

The Rise and Apparent Fall of a New Frontiersman

What Makes This Man Run?

NOTE: This is the story of the meteoric rise—and current obscurity—of a youthful star of the New Frontier, by our news analyst who specializes in Latin American affairs.

By RICHARD H. BOYCE
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

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DICK GOODWIN

Richard N. Goodwin, 30, product of Harvard Law School, class of 1958, came to the New Frontier early and got on rapidly.

For a year after he left Harvard he served as clerk for Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. In the summer of 1959 he joined the staff of the House Committee investigating the quiz-show scandals of television.

There Dick Goodwin first came to national attention when he sold an article about the TV probe to Life magazine. Newspapers criticized him for it. The probe committee issued an order forbidding its staff members from writing articles for publication. And Dick Goodwin quit his job.

The Life piece had nothing to do with it, he insisted. The committee chairman and committee chief counsel both had consented to its publication, he said. Anyway, he'd been offered a job with John F. Kennedy, then a senator building a campaign staff.

Star Rises

Now Dick Goodwin's star began to rise. As a Kennedy campaign speechwriter and member of a Kennedy pre-inauguration task force on Latin American problems, the curly-haired Goodwin and Mr. Kennedy became close. When Mr. Kennedy moved into the White House, Mr. Goodwin moved in too—as an Assistant Special Counsel to the President.

Then only 29, Mr. Goodwin became the President's chief adviser on Latin America. But he'd never been there. He didn't speak Spanish. He had no Latin-American background. These factors, plus his youth, brought more criticism.

But the young law graduate with the brilliant mind ignored all this. He continued on the way up. And he learned fast. He wrote Mr. Kennedy's speech in March 1961, which announced the Alliance for Progress. He headed a White House task force on Cuba after the attempted invasion. He attended a Rio meeting of the Inter-American Bank. He made other trips to Latin America on special missions for the President. He studied Spanish.

In August, 1961, Mr. Goodwin went to Uruguay for the hemisphere conference that put the Alliance for Progress into being.

Conversation

It was there Mr. Goodwin experienced the first of several incidents that have slowed his pace—he had a conversation with Ernesto (Che) Guevara, Cuba's Minister of Industry.

Two days later, Argentine President Arturo Frondizi also met with Sr. Guevara.

did not leave a wrong impression.

Invitation

During the conference Chilean officials invited Mr. Goodwin to visit their country and discuss aid. He agreed. Later Washington told Chile it would send instead Teodoro Moscoso, Alliance for Progress chief. Chile insisted on Mr. Goodwin. The situation was strained. Finally both men went, and Chile was promised \$120 million in aid. One administration official said:

"The Chileans should have dealt directly with Secretary of State Rusk. They wanted Mr. Goodwin because they knew they could work on his inexperience."

While Mr. Goodwin was in Chile, his boss, Robert Woodward, was moved out as Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America. Some thought Mr. Goodwin would get the job. But Edwin Martin got it. Under Secretary George Ball reportedly told Mr. Woodward he was being moved (he now is Ambassador to Spain) "because you haven't been able to control that boy." Mr. Woodward reportedly replied: "How can I control him? He's a White House man!"

In April Mr. Goodwin was criticized again when he agreed to a TV debate with Carlos Fuentes, a Mexican communist. The debate didn't come off because Sr. Fuentes was denied an entry visa.

Of this, Mr. Goodwin says he accepted the network's invitation to debate after checking with superiors, and the debate was called off when it was learned Sr. Fuentes was a communist.

Mr. Goodwin was criticized again in May when he gave me information regarding negotiations with Mexico toward settling a long-standing Texas border dispute. Mr. Goodwin's critics said premature publication might injure delicate negotiations, called his action "poor judgment."

Rarely Seen

Last month newsmen noted that when Mr. Goodwin accompanied the President to Mexico he took no part in official functions, was rarely seen during the three-day visit. A State Department source commented: "Ed Martin, Mr. Goodwin's

new boss, kept him under wraps, kept him from being his own worst enemy."

Was New Frontiersman Goodwin's rocket-like career beginning to slow down?

One State Department official thought so. He said: "Mr. Goodwin is no longer our liaison to the White House on Latin Affairs. Ralph Dungan is now our only link over there."

Mr. Dungan is a special assistant to President Kennedy. He has been handling some Latin affairs since January 1961. Today he said: "I do maintain more than a usual interest in Latin America now."

After the Mexican trip

Mr. Goodwin was given an "additional assignment" with the Peace Corps. He is preparing for an October conference on training of middle-management personnel for Latin nations.

Eased Out?

The announcement sparked talk that Mr. Goodwin was being eased out of his high post because of the series of incidents which have been labeled poor judgment.

But officials who have worked closely with Mr. Goodwin deny this. Mr. Goodwin himself airily dismisses it as untrue. His name is still on the door of his State Department office and he spends about half his time there.

Does New Frontiersman Goodwin think he has been guilty of poor judgment?

"That's for others to say, not me. But my career has not been shortened, in fact the contrary; after I finish the Peace Corps job I'll be back here (at State) full time."

The pleasant and mild-mannered Goodwin concedes he may have critics in the department "but I don't know of anybody trying to oust me and I get along well with my colleagues."

There is no question Mr. Goodwin has had a hand in almost every important Latin-American policy decision during the Kennedy term.

It seems equally sure that no matter how he may stand with some of the State Department or the White House Staff, Mr. Goodwin is still high in Mr. Kennedy's esteem.

This brought criticism from the Argentine military. Argentine Foreign Minister Adolfo Mugica defended his President by pointing to the Goodwin-Guevara meeting, then unpublicized. Sr. Mugica disclosed that Messrs. Goodwin and Guevara had a three-hour secret meeting arranged by the Cuban Embassy to sell the idea Cuba wanted to get along with the United States.

Mr. Goodwin denied this, saying the Guevara meeting was social, unexpected, not secret, lasted less than a half hour, and that they didn't discuss Cuba-U.S. relations.

Sr. Mugica insisted no high U.S. official could talk with a high Cuban communist without the President's knowledge. Sr. Guevara added fuel to the fire by publicly backing Sr. Mugica, saying he told Mr. Goodwin Cuba was "ready to talk to the U.S." Sr. Mugica's boss said his statements had embarrassed Washington, Sr. Mugica resigned.

House Blast

On the floor of the House, Rep. Steven Derouinian (R., N. Y.) called Mr. Goodwin a "kid playing with fire" and said he was "running a one-man State Department on Latin America." He wanted Mr. Goodwin "summarily dismissed or reassigned to some other less sensitive field of endeavor."

But a Senate committee said it was satisfied with Mr. Goodwin's version of the Guevara incident. Sen. Wayne Morse (D., Ore.) called Mr. Goodwin "a competent expert in the Latin-American field." And a few weeks later, President Kennedy promoted Mr. Goodwin to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs.

Still controversy seemed to dog him. After he went to Brazil and Argentina last December to discuss the hemisphere conference on Castro scheduled for January, some congressmen complained that Mr. Goodwin represented to the Latins that the United States would be content with only a joint condemnation of Castro. Actually, at the conference the United States sought and won a much firmer anti-Castro position.

Of this Mr. Goodwin says today that he discussed what was then the formal U.S. position, but this later changed. "Maybe I handled it unskillfully, but I didn't deviate," he said. He feels he