private appointment with FDR for 10 months.[20] Later, Harry Hopkins brought Robert Sherwood, a veteran playwright, into the White House in 1940 to help with speech preparation. As he recounts it, the assignment was a surprise.

> At first, I did not know why I was there but I soon found out that I had been pressed into service as a "ghost writer" (another sinister term). I also found out what an unsubstantial wraith a ghost writer really is; when working for Franklin D. Roosevelt, his one purpose was to haunt the White House day and night, until a speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt (and nobody else) had been produced.[21]

Sherwood's description captures the paradox of the presidential ghostwriter at the time of Roosevelt: to contribute to speeches in a way that is never noticed. As presidents and speechwriters would for decades, Roosevelt and his speechwriters would carefully preserve the image that he wrote his own speeches.

Roosevelt's speechwriters worked closely with the President to make sure that speeches matched his rhetorical style. As Rexford G. Tugwell describes it, while the speechwriters might write a speech, Roosevelt, in the end, would make it his own: "Roosevelt's own touches are identifiable. They gave warmth and reassurance."[22] Roosevelt's speechwriters gave the President credit for putting the heart in his speeches. Robert Sherwood offered, "He [FDR] was stirring because he himself seemed deeply stirred."[23]

Before the development and spread of polling and focus groups, FDR needed some way of reading the public. To compliment his political instinct, the President turned to his wife. Because she traveled extensively she developed a strong sense of the thinking of the people, especially the young people and housewives. More than anyone else with access to the President, the First Lady remained in touch with the American people and proved to be an asset on speeches involving youth, education, and consumer interests.[24]

The speechwriting process

Major speeches often required a week or more of work. Roosevelt would begin the process by discussing major points, audience, and the general length of the speech with his ghostwriters. Occasionally, the President would dictate or write out a draft. At other times, the direction from the President was much less clear. Sometimes Roosevelt would simply say that he had not spoken to the American people recently and wanted to update them on the war or domestic activities.[25]

Charles Michelson, the director of publicity for the Democratic National Committee who helped FDR draft speeches asserted, "I was never present when a big speech was born that the President did not take the political viands offered and cook them in his individual way. Take it from one rather experienced in the formation and presentation of speeches: Franklin Roosevelt is a better phrase maker than anybody he ever had around him."[26] Michelson's description of FDR's speechwriting process is consistent with those of others. While the President might accept themes or phrases from drafts from a variety of sources, Roosevelt would often stretch out on a couch and dictate his own version.[27] Roosevelt often dictated pages worth of material sitting with his "Speech Folder" where he kept clippings of news stories that he wanted to address, letters from citizens famous and unknown, and his own notes about speech topics. Sam Rosenman describes Roosevelt's dictation style:

> Going over a draft, the President would suddenly lay down his pen, lean back in his large swivel armchair, throw his head back, and look up and the ceiling intently. This might continue for two or three minutes, although it would seem longer as we sat around quietly waiting. Then he would sit up and start writing or, more often, start dictating.[28]

Roosevelt's dictations were often rambling and sometime included personal insults that he knew would be removed later in the process. The speechwriters learned that Roosevelt used this dictation to try new ideas and to

vent some hostility. After Roosevelt had dictated a particularly nasty speech draft, Robert Sherwood fretted to Harry Hopkins that the President needed to delete his angry words and seek a more presidential tone. Hopkins sharply rebuked Sherwood saying, "You ought to know that that is precisely what he will do. He has no intention of using all that irritable stuff you say he dictated. He's just getting if off his chest. It has been rankling all this time and now he's rid of it. He probably feels a lot better for it and he'll have a fine sleep."[29]

After dictating draft material or discussing the broad outline of a speech Roosevelt would leave his speechwriters with a comment like, "Well—something along those lines—you boys can fix it up."[30] Then the Hopkins, Rosenman, and Sherman would retreat to the Cabinet room two doors down from the Oval Office to rework Roosevelt's text. The speechwriters liked working in the cabinet room because the President did not like air conditioning since it affected his sinuses. This made working in the President's study uncomfortable during the summer.[31] The speechwriters would make use of the huge table in the room, covering parts of the table with drafts, books, telegrams, letters and other materials they would use to cut and paste Roosevelt's initial thoughts together with materials from the speechwriters in an attempt to assemble a coherent draft. As Rosenman said, "Shears and paste were used plentifully."[32] One end of the table held the writers' provisions for the night ahead: "Coca-Cola, ginger ale, and plain charged water, some cups and sauces and large glasses, a bowl of cracked ice, and a bottle of whiskey."[33]

According to Rosenman, the first draft was the most important document even if it would end up being extensively revised because it established the basic topic and tone. He also felt that he could tell from the first or second draft whether the speech would be good or not and that "With rare exceptions, it was the earlier drafts that determined the essential quality of the final speech."[34]

Often the drafts that came back to the President were much longer than the stingy word count demanded by Roosevelt. Roosevelt would read through the revised draft making deletions and dictating additions. Roosevelt would mark passages that were too long with "boil," indicating that the language needed to be boiled down.[35] Often Roosevelt would read the speech out loud to make sure that the speech would work well over the radio rather than just look good on the printed page.[36]

After Roosevelt had dictated his changes the speechwriters returned to the cabinet room to try to incorporate the President's suggestions into a coherent second draft. A major speech might eventually go through as many as twelve drafts and that sometimes not even a single sentence from the first draft made it to the final draft.[37] The speechwriters would often work well into the night so that they could present a fresh draft to the President in the morning. These late nights of drafting and redrafting speeches were, in the words of Sam Rosenman, "the grind— and the glamour—of what was know as "ghostwriting" for a President of the United States."[38]

While the speechwriting process was not as institutionalized as it would be by the Reagan presidency, Roosevelt's speechwriters were not spared the influences of the rest of the executive branch. Speeches had to be reviewed by the various departments. The speechwriting staff constantly felt the "harrowing responsibility:" "The

New York Times can make mistakes—the World Almanac can make mistakes—but the President of the United States must not make mistakes."[39]

Before America's formal entry into the war, the State Department continually pressed the White House to be cautious with its prose. Judge Rosenman recounted FDR's distain for the State Department's tone:

> The President was extremely impatient with some of the draft that came over from the State Department during those years, and with some suggested corrections in the draft he had sent over to them for consideration. He felt that they were too apt to use "weasel words" (a favored phrase he had borrowed from Theodore Roosevelt); that they made too many reservations and were too diplomatically reserved.[40]

Roosevelt's famous "arsenal of democracy" speech was sent to the State Department for comment and, in the words of his speechwriters, "of which plenty was forthcoming."[41] As Robert Sherwood recounts, Roosevelt took special note of some of the State Department's reservations.

> At one point in the speech, Roosevelt spoke of the agents of the fifth column operating throughout the United States and Latin America. Then followed the sentence, "There are also American citizens, *many of them in high places*, who, unwittingly in most cases, are aiding and abetting the work of these agents."
>
> The words I have italicized came back from the State Department circled in red to indicate they should be cut out. When Roosevelt read this draft and saw that mark, he asked, "Who put this red line in here?" We explained that that the State Department suggested it would be well to delete these dangerous words.
>
> "Oh, do they!" he said. "Very well. We'll change it to read—'There are also American citizens, many of them in high places—*especially in the State Department*—and so forth."[42]

One illustration of the conflicting perspectives of the White House and departments was the Chiefs of Staff's objections to the President referring to the amount of British ships sunk relative to the production capacity of the U.S. and England. The military wanted to keep the information from the public while the White House felt that the losses accumulated at seas painted a clear picture that would make clear the need for American action.[43] Sometimes the comments from the War Department came from General Marshall himself and were harder to ignore.[44]

While the speechwriters got a great deal of advice about Roosevelt's speeches, they generally made little use of it, sometimes relishing those they included and excluded.

> We used to derive enjoyment from the thought of various important personages around Washington listening to the Presidential broadcasts and then, as the strains of "The Star Spangled Banner" broke out at the finish, cursing, "He didn't use a *word* of that stuff that I sent him." It was even more enjoyable to picture the amazed expression of some anonymous citizen in Council Bluffs who had written a letter to the President and then heard something from that letter incorporated in a Fireside Chat.[45]

At times, Roosevelt confided things to the ghostwriters while excluding the departments. In 1944 when FDR wanted to insert a section in a speech about creating a national service act, the speechwriters asked if they should

consult with the director of the Office of War Mobilization. Roosevelt preferred to keep the proposal quiet: "As soon as it gets around, I know they will try to argue me out of it. I just want it kept right here in the room between us boys and Grace."[46] This secrecy extended to having inserts related to the proposal (humorously labeled "project Q 38") typed only by Grace, avoiding the regular staff office.

