

# **Working for Goodwill: Journalist Lowell Mellett**

(long version)

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Note: This paper is an extended version of “Working for Goodwill: Journalist Lowell Mellett,” published in *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* (quarterly of the Indiana Historical Society) 27:4 (Fall 2015) 46-55. (All copyright protections of the article apply to this longer version.) This revision contains additional text, about twice as much as in the article. It also contains references and endnotes, which the journal’s house style omits. In addition, a chronological bibliography of Mellett’s non-newspaper writings has been added at the end of the article.

Abstract: Lowell Mellett was a major figure in President Franklin Roosevelt’s unprecedented communications apparatus. He is largely remembered for his role as liaison between the federal government and Hollywood during World War II. However, Mellett had a major career in journalism before joining the administration in 1938 and was an influential syndicated columnist after leaving the White House in 1944. As his pre- and post-White House service is less known, this article seeks to provide an historical sketch of his journalism career.

Presidential assistant Lowell Mellett (1884-1960) looms relatively large in one aspect of the history of Franklin Roosevelt’s administration and World War II. He was the senior federal

liaison between the film industry and Washington during the early years of the war. Holding a series of changing titles, he was President Roosevelt's point man for the Hollywood studios, working to promote productions that supported FDR's internationalist orientation and the nation's war goals.

Mellett initially joined the administration in 1938, after having resigned (relatively quietly) from a senior position with the Scripps-Howard in late 1937 because he disagreed with its increasingly anti-FDR editorial stance (partly triggered by Roosevelt's court packing proposal). A few months later, FDR named him executive director of the National Emergency Council (NEC), later the Office of Government Reports (OGR). Mellett reinvigorated the agency, converting it from coordinating delivery of New Deal programs to a presidential communication agency engaging in two-way public relations.

As a result of Congress passing the 1939 reorganization law, presidents were permitted to appoint six administrative assistants.<sup>1</sup> In the fall of 1940, Mellett reminded FDR that there was still one vacancy and that law permitted the six to be involved in politics (in contradistinction to run-of-the-mill federal civil servants who were expected to abstain from partisan politics). Mellett wondered if FDR would want to appoint him as the sixth administrative assistant for the duration of the reelection campaign so that he could be more overtly involved in politics? (A reminder that in 1940 Roosevelt was running for an unprecedented third term.) Mellett would be glad to resign after the election if the president so desired. FDR loved the slyness involved in Mellett's idea and in October 1940 named him as the sixth White House administrative assistant, while continuing him as OGR Director (but with only one salary). Mellett stayed on in the dual roles after the 1940 election.<sup>2</sup>

Within weeks of Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), FDR formally designated him to serve also as the Coordinator of Government Films for the duration of the war. In short order, Mellett expanded OGR staff to work with the movie industry, opened a field office in Hollywood, and issued a policy guidebook for moviemakers seeking the government's cooperation in productions. From December 1941 until July 1943, Mellett was the President's point man for the movie industry. Indicating his major status, he was one of the speakers at the 1943 Oscars ceremony. When Roosevelt reorganized federal information services in June 1942, Mellett kept his film portfolio while changing titles. OGR was merged into the new Office of War Information (OWI) and Mellett became the head of OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures. When Congress cut off almost all funding for OWI's domestic operations effective the end of Fiscal Year 1943 (June 30), Mellett resigned from OWI and the Bureau folded. He continued as a White House administrative assistant until resigning in 1944 to write a column for the *Washington Star*.

Mellett's role and influence in wartime Hollywood continues to be recognized in contemporary historical literature.<sup>3</sup> However, his relative ubiquity in this literature seems somewhat out of proportion to Hollywood's overall war record. Mellett's role began in December 1941 and ended in July 1943, 20 months of a 45-month war, or less than half the war. He seems to loom larger than perhaps is justified (possibly because his office files from that era are available to researchers at the Roosevelt Presidential Library). Mellett is also sometimes identified in histories of President Roosevelt's news and public relations strategies.<sup>4</sup>

However, there has been very little examination of the bookends of his White House work, as a journalist before 1938 and after 1944. There are only a few references in the literature about his newspaper career, usually playing a fleeting bit part. His pre-FDR role in journalism is

briefly mentioned in biographies of trailblazing female journalist Ruth Finney, WWII reporter Ernie Pyle, and columnist Westbrook Pegler, as well as a memoir by George Seldes.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, regarding his post-FDR journalism career, he is occasionally mentioned in passing, usually when citing one of his *Washington Star* columns.<sup>6</sup> According to American historian Michael Beschloss, one of history's contributions is to call attention to figures who had been important, but "as we move further and further away from the period, have shrunk almost to a pinpoint in our rearview mirrors."<sup>7</sup> The purpose of this article is to do just that with a biographical sketch of Mellett's largely unknown newspaper career before and after the Roosevelt White House.

### **Early Years in Journalism, 1900-1915**

Lowell Mellett was a native of Indiana and his father, Jesse, was editor and co-owner/publisher of the *Elwood [IN] Free Press*. The *Press* was a Democratic newspaper, probably influencing Lowell's own politics. Born in 1894, he had six brothers, five of whom went into journalism or writing. His brother Don was editor of the *Canton [OH] Daily News*, where he crusaded against organized crime and its influence over the corrupt police department. In 1926, Don was assassinated by gangsters and their allies in the police department. It was a sensational national story.<sup>8</sup> Another brother, Homer, was state editor of the *Indianapolis News* and brother John Calvin wrote juvenile fiction.

A short summary of Mellett's personal life: In 1907, while working for the Indianapolis paper, he married Dorothy Roddy. They had no children and divorced in 1911.<sup>9</sup> In 1914, while working in the Pacific Northwest, he married Bertha Knatvold, a local author of fiction and writer at the *Tacoma [WA] News*. As Bertha K. Mellett, she continued her writing career,

including novels and short stories in *Collier's*. They had a daughter, Anne (who married Dexter Keezer). Mrs. Mellett died unexpectedly in 1936.<sup>10</sup> Mellett never remarried.

Most information on Mellett's early newspaper career is based on autobiographical scraps or published accounts that relied almost exclusively on his own telling.<sup>11</sup> Mellett dropped out of public school, apparently never graduating from high school.<sup>12</sup> By one account he left at age 13, by another at 16. Mellett's first professional position in journalism was as a 16 year-old sent by the *Muncie [IN] Star* to cover the 1900 Democratic national convention in Kansas City. It nominated William Jennings Bryan, who went on to lose to President William McKinley who was running for reelection. In short succession, at 17 he worked as a city editor at the *Parkersburg [WV] State Journal*, at 18 in a similar capacity at the *Wheeling [WV] Intelligencer*, at 19 at the *Indianapolis [IN] Sentinel*, at 20 as a rewrite man at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and then at 21 as legislative and political reporter for the *Cincinnati Post*. That was followed by brief stints at the *New York Evening World* and then the *Indianapolis News*. His peripatetic career was not out of the ordinary, partly reflecting the pre-professional stage of journalism in the US, low salaries, poor working conditions, short term assignments and little prospect for permanence.

His career then solidified, with positions at larger papers in the Pacific Northwest, for longer periods and with more responsibilities. From 1910-1913 he was the city editor of the *Tacoma [WA] News* and then, from 1913 to 1915 as the Managing Editor of the new (and short-lived) *Seattle [WA] Sun*.<sup>13</sup> In both positions he reflected the times, supporting good government and progressive reforms in social and industrial conditions. In all, in 15 years he had worked for 18 newspapers.<sup>14</sup> In 1914, he gave a short lecture on his view of newspaper work, disdaining the term journalist as a too highbrow and fancy for the reality of the work. His most important advice to students in the University of Washington's Department of Journalism was to work for

“a newspaper whose aims you have reason to consider high” so that one would actually enjoy working there.<sup>15</sup>

### **United Press and World War I, 1915-1919**

In 1915 (when the *Sun* ceased publication), Mellett was hired by the United Press (UP) wire service to work in its Washington, DC office. He was both the manager of its bureau and a bylined staff correspondent. Mellett often wrote the lead capital story of the day, routinely appearing as the line story in many of UP’s subscribing newspapers around the country. He covered developments in the White House, State Department and Capitol Hill with special attention to the impact and implications of the European war which had begun in 1914 (and later called World War I). He also wrote softer feature-style stories from Washington. Mellett sometimes travelled, such as covering the threats of violence in Atlanta after the governor commuted the death sentence of Leo Frank, a Jewish business executive from New York convicted of murdering a little white girl. The governor had to mobilize the state militia to protect himself from likely lynch mobs.<sup>16</sup> On another occasion Mellett travelled to upstate New York to interview the prison official in charge of executions.<sup>17</sup> He also covered both presidential conventions in 1916. At the end of the year, he wrote a series about the effect of booming Wall Street on New York City’s high living lifestyle.<sup>18</sup>

In late 1916, he moved to UP’s London bureau to cover the war from there. By then, it had been going on for two years. Mellett covered, from afar, war developments based on official pronouncements and governmental and political developments in London. While these breaking news stories were conveyed by telegraph, he sometimes used the regular mail to submit features not likely to be outdated.<sup>19</sup> He continued covering the war after the US joined it in April 1917,

initially staying in London. He was the second in command there, often controlling assignments of more junior reporters, such as George Seldes and Westbrook Pegler. Pegler, typically, remembered Mellett only in negative terms. In at least one case, Mellett evaded the war censors (who didn't like critical coverage of the US military's operations) by taking a Pegler story back with him to London and dispatching it from there.<sup>20</sup> In early 1918, his mailed features began appearing as a series titled "Under the Camouflage: Intimate War Experiences and Observations of Lowell Mellett."<sup>21</sup>

While stationed in London, he travelled to Paris several times to report from there.<sup>22</sup> Then, in mid-1918, at the beginning of the major Allied military offensive, he returned to France to become a military correspondent. At various times, he reported from the war zone, attached to military units of the US,<sup>23</sup> French,<sup>24</sup> and British.<sup>25</sup> He filed stories with vivid portrayals of the fighting, including "probably the most detailed and accurate description received in this country of the now famous battle of Belleau Wood."<sup>26</sup> In early November, he crossed into Belgium with the Allied Armies in pursuit of the collapsing German front and reported from Brussels on the armistice of November 11, the last day of the war.<sup>27</sup>

Mellett stayed in Paris to cover the post-war peace conference. With the fate of old and new nations at stake, Paris was the hub for scores of formal, informal and self-appointed national pleaders. America, the true winner in the war, was at the center of these maneuverings. Mellett was UP's lead correspondent for these almost-daily developments.<sup>28</sup> When President Wilson briefly left the conference to visit Belgium, Mellett accompanied him.<sup>29</sup> When Wilson returned to the US on a Navy ship, Mellett stayed with him and reported by wireless from the ship.<sup>30</sup> After three years abroad as a foreign and war correspondent, Mellett was back in the US.

