

Originally Processed With FOIA(s):

FOIA Number:

S

# FOIA MARKER

**This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the George Bush Presidential Library Staff.**

---

**Record Group/Collection:** George H.W. Bush Presidential Records  
**Collection/Office of Origin:** Speechwriting, White House Office of  
**Series:** Snow, Tony, Files  
**Subseries:** Subject File, 1988-1993

---

**OA/ID Number:** 13895  
**Folder ID Number:** 13895-004

---

**Folder Title:**  
[Interview-President and Mrs. Bush, 5/15/90]

---

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
<b>G</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

---

# BUSH BIO -

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Internal Transcript

May 15, 1990

INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. BUSH  
BY JOE HYAMS

The Residence

4:00 P.M. EDT

(Names of people referred to in this interview are spelled phonetically.)

MRS. BUSH: I got a letter from Doug West. I did, I know, and I think the Bushes knew before I did, that he had been shot down. And so we thought he was missing in action because we hadn't heard from him. But four days later, the Bushes called me -- they'd heard.

Q They had heard?

MRS. BUSH: Well, I'm sure --

Q But you didn't know.

MRS. BUSH: No. I got a letter from Doug West. Four days after I got the letter from Doug West, I called the Bushes, and they said, well, they knew that this had happened. But then four days later they called with great news -- George had called from Hawaii.

Q Now, that's interesting. There are pictures of the -- it's just that some of the people --

MRS. BUSH: Don, where's our wedding book? Do you know that?

DON: Wedding book?

MRS. BUSH: Yes, you take everything I own. Have you got that?

DON: --

MRS. BUSH: Kennebunkport, or where?

DON: I think it's here. A little small book? Not wide, but yellow covered?

MRS. BUSH: No, blue.

DON: Blue? Don't have that one. It's in K-port.

MRS. BUSH: It has wedding pictures in it. Must be in Kennebunkport. I'm going up next week, so --

Q So the Bush family knew the Pierce family.

MRS. BUSH: Yes. Not well, but they knew them.

Q They knew each other.

MORE

MRS. BUSH: The fathers took the club car -- the train -- the same train to work every day. Everybody had heard of Pres Bush, and I venture to say everybody heard of Marvin Pierce in that --

Q Society.

MRS. BUSH: Well, yes.

Q Group -- community, it really was.

MRS. BUSH: In the two towns ten miles apart. And both of them played very good golf, for one reason that they would have heard of each other. And I think Pres Bush -- I think -- my dad was a famous football player, so I know Pres Bush knew of him -- had always known of him. And I know my father had always known of Pres Bush. I mean, I think they were not great friends.

Q They knew each other?

MRS. BUSH: Yes, and then they became friends.

Q In a book by Donnie Radcliffe, she had said and went into some length about it.

MRS. BUSH: Unauthorized.

Q Was it unauthorized?

MRS. BUSH: Yes.

Q But the quotes were rather long.

MRS. BUSH: She followed me. She's still my biographer, I think. She's everywhere -- everywhere. I introduce her as my biographer. No, she's very nice. But it was unauthorized. But we cooperated with it.

Q Well, there was one story that was rather -- I live with six dogs, and they're all over me.

MRS. BUSH: One story -- what?

Q There was one story about when you were growing up and your brother Scott was ill, and that your mother spent a lot of time with Scott. And I assume that the other children -- all of you must have felt a little bit -- no?

MRS. BUSH: Not really, because he was five years younger. You know, that's an enormous amount younger.

Q That's true.

MRS. BUSH: And he was a saint. He hates to hear that, but I mean, he was the best little kid you ever knew. He never complained and he just was a darling little boy.

Q There wasn't any jealousy among the siblings?

MRS. BUSH: I don't think so. If there was, nobody mentioned it. I don't think there was, though. He was so much younger. He was five years younger than I was and nine years younger than my brother, and ten years younger than my sister -- maybe eight years -- than my older brother. So it wasn't sibling rivalry. I think that happens when you're closer.

Q It may well. Is Scott still -- he's well, still?

MRS. BUSH: Oh, Scott is wonderful. He's the head of a company called PAMCO, and he's a wonderful man. He was quoted highly in Donnie Radcliffe's book. My brother and my sister wouldn't speak

to her. They're shy.

Q They're shy?

You said that you called your folks from college to tell them about the engagement.

MRS. BUSH: Yes. And they were not surprised.

Q They were not?

MRS. BUSH: No. Actually, see, being the third child -- well, first of all, anybody who looked at us knew we were in love, which you don't think is true when you're young. I mean, you think you've got a secret. But those secrets show. And my sister had gone through the big battle. She, during the war, got engaged to, or just before the war, and married a Yale senior and lived at Yale. She had graduated from Smith. And I thought they had put up a great fuss. But they had done that with my sister. You don't do those things twice. And there was a war. We were right in the middle of the war.

Q There was a war. But they weren't upset? You hadn't known George that long, had you?