Eventually, a final reading copy of each speech would be typed on special paper that would not make noise when he turned the pages and then placed in a black leather loose-leaf folder. Because this was the copy the President would read from, FDR frequently marked up these pages to remind him about phrasing and points of emphasis. One of the most interesting markings (included in Appendix A) found in the archives was explained by Rosenman:

> In reading one draft aloud he had inadvertently transposed the "head" and the "heart." He wanted to make sure that he would not confuse the two when he delivered the speech. So, above the word "head" he drew on his reading copy a head, and above the word heart he drew a heart with a neat little arrow through it.[47]

The status of speeches in the Roosevelt administration is evident in the handling of the reading copy. Each reading copy was signed by Roosevelt, the changes in his handwriting probably revealing a great deal about his health (Appendix B). After Roosevelt finished with the speech it was tied together with a ribbon and then placed in a small blue cloth-covered box built by ask Augustus Giegengack for each speech and with the name of the speech and the date embossed in gold on the edge. While every administration has preserved their president's reading copy by placing it in a folder, the care and elegance of the Roosevelt White House stands out.

Unfortunately, from the point of view of the speechwriters, this "reading copy" wasn't always read. While the ghostwriters were generally amazed how little trouble Roosevelt got into relative to how much ad-libbing he did, ad-libbing was a source of both "amusement as well as concern" among the speechwriter. They facetiously formed a "Society for Prevention of Ad-Libbing" that frequently met with the President the morning after speeches and threatened to expel him.[48] Despite the humor in their approach, Rosenman and the others urged the President to avoid ad-libbing in major speeches reminding him "how easy it was for even the most accomplished orator to choose unfortunate words on the spur of the moment and thus give the wrong impression."[49]

Raymond Moley suggests that, "When it came to writing speeches, they were written with, rather than for him [FDR].[50] Moley's distinction is instructive. Roosevelt did have many collaborators on his speeches. However, he was an active participant from the very beginning and remained a strong influence throughout.

While the general picture of speechwriting provides insights into the process and Roosevelt's role, a couple of special cases can be used to further illustrate the nature of his relationship with speechwriters and why his speechwriting remained successful.

The first inaugural

Franklin Roosevelt's first inaugural address is widely regarded as one of the most important speeches in U.S. history. Its eloquence spoke to the crisis of the time, but continues to hold meaning for subsequent generations. It superbly demonstrates that the choice of the president's words can carry huge implications. With American banks in crisis, FDR's ability to instill confidence through his speeches became as important a part of economic recovery as any act of legislation.

James McGregor Burns paints a vivid picture of Roosevelt working on the speech draft at home in Hyde Park.

> Franklin Roosevelt's pencil glided across the pages of legal cap paper…
> The fire hissed and crackled; the large hand with its thick fingers moved rapidly
> across the paper… Phrase after phrase followed in the President-elect's bold,
> pointed, slanted hand. Slowly the yellow sheets piled up. By 1:30 in the morning
> the inaugural speech was done.[51]

Burns' account is backed up by a note that FDR made and attached to the draft, noting that he began working on the draft February 27 at 9 PM and worked until about 1:30 the following morning.[52] Rosenman wrote that this was one of the few times that Roosevelt wrote out a first draft of a speech. Unfortunately, it appears that this idea of the speech emerging from the mind of the great man in a brilliant, but laborious evening of drafting is largely myth. More recent accounts trace the origin in the speech beyond that February evening before a crackling fire. In his second memoir of the Roosevelt year, Raymond Moley describes his own role in early drafts of the speech beginning with a late-night meeting on September 22 with candidate Roosevelt.[53] In that meeting FDR provided a rough outline of what he would want to say in the earliest days of his presidency to provide inspiration without relying on simple optimistic rhetoric. These ideas were revisited when Moley and Edward J. Flynn meet with President-elect Roosevelt in Warm Springs on February 3. Moley documents this by reprinting twelve pages of notes from that meeting. Based on those notes, Moley began drafting a speech after he returned to New York, ultimately producing a draft speech, two pages of which are reproduced in his book. Eventually, he took a revised draft to Hyde Park on February 27. According to Moley, "He [FDR] read over my draft carefully and then said that he had better write out the text himself because if Louis Howe (who was expected the next morning) failed to see a draft in his (Roosevelt's) handwriting, he would 'have a fit.'"[54] Roosevelt and Moley then talked through every line of the speech as the President-elect wrote out the speech draft. The next morning Moley went over the Roosevelt handwritten draft, changing a few words and making a couple of additions.

This mythology of the origins of the inaugural is a telling case of ghostwriting. There is a clear effort to eliminate evidence of anything predating the President's writing of the draft. Roosevelt's inaugural address is often portrayed as a turning point, the moment at which America shed the fear and uncertainty of the depression and began to move ahead lead by the historic figure of Franklin Roosevelt.

At the same time, Moley describes Roosevelt as deeply involved in both mapping out the general themes and reworking Moley's draft. Roosevelt appears to be as intimately involved in the crafting of his inaugural address as

any modern president. Further, in defending his account, Moley points out that expecting such a critical speech would spring from a single individual's moment of inspiration is unrealistic and perhaps even unhealthy. "Those who accept this hypothesis are certainly not paying Roosevelt a compliment when they contend that the announcement of such portentous policies was determined on a momentary hunch."[55] Later, Moley goes on to say:

> History is sometimes made by sudden and unpremeditated decisions and actions. But guiding and permanent innovations in public policy are more often the result of long and carefully calculated reasoning… The care which characterized the composition of this address earned for it the immediate as well as the lasting recognition accorded it by the American people.[56]

Even this draft does not contain the speech most famous "fear itself" line and the origins of the speech's most famous line remains unclear. Samuel Rosenman always assumed that it was in FDR's original first draft. Later Rosenman reported asking others about the origins of the sentence and concluded that it was the President's own or borrowed from Henry David Thoreau who wrote, "Nothing is so much to be feared as fear," because one of Eleanor Roosevelt's friends had given FDR a copy of some of Thoreau's writing after the election.[57] Moley notes that the phrase first appears when Louis Howe adds the first paragraph when the famous line remained. Moley doubts that either Roosevelt or Howe were familiar with Thoreau and instead suggests a less inspiring origin:

> I do clearly remember that the phrase appeared in a department store's newspaper advertisement some time earlier in February. I assume that Howe, a inveterate newspaper reader saw it, too… To Howe's ever lasting credit, he realized that the expression fully fitted the occasion.[58]

Moley and Roosevelt worked on the speech again on March 3. According to Moley, mostly they removed minor changes made by Howe. Some of this time was likely spent to help Roosevelt to become as familiar as possible with the text. The draft was then given to a typist who prepared the final reading copy that was closely guarded by Moley who kept it under his pillow that night.

"My friends…" FDR's Fireside chats

> *Until last night, to me, the President of the United State was merely a legend. A picture to look at. A newspaper item. But you are real. I know your voice; what you are trying to do.[59]*

Roosevelt's fireside chats brilliantly melded the yearnings of Americans with the relatively new technology of radio. Whereas presidents had traditionally offered an "address" the new president offered a "chat." According to Sherwood, an "address" might sound, "indented as an exhortation, or an elaborate apologia, or a stern lecture," while a "chat" allowed Roosevelt to speak "simply, casually, as a friend or relative, who had figured out a way to prevent foreclosure on the mortgage."[60] Rosenman described these chats as taking the American people into the confidence of the government by "a talking directly to the people of the nation—or rather to each person in the nation."[61] Roosevelt made use of the first person in speeches to bring listeners into the White House with him and create a sense of a shared mission.[62]

Roosevelt's Fireside chats were immensely popular. One of the most common subjects of letters to the President was the request for more chats.[63] Roosevelt, however, demurred, preferring instead to reserve those speeches for key moments or issues on which he could have the most influence. He worried that if his speeches became too common they would lose their effectiveness.[64]Most often Roosevelt spoke to the nation from the White House, although two of the fireside chats were given from his home in Hyde Park. These chats averaged twenty-six minutes, and ranged in length from fifteen to forty-five minutes.[65] Roosevelt usually spoke at 10 PM Eastern in the evenings as families were settling in for the evening. Originally, these fireside chats were on Sunday evenings to maximize the listening audience. However, Roosevelt moved the speeches after church leaders complained that his chats were cutting into attendance on Sunday evening services.[66]

Lawrence and Cornelia Levine suggest that one of the reasons's for Roosevelt's dedication to developing effective radio appeals was that because of his polio, Roosevelt could not mingle with the people. Unable to move around easily and meet them physically, the President opted to develop his ability to connect electronically by radio.[67] As he did with other speeches Roosevelt sought to use "simple everyday language and homely analogy to explain the complex problems of government."[68] As Sam Rosenman describes it, Roosevelt strove for an assessable style:

> He [FDR] preferred a short sentence to a long one, and a one- or two-syllable word to a four- our five-syllable word. He preferred simple, direct, forthright statements to fuzzy, ambiguous or devious language. He preferred a simple everyday expression to a flowery oratorical one.[69]

Roosevelt's first fireside chat may have been his most important. In it, he sought to explain to the nation his reasons for imposing a "banking holiday" and to re-establish the people's confidence in the banking system. While the Treasury Department prepared a "scholarly, comprehensive draft" of the speech, Roosevelt discarded the draft and wrote his own using simple, ordinary language that citizens would understand. While Roosevelt's famous fireside chats predates the world of rapidly polling which provides specific evidence to back speculation about the impact of speeches, there is ample testimony to the success of FDR's first fireside chat in the success of the banking holiday. Banks that had been depleted reopened to find account holders willing to make more deposits than withdrawals and within weeks most of the nations banks were open and on more solid ground. Clearly, Roosevelt had restored a confidence that went beyond the casual claims that would have been measured by a public opinion poll and extended into financial votes of confidence in a cash-strapped nation.