### ***Collier's, the Washington Daily News and Scripps, 1919-1937***

Being back at the UP's Washington bureau likely felt anti-climactic for Mellett. Within a few months of returning, in November, 1919, he accepted the position of Managing Editor of *Collier's*, a weekly magazine that mixed public affairs, essays and fiction.<sup>31</sup> Besides his editorial duties for the nonfiction portion of the magazine,<sup>32</sup> he also authored eight pieces on public affairs and US history (see Bibliography). But Mellett missed the excitement of daily journalism and the cut and thrust of politics. During the summer of 1920, he arranged with *Collier's* for a leave in order to cover the two presidential nominating conventions for UP.<sup>33</sup> Returning to the magazine after the conventions, he realized he was not a good fit for the magazine.<sup>34</sup> After only a year at the magazine, in early winter of 1920, he resigned to resume working in UP's Washington bureau.<sup>35</sup> By now, he was considered a marquee name in capital journalism, advertised by the *Washington [DC] Herald* as one of its "Ten Exclusive Special Writers."<sup>36</sup>

In the fall of 1921, a year after returning to UP, the Scripps newspaper chain hired him to be the founding editor of the new afternoon paper it was inaugurating in Washington, the *Daily News*.<sup>37</sup> As a national newspaper chain (and syndicated news service), the company felt it needed an outlet in the capital in order to be viewed as a peer and competitor to the more well known chains, such as Hearst. Mellett felt comfortable accepting the position because of the Scripps papers' tradition of reporting for a readership of the working class, the common people, and ferreting out favoritism, corruption and self-dealing elites.<sup>38</sup> The choice of Mellett was a signal that the paper, even though a tabloid, would present serious journalism rather than sensationalism. Publishing a non-salacious tabloid was practically an oxymoron. But by this point in his career, Mellett had become a brand for fact-based, clearly-written, and responsible news coverage. The first issue appeared on November 8, 1921. Mellett immediately set the tone

with a front page announcement that the paper would “refine the news in the sense in which gold is refined when the dross is removed.”<sup>39</sup> This was a significant statement, especially due to the internal structure of Scripps newspapers. As Editor, Mellett had wide powers, controlling all aspects of what appeared in the paper. For example, the business manager of the paper reported to him and Mellett had the authority to decline advertising. Hence, pressure from advertisers unhappy with news coverage was futile, because Mellett had no one over him.<sup>40</sup>

Mellett edited the paper from its debut issue until late 1937, with a brief interruption of a few years in the mid-1920s (when he held a different position for Scripps in Washington). During that time, he established and maintained a professional ethos which became lore for a generation of young and upcoming reporters he molded. Reporters loved him. According to *Daily News* reporter Robert Horton, Mellett was “the best editor I ever knew” because Mellett was “absolutely honest, scrupulous, and if he thought a story was true he would run it no matter what it might cost the paper in advertisers or circulation.”<sup>41</sup> Tom Kelly, later at the *Post*, remembered Mellett as “a gentle man of crystalline ideas” about good journalism. Mellett created a newsroom culture that “was a mixture of irreverence, sentiment, occasional fury and playfulness.” It was a reporter’s newspaper, he felt.<sup>42</sup> Ernie Pyle “liked and respected Mellett,” even agreeing against his better judgment to accept Mellett’s request that Pyle become managing editor. Eventually, Pyle was appointed to his dream job of itinerant columnist-at-large. When Pyle initially worried that his early columns weren’t good enough, Mellett cabled him, “Your stuff excellent quit worrying about it.”<sup>43</sup> Bruce Catton, a national political columnist for Scripps and later a best-selling historian of the Civil War, described Mellett as “soft-voiced...and [having] a quaint habit of sitting on one ankle and smiling quizzically at nothing at all when the arguments got hot.”<sup>44</sup> An editorial writer for a Texas newspaper reminisced about working for

Mellett early in his career. Mellett was “an old-fashioned radical, he was the champion of the underdog, the foe of entrenched wealth, the deflator of stuffed shirts.”<sup>45</sup> By the standards of the times, Mellett was progressive about women in journalism. In 1931, he nominated his reporter Ruth Finney for a Pulitzer.<sup>46</sup> (She didn’t win.)

In late 1923, Scripps (by now Scripps-Howard) asked Mellett to give up his editorship of the *Daily News* to head the Washington bureau of the chain’s news service and syndicate. (It was called the Newspaper Enterprise Association [or Alliance], sometimes cryptically identified in the credit line as “NEA Service,” a title which obscured its ownership by Scripps.<sup>47</sup>) Four years later, in late 1927, Mellett resumed his editorship of the paper while continuing to head the news service. While Scripps had a reputation for low salaries, Mellett was well paid doing both jobs. By 1937, his annual salary was about \$20,000 a year, a very good newspaper salary for the time.<sup>48</sup> While working for Scripps, Mellett was active in professional associations, including the Gridiron Club,<sup>49</sup> Delta Sigma Chi,<sup>50</sup> Overseas Writers,<sup>51</sup> and the Washington Newspaper Golf Association (beating President Harding by one stroke in 1922).<sup>52</sup>

Even if he didn’t need to freelance to make enough money, Mellett occasionally contributed pieces to non-competing outlets, often as an opportunity to express more openly his political and ideological sympathies (see Bibliography). In 1923, he wrote an oft-quoted story about the abuses of child labor and the way the court system was maintaining a virtually unrestricted corporate role in working conditions, hours and age. That year he also wrote about the growth of the KKK in his home state of Indiana, focusing partly on its virulent anti-Catholicism. The next year, he wrote a 12-part series for the labor press about the anti-labor decisions of the US Supreme Court, especially in overturning so many of the Progressives’

economic regulatory laws as violating a narrow and pro-business interpretation of the Constitution.<sup>53</sup>

Several senators tried to involve Mellett in the 1928 presidential campaign. First, George Norris (R-NE) was convinced of corruption by southern (black) Republicans. He felt that support for presidential candidates (including Hoover) was being bought with cash payments to party leaders in the South, as well as selling patronage jobs (controlled first by the Harding administration and then Coolidge's). Norris wrote Mellett his list of particulars, urging Mellett to launch major coverage of the topic, especially focusing on Norris's claims of Republican and administration efforts to block his investigation and to cover up those efforts.<sup>54</sup> Mellett was not convinced.

Then, Senator J. Thomas Heflin (D-AL) publicly accused the campaign organization of Democratic candidate Al Smith (who, at the time, was governor of New York) of paying Mellett's *Daily News* to run a (favorable) serialized biography of Smith as well as a promise of its editorial endorsement.<sup>55</sup> In June 1928, Mellett testified before a special Senate committee to refute the charges, agreeing to be sworn in as a witness (thus subjecting himself to potential perjury charges). He pointed out that the chain had bought the rights to serialized biographies of both Smith and Hoover, paid a syndicate in New York for the rights (not the candidates or their campaigns) and – after a conference of the editors of Scripps newspapers – had already publicly endorsed Smith for the Democratic nomination and Hoover for the Republican. Mellett also said that if the chain's preferred candidates both won their party's nomination, then it would endorse Hoover over Smith.<sup>56</sup> He made Heflin look like a fool and a demagogue (including being an anti-Catholic bigot).

### ***Washington Star* Columnist: 1944-VJ Day**

In spring 1944, the management of the *Washington Evening Star* contacted Mellett at the White House. The conservative and Republican afternoon newspaper was seeking an editorial columnist who would provide a contrarian perspective and appeal to Democratic readers. Giving readers “variety and balance between conservative and liberal” columnists had been a conscious and long-standing editorial policy of the paper.<sup>57</sup> Would Mellett be interested? He was. He had lost his Hollywood portfolio about eight months earlier and had since been serving full-time as administrative assistant to the President.<sup>58</sup> The timing was also auspicious politically. Mellett would be in place in time to promote FDR’s reelection to a fourth term in November.<sup>59</sup> Roosevelt announced the news at his regular semi-weekly press conference on March 24. “Much to my disgust,” he said light-heartedly, Mellett had told him of his plans and “there is nothing for me to do except to accept it.”<sup>60</sup> In his formal letter accepting the resignation, the President joked that now he might have “to eat some of the things I’ve said in the past about columnists” who were generally conservative, anti-FDR and some quite virulently so.<sup>61</sup>

Mellett titled his column “On the Other Hand,” indicating his mission to provide the other side of the story, giving some balance to the *Star*’s editorial position and its many conservative columnists. The column was published three times a week, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and was nationally syndicated. His columns, managed by the Bell syndicate, ran for varying periods in, for example, the *New York Post*, *Boston Globe*, *St. Petersburg [FL] Times*, *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, *Hamilton [OH] Journal*, *[Mitchell, SD] Daily Republic*, *Alton [IA] Democrat*, *[Harlingen, TX] Valley Morning Star*, and *[Beckley, WV] Daily News-Digest*.