MRS. BUSH: No. Yes, fairly long. A couple of years.

Q A couple of years?

MRS. BUSH: We were just announcing our engagement, you understand. A year, maybe. More than a year. Almost two years. I met him when I was 16. We announced our engagement when we were 18, and got married when we were --- when I was 19 and he was 20. So they didn't -- we were just announcing our engagement, and you know, then, you might not remember this, but one should remember that when you got engaged at that time, you weren't sure you were ever going to see the person again when they went overseas.

Q That's true.

MRS. BUSH: So maybe -- I know my mother and father really liked him. But I don't think they were thinking "she's going to get married," I think they were thinking, "let's just take this one step at a time." He had yet to go overseas, you see. And I think his family who had good reason, probably, to object because of his youth, probably thought anything that'll make him happy -- I would feel that as a mother. I mean, I wouldn't want my child going overseas without somebody other than his mother and father who loved him. So I think that's what kept it down. We were very much at war.

Q I remember that. I'm older than you are, so I remember --

MRS. BUSH: But people who aren't my age don't remember that, and I think from Wellesley on up and down, they don't understand. It's almost out of their world. It is.

Q It is. They don't understand it.

MRS. BUSH: And I understand that. I'm very sympathetic to the Wellesley girls. I understand what they're saying.

Q I'm not sure that I understood what they were saying.

MRS. BUSH: Well, I understand it. They're not saying "Don't come," they're just saying come under protest. So what?

Q That's okay.

You weren't disappointed about the star sapphire. You do

still have it and you still wear it. There it is. That's it?

MRS. BUSH: Never off.

Q That's a beauty.

MRS. BUSH: Never off. I was surprised, but I mean, I was scared to death of his mother anyway. Not because she was scary, but because she was so perfect and has remained thusly for 45 years. I adore his mother. But she kept hinting all the way down.

Q Despite the perfections, you adore her?

MRS. BUSH: Yes, I do. I've always loved her. Everyone loves his mother. She's not that perfect. She never found fault with any of her in-laws. But all the way down on the train, she was saying, "What kind of ring would you like?" Well, I'm dumb, but not that dumb. I said, "Well, I don't care."

"Well, I mean, does it have to be a diamond?" You know, "It doesn't matter." I mean, no matter what I said, I was wrong, so I said, "I just don't care." She had it with her all of the time. I don't remember if it was in a box or not, but she had it all the time.

Q And when he gave it to you, do you remember whether it came out of a pocket?

MRS. BUSH: Pocket, probably. I don't remember it, but I'm sure --

Q Do you remember anything he said, or did he just -- did he put it on your finger?

MRS. BUSH: No, no. Probably. But remember, we were surrounded by people at all times, I'm sure. Because his mother and I went down, I believe, on --

Q On the train.

MRS. BUSH: On the train. I don't know if I went back with her, but I assume I did. I can't remember.

Q Have you worn the ring consistently?

MRS. BUSH: Yes.

Q Since you got it?

MRS. BUSH: Yes.

Q You like it, then.

MRS. BUSH: Sure. Well, it's my engagement ring.

Q It's a beautiful ring.

MRS. BUSH: His Aunt Nancy gave him the stone. I've never have it evaluated. I'm sure it's probably not real, but we don't care. It's my engagement ring. It's very nice.

Q And that question about what drew the both of you together, I understand that -- the most attractive man I had ever met, and he probably thought you were the most attractive woman he's ever met.

MRS. BUSH: I don't know. I have no idea. But we were too young to -- we were just lucky -- darn lucky.

Q I would say.

MORE

Well, the wonderful thing about all of the people that I interviewed who are your contemporaries, our contemporaries, is that with very few exceptions, they've all stayed married to the same woman, the same man, whatever you will.

MRS. BUSH: That's right.

Q But they had a different sense of marriage and its meaning. All of them.

MRS. BUSH: Well, I have house guests downstairs who didn't, so don't say that out loud. But -- of good friends. But that's right.

Q They did. That generation.

MRS. BUSH: Of our friends, that's right.

Q All the people who --

MRS. BUSH: And I don't think they gutted it out, in case you're interested. I mean, I think they genuinely loved each other.

Q Liked each other. Loved or liked.

MRS. BUSH: Well, I mean, now I think they genuinely love each other, and I think they always liked each other. And I think that's -- I don't know how that -- why it's changed.

Q I don't know why, either. And I don't think any sociologists know. Different values, probably. Divorce has become so easy, people give up easier.

MRS. BUSH: It's not easy, divorce. We're going through one. It ain't easy. They're very hard.

Q I mean, legally easy. It's difficult emotionally.

Your answer to this is quite right. When you're young, you don't think about that. That's true. It never occurs to you.

MRS. BUSH: That's right. I know that's true. I mean, I know it because of my work now with AIDS and with -- I wasn't so smart then, but I know it now, because you could shake kids and tell them you shouldn't do this and you shouldn't do that, because you're fooling with death -- with crack and drugs. They hear you, but they don't hear you. They're not listening. That's true. They just don't think they're going to die -- children.