FDR's style

Robert Jackson, who helped with some of FDR's speeches, believed that the Roosevelt style emerged as the President worked over speech drafts and making them his own, sounding like what he would say in conversation. As a result, according to Jackson, He never seemed to be reading to an audience. Neither did he seem to be reciting."[70] Franklin Roosevelt clearly deserves much of the credit for creating the conversation between the nation's top official and the average American. Roosevelt reached farther and more effectively into the American household than had

any president before. The volume of letters the White House received from men and women across the country and all over the economic and social spectrum testify to the depth of Roosevelt's appeal.

Levine and Cornelia R. Levine concluded that FDR's style was assessable because 70% of the words that he used were among the 500 most commonly used words and 80% were among the 1000 most commonly used words.[71] Roosevelt spoke slowly, averaging 100 to 120 words a minute, much slower than found on radio at the time.[72] Robert Jackson describes how FDR edited his speeches:

> First of all, he eliminated all long, unfamiliar foreign or technical words and brought the thought into simple, plain words, of Anglo-Saxon origin if possible… He eliminated complicated and involved sentences and used short, simple, and direct ones… Then too he never used abstract terms where he could be concrete.[73]

Roosevelt never lost sight of his audience. While Roosevelt's language was assessable, he did not talk down to people. He understood that the president needed to speech to ordinary people without sounding ordinary. As one speechwriter put it, "Voters do not want everyday fellows to take up the responsibilities of high office."[74] As Rosenman the balancing of styles:

> "I think that when Roosevelt, for example, delivered his first fireside chat on the banking crisis in March 1933, he was able to take a very complicated piece of legislation and explain it to the people in terms which they could understand, but at the same time, it was in terms which could be used in polite conversation between intelligent people. You never got the impression, with Roosevelt, that he was talking down to people—of course, that would have been fatal. But you never lost the impression that the man who was talking to you was the President of the United States, and that he was talking to you from that position."[75]

FDR and his ghostwriters

While FDR's speechwriting process bears some resemblance to today's full-time speechwriters, there are several key differences between FDR's ghostwriters and the elaborate speechwriting staff found today. One of the most important differences is the close working relationship the writers enjoyed with the president. They were able to claim large blocks of time in which they could exchange ideas on policy and speeches. During this extended interaction, the "ghosts" served as more than writers—having a real impact of the President's thinking as well as his writing.

During the interval between the Roosevelt administration and Reagan's presidency the speechwriting process went from ghostwriters to a specialized office with a permanent place reserved on the White House organizational chart. While the institutionalization of the office would seem to offer the ghostwriters the credibility and visibility they may have wanted, the specialization of the office narrowed their work and their influence.

Writing for Reagan

We see him all the time. We wave to him.[76]
Reagan Speechwriter Peggy Noonan

To some, Ronald Reagan reflected what had gone wrong with an institution that now seem better suited to a shallow actor than a wise statesman. To others, Ronald Reagan embodied and articulated the American dream better than any president in generations. The speechwriting process was central to the Reagan's broader mission to transform the landscape of American politics. As one Reagan speechwriter put it, he [Reagan] sought to change the *mores* of Americans."[77] François Mitterrand proclaimed that Reagan was "in communion" with the American people.[78]

Speech also played an important tactical role in the Reagan White House's political agenda. As one Reagan aid said, "As appearances go, so goes the presidency."[79] Reagan was known by staff as "the big cannon" in the White House arsenal. Reagan Pollster Richard Wirthlin described the President's speeches as the heart of the administration's success: "From a strategic perspective, when facing a challenge I felt the answer was almost always to have Ronald Reagan speak. It was like putting the ball in the hands of your star player with the score tied and ten seconds left in the game. You could always count on him to produce in the clutch."[80] Speeches played a role in the Reagan White House's legislative strategies, as one member of the congressional relations staff said, "Clearly, when you have the 'Great Communicator,' you let him communicate greatly."[81]

However, the importance of Reagan's speeches to the White House's strategy would make evident one of the dilemmas of presidential speechwriting: the more important the speech becomes, the more closely it is scrutinized, edited, and threatened by dilution. Speechwriter Peggy Noonan joked that she learned that a speech in the Reagan White House was treated like a sausage skin. "The stronger it is, the more you shove in."[82]

Reagan's speechwriting is a bit of a paradox. As one speechwriter pointed out, "Reagan was called the "Great Communicator" but few of his exact words, except for "evil empire," are quoted."[83] While it may be true that Reagan's speeches have few great lines, he gave many great speeches. While the lines may not be memorable, Reagan's speeches often painted a vivid image that remained with his audiences and shaped how they viewed the world.

Reagan: to love him is to know him

One of the ironies that makes Reagan especially interesting for students of both the White House staff and presidential rhetoric is that while Reagan is known for his speeches, the people who drafted those speeches knew little about him. Peggy Noonan, whose texts did as much to define Reagan as anyone had only the briefest glimpse of the President before writing the famous speech at Pointe duHoc. On her first day at work Noonan learned that some of the speechwriters hadn't met with Reagan in over a year and she would not meet with Reagan until she had been in the White House four months.[84] In his book on his experience working for Reagan, speechwriter Peter Robinson described how the speechwriters describe purchasing copies of photos every time they were photographed

with Reagan.[85] That their interaction was so sporadic and noteworthy indicates how different their work with Reagan was compared to the more intimate working relationship enjoyed by earlier generations of speechwriters.

Distance between speechwriter and president is not unique to Reagan. However, the Reagan administration may be the best case for examining the dilemma because the distance neither alienated the staff nor kept them from writing well on behalf of the man they hardly knew. Other speechwriters have grown resentful when kept away from the president they served. The speechwriters wanted more time to learn about what Reagan thought (and to bask in the aura of the Oval Office and its occupant). However, they were generally accepting of the other demands on Reagan's time and were generally content to labor away based on reading through Reagan's old speeches or talking to advisors with more interaction with him.[86] While Reagan was often an aggressive editor, making many changes to speech drafts before sending them back to the speechwriters, broader discussions of political philosophy of speech strategy seldom involved the speechwriters. Thus, the speechwriters often wrote speeches for Reagan based upon little more knowledge that people outside the White House might have.

To many Americans, Reagan embodied their idea of America. So it may be appropriate that to many of those who wrote for Reagan, he was as much myth as man. The speechwriters almost breathlessly describe the most minor brushes with the President. In Robinson's book, How Ronald Reagan Changed My Life, he describes his first glimpse of Reagan in person as a transforming event. Although Reagan did not speak -- only sticking his head in the door with a wave and a wink—Robinson turned to another speechwriter and said, "How did such a nice guy ever get to be President?"[87] Peggy Noonan recalls the first time she got back a speech draft with evidence that Reagan had read it. She clipped the handwritten "RR, Very Good" scrawled on the first page, taped it to her blouse, and wore it around for much of the day.[88]

In an odd way, the distance from Reagan and the exclusion from Oval Office policy discussion may have liberated the speechwriters. They seldom heard Reagan turn aside their lofty rhetoric; others did that for the President. Free of the details of policy the speechwriters were free to construct rhetoric that soared above the policy compromises and political deals that were necessary. They were free to write about the vision of America that Reagan talked about, not the policies that politics forced him to settle for.