While his column did not seem to have been widely picked up, he was considered “a popular newspaper columnist,” partly because of his capital perch, giving him widespread

readership of decision-makers and reporters in Washington.<sup>62</sup> He was assumed to be representing the president's and Democratic Party's perspective and was trying to balance out the bulk of columnists, who – reflecting the editorial leanings of most publishers – were conservative. For Democrats, Mellett was one of the few lights they could look to. As a result, many of his columns were inserted in the *Congressional Record* by Democrats as concisely presenting their point of view. For example, on July 20, 1945, Senator Dennis Chavez (D-NM) inserted four of Mellett's recent columns published in the preceding weeks as comprehensively articulating his views.<sup>63</sup>

In his debut on April 15, 1944 Mellett noted a vitriolic Pegler column 'welcoming' him back to journalism.<sup>64</sup> In a humorous and self-deprecating style (the opposite of Pegler's), he declined to fire back. Instead, Mellett said his goal would be to promote love for fellow man and good will, not hate (excepting toward the leaders of Germany and Japan). It was unusually soft and un-masculine vocabulary for the time. He pointedly noted that "we can use those words without feeling self-conscious or otherwise embarrassed."<sup>65</sup> Entertainment columnist Walter Winchell opined that Mellett's first column was "a good lesson in reporting, good taste, and snappy retorting."<sup>66</sup>

In his first substantive column, Mellett quickly waded into the political wars. He noted that partisan politics had taken no significant rest due to the war. The criticism that FDR was using the war for partisan and ideological purposes had been a long-running theme. This time, the assertion was that the timing of the Allied invasion of Europe was being set for the same week as the Republican presidential convention, as a way to push it off the front page. Mellett reminded readers that the Secretaries of War and Navy were prominent Republicans who didn't need the job and therefore would not hesitate to quit noisily if they felt the President was

meddling in the conduct of the war for partisan advantage.<sup>67</sup> Mellett was clearly announcing his role of calling out criticisms of the President which FDR routinely declined to respond to and which Democrats on Capitol Hill often took a pass on.

He elaborated on these political attack strategies of FDR's critics in several other columns. He described an effective tactic frequently used by conservative editorialists and politicians to generate negative stories about the president. They were "conjuring up imaginary plans and purposes on the part of the administration and then demanding in outraged accents, 'Do we want our boys sacrificed for that?' It is part of a campaign calculated to destroy confidence in American leadership regardless of the consequences."<sup>68</sup> Discussing the seeming increase in tax evasion during the war, Mellett vividly described the underlying theme used by conservatives against FDR's war leadership that dominated the tenor of news coverage from Washington during the war: "From the very beginning of the war a political chant has been sounded against every government regulation made necessary by the war. Citizens are told they are being harassed unnecessarily, taxed unduly, deprived of necessities and comforts by the whims of irresponsible bureaucrats. This is dinned in their ears unceasingly."<sup>69</sup>

Mellett also tried to counteract the political amnesia that FDR's critics were eager to exploit. For example, he called out leaders of the conservative Farm Bureau who, in 1933, had supported trying to raise pork prices by killing piglets (and donating the meat to feed the hungry), but years later depicted themselves as consistent critics of FDR's agricultural policies.<sup>70</sup> When red-baiters tried to smear union leader Sidney Hillman as a Communist, Mellett gleefully quoted from earlier articles in the Communist Party's *Daily World* criticizing Hillman for positions the paper viewed as anti-Communist.<sup>71</sup> Mellett was a consistent liberal and aggressive voice regarding domestic events. He pointed to the good done by a federal bureaucracy such as

improving the nutrition of armament production workers – even management liked it!, he wrote.<sup>72</sup> Mellett repeatedly denounced the demagoguery of Southern racists and the House Un-American Activities Committee.<sup>73</sup> His columns also discussed international developments, such as speculating on possible maneuvering by Japan to avoid the inevitable and commenting on reviving a free press in newly occupied Germany.<sup>74</sup> In particular, Mellett was a partisan Democratic voice, almost consistently praising his party and criticizing the posturing and false statements of Republicans.<sup>75</sup> As a former White House insider, he wrote a heartfelt column upon FDR's death and described the reality behind the light-hearted mask that FDR presented during his twice-weekly press conferences.<sup>76</sup>

Mellett's writings sometimes made him a news figure. His column on railroad freight rates prompted a critical editorial in a Midwestern paper, as did a column on female conscription in a Pennsylvania newspaper.<sup>77</sup> An Alabama Congressman criticized Mellett's anti-lynching column as having "gone beyond the pale of freedom of speech and [he] has been guilty of libel;" another for Mellett opposing parochial California interests regarding a water treaty with Mexico.<sup>78</sup> Congressman Martin Dies, head of the Un-American Activities Committee, tried to smear him as colluding with a 'red' labor organization for political purposes while in the White House.<sup>79</sup> A Mellett column trying to understand the appeal of likely 1944 GOP presidential nominee Tom Dewey (then governor of New York) was dissected in Dewey's 'official' campaign biography as indicative of Dewey's intangible appeal.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Washington Star* Columnist: Truman's First Term (after VJ Day), 1945-1948**

From the end of WWII to the 1946 Congressional elections, Mellett's columns continued the themes he had developed during his wartime columns. He promoted the Democratic

president and criticized Republican and conservative maneuverings in Congress to defund the New Deal. Considering the seeming institutionalized political amnesia that capital politicians and their allies in the media exploited, he sometimes served as the voice of “history,” reminding readers of such ancient backdrops of a current news story as what had happened five years earlier. New themes that he focused on during the post war period included defending unions and collective bargaining which the business sector tried to reverse; the need for international cooperation including a world government such as the UN; and the consequences of the US monopoly on the atomic bomb. Mellett also tried to coin a new word, suggesting that conservatives who made “a virtue of selfishness” instead of generosity to the less fortunate be called “illiberal.”<sup>81</sup> It didn’t catch on. Once he broke with President Truman. Truman supported legislation to counteract a railroad workers’ strike, including the power to draft the strikers into the armed forces and then force them back to work. Mellett, somewhat melodramatically, declared Truman had just lost any chance of winning the 1948 presidential election.<sup>82</sup> Mellett’s column became news, quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor*.<sup>83</sup>

Mellett’s foremost effort during that time was to promote a purge of conservative legislators during the 1946 election. Besides his columns criticizing conservatives (whether Democratic or Republican), the only book he ever wrote was to encourage liberal activists to defeat members of the House and Senate who were (sometimes quietly) trying to sabotage progressive legislation. The slim (138-page) book *Handbook of Politics and Voter’s Guide* was released in May 1946 by a commercial publishing house, New York-based Penguin Books. At 25¢ it was inexpensively priced to increase sales. According to one source, Penguin printed a million copies.<sup>84</sup> Mellett viewed the book as an effort at what would now be called transparency, making information widely available that otherwise was hard to obtain, especially all in one

location.<sup>85</sup> The book presented the key roll call votes that he felt truly captured a legislator's support or opposition to FDR's and Truman's policy proposals. In particular, he focused on appropriation bills, often mind-numbing votes on riders to funding bills that were nearly impenetrable in terms of ideology. He repeatedly demonstrated that it wasn't enough for Congress to authorize a program. Later, when the annual appropriation for that program came up, opponents often sought to cut funding, even zero it out, providing a backdoor and low profile way to kill a program. According to a Broadway gossip columnist, the potential explosiveness of the book made some conservative legislators try to get it "suppressed."<sup>86</sup>

Mellett made the unusual argument that defeating an anti-New Deal legislator in a primary, even if he were replaced by another anti-New Deal opponent, was good for liberals. In Mellett's logic, removing a powerful senior member who was, say, a committee chair and replacing him with a powerless freshman was progress, because the replacement would have less clout to affect outcomes. Notwithstanding its partisanship, the book got mostly positive reviews as a guide to public policy and elected officials. Syndicated columnist Jack Stinnett dedicated two columns to it, calling the book "the best key I have run across on how to vote for whom."<sup>87</sup> The *Christian Science Monitor* called it "highly engaging" and the *New York Times* reviewer called it "powerful."<sup>88</sup> Non-journalistic publications also made positive comments. *Foreign Affairs* said Mellett "gives some sage advice to intelligent voters."<sup>89</sup> The review in the *American Political Science Review* was mixed, noting that the book did not contain anything new for political scientists, but that for lay citizens "the book is worth the price."<sup>90</sup>

It was all for naught. The Republicans had a sweeping victory in the November 1946 elections. The Senate went from 57-38 Democratic majority to a 51-45 Republican majority. The

House shifted from 243-190 Democratic to 246-188 Republican. This was the soon-to-be-famous 80<sup>th</sup> Congress which Truman used as his punching bag in his 1948 reelection campaign.

The November 1946 elections may have been a setback for Democrats, but Congressional deliberations in 1947-48 were a goldmine of stories for Mellett. Republican lawmaking efforts included such diverse areas as: electricity supplied by publicly-owned facilities vs. private utilities, labor vs. management, irrigation policies for small vs. corporate farms, rent control, loyalty oaths, and opposition to health care reform. These issues provided a nearly endless supply of subjects for which Mellett could excoriate Republicans and articulate the viewpoint of liberal Democrats.<sup>91</sup> Nor did Mellett limit himself to domestic politics. He felt comfortable commenting on international affairs as well, such as US nuclear strategy in the Cold War, the UN, India, and Palestine.<sup>92</sup>

Between the 1946 midterm elections and the 1948 presidential election, the most prominent public role Mellett played was related to the efforts by Republicans to claim that Democrats protected Communism and subversion when they were in power. Actor Robert Taylor, one of the relatively few movie stars who were Republicans, made an inflammatory accusation against Mellett. At a closed hearing of House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in Los Angeles “investigating” Communism in the movie industry, Taylor claimed that when Mellett was the federal government’s liaison with Hollywood during the WWII, he had used his power to force Taylor to play a role in the pro-Soviet *Song of Russia*. According to Taylor, Mellett had arranged for a deferment of Taylor’s enlistment in the Navy, even implicitly threatening that Taylor’s refusal to make the movie would endanger his impending commission. The committee chair, of course, promptly declared that this serious accusation needed to be publicly investigated in further hearings. Taylor’s accusation was not merely political dynamite,

it was a two-fer for Republicans. It was part of the larger narrative arc of (1) Communist infiltration into Hollywood to the point of inserting pro-Communist propaganda within movies and (2) that the Roosevelt administration had been soft on Communism and were apologists for the Soviet Union during WWII. (Yalta!) Mellett immediately and flatly disputed Taylor's charge, saying "It was too damn silly to deny."<sup>93</sup> But the inflammatory charge had (political) legs; nor would the media let such a great story fade away.<sup>94</sup> Mellett then demanded that HUAC give him an equal chance to testify before the committee to refute the "smear-and-run" allegation.<sup>95</sup> At first, Committee chair J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ) said Mellett would be invited to testify at a follow-up hearing in Washington.<sup>96</sup> He even claimed that Mellett had been subpoenaed (i.e. forced) to testify.<sup>97</sup> It was untrue. Mellett was never subpoenaed and never given a chance to testify before the committee about his version of the story.<sup>98</sup>

A few years later, a law review article stated that Mellett's case was a "flagrant example" of the unfairness of the way the Committee operated, refusing to honor the "right of reply." It was the kind of "character assassination" typical of HUAC's Hollywood hearings.<sup>99</sup> More than half a century later, Mayhew revisited the accusation and concluded that Taylor's basic charge against Mellett seemed unlikely based on the historical documentation he was able to locate and examine.<sup>100</sup> The contretemps captured Mellett's unusual status. He was an observer and a participant. As a prominent nationally syndicated news columnist, he was commenting on current affairs (with a pro-Democratic bias). As a former White House aide, he was still a public figure who *made* news. A member of Congress attacked Mellett for being so effective an administration propagandist that Mellett's writings were having an impact on Congressional deliberations.<sup>101</sup> Mellett's views and activities were sometimes commented on by other columnists and editorialists, treating him as a news maker.<sup>102</sup>

As a columnist, Mellett's main goals in 1947-48 were political, to defeat what he considered special-interest giveaways by the Republican 80<sup>th</sup> Congress and to promote a Democratic presidential victory in 1948.<sup>103</sup> He wrote a series of four columns profiling Senator Robert Taft (R-OH), one of the leading candidates for the Republican nomination, in advance of Taft's campaign swing to the West,<sup>104</sup> attacked the eventual Republican nominee Thomas Dewey,<sup>105</sup> and promoted Truman's chances.<sup>106</sup> He gloated in his first post-election column about Truman's upset victory.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, Mellett was something of a trail-blazer in journalistic ethics. While corrections have become a common journalistic feature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Mellett was unusual in making them in 1948. At the end of a regular column, he placed a "Correction" about an earlier column. He had misstated something, attributing a negative (and, due to its language, unprintable) comment to Senator Ralph Brewster (R-ME) that another state politician had actually made. Mellett apologized and stated that "I regret my own bad reporting.—L. M."<sup>108</sup>

### ***Washington Star* Columnist: Truman's Second Term, 1949-1952**

Truman's upset victory was followed by something of an anti-climatic term. Internationally, Washington news was dominated by the initially popular Korean War becoming increasingly unpopular because it seemed endless and without a clear US victory, the (equally endless) Cold War, and the USSR acquiring the atom bomb. Domestically, the news was dominated by Republican attacks on (supposed) widespread Communist infiltration in the executive branch, Joe McCarthy's rise to power, accusations of corruption in government, Truman's firing of General MacArthur, "Who lost China?", labor-management unrest, and inflation. Mellett weighed in on all these and more. He was the spirited voice of liberalism (and

accurate history) while Democratic spirits were flagging and becoming increasingly defensive. Democrats often inserted his columns in the *Congressional Record* as articulating their liberal viewpoint on policy issues, apparently better than they were doing or, at least, welcoming having at least some company. He was especially acerbic about the conservative coalition which dominated politics on Capitol Hill (going back to FDR). Although the Democratic Party was mostly the majority party in both houses of Congress, an alliance of conservative (largely Southern) Democrats and minority Republicans had a numeric majority. Mellett was often the columnist trying to rally dispirited liberals. Two examples of this prominent liberal role occurred during fights over Truman's nominations to regulatory commissions. Now long forgotten, they were central acts in the fierce ideological battles of Truman's full term.

In early 1949, Truman nominated John Carson to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The conservative coalition (and their allies in the media) made the nomination a cause célèbre, fighting against a person they characterized as “a radical, an anti-capitalist and, by implication, a Communist.”<sup>109</sup> Carson (a Catholic) was none of those, but he was independent and did not believe that corporate behavior was always all right nor that the marketplace was always perfect. He believed that sometimes regulation was necessary. Mellett (and several other left-of-center pundits) wrote in support of Carson's confirmation. A column by Mellett raised a new issue, namely of a 1931 Vatican encyclical on economics which, when selectively read and interpreted, was mildly critical of some aspects of capitalism. With Carson's views somewhat based on the encyclical, Mellett implied that the conservative opponents of the nomination were, indirectly, also viewing the Pope as one of their ideological enemies. Mellett's column triggered another committee public hearing, somewhat farcical, with the Senators trying to parse Catholic theology

and economic philosophy as expressed in the encyclical.<sup>110</sup> Eventually, after a six-month fight, Carson was confirmed.

An even more contentious fight occurred later that year. While a Congressman, Lyndon Johnson (D-TX) had been (largely) a pro-FDR partisan. But then, as a freshman Senator, he led the charge of the oil and gas industry against the reconfirmation of Leland Olds for the Federal Power Commission (FPC). Again, the issue was vigorous regulation or not. Olds and Truman were in the former category, Johnson and the industry in the latter. In a melodramatic telling, biographer Caro wrote of LBJ's smearing of Olds as a Communist.<sup>111</sup> Caro highlighted the power and incisiveness of Mellett's columns during the confirmation fight, when Mellett repeatedly pointed to weaknesses of Olds' supposed transgressions.<sup>112</sup> A much more traditional and restrained academic recounting of the confirmation battle also (approvingly) noted Mellett's ability to shred flimsy accusations.<sup>113</sup> Trying to rally liberals, Eleanor Roosevelt also cited Mellett's points in her column.<sup>114</sup> This time, the conservative coalition prevailed, with the Senate rejecting the nomination in a floor vote.<sup>115</sup> For Mellett, it was a depressing outcome, emblematic of the times.

Conservatives correctly viewed Mellett as a powerful voice of their political enemies and they gave as good as they got. Senator Robert Kerr (D-OK) said the themes of Mellett's columns came from "his beloved textbooks on socialism" and that there was a "vacuum that he has been carrying around between his ears for so long."<sup>116</sup> Senator George Smathers (D-FL) named Mellett as one of the columnists who were consistently writing "on the socialist side."<sup>117</sup> Congressman Clare Hoffman (R-MI) called him "an efficient chronic mudslinger."<sup>118</sup>

### ***Washington Star* Columnist: Eisenhower, 1953-1954**

Eisenhower's election put new wind in Mellett's sails. With a Republican in the White House and Republican majorities in both houses of Congress, Mellett could now let it fly. His was the voice of the loyal opposition, repeatedly presenting alternatives to the policies of the GOP. To those who discounted his criticisms as that of a knee-jerk Democrat, he wrote a column a few months after Eisenhower took office that his journalistic mantra was "to keep a critical eye on government. Not unfriendly, just critical."<sup>119</sup> In particular, he often returned to the theme of Republican support for business, to the point of agreeing to arrangements relating to public power, logging, offshore mineral rights, and water that in his view were outright giveaways of public assets.

At one point, Mellett's writings were targeted by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI), then at the height of his powers. Mellett had written a column in March 1953 on "The Right to Confront Accusers" that described sympathetically a tale from an (unnamed) acquaintance on how the climate of fear was affecting the private lives of federal employees, even when they had done no wrong. Nobody wanted to run the risk of being "mentioned" or associated with anything controversial, even the most minor neighborhood matters.<sup>120</sup> Mellett didn't explicitly criticize McCarthy in the column, but no one could miss who he was alluding to. McCarthy, accurately, took offense. Though unnamed in the Mellett's column, it was based on a story told him by David Coyle, a writer and friend who was, at the time, an at-will federal employee within the office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

McCarthy ferreted Coyle out, subpoenaed him to testify at a closed session of his (much feared) Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.<sup>121</sup> At the meeting McCarthy swore Coyle in, thus subjecting Coyle to potential perjury charges. The senator proceeded to bludgeon Coyle to state on the record that he was the source of the Mellett column. When Coyle confirmed it,

McCarthy demanded: “Did you think that [giving a column idea to Mellett] was one of your functions as a State Department employee?” Coyle: “No, that was one of my functions as a free American.”<sup>122</sup> McCarthy, typically, would have none of it. He was offended and outraged. His aide, Roy Cohn, said more bluntly that “attacks against this committee” were improper.<sup>123</sup> During the hearing, McCarthy even claimed that he had just subpoenaed Mellett to force him to testify before the subcommittee later that day.<sup>124</sup> It was an empty threat. Mellett never testified.<sup>125</sup> Although it was a closed session, the story quickly leaked and became the latest sensation of McCarthy’s activities. Based on the spin of the stories and the quotes of the closed hearing, McCarthy or an aide was the likely source. Coyle was the heavy, as was the just-ended Democratic administration.<sup>126</sup> Mellett, of course, was unrepentant, although likely regretting that Coyle had gotten ensnared by McCarthy due to one of his columns.<sup>127</sup>

Besides highlighting flaws in Republican policy proposals and trying to present positive Democratic alternatives, Mellett was increasingly the ‘memory’ of the Democratic Party, dedicating columns to defending FDR and correcting the narrative that Republicans were using to re-craft history. He re-explained Democratic positions in support of TVA, public power, Yalta and all other subjects of Republican accusations. By summer of 1954, such columns were increasingly taking on a nostalgic and elegiac tone. Mellett used the device of the “Old Timer” who was narrating how current developments fit into somewhat forgotten past events.<sup>128</sup> In a sense, he was trying to add historicity to daily journalism.