While Reagan's mythical stature in the speechwriting office created a team of hard working writers, the vagaries did create some conflict. Aram Bakshian, who headed the speechwriting office under Reagan, noted the connection between staffers and Reagan who often proclaimed, "Let Reagan be Reagan." What they really meant, according to Bakshian, was "Let me be Reagan."[89]

Reagan's staffers are generally very defensive of their president, but they do concede to some distance between Reagan and the details of some speeches. Larry Speaks acknowledged that at time Reagan "gave his aides more power, for better or worse, than they would have had under any President in memory."[90] Dick Wirthlin describes Reagan's reputation as uninvolved or unaware of White House events "both true and false." According to Wirthlin, Reagan's style of delegation resulted, in part, from Reagan's role as a "visionary."

> He was a visionary, and visionaries are seldom drawn to detail. Reagan
> would tell us what his goals were, what he wanted us to do, and then he would
> expect us to go out and find the best way to achieve his objectives.[91]

Even speechwriter Peter Robinson admitted that while the official White House line was that Reagan could write all his speeches himself if he had time: "It sounded good, and I certainly said it often enough. But I couldn't help wondering if it were true."[92] While Robinson eventually came to believe that Reagan was more than capable of writing his own speeches, such initial doubt from within the White House reflect the natural level of suspicion about presidents. That it would be more widely held about the ex-actor Reagan is also natural.

The Reagan Staff

The speechwriting office was part of Communications operation that also included the various press operations in the Reagan White House. Michael Deaver was the top aid most likely to be involved in speechwriting and image. James Baker would also become involved, but was less concerned with image than Deaver, preferring to focus more on policy implications of speeches. Ed Meese would become involved occasionally but was the least involved of the Troika.[93] During his presidency, Reagan spoke nearly 4 million words in delivering 2,500 remarks, all provided by the speechwriting department's six full-time writers.[94]

One of the ironies of presidential speechwriting is a president who hires talented speechwriters will contribute to the perception that their words are chosen for them. Reagan's speechwriting team was talented and generally well organized. Many have gone on to enjoy very visible careers writing books and opinion columns. Others have been less visible, but equally successful writing for other individuals or groups.

One of Reagan's best speechwriters, Ken Khachigian, was not on the White House staff and did not remain in Washington very long.[95] Khachigian had been in charge of speechwriting during the 1980 campaign but had no interest in staying in Washington. He helped with the inaugural address and extended his stay in Washington after the President was shot but left after helping with the speech that Reagan gave to a joint session of Congress after his recovery.[96]

In Khachigian's absence, Tony Dolan was temporarily put in charge of speechwriting. Tony Dolan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, was a Yale graduate who had appeared in Greenwich Village clubs as a folksinger.[97] While calling him an excellent writer, another speechwriter described Dolan as a prima donna.[98] Dolan, like many other good writers, resisted editing and often clung stubbornly to what he had written. Dolan may have earned the title of prima donna, he also earned the admiration of all the speechwriters he worked with for his ability. However, some doubts about Dolan must have emerged in the White House as he retained the interim title for several months before Aram Bakshian would be asked to step in as Director of the speechwriting office (although Dolan was given the title of Chief Speechwriter as a face saving gesture).[99] Bakshian had been working on liaison with the arts through the Office of Public Liaison but agreed to move over to speechwriting if he could remain engaged in selecting artists

who were to be considered for the Medal of Freedom. Bakshian had a weekly meeting with Reagan that allowed him to bring in writers working on important projects.

Like everything else in the White House, the speechwriting process was impacted by the shift to Donald Regan as Chief of Staff at the beginning of the second term. Ken Khachigian complained that the speechwriters no longer enjoyed one-on-one meetings with the President and that when the speechwriters were allowed in to see Reagan, Regan's assistants sat in and left the President feeling "confined and cornered."[100]

Like other administrations, the Reagan speechwriting staff was supported by a research staff that was responsible for fact-checking. Sometimes, the speechwriting staff was called upon to verify stories from the President himself. For example, Reagan frequently told the story of a Congressional Medal of Honor winner who received the award for staying aboard a crippled B-17 rather than to leave a wounded ball-turrent gunner to crash alone. According to Lou Cannon, "The only serious debate within the White House was whether Reagan knew what he was doing when he told a made-up story or whether he had reached a point where he actually could not distinguish films from facts."[101]

The Reagan team was as troublesome as it was talented. According to Larry Speakes, Pat Buchanan, who had been brought in to shore up support from the right, "caused more trouble in only two years than anyone else who worked with Reagan, during the first six years."[102] Speakes believed that some of Buchanan's Op-Ed pieces in the Washington Post may have actually cost the administration votes on its Contra aid legislation.[103] Peggy Noonan proved talented but too anxious to take credit. Buchanan had supported bringing Noonan in during his battles with Don Regan as Buchanan sought to solidify the right's control over the speechwriting office. According to Larry Speakes, "she insisted on taking credit in public for many of the speeches she had written. She was always saying, "I wrote this' and 'I wrote that.'"[104] Given Reagan's reputation as an actor not a writer, any attempt by a speechwriter to assert authorship was especially problematic.

The Reagan speechwriters regarded themselves as the true believers who advocated the purest vision of Reagan's political philosophy and described themselves as "the consciences of the presidency" or the "soul of the administration," a notion which stirred resentment from the rest of the White House.[105] Peggy Noonan wrote that some people (most likely the speechwriters) felt that the speechwriting process was "the point where ideas and principles still counted."[106] One speechwriter did concede that the speechwriters might not have been the easiest people to work with: "Serious, composed, earnest, and level-headed, the pragmatists had mastered the practical realities of politics and life. My fellow speechwriters? Please."[107]

While the speechwriters might have been temperamental, they seem to have accepted polling's intrusion into their art reasonably well. Richard Wirthlin, who had been advising Reagan on public opinion and political strategy since 1968, was officially not part of the White House staff but retained access to the President. While Wirthlin's polling was not the first time polls were brought into the speechwriting process, the specificity of data coming from a pollster largely dedicated to the rhetoric had the potential to make the tension with the writers more intense than

ever. Wirthlin began to make use of "PulseLine" technology to measure individual responses to specific portions of almost every major presidential address during the Reagan presidency. While such technology had been in existence for years, this was its first use in the White House.[108] Wirthlin would assemble groups ranging from thirty-five to one hundred citizens who were given boxes with dials on which they could register their responses to a speech as it progressed. The data gathered during the speech was supplemented by analysis of focus group meetings held immediately afterwards. These studies allowed Wirthlin to identify "power phrases" or "power lines" that had the highest responses. Based on this analysis the speechwriters could be instructed to include these phrases in subsequent addresses. Wirthlin's advice was often the kind of general political advice any advisor might offer. For example, reviewing a draft of Reagan's February 18, 1981 address to a joint session of Congress, Wirthlin suggested changing the description of Reagan's spending proposals from "cuts" to "reductions" with out mentioning specific polling data.[109]

According to Wirthlin, while some speechwriters appreciated the lessons learned from these empirical tests of wording, others resented what Wirthlin concedes were attempts to "turn art into science, to treat the ancient craft of rhetoric like a marketing project."[110] While respecting the writers' worries, Wirthlin correctly notes that his efforts were largely updates of the old speechwriters' practice of analyzing audiences by sitting in on presidential speeches, tallying applause and laughter. The impact of PulseLine is hard to determine. In general, Reagan's speechwriters report seldom feeling pressured by Wirthlin to include such lines. However, Wirthlin enjoyed direct access to Reagan that allowed him to make sure the lines were inserted by the President himself.[111] For this reason, it is hard to tell whether some of Reagan's editing efforts reflected his rhetorical intuition or the results of Wirthlin's studies. Wirthlin give Reagan tremendous credit for his speeches and writing, but at the same time, expresses doubts that Reagan fully understood what he was doing. "In some ways, I'm not sure even Ronald Reagan fully grasped what it was about his rhetoric that made his words resonate so strongly with citizens, or why he was able to transcend policy differences while winning people's support."[112]

The Reagan style

> *There have been times in this office when I've wondered how you*
> *could do the job if you hadn't been an actor.[113]*
>
> *Ronald Reagan*

The Reagan speechwriting style was straightforward and simple. While Reagan's approach may have been the product of years of study and practice, the end result was a speech that seemed simple and conversational. The Reagan approach reflects the balanced approach that made him a great speaker, carefully evaluating the text while never losing sight of the audience. Reagan's criterion was, "Would you talk that way to your barber?"[114] Reagan had spent years giving speeches, carefully watching his audience and learning what engages them. Reagan used two different contact lenses when giving a speech. Reagan learned to wear a near-sighted lens in the right eye for reading the script, in his left eye, a far-sighted lens for keeping the audience in clearly in focus.[115] In some ways, Reagan's contact lenses are the best example of his approach, constantly keeping interaction of the text and the audience.

One of Reagan's most successful tools was making examples of heroes of the stories he told. As Tom Brokaw commented after Reagan's death that, "it's the way he brought real people into his speeches that stands out."[116] Trained in the world of movies, Reagan doubtlessly understood the ability of characters and stories to make a point. Reagan talked about *real* people in his speeches, but he certainly did not portray them as ordinary. As one speechwriter noted, "Reagan said abstract words go in ear one in and out the other but a good story paints an unforgettable picture."[117] According to Dick Wirthlin, Reagan's use of stories worked because "Stories work because they don't raise the red flag of the "hard sell," and indeed, Reagan used them to let the *audience* link the rational to the emotional for themselves."[118] Moreover, by demonstrating his admiration of real people, Reagan took on an air of humility that made it easier for ordinary people to admire him.

Reagan may be as well known for his style of delivery as for his words. Larry Speakes saw a strong connection between Reagan's acting background and his success in office: "Above all, he is an actor, and we never apologized for his Hollywood background. Communication is a key part of leadership."[119] According to his staff, Reagan could make speeches work: "Sometimes while reading a line in an early speech draft I would say to myself, 'Oh, boy, that's going to fall flat.' Then Reagan would stand up and deliver the line with a different point of emphasis, or a facial expression that brought new meaning to what he said. Watching Ronald Reagan practice a speech was like watching Babe Ruth take batting practice. It was truly something to behold."[120] One interesting example is a speechwriter's recounting of listening to the President read a speech he had written: "I thought it was very moving when I wrote the speech and included it, but it didn't really hit me until I was standing in the Oval Room and the President read it, because he was so good. I actually found—which is unusual for me—that my eyes were beginning to water.[121]

By the time Reagan was President, the Teleprompter was a reliable tool for presidential speeches. Most of Reagan's major addresses were given with the assistance of a teleprompter that scrolled the text across screens in front of him as he spoke. While Teleprompters were reliable, the President needed a backup and there were numerous occasions when a Teleprompter did not suit the setting leaving the President to rely on more traditional texts. Often, the President used speech texts on half sheets of heavy paper, giving the President something like heavy large, index cards that whose size allowed for the large type. While the Reagan White Housed over-sized text because of Reagan's nearsightedness, every administration has used somewhat oversized text to make reading as easy as possible. One some occasions, Reagan used the large index cards he had used for stump speeches for years. Often, these index cards were handwritten by Reagan or typed in his own special shorthand that he had developed over years of giving speeches. An example of Reagan's shorthand code is included in Appendix C.

Reagan's use of these cards extended even to more informal meetings, irritating members of Congress in particular who resented the scripted answers and Reagan's unwillingness to go beyond the formal statements that Reagan opened these meeting with. Such over-scripting of Reagan was a concern to some in the White House. When David Gergen received a draft of remarks for a roundtable meeting with business leaders, he scrawled on the

draft, "OK—But <u>why</u> are speechwriters doing this? It's a <u>private</u> lunch. Also, question whether RR should have anything for this. He can wing it pretty well."[122]

Reagan was a veteran and fan of movies. Lou Cannon suggests that Reagan "spent more time at the movies during his presidency than anything else."[123] Reagan watched movies frequently, occasionally letting his movie watching keep him from his briefing books. As was the case with other parts of his presidency, what Reagan may lack in specifics he made up with his broad sense of things. Reagan was constantly refining his sense of dramatics. While his occasional quotations from movies may have irritated critics, it represented a kind of on-going education as Reagan stayed abreast of the American psyche.

The Reagan Speechwriting process

> *I sometimes thought it was like sending a beautiful newborn fawn*
> *out into the jagged wilderness where the grosser animals would pierce*
> *its tender flesh and render mortal wounds; but perhaps I understate.[124]*
> *Peggy Noonan*

Despite Peggy Noonan's vivid metaphor, the speechwriting process in the Reagan White House was a relatively civilized affair. The speechwriting process in the Reagan White House followed the basic pattern in place since the Nixon administration. Speechwriter William Muir described six steps: "assignment, drafting, editing, circulation, revising within the Speechwriting Department, and revision by the president himself."[125]

Actually, the speechwriting process often began before the first involvement of the speechwriting office. Sometimes the White House had a speech in search of an event, but most often an event is scheduled with the speechwriters left to decide how to fill the event. One of the most interesting sidelights on Reagan's events was the contribution of astrologers. Joan Quigley in her book claims, "I chose the times for President Reagan's speeches, with the exception of a few emergencies when necessity dictated that the speech begin at a particular time." While Quigley doesn't take credit for the success of "The Great Communicator," she claims a level of contribution similar to the speechwriters, "My role, like that of the speech writers, made something that was already magnificent even better."[126] In her memoirs Nancy Reagan described Quigley's astrology reports as only one factor in deciding the President's schedule, but never the only one.[127]

Once the speech was set, the speechwriting staff took over drafting. In the assignment phase, the chief speechwriter assigned a speech to one of the speechwriters for drafting. The Reagan speechwriters did not have a rigid system of policy specialization and speechwriters were asked to draft speeches on a variety of topics. Specialization was avoided to keep all of the writers informed on a range of issues and to keep the rhetoric on a topic as fresh as possible.[128] Rotating assignments also had the advantage of keeping writers from having a sense of ownership of topics that could result in expectation of control over the policy itself. While rotating speeches may have kept the speechwriters fresh, it may also have diminished their clout in internal battles. These speechwriters were not even the "generalist" advisors who had ghostwritten policy and speeches in the past. By the time of the

Reagan administration the speechwriters were exclusively writers and very few would be seen as an authoritative voice on any policy.

Next, the speechwriters would edit their speeches. Often, a speechwriter would produce numerous drafts, especially for major addresses. Sometimes, speechwriters would show early drafts to other speechwriters. However, often the Reagan speechwriters would work without much input from others writers.

The circulation of drafts in the "staffing" process produced the same kind of clashes found in other administrations. While the staffing process always puts the speechwriters in conflict with the policy experts, the gap between speechwriters and policy experts was as dramatic in the Reagan White House as any studied. Peggy Noonan, describes the emotional trauma of seeing her work reviewed in the staffing in the most dramatic terms: "This is where my heart was plucked from my breast and dragged along Wet Exec, hauled along every pebble and pothole. This was my Heartbreak Hill, my Hanoi Hilton, this was… the staffing process."[129]

While the passions of the Reagan speechwriters and the increasingly narrow role of speechwriters helped insure that circulation of drafts would stir departmental, personal, and political rivalries within the Executive Branch, the Reagan White House generally did a good job of managing these conflicts because the speechwriters maintained control during the revision stage. While the speechwriters would find themselves buried by stacks of drafts marked up by experts and senior White House staffers, they were able to maintain control of the content enough to protect the integrity of the speech drafts. As one speechwriter pointed out, "the speechwriters dominated because in the typical controversy, the numerous official to whom the draft was circulated would clash with one another."[130] In the face of conflicting advice from the various offices around the White House, the speechwriters were able to find advice that supported their perspective. Much of the feedback represented small or narrow concerns that where relatively easily accommodated. Some speechwriters continued to complain, but most speechwriters felt that most of the changes they were forced to make were reasonable.

Reagan, like most other presidents, heavily edited speech drafts at times. Occasionally, the speechwriters would find that entire drafts had been discarded with Reagan re-drafting the entire speech. This occurred most often on the short radio addresses. However, especially early in the administration, Reagan would occasionally hand-write significant portions of major addresses.

Several cases from the Reagan administration illustrate the process of speechwriting and clearance, and Reagan's personal roll.

Tear down that wall

One of the most intense battles over rhetoric involved Reagan's remarks at the Brandenburg Gate in June 1987. While others may dispute it, many of Reagan's admirers give him credit for bringing down the Berlin Wall with his speech in Berlin in June of 1987 when he proclaimed, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Oddly enough, while

Reagan's admirers today credit this speech as the first step in the fall of the iron curtain, there was tremendous resistance within the administration to include that call to tear down the Berlin Wall in the speech.

Speechwriter Peter Robinson initially drafted Reagan's famous line after visiting Berlin on an "advance" trip that was designed to give him a feel for the city and the audience. Initially he met with an American diplomat in Berlin who gave him extensive advice, most of it cautious warnings that focused on what not to say. Later, Robinson had dinner at the home of Dieter and Ingeborg Elz. Over the course of the evening he wanted to get a feel for how the citizens of Berlin felt about the Berlin wall and other subjects. When the subject of whether or not Berliners had grown to accept the Berlin Wall Ingeborg broke in

> A gracious woman, she had suddenly grown angry. Her face was red. She made a fist with one hand and pounded it into the palm of the other. "If this man Gorbachev is serious with his talk of *glasnost* and *perestroika*," she said, "he can prove it, He can get rid of this wall."[131]

Inspired by the conversation that evening, Robinson drafted a speech that called upon the Soviets to tear down the wall. In the weeks that led to the delivery of the speech the draft was reviewed by both the State Department and the National Security Council—both of which wanted the call to tear down the wall removed or significantly watered down. The NSC staff considered Robinson's draft "a mediocre speech and a missed opportunity."[132] The criticism was not limited to anonymous minor officials. Both Deputy National Security Advisor Colin Powell and Secretary of State George Shultz objected to the speech. Some flavor of the degree of these objections can be seen in Appendix D, which includes a page of revisions suggested by the NSC.