With no fanfare or formal announcement, Mellett’s last regular Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday column was published on July 17, 1954. It only hinted obliquely at its significance. The old-timer narrator talked of “getting old” and having a “tired old heart.” “I’ve done a lot in my time, but it isn’t easy anymore.” He reminisced about his life growing up in the North,

remembering the Spanish-American War through to WWII. He caustically observed that he wasn't able to switch from love to hate or the other way around depending on who America's enemies and allies were at the moment.<sup>129</sup> In all, the column was of a worn out and ill veteran reporter who was bidding adieu.<sup>130</sup>

### **Retirement, 1954-1960**

After ending his column, Mellett's last bylined piece was published in December 1955 in the *Post*, the *Star*'s arch-competitor. It was a (complimentary) review of a book by Herblock, the *Post*'s long-time cartoonist.<sup>131</sup> It is possible that Mellett was asked to do the review precisely because he had been associated with the *Star*, as a signal that the reviewer was independent and in a position to write a negative review if he so wished.

Mellett's health deteriorated after 1954. He died in a Washington hospital on April 6, 1960, only 12 hours after being admitted. He was 76. No cause of death was announced, but the obituaries noted he had had an unspecified "heart condition" and that he had been in ill health for a long time.<sup>132</sup> (He was also a heavy smoker.) His only offspring, his daughter, was with him when he died.

Editorials praising his contributions to journalism appeared in the *Post*, *Star*, and *Daily News*.<sup>133</sup> An editorial writer for the *El Paso [TX] Herald-Post*, who had apprenticed under Mellett at the *Daily News*, referred to him glowingly, regretting that Mellett "was better known to a generation now gone" because few would be aware of the significance of his contributions to journalism.<sup>134</sup>

Two Democratic senators paid tribute to him on the floor of the Senate the day after the announcement of his death. Ernest Gruening (D-AK) described him as "a journalist of character,

of enlightenment, of vision. He served in his lifelong profession of journalism with outstanding distinction.”<sup>135</sup> Mike Monroney (D-OK) praised him for his dedication to his profession and to making sure both sides of a story would be covered fairly.<sup>136</sup>

## **Legacy**

Lowell Mellett bequeathed \$37,500 to the American Newspaper Guild to promote a responsible press, suggesting an annual prize for those helping pursue that goal.<sup>137</sup> The Guild’s award gradually shifted from Mellett’s aggressive approach to journalism to a more reformist focus on problems of press freedom.<sup>138</sup> It came to be called the “Mellett Award for Improving Journalism through Critical Evaluation.”<sup>139</sup> Winners included such distinguished journalists and institutions as Ben Bagdikian, Stephen Hess (of the Brookings Institution), Norman Isaacs, Jonathan Alter, Martin Schram, Tom Rosenstiel, and *Nieman Reports*. In 1984, the management of the award shifted to the School of Journalism at Penn State.<sup>140</sup> A few years later, the Mellett money ran out. Penn State changed the name to the Bart Richards Award for Media Criticism, which continues to be presented annually at the National Press Club to this day.<sup>141</sup>

Mellett’s career began with the relatively common early 20<sup>th</sup> century journalistic orientation of a Progressive crusader and reformer who stood for good government and protection of the unfortunate. Then, his professional career as a reporter, editor, government information official and columnist, spanned the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He covered or participated in all the awesome stories of the era: World War I, the booming 1920s, the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, the birth of the atomic age, the Cold War, and McCarthyism. It was an exciting time to be in journalism and Mellett conveyed to his readers how interesting and intriguing these events were. Perhaps most significant about his bifurcated

newspaper career is that he was one of the first reporters who shifted from journalism to government *and back*. For most Washington-based reporters who became government PR professionals, such a career change went only one way and was permanent. Mellett was one of the few who came back, albeit to practice punditing instead of reporting. He deserves to be remembered as much for his extensive newspaper career before and after Roosevelt's White House as for his brief role as federal film czar at the beginning of WWII.

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"The Sons of T. Jefferson," *Collier's* 65, no. 22 (June 26, 1920), 12-13, 18, 20.

"The Constitution Among Friends," *Collier's* 66, no. 15 (October 9, 1920), 9, 34-37.

"Yourself a Thousand Years from Now," *Collier's* 67, no. 3 (January 15, 1921), 12-13, 20.

"What Every President Knows," *Collier's* 67, no. 10 (March 5, 1921), 11, 22-23.

"Has Congress Helped the Farmer?" *Collier's* 67, no. 12 (March 19, 1921), 10-11, 29.

"His Training for Responsibility," *Collier's* 67, no. 17 (April 23, 1921), 22.

"Trade Follows the News," *Collier's* 67, no. 20 (May 14, 1921), 11, 27.

"Forward Move in Transportation," *Nation's Business* 11, no. 11 (October 1923), 18-21.

"Klan and Church," *Atlantic Monthly* 132 (November 1923), 586-92.

“Boy Who ‘Wrecked’ the Child Labor Law Tells How He was Used by Mill Owners,” *Labor* 5, no. 11 (November 17, 1923), 1, 3.

“The Sequel to the Dagenhart Case,” *American Child* 6, no. 1 (January 1924), 3.

“The Supreme Court’s Rise to Power,” 12-part series, *Machinists’ Monthly Journal* 36, nos. 1-12 (January-December 1924).

“The Office of Government Reports,” *Public Administration Review* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1941), 126-31.

“Government Propaganda,” *Atlantic Monthly* 168, no. 3 (September 1941), 311-13.

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*Handbook of Politics and Voter’s Guide* (New York: Penguin, 1946).

“History with Suspense of a Novel” (book review), *Labor and Nation* 3, no. 3 (May-June 1947), 42.

## Notes and References

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<sup>1</sup> The Brownlow Committee’s report recommending the reorganization had famously stated that “The President needs help” including with several new presidential assistants who should have “a passion for anonymity.” That was a good description of Mellett’s style in the White House.

<sup>2</sup> Mordecai Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency: FDR’s Office of Government Reports* (Albany: State University of New York Press).

<sup>3</sup> Some recent examples (in reverse chronological order): Joseph McBride, *Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success*, rev. ed. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 475-79; Gary D. Rhodes, “‘The double feature evil’: Efforts to eliminate the American dual bill,” *Film History* 23 (2011): 68; Andrew J. Falk, *Upstaging the Cold War: American Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy, 1940-1960* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 25; Randy Roberts, “John Wayne and Wartime Hollywood: John Wayne Goes to War,” in Steven Mintz and Randy Roberts (eds.), *Hollywood’s America: Twentieth-Century American Through Film*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 152-53; Alan Sennett, “Play It Again, Uncle Sam: *Casablanca* & US Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 37 (Spring 2009): 4.

<sup>4</sup> Betty Houchin Winfield, “FDR as a Communicator,” in William D. Pederson (ed.), *A Companion to Franklin D. Roosevelt* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 226; Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, “George Akerson’s Legacy: Continuity and Change in White House Press Operations,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38 (December 2008): 598; David Michael Ryfe, *Presidents in Culture: The Meaning of Presidential Communication* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 71.

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<sup>5</sup> Kathleen A. Cairns, *Front-Page Women Journalists, 1920-1950* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 56; James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 23; Oliver Pilat, *Pegler: Angry Man of the Press* (Boston: Beacon, 1983), 82; George Seldes, *Witness to a Century: Encounters with the Noted, the Notorious, and the Three SOBs* (New York: Ballantine, 1988), 54.

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. Caro, *Master of the Senate; The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, vol. 3 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 273-77; Sarah Hart Brown, *Standing Against Dragons: Three Southern Lawyers in an Era of Fear* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 42; Mark Dyreson, "If We Build It Will They Come? The Plans for a National Stadium and American Olympic Desires," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25 (September 2008): 1490n69.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Beschloss, "In the Air, On the Sea," *New York Times Book Review*, November 27, 2011, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Crowl, *Murder of a Journalist: The True Story of the Death of Donald Ring Mellett* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Mellett's ex-wife (who, after their divorce, sometimes went by the name Dorothy Millette, vaguely echoing her married name), was later in a common-law marriage with Paul Bern, who became an influential film producer at MGM. Without disclosing that relationship (which she was against ending), he then married star Jean Harlow. In 1932, just as this (quasi)bigamy scandal was about to break, Bern died at home of a gunshot wound to the head, apparently following a furtive visit by Roddy when Harlow was out. Eager to protect Harlow's star status, MGM apparently participated in a cover-up at the crime scene (before the police arrived) and a character assassination of Bern when the news broke. These actions strongly contributed to an official coroner's decision that Bern had committed suicide (E. J. Fleming, *Paul Bern: The Life and Famous Death of the MGM Director and Husband of Harlow* [Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009]). If the suicide had indeed been faked, the shooter may have been Roddy, or someone associated with MGM or even an upset Harlow. Harlow died in 1937, at age 26, without ever discussing Bern's death. Roddy killed herself a few weeks after Bern's death. Even though Mellett had had no contact with her since the divorce more than two decades earlier, he volunteered to pay for her funeral and cremation given that no one else stepped forward as a relative or friend to claim her body and make final arrangements ("Former 'Hubby' Pays Costs of Woman's Burial," [Valparaiso, IN] *Vidette-Messenger*, September 20, 1932, 5).

<sup>10</sup> "Bethe Mellett, Noted Author, Dies on Coast," *Washington Post*, June 2, 1936, 4.

<sup>11</sup> "Knight in White Armor," *Nation's Business* 29, no. 6 (June 1941), 29-30, 84-93; "Lowell Mellett," Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame, [http://indianajournalismhof.org/wp-content/uploads/wp\\_indianajournalismhof\\_org\\_/file/Lowell%20Mellett.pdf](http://indianajournalismhof.org/wp-content/uploads/wp_indianajournalismhof_org_/file/Lowell%20Mellett.pdf). Mellett's papers at the Roosevelt Presidential Library relate almost exclusively to his White House service, as does his oral history interview.