Reagan would eventually approve the strong language saying to Robinson with a smile, "The boys at State are going to kill me but it's the right thing to do."[133] However, Reagan remained conspicuously silent throughout the White House's debate, protecting himself from the conflict.

Pointe du Hoc

No speech better reflects Ronald Reagan's success—and the ironies behind his success—than his speech at Pointe du Hoc in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Normandy invasion. The speech was by every account a resounding success and is widely and fondly remembered. However, while this speech may be his most eloquent speech, it is also a speech that had little direct impact on any public policy. As was often the case, some of Reagan's best rhetoric would end up having little to do with the policies of "Reagan Revolution." Historian Douglas Brinkley, who devoted a book to the speech and its antecedent events, described the "Boys of Pointe du Hoc" speech as "the opening salvo to a new American indebtedness to World War II veterans." [134] According to Brinkley, the speech played an important role in Reagan's effort to re-create a strong sense of American patriotism during the 1984 election. Reagan would reach back to the Normandy invasion because it better fit the hopes and dreams of Americans better than any military effort since.

As is often the case on a major address, the departments suggested their own version. The State Department provided their own language, described by Douglas Brinkley as "bureaucratic, lifeless in a Harvard Law School type of way" and "the kind of terse Foggy Bottom prose Secretary of State George Schultz would often deliver in a bland monotone, guaranteed to put a listless glaze over even the most ardent listeners' faces." Brinkley goes on to contrast the State Department draft from the White House style by saying "Not a glimmer of the kind of high-note rhetorical bravado FDR would have demanded from his speechwriters."[135] Weighing in on it's own themes, the National Security Council sought a theme of reconciliation with Germany because West German chancellor Helmut Kohl had been excluded from the Normandy event. Given Reagan's desire to keep Western Europe unified against the Soviet Block, the need to soothe Kohl was not trivial.

The direction of the speech took shape when Noonan learned that American veterans of the assault on the beaches would be present. When she realized that the veterans who had taken Pointe du Hoc fifty years earlier would be in attendance she scrapped her early drafts and started over.[136] Picturing the men gathered there, Noonan made their stories the centerpiece of the speech.

> Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.
>
> These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.
>
> Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem• You are men who in your "lives fought for life… and left the vivid air signed with your honor."

Noonan faced the usual pressures to include the perspectives of the departments. The State Department and National Security Council wanted the President to recall the 20 million Russian lives lost in the war. In a memo to head speechwriter Ben Elliot, Noonan responded to the suggestion:

> I have not incorporated this suggestion because it is irrelevant (the substance here is Normandy, and the Russians weren't at that party), unneeded (brings up the whole new topic of what losses each nation suffered in the war when we don't talk about the millions of French, British, German and American dead), and… it has the egregious sort of special pleading ring that just stops the flow; it sounds like we stopped the speech dead to throw a fish to the bear.[137]

Noonan would argue that the speech faced opposition within the Pentagon because it was drafted by a woman. "I have to tell you I have learned about the military and how they think over in Defense. And the idea that a woman wrote the speech and that I had never seen combat upset them beyond belief. Cliques tried to tear it apart, and I saw that what they were doing was without the intention of being helpful."[138] Despite her complaints, most of Noonan's speech survived the process. While some good material was cut from her speech, there is no denying the success of the speech as given.

Reagan: Whose Line is It?

The question of authorship of speeches is probably most hotly debated in the case of Reagan. As an actor, Reagan made an easy target for critics who expected him to be doing no more than following scripts prepared by others. Reagan's reputation as lacking interest or understanding of policy details contributed further to this debate. In the 1998 book Jane Mayer of the <u>Wall Street Journal</u> and Doyle McManus of the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> reflected the views probably held by many reporters that "Reagan seems to have ceded not only the literary craftsmanship, but much of the basic content, to his unelected staff."[139] Wynton Hall attempted to recast the debate by describing a "symphonic" view of Reagan as the composer with the speechwriters and pollster Richard Wirthlin at his direction.[140] In reality, Hall's view of composer is really a re-labeling of the earlier defense of Reagan. By the composer analogy, Reagan falls short. A composer constructs and arranges all the elements of a symphony. Reagan certainly knew the tune, but didn't know all the notes.

Some of the evidence of Reagan's relative lack of control comes from accounts within the administration. Peggy Noonan, describing the speechwriting process, casts Reagan as inheriting the product of the speechwriting process.

> It was a constant struggle over speeches, a constant struggle over who was in charge and what view would prevail and which group would triumph. Each speech was a battle in a never-ending war; when the smoke cleared there was Reagan, holding the speech and saying the words as the mist curled about his feet. I would watch and think, That's not a speech, it's a truce. A temporary truce.[141]

Mayer and McManus' account of the drafting of the 1986 State of the Union Address provides their evidence:

> The 1986 State of the Union Address started, not with a set of ideas from the president, but with a speechwriter's outline—to which Reagan contributed exactly three points. One was a clipping from the conservative <u>Washington Times</u>, calling for more boldness in the campaign for aid to the contras. One was a brief note, scrawled in the margin of a draft, explaining why Reagan wanted the power to veto individual items in the federal budget. And the third was a question jotted next to a passage about teenage pregnancies: "Will this get to the subject of pregnancies sought in order to obtain welfare and independence from family"[142]

The issue of a president's reliance on texts prepared by others is extremely nuanced. Mayer and McManus are likely correct that this speech was built from the blueprint put to paper by others. Such an outline can be found in the archives of other presidents. What we can not observe directly is the degree to which discussions that Reagan had with senior staff and the head speechwriter guided the drafting these outline. Speechwriters work to anticipate the wishes of the president they serve. As the head speechwriter wrote to Reagan after the Berlin wall speech "most of what we do over here is plagiarize your old speeches or take good notes about where you want to go in a speech."[143] Having a staff anticipate your wishes is significantly different from having staff define your wishes.

A more accurate portrait is historian Richard Reeves' argument that "The old actor was staff dependent but not staff driven. He went where he was told to go—taking directions they called it in his old business—but possibly

more than any politician of his time he said what he actually thought, often to a fault."[144] Reeves is correct to point out that Reagan did allow his staff to tell him where to stand, just as an actor trusts a cameraman and lighting director to pick the best angle and best light. But, Reagan could exert control over his message, overriding the wishes of senior staff on matters of principle. Lou Cannon captures the dilemma well:

> The paradox of the Reagan presidency was that it depended totally upon Reagan for its ideological inspiration while he depended totally upon others for all aspects of governance except his core ideas and his powerful performances.[145]

> While he would become the most highly managed president in the history of the republic, Reagan did not depend on his managers for political inspiration. He had found his ideas for himself, drawing on the resources of his life and the requirements of his performances, and shaped them into a story that would become the screenplay of his presidency.[146]

While it is clear at times that Reagan is more than capable of making up his own mind and putting together his own speeches, there are moments that will surely appear odd to the outsider. For example, Reagan turned to Peggy Noonan to draft his farewell address. Noonan was no longer a member of the administration, but was paid by the hour for this project (the bill is included in Appendix E).

Noonan sent Reagan an annotated speech draft in order to "help him get psychologically in tune with the text."[147] Reflecting on how she wanted the President to connect to the people in his final address, she told Reagan, "They love you, Mr. President, but you're still a mystery man to them in some respects. We're going to reveal more of you than you've seen in the past, mostly by talking about big things in a personal and anecdotal way."[148] Noonan's letter to the President reads somewhat like a directors motivation of an actor in way that reveals the interchange between President and speechwriter:

> For instance: You told me, and should say in your farewell address, that the twin triumphs of your presidency are the economic turnaround the people created, and the fact that America is once again admired in the world. To illustrate both assertions you are going to tell the story you told me about your first economic summit…

The speechwriter directs the President by saying "you are going to tell," reflecting the degree to which the President often let others choose his lines and direct this moves. Having words chosen for a president is nothing new. But the explanation for the general direction of the speech is the kind of guidance that distinguishes the role of Reagan's speechwriters from that provided by Roosevelt's staff. It is important to point out that while Noonan is pointing the President to a set of arguments, she is directing Reagan back to his own intentions and his own stories and the President was always ready to rewrite a speech that did not fit.

Conclusion

While Roosevelt and Reagan mastered they airwaves during their years in office, it is not clear how much they mastered the speechwriting process. While the end products may have been very similar, the two men took significantly different approaches to working with their speechwriters. While Harry Hopkins and Sam Rosenman would live as guests in the White House residence, the Reagan speechwriters almost never got to see their president and often had to content themselves with an occasional wave. While Roosevelt's speechwriters enjoyed a friendly, casual relationship with the President and played a broad policy making role in the White House, Reagan's speechwriters confined by the formal structure of the modern White House to writing and enjoyed no role in policy development.

Concerns with the distance between president and speech development can be seen in academic and political circles. Historian Lewis Gould argues in his exploration of the nature of the modern president that speechwriters "put the occupant of the White House at a remove from the words he said."[149] After his years in the White House Richard Nixon expressed his concerns about speechwriting when a president leaves speech development to others.

> So he hands the task over to his eager young writers, and a vicious circle soon develops. If policy statements become less important, a leader will spend less time on them. But thinking a speech through helps a leader think his policy through, so when the speech ceases to be his own, so does the policy. In the end, the public suffers, and so does the leader, because he has no reason to force himself to use his imagination and memory to the hilt.[150]

By comparing Reagan and Roosevelt we gain some leverage in evaluating the role each played. Both men relied upon others to assemble their speeches. However, Reagan remained detached from his speechwriting, even in cases where he would eventually weigh in. The Berlin Wall speech is an especially telling case as Reagan sits quietly, protecting himself from a battle waged among his subordinates. His distance from the debate left others uncertain about his position and may have kept him from dealing with all the nuances of the debate. While his speechwriters loved the man, they often fought over what he stood for. Roosevelt, by contrast, is a larger intellectual and personal presence in the process. His contributions shaped the structure of the speech and the arguments behind the speech. While both men deserve the label of great communicator, only Roosevelt earns the additional title off great thinker.

Appendix A
Roosevelt's Visual Clues
Reading Copy-1937 Inaugural Address[151]

-6-

[lined] In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

Appendix B
FDR's Signature
1933 Inaugural Address[152]

In this dedication of a nation we humbly ask the blessing of God.
May he protect each and every one of us.   May lie guide me in the days
to come.

[signature: Franklin D. Roosevelt]

[handwritten note: This is the original reading copy I used March 4—]

1945 Inaugural Address[153]

-5-

We pray now to Him for the vision to see our way

clearly -- to see the way that leads to a better life

for ourselves and for all our fellow men -- to the

achievement of His will to peace on earth.

[signature: Franklin D. Roosevelt]

****

[handwritten note: orig reading copy]

Appendix C

Reagan's Code[154]

Senator Mathias, honorable Members of the House, and distinguished guests, and Members of the Senate, of course.

This has been an historic day, and it's not over yet. Together, we mark the end of one term and the beginning of another. And I want each of you to know how grateful I am for all that you've done—all the energy and personal commitment that you have mustered in these last 4 years to make our system work.

In the shifting alliances of a free government, we in this room have been intense allies on some issues, while disagreeing on others. But I think the level of respect and courtesy with which we've treated each other speaks well for us and confirms the viability of this great democratic system which is now in our care.

There's been quite a few Inaugurations in my lifetime. I missed Abe Lincoln's but-—I do remember Calvin Coolidge 's.

29

Appendix D

The National Security Council offers a few suggestions on the Berlin Wall speech[155]

Page 6

[Handwritten edits and typed text, a marked-up draft of a speech:]

These protests were well-meaning; they were an exercise of ~~But the Alliance held firm, moving to counter the Soviet~~ the freedom we are defending. But they were mistaken. ~~threat. And I invite those who protested then — I invite those~~ ~~who protest today — to mark this fact.~~ Because ~~we~~ the Alliance remained firm, ~~strong,~~ the Soviets came back to negotiate on mutual reductions. to the table. Because we remained strong, today we are engaged in talks that ~~promise~~ hold the possibility of not merely limitations ~~on~~ the growth of arms, but eliminating, for the first time, a whole ~~deep and verifiable arms~~ class of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. ~~reductions~~.

As I speak, NATO ministers are meeting in Iceland to review the progress of ~~consider~~ our proposals for ~~reducing (I.N.F.'s)~~ eliminating these intermediate-range

Jargon

nuclear forces. We have proposed deep cuts in strategic forces as well. The Western Allies have made serious

(At the ~~Start~~ talks in Geneva,) ~~Indeed, we have proposed sharp~~

No!

~~cuts in virtually every aspect of the nuclear forces now based in~~ and far-reaching proposals to reduce the danger of conventional war, ~~Europe.~~ and to ban chemical weapons. While we pursue these arms ~~Today I will go further.~~ reductions, I pledge to you that we will maintain the flexible capacity ~~It is well-known that we in the west require nuclear forces~~ to deter Soviet aggression at any level at which it might occur. ~~not only to counterbalance Soviet nuclear missiles, but to make~~ And the United States, in cooperation with many of its Allies, ~~up as well for the superiority of Soviet conventional forces~~ is pursuing research toward a safer and more stable ~~virtually throughout Eastern Europe. So today I challenge the~~ nuclear balance -- to base deterrence not on the threat of ~~Soviets. Those thousands of troops -- those massive conventional~~ offensive retaliation, but on strategic defenses that protect ~~forces of all kinds -- that are in place in~~ Eastern Europe not to human lives instead of targeting them. ~~maintain the military balance but only to secure Soviet~~ By these means, we seek to make Europe -- and ~~domination. Withdraw them. For the sake of arms control -- for~~ the world -- safer. But we must remember a crucial fact: ~~the sake of peace in Europe -- withdraw them.~~ East and West do not mistrust each other because we are ~~The resolve to defend ourselves, the determination to reduce~~ armed; we are armed because we mistrust each other. ~~the nuclear threat -- our Strategic Defense Initiative makes both~~ And our differences are not about hardware; they are ~~clear. In East and West alike, today nuclear strategy is based~~ moral and political differences about the relationship between ~~upon the threat of massive retaliation. The Strategic Defense~~ the citizen and the state.

Appendix E
Peggy Noonan's Bill for Reagan's Farewell Address[156]

```
BILL FOR SERVICES RENDERED


Farewell Address by President Reagan,
assistance in drafting

Days worked:

December 13, 1988 through January 8, 1989

Total days worked:  27
@ $277 per day
Total:  ........................... $6,479.00



Pay to:  Peggy Noonan Rahn
         8917 Potomac Forest Dr.
         Great Falls, VA  22066

         SS #
```

Peggy Noonan Rahn
1-16-89

Dec. 13	4 hrs	Dec. 25 —		
Dec 14	4 hrs	Dec 26	10 hrs	
Dec 15	8 hrs	Dec 27	10 hrs Jan. 6 9 hrs
Dec 16	10 hrs	Dec 28	8 hrs Jan 7 10 hrs
Dec 17	9 hrs	Dec 29	12 hrs Jan 8 8 hrs
Dec 18	4 hrs	Dec 30	12 hrs	
Dec 19	10 hrs	Dec 31	12 hrs	
Dec 20	10 hrs			
Dec 21	10 hrs	Jan 1	12 hrs	
Dec 22	7 hrs	Jan 2	8 hrs	
Dec 23	9 hrs	Jan 3	4 hrs	
Dec 24	8 hrs	Jan 4	4 hrs	
		Jan 5	8 hrs	

Endnotes

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1 Douglas Brinkley, The Boys of Pointe du Hoc: Ronald Reagan, D-Day, and the U.S. Army 2nd Ranger Battalion (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) 115.

2 Roger Butterfield, "Ghost Writers: Behind the famous presidential phrases often lurks an unknown phrasemaker," Life July 5, 1968: 62.

3 The view that Welliver was the first speechwriter on staff is found in many sources including Irwin Hood (Ike) Hoover, Forty-Two Years in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934) 252, and Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965) 70 & 94.

4 Robert K. Murray, The Harding Era: Warren G. Harding and his Administration (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969) 122.

5 Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965) 96.

6 Cornwell 96.

7 Irwin Hoover 252. Also, Cornwell 110.

8 Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine, The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002) x.

9 Roosevelt would give his speech live over the radio and then repeat portions of the speech for the newsreel cameras.

10 Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1952) 177.

11 Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, revised edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1950) 215.

12 Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 11.

13 Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 1.

14 Samuel I. Rosenman, Oral History (Columbia University Oral History Office, 1960) 201.

15 Samuel I. Rosenman, Oral History, Columbia University Oral History Project, 197. Also, Oral History Interview with George M. Elsey, February 10, 1964, Truman Library. Roosevelt dealt with Attorney General Biddle's objection to the use of the "counselor" title by waiting until Biddle was on an official visit to Mexico before making the announcement.

16 Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 10.

17 Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 282.