<sup>12</sup> His 1898 registration for a library card (when he was four years old) at the Muncie (IN) Public Library is available online,

<http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/WMRead&REC=1&CISOPTR=428&CISOSHOW=185>.

<sup>13</sup> In 1912, Mellett was the sole passenger on flight in Washington State, giving him the distinction of the first air passenger in the state's history, "First Passenger Flight in Washington,"

[http://digitum.washingtonhistory.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/boland&CISOPTR=32](http://digitum.washingtonhistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/boland&CISOPTR=32).

<sup>14</sup> Lowell Mellett, "Problems of Organization," in *Supplementary Lectures in Journalism; Bulletin of the University of Washington*, University Extension Series No. 11, General Series No. 81 (Seattle: University of Washington, 1914), 41. Bethe Mellett delivered a lecture on "Woman's Opportunities in Journalism."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>16</sup> "Gov. Slaton Still in State of Siege Today," *Altoona [PA] Mirror*, June 22, 1915, 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Killing of Becker is Called Murder," *Altoona [PA] Mirror*, July 31, 1915, 2.

<sup>18</sup> "Speculators Roll in Wealth—New York A Modern Babylon," [Chicago] *Day Book*, December 12, 1916, 30; "Employees on Wall Street Get Big Gifts This Year," *La Crosse [WI] Tribune*, December 15, 1916, 20; "'Prosperity Crawl' is New Dance in New York, Cafes and Dance Halls Crowded," *Sandusky [OH] Star-Journal*, December 16, 1916, 6.

<sup>19</sup> "Abraham Lincoln and Booker T. Washington Popular in England," *Sheboygan [WI] Press*, March 20, 1917, 2;

"Sees Jewish Dream of Republic of Judea Coming True," *Iowa City [IA] Citizen*, May 18, 1917, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Emmet Crozier, *American Reporters on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 175-76; Seldes, *Witness to a Century*, 54; Pilat, *Pegler*, 69, 80-82.

<sup>21</sup> For example, see Warren [PA] *Evening Times*, January 24, 1918, 3; *Des Moines [IA] News*, February 21, 1918, 5.

<sup>22</sup> "Allies Conference to Determine How War Against Germany Shall be Handled," *Sheboygan [WI] Press*, November 27, 1917, 1; "Sea Operations to be Directed by Allied Board," *Freeport [IL] Journal-Standard*, December 5, 1917, 1.

<sup>23</sup> "Marines Gained Object," [Oshkosh, WI] *Daily Northwestern*, June 8, 1918, 9.

- <sup>24</sup> “Germans Retreating on Entire Front,” *Des Moines [IA] News*, July 28, 1918, 1.
- <sup>25</sup> “Huns Stubbornly Resisting the Advance of the British Armies on St. Quentin-Cambria Line,” *Clearfield [PA] Progress*, September 21, 1918, 1.
- <sup>26</sup> “When Others Fell Back U. S. Men Stood at Belleau Wood,” *Trenton [NJ] Evening Times*, July 10, 1918, 10.
- <sup>27</sup> “Brussels Again Lighted Up While Huns Leave Country,” *San Antonio [TX] Evening News*, November 11, 1918, 1.
- <sup>28</sup> “America Holds the League of Nations in a Balance,” *Moberly [MO] Evening Democrat*, February 4, 1919, 1; “Wanted, Nation to Act as Prosecutor of Former Kaiser,” *Iowa City [IA] Daily Citizen*, May 15, 1919, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> “Wilson Orders Disregard of Rule Laid Down by British on Shipping,” *Clearfield [PA] Progress*, June 18, 1919, 1. The story related to the British insistence on maintaining an economic blockade of Germany until the signing of a peace treaty.
- <sup>30</sup> “President on His Way Home,” *Dunkirk [NY] Evening Observer*, June 30, 1919, 1; “Pres. Wilson Will Explain to Congress How Germany Must Carry Out Terms of Treaty,” [*Lebanon, PA*] *Semi-Weekly News*, July 7, 1919, 6. The dateline was “Aboard the U.S.S. George Washington.”
- <sup>31</sup> “Mellett Goes to Colliers,” *Indianapolis [IN] Star*, November 4, 1919, 2.
- <sup>32</sup> “Hoosier Spinner of Racetrack Yarns May Invade Field of Political Fiction,” *Indianapolis [IN] Star*, May 7, 1922, 80. The article was about Lowell’s brother John adopting the pen name Jonathan Brooks partly so that his fictional pieces could appear in *Collier’s* without the appearance of nepotism on Lowell’s part. Brooks was their mother’s maiden name.
- <sup>33</sup> “Mellett, Jacobs, Martin, Walker and Others to Report G.O.P. Convention for Star-Journal,” *Sandusky [OH] Star-Journal*, June 5, 1920, 12. His rather cumbersome byline was “Written for the United Press. By Special Arrangement with Collier’s Weekly” (“Overnight the Leaders Worked at Compromise,” *Dunkirk [NY] Evening Observer*, June 12, 1920, 1).
- <sup>34</sup> *Collier’s* also had some major union problems at the time and it is possible that Mellett quickly realized how uncomfortable he felt in that environment. For example, the week he joined the magazine it had just resumed publication after a strike at its New York City plant. It had bypassed the strike by moving printing to a nonunion location out of town. The magazine explained to its readers that the resumption of publication was because “good Americans are demonstrating in this way their respect for law, order, and the square deal” (“Collier’s Resumes Publication,” *Collier’s*, 64, no. 15 [November 5, 1919], 13).
- <sup>35</sup> “Harding Urges Congressmen to Work Together,” *Ireton [IA] Ledger*, December 9, 1920, 3. Some of the articles that Mellett wrote for *Collier’s* were published after he left the magazine, presumably due to the length of the editing and publishing processes.
- <sup>36</sup> “Everybody’s Newspaper: The Herald -- One Cent” (advertisement), *Washington Post*, May 12, 1921, 9. It is unclear why the *Post* agreed to run this full-page ad from its morning competitor.
- <sup>37</sup> “New Afternoon Paper At National Capital,” *Logansport [IN] Morning Press*, October 27, 1921, 4.
- <sup>38</sup> Gerald J. Baldasty, *E. W. Scripps and the Business of Newspapers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
- <sup>39</sup> Tom Kelly, “The Daily News: An Insider’s View of Elan, Zeal on a Reporter’s Paper,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 1972, C1, C5.
- <sup>40</sup> US Congress, Senate, Special Committee Investigating Presidential Campaign Expenditures, *Presidential Campaign Expenditures*, public hearings, 70<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 922.
- <sup>41</sup> Richard M. Ketchum, “Interview with Robert Wyman Horton, Dec. 30, 1987,” 1-2. Box: *The Borrowed Years*, Ketchum Papers, Research Collections, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington. A few months after Mellett joined the White House, he hired Horton to direct the PR office of the US Maritime Commission. Horton rose to head PR for FDR’s pre-WWII arms production build-up. It was called the Division of Information and was within the Executive Office of the President. After Pearl Harbor, for the first half-year of WWII, the Division quickly grew to become the largest of all federal information agencies. In mid-1942, it was folded into the new Office of War Information along with Mellett’s OGR (Mordecai Lee, *Congress vs. the Bureaucracy: Muzzling Agency Public Relations* [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011], 273n86).
- <sup>42</sup> Kelly, op. cit.
- <sup>43</sup> Tobin, *Ernie Pyle’s War*, 23, 40.
- <sup>44</sup> Bruce Catton, *The War Lords of Washington* (New York: Greenwood, 1969 [1948]), 64.
- <sup>45</sup> “Lowell Mellett” (editorial), *El Paso [TX] Herald-Post*, April 8, 1960, 20.
- <sup>46</sup> Cairns, *Front-Page Women Journalists*, 56.
- <sup>47</sup> Rodney Dutcher, “Washington Letter” (syndicated column), *Bismarck [ND] Tribune*, January 13, 1928, 4.
- <sup>48</sup> “Mellett to Do Column for Washington Star,” *Editor & Publisher* 77, no. 14 (April 1, 1944) 9.
- <sup>49</sup> “Gridiron Widows’ Play Own Little Farce,” *Syracuse [NY] Herald*, December 15, 1935, 4-A.

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- <sup>50</sup> UP, “‘Gridiron’ Banquet Held at Lexington [VA],” *Charleston [WV] Gazette*, May 28, 1933, 8.
- <sup>51</sup> “J. A. Spender Guest of Overseas Writers,” *Washington Post*, January 4, 1928, 20.
- <sup>52</sup> Carter Field, “Harding, Fussed by Crowd, Loses Press Golf Honor by a Stroke,” *New York Tribune*, May 27, 1922, 1.
- <sup>53</sup> Coming 13 years before FDR’s court packing effort, even before the Great Depression started (1929), this is a reminder how early progressives saw the court as the bastion of laissez faire economics and an obstacle to reforms.
- <sup>54</sup> Donald J. Lisio, *Hoover, Blacks, & Lily-Whites: A Study of Southern Strategies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 52, 297n16. Norris seemed to be wearing odd political blinders in this effort. He showed no interest in how Southern Democrats successfully disenfranchised black voters.
- <sup>55</sup> US Congress, *Presidential Campaign Expenditures*, 755. In those days, the word was spelled ‘indorsement.’
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 920-24.
- <sup>57</sup> Sung Chiao Chen, “The News and Editorial Performance of the Washington Evening Star,” unpublished master’s thesis, American University, 1961, 83.
- <sup>58</sup> In a jab and sneer typical of Luce publications, *Time Magazine* wrote that Mellett was “not conspicuously employed since Pearl Harbor” (“The President’s Week,” *Time*, April 3, 1944, 19).
- <sup>59</sup> A major newspaper hiring a White House staffer to write an column which opposed the paper’s editorial stance was repeated in 1973, when the liberal *New York Times* hired Nixon White House aide William Safire.
- <sup>60</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Complete Presidential Press Conferences* (New York: Da Capo, 1972), 23:110.
- <sup>61</sup> “Mellett Resigns to Resume Writing,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1944, 9.
- <sup>62</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 291.
- <sup>63</sup> *Congressional Record* 91, no.12 (July 20, 1945), A3571-73.
- <sup>64</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “President Takes Slap at Press in Accepting Resignation of his Aid [sic], Lowell Mellett” (“Fair Enough” syndicated column), *Troy [NY] Record*, April 13, 1944, 6. Another conservative columnist, Paul Mallon, wrote that Pegler “fell on his face” in his comments about Mellett, even though Mallon agreed with some of Pegler’s criticisms of Mellett (“News Behind the News” [column], *Lima [OH] News*, April 17, 1944, 6).
- <sup>65</sup> “Man Has to Bite Dog to Make It News, Lowell Mellett Recalls in First Column,” *Washington Star*, April 18, 1944, A-7. See also “Star to Present First Column By Lowell Mellett Tuesday: Veteran Writer Says Tolerance Will be Keynote,” *Washington Star*, April 16, 1944, A-2.
- <sup>66</sup> “The Man on Broadway” (syndicated column), *Syracuse [NY] Herald-Journal*, April 20, 1944, 21.
- <sup>67</sup> “President has Fulfilled his Promise to Keep Politics Out of Present War,” *Washington Star*, April 20, 1944, A-9. Given the rose-colored glasses by which WWII is now viewed in the national memory, the column provides a reality check and reminder of how sharp and continuous partisan criticism of FDR was during the war.
- <sup>68</sup> “Dutch Indies Will Not Cost Any U. S. Blood,” *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, April 12, 1945, 9.
- <sup>69</sup> “Intensive Campaign Planned to Root Out Tax Chiselers,” *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, August 5, 1945, 6.
- <sup>70</sup> “Slaughter of Those Little Pigs in 1933 Provided Food for Hungry,” *Congressional Record* 90, no. 10 (August 1, 1944), A3492-93.
- <sup>71</sup> “Communist Paper Shows Hillman is Not Communist,” *[Harlingen, TX] Valley Morning Star*, August 12, 1944, 4.
- <sup>72</sup> “Thwarted by Those You Help – That’s Life of a Bureaucrat,” *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, June 24, 1945, 7.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*: “Senate Admonished to Watch When Poles Go to Polls,” July 12, 1945, 9; “Plenty of un-American Doings Right in Congress,” July 23, 1945, 7.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*: “Japs May Adopt Communism in Desperation,” May 31, 1945, 5; “Allies Should Tell Germans the Truth,” May 15, 1945, 6.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*: “Truman Winning Admiration by Doing Excellent Job,” May 3, 1945, 4; “Taft’s Criticism of Potsdam Ridiculed,” August 7, 1945, 4.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*: “Writer Recalls President’s Ordeal at Press Confabs,” April 17, 1945, 4; “‘Now We’re on Our Own’: Is Feeling Since F. R. Died,” April 19, 1945, 9. The second column triggered a hostile editorial in a Pennsylvania newspaper. If millions of people were indeed dependent on FDR and now were on their own, that was a bad thing because it meant they had become habituated to a paternalistic government. Such people “constitute the real danger to democratic government, those who believe it is the duty of government to support the people, rather than of people to support the government” (“‘On the Other Hand’” [editorial], *Chester [PA] Times*, April 19, 1945, 6). The editorial is another demonstration of the deep-seated hatred of the New Deal by conservative publishers, still vivid in 1945, after four years of the war.
- <sup>77</sup> “About Freight Rates” (editorial), *Mason City [IA] Globe-Gazette*, May 29, 1944, 13; “Regimentation for ‘Lost Generation’” (editorial), *Chester [PA] Times*, January 23, 1945, 6.

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- <sup>78</sup> *Congressional Record*: 90, no. 5 (June 13, 1944), 5840; 91, no. 1 (February 19, 1945), 1282-84.
- <sup>79</sup> “Dies Weighs PAC Probe,” *Charleston [WV] Daily Mail*, July 29, 1944, 1; “Is This Martin Dies’ Opus?” (editorial), *Tucson [AZ] Daily Citizen*, July 31, 1944, 8.
- <sup>80</sup> Stanley Walker, *Dewey: An American of This Century* (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill, 1944), 146.
- <sup>81</sup> “Columnist Suggests A Name For Mean, Selfish Politicians,” *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, September 18, 1945, 6.
- <sup>82</sup> “Truman Finished Politically by Strike Talk,” *Ogden [UT] Standard-Examiner*, June 1, 1946, 6.
- <sup>83</sup> Richard L. Strout, “Defeat Looms in Senate for Strikers’ Draft,” *[Boston] Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 1946, 17.
- <sup>84</sup> Drew Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round” (syndicated column), *Washington Post*, April 18, 1946, 12.
- <sup>85</sup> Mellett’s book foreshadowed by two and a half decades a similar effort by Ralph Nader (Mark J. Green, James M. Fallows, and David R. Zwick, *Who Runs Congress? [Ralph Nader Congress Project]* [New York: Bantam, 1972]). Like Mellett’s, the Nader book was originally published as a paperback and in an election year to encourage wide circulation and impact. Nader’s effort extended into four editions, through 1984, while Mellett only had one.
- <sup>86</sup> Walter Winchell, “Man About Town” (syndicated column), *Charleston [WV] Daily Mail*, April 23, 1946, 9.
- <sup>87</sup> Jack Stinnett, “Washington” (syndicated column), *[Massillon, OH] Evening Independent*, May 14, 1946, 4. The second column ran the next day.
- <sup>88</sup> John Beaufort, “How to Be a Politician: Mr. Mellett Speaks,” *[Boston] Christian Science Monitor*, July 17, 1946, 11; Alan Cranston, “Checking on Your Congressman,” *New York Times Book Review*, June 30, 1946, 15. In 1968, Cranston was elected to the US Senate (D-CA). Before and after WWII, he was a freelance writer and (leftie) political activist. Occasionally, he was invited by the *Times*’ Sunday book review section to review books on public affairs (authoring nine reviews between 1945 and 1947). During WWII, Cranston worked first at the Office of Facts and Figures (a sister agency to Mellett’s OGR) then OWI, where he headed the Foreign Language Division. It disseminated information to US non-English newspapers. Cranston likely had crossed paths with Mellett in 1942-43 when both headed units in OWI’s Domestic Branch (although Mellett as a bureau chief outranked Cranston as a division chief [in a different bureau]).
- <sup>89</sup> Robert Gale Woolbert, “Recent Books on International Relations,” *Foreign Affairs* 25:1 (October 1946): 164-65.
- <sup>90</sup> J. B. Shannon, Review of *Handbook of Politics* by Lowell Mellett, *American Political Science Review* 40:5 (October 1946): 1017-18. After the election, the reform-minded *National Municipal Review* also recommended the book (Charles Edison, “How to Break into Politics,” *National Municipal Review* 36:6 [June 1947]: 305).
- <sup>91</sup> A photo of Mellett in spring of 1948 was taken by a photographer from *Life* magazine, but never published, “Harold L. Ickes Honored At New York Post Dinner,” <http://www.life.com/news-pictures/53377407/harold-l-ickes-honored-at-new-york-post-dinner>.
- <sup>92</sup> “Reign of Fear Threatens World Self-Destruction,” *[Mitchell, SD] Daily Republic*, January 20, 1948, 4; *Congressional Record*: 94, no. 9 (February 3, 1948), A628; 94, no. 10 (April 14, 1948), A2269.
- <sup>93</sup> “Red Quiz Charge Branded ‘Silly,’” *Long Beach [CA] Independent*, May 15, 1947, 1. It was the lead story.
- <sup>94</sup> Taylor later backpedaled a bit on the most inflammatory aspects of his charges against Mellett.
- <sup>95</sup> “Mellett Asks Speedy Hearing on Hollywood ‘Red’ Charges,” *Washington Post*, June 6, 1947, 17.
- <sup>96</sup> AP, “House Anti-Red Group to Grant Mellett Hearing,” *Washington Post*, June 7, 1947, 3.
- <sup>97</sup> AP, “Filmdom Red Inquiry Opens Tomorrow,” *Washington Post*, October 19, 1947, M1.
- <sup>98</sup> “Thomas Group Dodged Truth, Mellett Says,” *Washington Post*, October 31, 1947, 12.
- <sup>99</sup> Robert K. Carr, “The Un-American Activities Committee,” *University of Chicago Law Review* 18 (Spring 1951): 630.
- <sup>100</sup> Robert Mayhew, “The Making of ‘Song of Russia,’” *Film History* 16 (2004): 351-52.
- <sup>101</sup> UP, “‘Spooned News’ Charged,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1947, 28.
- <sup>102</sup> Walter Winchell, “In New York” (syndicated column), *Brownsville [TX] Herald*, April 7, 1947, 4; Kenneth L. Dixon, “Assignment: America” (syndicated column), *[Connellsville, PA] Daily Courier*, July 8, 1947, 6; [H. R.] Baukhage, “Washington Digest” (syndicated column), *[Mt. Pleasant, IA] News*, October 17, 1947, 5; “Red Propaganda” (editorial), *Kingsport [TN] Times*, October 22, 1948, 4.
- <sup>103</sup> Strictly speaking, Truman was not running for reelection to a second term. Rather, like Theodore Roosevelt, Vice President Truman had ascended to office early in the deceased president’s term and then ran for election to a full (first) term. Both could have run for reelection to a second (full) term, but did not.
- <sup>104</sup> The *Reno [NV] Evening Gazette* didn’t run Mellett’s columns regularly, but printed a series of four columns on Taft because “the articles are of special interest in view of Senator Taft’s scheduled appearance in Reno” (Editor’s Note, Lowell Mellett, “Taft ‘Durable Person,’ Capital Writer States,” September 16, 1947, 6). The remaining columns ran on September 17-19.