18 Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 203.

19 Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 229.

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[20] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 202.

[21] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 184.

[22] Rexford G. Tugwell, Roosevelt's Revolution: The First Year-A Personal Perspective (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1977) 64.

[23] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 267.

[24] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 346.

[25] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 268.

[26] Charles Michelson, The Ghost Talks (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1944) 13.

[27] Michelson 12.

[28] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 143.

Both Rosenman and Sherwood describe a similar process. Both also mention that Roosevelt liked to start his dictation with the proclamation, "Grace, take a law." This line came from the Broadway musical, "I'd Rather Be Right. In the play an actor (George M. Cohan) playing a president modeled on FDR during the his first 100 days would turn to his secretary and say, "Mac, take a law." While the President had never seen the play, he enjoyed repeating the joke.

[29] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 266.

[30] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 213.

[31] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 204.

[32] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 248.

[33] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 3.

[34] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 268.

[35] Raymond Moley, with the assistance of Elliot A. Rosen, The First New Deal (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966) 97.

[36] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 215.

[37] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 212.

[38] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 8.

[39] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 216.

[40] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 9.

[41] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 227.

[42] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 227. See also: Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 262.

[43] Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt 285-286.

[44] Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins 216.

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[45] Sherwood, <u>Roosevelt and Hopkins</u> 216-217.

[46] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 422.

[47] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 144

[48] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 486.

[49] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 486.

[50] Moley 97.

[51] James McGregor Burns, <u>Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox</u> (New York: Harcourt, Braces & World, Inc., 1956) 161.

[52] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 90.

[53] Moley's account of the origins of the inaugural address are the focus of Chapter Seven of <u>The First New Deal</u>, 96-124.

[54] Moley 113.

[55] Moley 117.

[56] Moley 119.

[57] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 91.

[58] Moley115.

[59] Taken from a letter from Mildred Goldstein, March 13, 1933, found in Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine, <u>The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR</u> (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002) 27.

[60] Sherwood, <u>Roosevelt and Hopkins</u> 42.

The White House did not coin the term "Fireside chat" that was the product of Harry Butcher who used the term before the May 7, 1933 address. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, <u>FDR's Fireside Chats</u>, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, xv.

[61] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 92.

[62] Sherwood, <u>Roosevelt and Hopkins</u> 41.

[63] Levine and Levine 11.

[64] Levine and Levine 12.

[65] Levine and Levine 16.

[66] Sherwood, <u>Roosevelt and Hopkins</u> 503.

[67] Levine and Levine 15

[68] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 92.

[69] Rosenman, <u>Working with Roosevelt</u> 144.

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[70] Robert H. Jackson, <u>That Man: An Insider's Portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt</u>, edited by John Q. Barrett (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 159.

[71] Levine and Levine 15-16.

[72] Levine and Levine 18.

[73] Jackson 160.

[74] Jackson 160.

[75] Rosenman, Oral History 25.

[76] Peggy Noonan, <u>What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era</u> (New York: Random House, 1990) 51.

[77] William K. Muir, Jr., "Ronald Reagan's Bully Pulpit: Creating a Rhetoric of Values," <u>Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond</u>, ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003) 194.

[78] Dick Wirthlin with Winton C. Hall, <u>The Greatest Communicator: What Ronald Reagan Taught Me about Politics, Leadership and Life</u> (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004) 12.

[79] Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, <u>Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984-1988</u> (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988) 278.

[80] Dick Wirthlin 129.

[81] Interview with the Author.

[82] Douglas Brinkley 143.

[83] James C. Humes, <u>Confessions of a White House Ghostwriter: Five Presidents and Other Political Adventures</u> (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc. 1997) 172.

[84] Noonan, <u>What I Saw at the Revolution</u> 51.

[85] Peter Robinson, <u>How Ronald Reagan Changed My Life</u> (New York: Harper Collins, 2003) 140.

[86] Peter Robinson 21.

[87] Peter Robinson 6.

[88] Noonan, <u>What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era</u> 64.

[89] Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview (University of Virginia, Ronald Reagan Oral History Project, January 14, 2002) 31.

[90] Larry Speakes with Robert Pack, <u>Speaking Out: The Reagan Presidency from Inside the White House</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988) 67.

[91] Dick Wirthlin 123.

[92] Robinson 121

[93] Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview, 40.

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94 William K. Muir, Jr., "Ronald Reagan's Bully Pulpit," 196.

95 Larry Speakes 88.

Speakes describe Khachigian as Reagan's speechwriter. Of course, Speakes goes on to say that Don Regan would be his chief of staff, a choice many around the Reagan White House might have reservations about.

96 Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview, 22.

97 Peter 212.

98 Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview, 31.

99 Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview, 22-23.

100 Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus 205.

101 Lou Cannon, President Reagan: The Role of A Lifetime (New York: Public Affairs, 2000) 38-40.

102 Larry Speakes 86.

103 Larry Speakes 88.

104 Larry Speakes 87.

105 William K. Muir, Jr., The Bully Pulpit: The Presidential Leadership of Ronald Reagan (San Francisco; ICS Press, 1992) 40 and 43.

106 Peggy Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution, 67.

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108 Wynton C. Hall, "The Great Composer: A Behind the Scenes Look at Ronald Reagan's Rhetorical Symphony," in The Reagan Presidency: Assessing the Man and His Legacy, ed. Raul Kengor and Peter Schweizer, editors, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005) 176.

109 Memorandum from Richard Wirthlin to Ken Khachigian and Dave Gergen, February 15, 1981, folder: "Address to the Joint Session Economy/Background [3], White House Office of Speechwriting: Speech Drafts, Box 1, Reagan Presidential Library.

110 Dick Wirthlin 178.

111 Wynton C. Hall 176-177.

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113 Ronald Reagan and David Brinkley: A Farewell Interview, ABC News, December 22, 1988, quoted in Cannon 32.

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[118] Dick Wirthlin 55.

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[120] Dick Wirthlin 95.

[121] Aram Bakshian, Miller Center Interview, 54.

[122] White House Staffing Memorandum, June 7, [1983], folder "Dave Gergen Edits of RR Speeches," David Gergen Files, OA1530, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library,

[123] Cannon 36.

[124] Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution 76,

[125] William K. Muir, Jr., "Ronald Reagan's Bully Pulpit" 198.

[126] Joan Quigley, "What Does Joan Say?" My Seven Years as White House Astrologer to Nancy and Ronald Reagan, New York: Birch Lane Press, 1990, 77. She makes a similar claim to being "responsible for timing" speeches and press conferences as well as take offs and landings of Air Force I on page 12.

[127] Nancy Reagan with William Novak, My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan (New York: Random House, 1989) 48.

[128] William K. Muir, Jr., "Ronald Reagan's Bully Pulpit" 199.

[129] Peggy Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution, 75.

[130] William K. Muir, Jr., "Ronald Reagan's Bully Pulpit" 199.

[131] Peter Robinson 98.

[132] Memorandum from Peter Rodman to Colin Powell, June 2, 1987, folder: "SP1150," White House Office of Records Management: SP (Speeches), SP 1150, Reagan Presidential Library.

[133] Peter Robinson 103.

[134] Douglas Brinkley, The Boys of Pointe du Hoc: Ronald Reagan, D-Day, and the U.S. Army 2nd Ranger Battalion, New York: Harper Collins, 2005, 5

[135] Douglas Brinkley 129.

[136] Douglas Brinkley 142.

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[139] Mayer and McManus 204.

[140] Wynton C. Hall 178.

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[144] Richard Reeves, <u>President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination</u> (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005) 13.

[145] Lou Cannon 71

[146] Lou Cannon 66.

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[148] Note to the President from Peggy Noonan, no date, folder: "SP 1314, [8 of 8]" White House Office of Records Management: SP (Speeches), SP 1314,

[149] Lewis L. Gould, <u>The Modern American Presidency</u> (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003) 63.

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[151] Reading Copy, Folder: "F.D.R. Inaugural Address-Capitol-January 20, 1937," Container 31, Speech Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[152] Reading Copy, Folder: "F.D.R. Inaugural Address-Capitol-March 4, 1933," Container 13, Speech Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[153] Reading Copy, Folder: "F.D.R. Fourth Inaugural Address-January 20, 1945," Container 85, Speech Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[154] Reading Cards, folder "Folder 325, 1/25/85" Box 17, Presidential Speeches, Handwriting Files, Box 17, Ronald Reagan Library

[155] Robinson/ARD draft, May 27, 1987, 1:30 p.m., folder "SP1150 (Begin-501693)," Speeches--SP, White House Office of Records Management, Reagan Library.

[156]Itemization of bill, folder: "SP 1314, [8 of 8]" White House Office of Records Management: SP (Speeches), SP 1314, Reagan Library.