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<sup>105</sup> *Washington Star*: “About Those Dewey Speeches that Fail to Say Very Much,” October 2, 1948, A-7; “Dewey Must Explain His Program to People if He Expects Action,” November 2, 1948, A-11.

<sup>106</sup> “Truman’s Popular Vote May be One Thing, His Electoral Vote Another,” *Washington Star*, October 28, 1948, A-19.

<sup>107</sup> “And Then the Flash Came from New York that Dewey Conceded,” *Washington Star*, November 4, 1948, A-17. Labor’s League for Political Education gave Mellett an award for “the best 100 word analysis of what happened” in the 1948 election (R. L. Davis, “Congress in Review,” *Catering Industry Employee* 58:4 (April 1949), p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> “Dewey’s Vigorous Campaigning Seen Contrast to G.O.P. Reliance on Apathy,” *Washington Star*, October 23, 1948, A-7.

<sup>109</sup> Wilfrid Parsons, “The Carson story,” *America* 82, no. 5 (November 5, 1949), 125.

<sup>110</sup> US Congress, Senate, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *Nomination of John J. Carson to be a Member of the Federal Trade Commission*, public hearings, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 1949, 39ff.

<sup>111</sup> Caro, *Master of the Senate*, chaps. 10-12.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 273-74, 277-78, 287, 296.

<sup>113</sup> Joseph P. Harris, “The Senatorial Rejection of Leland Olds: A Case Study,” *American Political Science Review* 45 (September 1951): 685n12.

<sup>114</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day” (syndicated column), *Laredo [TX] Times*, October 7, 1949, 6.

<sup>115</sup> The *Congressional Record* reprinted two of Mellett’s columns about Olds’ ongoing battles with the oil and gas industry: excerpts of his May 24, 1949 column (95, no. 8 [August 1, 1949], 10866) and the full text of his October 1, 1949 column (95, no. 11 [October 11, 1949], 14225-26).

<sup>116</sup> *Congressional Record* 96, no. 3 (March 24, 1950), 4019.

<sup>117</sup> UP, “Senator Tags ‘Socialists’,” *Tucson [AZ] Daily Citizen*, November 29, 1952, 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Congressional Record* 98, no. 2 (February 29, 1952), 1661. By the end of his term, Truman was so unpopular he knew he could not be reelected. Instead, he endorsed Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson to be his successor. Stevenson lost to Eisenhower in the 1952 presidential election.

<sup>119</sup> Column of April 7, 1953, quoted in Buel W. Patch, “Government and the Press,” *Editorial Research Reports* 1 (May 6, 1953), 324.

<sup>120</sup> Excerpts of the column are in US Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Executive Sessions*, Vol. 1, 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session [1953], published in 2003, 806ff.

<sup>121</sup> By the time he testified before the subcommittee, Coyle was no longer employed by the State Department. He had been let go the morning of the hearing, effective close-of-business the day before. It is unclear if he had been released because he was an at-will employee and was viewed a Democrat, a carry-over from the Truman administration. If so, his firing would be unremarkable, merely part of a routine house-cleaning of patronage employees when the presidency changed from one party to another. (At this point, the Eisenhower administration was only seven weeks old.) However, based on the timing of his firing and the subcommittee hearing, it is more likely that McCarthy had complained to the administration about harboring an employee who was criticizing him (McCarthy) and the administration promptly let Coyle go before McCarthy would go public. This shifted the lead of the story from McCarthy investigating the activities of a *current* State Department employee to a *former* one. If indeed the latter, it shows McCarthy’s continuing power after Eisenhower assumed the presidency. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was doing his best to keep McCarthy and the rest of the very conservative right-wing of the party placated.

<sup>122</sup> US Congress, *Executive Sessions*, 810.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 860.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 838.

<sup>125</sup> It is unclear from the record if the Mellett subpoena was never issued or if it was never invoked. One possible explanation could be that McCarthy eventually understood that Mellett would be a forceful proponent of freedom of the press and that Mellett would get the better of him not only in the hearing, but also in subsequent coverage.

<sup>126</sup> March 16, 1953: Warren Duffee, UP, “State Department ‘Adviser’ Never Got to Advise Anybody,” *Washington Post*, 1; AP, “Coyle Denies Being ‘Lost’,” *Hartford [CT] Courant*, 9.

<sup>127</sup> Indicating that their friendship survived intact, Coyle was the master of ceremonies at a memorial service for Mellett at the Cosmos Club (“Mellett Grant Seeks Responsible Press,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1960, A1).

<sup>128</sup> *Washington Star*: “Knowland Would Destroy U. N.: Old-Timer Thinks He’s Out to Do for United Nations What Lodge and Others Did for League of Nations,” July 3, 1954, A-5; “There’s Plenty to Write About: At Least Old-Timer Thinks There is and Passes Along a Few Suggestions, Including a New Slant on President,” *Washington Star*, July 10, 1954, A-5.

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<sup>129</sup> Probably deliberately, his comment about not being a hater revisited the theme of his first column in April 1944. Mellett was explicitly closing the circle of his punditing career.

<sup>130</sup> “Getting Old, Old-Timer Finds: Says His Heart is Not What it Used to Be, Can’t Switch from Love to Hate with Ease Expected of Loyal Americans,” *Washington Star*, July 17, 1954, A-5. Confirmation that this was his last published column is documented in Reel 19 of the *Washington Star-News Index* (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, n.d.). Mellett is not listed as authoring any columns after that. All *Star* columns are listed chronologically in the category of “Special Articles” within the News section of the index (which also has separate sections for editorials and features). Oddly, all of Mellett’s obituaries listed him as retiring in 1956, not 1954. It is possible that he (quietly) suspended his column in 1954 due to health issues. He may have hoped to resume the column eventually, but never did. If so, perhaps in 1956 he simply made a more formal, but again private, decision that he would never be healthy enough to restart the column and then retired.

<sup>131</sup> “Herblock Proves Again He Can Typewrite, Too,” *Washington Post*, December 11, 1955, E9.

<sup>132</sup> “Lowell Mellett Dies; Noted Capital Newsmen,” *Washington Star*, April 7, 1960, B-4; Harry Gabbett, “Lowell Mellett, Newsmen, Dies,” *Washington Post*, April 8, 1960, C2; AP, “Lowell Mellett, Ex-U.S. Aide, Dies,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1960, 35.

<sup>133</sup> The editorials were reprinted in the *Congressional Record* 106, no. 6 (April 8, 1960), 7717-19.

<sup>134</sup> “Lowell Mellett” (editorial), *El Paso [TX] Herald-Post*, April 8, 1960, 20.

<sup>135</sup> *Congressional Record* 106, no. 6 (April 8, 1960), 7717.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 7719-20.

<sup>137</sup> “Mellett Grant Seeks Responsible Press,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1960, A1.

<sup>138</sup> Walter M. Brasch, *With Just Cause: Unionization of the American Journalist* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 9, 344.

<sup>139</sup> “They Pulled No Punches” (advertisement), *Columbia Journalism Review* 28:5 (January/February 1990): 21.

<sup>140</sup> “Mellett Award for journalism finds new home at Penn State,” [*Huntington, PA*] *Daily News*, January 18, 1985, 9.

<sup>141</sup> Based on information provided by Steve Sampsell, Director of College Relations, College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, December 2011, author’s files.

<sup>142</sup> Based on the biography Mellett submitted to *Who’s Who in America, 1950-1951*, he had authored several articles in British public affairs magazines (p. 1863), but I was unable to locate a searchable database of such periodicals.

Lowell Mellett was a journalist best known for supervising the series *Why We Fight* during World War II. Inducted to The Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame April 27, 2013 Lowell Mellett ended his journalism career as a nationally syndicated columnist for the *Washington Star*, ending his "On the Other Hand" column in 1956 because of ill health; Mellett died on April 6, 1960. He was a gifted writer and a brilliant editor whose work will long be remembered in his profession." The late Lowell Mellett, an Elwood native who was a newspaper executive in Washington before becoming a top aide to President Franklin Roosevelt. Mellett's journalism career started at age 16 when the *The Muncie Star* sent him to cover the 1900 Democratic National Convention. Journalist Lowell Mellett endowed the fund bearing his name and donated it to the Newspaper Guild in 1966 to foster press responsibility without impinging on its freedoms. Since 1978, the Guild annually awards a journalist the Lowell Mellett Award for Improving Journalism through Critical Evaluation.

Abstract: This collection includes correspondences, nomination applications, newspaper articles, journalism awards, publications, as well as audiotapes (9 stored separately) and 2 video tapes documenting the Mellett Fund for a Free and Responsible Press. Collection Number: 621. Be good there and all the best for your new workplace. 50. It was a pleasure working with you and your loss will be greatly felt. Thank you for your time and dedication while you worked for us. Best wishes as you embark on a new challenge. Similar Articles: 50 Appreciative Work Anniversary Wishes. 51. Farewell to the colleague whose work ethics, discipline, and commitment towards the organization is legendary and can never be contested. This company is losing an amazing employee and us- a true friend. You know you'll succeed in all that you set your heart to. Our best wishes are always with you! 52. Our team is forever indebted to you for pulling us out of hard spots and taking all the hard work up for yourself. Lowell Mellett (1886 - 1960) was a journalist best known for supervising the series *Why We Fight* during World War 2. Born in small-town Indiana, Mellett claimed his interest in public affairs came from holding a torch in rallies for rivals Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison since, as he wrote, "a boy could keep the torch if he was thoughtful enough to drop out of the parade before it reached the finish line" He became a journalist, covering local and then national and international affairs... The majority of workers in Iceland now look set to move to shorter hours for the same pay. Trials of a four-day week in Iceland were an "overwhelming success" and led to many workers moving to shorter hours, researchers have said. The trials, in which workers were paid the same amount for shorter hours, took place between 2015 and 2019. Productivity remained the same or improved in the majority of workplaces, researchers said. A number of other trials are now being run across the world, including in Spain and by Unilever in New Zealand. In Iceland, the trials run by Reykjavík City Council and the national government eventually included more than 2,500 workers, which amounts to about 1% of Iceland's working population.