Q No, and you don't think you're going to die. I never thought I was going to die. And I was four years in the Army. Never thought --

MRS. BUSH: No, of course not.

Q I knew it was going to be her, but never me.

MRS. BUSH: Exactly. Well, not so easy today. I mean, the rest of you are going to go before I go.

Q That's right.

MRS. BUSH: But much harder when you're a teenager.

Q That time together during first spring break, you had a friend from school --

MRS. BUSH: I know I had a friend from school. He, I think, brought Red Dog Warren, I think, his friend from school, and

we double-dated. George Warren -- Red Dog Warren. I think that's who he brought. He might remember. Don't give him a hint. He might remember. I don't remember. But we may have gone to a movie or something. I thought we went to Playland, but I think now it wasn't open spring vacation.

Q Don't think you ever blossomed into a trim young woman, huh? (Laughter.)

MRS. BUSH: Probably did.

Q I would guess at about 16.

MRS. BUSH: Fifteen or sixteen.

Q Fifteen or sixteen is probably when it was, because that -- someplace, I have that rather long quote from Donnie Radcliffe. But what she did quote was accurate. I mean --

MRS. BUSH: What did she quote? Her book is not even a full book, you know.

Q It's pretty close.

MRS. BUSH: I mean, I'm not done yet.

Q Oh, heavens, no. It's not --

MRS. BUSH: But I mean, it's not even a regular size book.

Q It's about 240 pages.

MRS. BUSH: Like Beatrice Potter.

Q This isn't going to be a very large-type book.

MRS. BUSH: George read the book. He liked it.

Q I was surprised. Whenever you do a book about someone, you figure you're going to get -- someone is going to say something unkind. Everyone he was with liked him. They all had nice things to say. And --

MRS. BUSH: That's true.

Q And for me, it was great. And I met some wonderful people. So I enjoyed it immensely.

MRS. BUSH: He's the kindest man I think I ever met.

Q Is that from just inside of him, or is that the way he was raised, do you think, to be kind and think the way he does?

MRS. BUSH: Well, I'm sure it was both. But he's a kind man. I think his family are kind. I think his family are very kind.

Q Do you remember any of the diary of private prayers? Was there one in particular that your mother --

MRS. BUSH: Dottie Bush?

Q Dottie Bush, rather, came up with?

MRS. BUSH: He has in his Bible, I think, some his mother loved.

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, everybody.

Q Mr. President, how are you?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Hey, Joe. How are you?

Q How are you? It's nice to see you.

THE PRESIDENT: Good to see you. Bar. Well, this is a cozy place for a meeting.

Q Very nice.

THE PRESIDENT: Surrounded by animals and --

Q I've brought some pictures of some of the people who I have seen. You see Gar Hoal there.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, look at this.

Q Providenciales.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of them I won't know at all. Don will know. There's Gar and Peanut. Now, where was that? Look at that nice place.

Q That's in Providenciales. That's where they live in the British West Indies. Cagos.

THE PRESIDENT: He's totally retired, I guess. He was President of a rope --

Q Yes, a rope company. He said it was the largest rope company in the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that right? It's wire rope, too, isn't it?

Q Yes. As a matter of fact, we found a piece of frayed rope by a mine, and he knew where the rope was made. He looked at it and I said, "How did you figure that out?"

THE PRESIDENT: He's a wonderful man.

Q There's a strand or two in there that identifies where a rope comes from.

THE PRESIDENT: But sometimes -- because I was in the drilling business, and they put a color strand through --

Q That's what he was looking for.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Isn't this fun? Is this Playstead here?

Q That's Playstead and --

THE PRESIDENT: And Jack Guy. He's marvelous. Jack's done well in life. Look at the TBF behind you. This is great. Providenciales. Tough place to have to go, Joe, but somebody had to do it, I know.

Q I liked it.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll bet.

Q It's not a place I'd care to live.

THE PRESIDENT: Really? Is it lonely out there? What do they do?

Q No, it's just that it's sea level, flat sea level.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Those are great.

Q Those are for you if you'd like them.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, why, thank you, sir.

Q It's just sea level, and the wind blows straight across it, flat out at 30 miles, or 60 miles an hour.

THE PRESIDENT: It's like Eleuthera used to be. Do you remember down there -- we used to go to Eleuthera and --

Q Yes, I do. Very much like Eleuthera.

THE PRESIDENT: But we loved it. But God darn, it was windy.

Q And it's also humid.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, what do you need from me on your project? I thought you did an amazing job on that manuscript. I couldn't get over it. A lot of people have scribbled out stuff on this general subject, but that thing was --

Q Well, it was fun. I enjoyed it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q They were such nice people -- all of them.

THE PRESIDENT: The only guy that knows more about it than you do is Don.

Q I think he does. He found the majority of those people for me.

THE PRESIDENT: It's amazing. He's a historian.

Q He came up with some that I never thought I would find. He came up with them. With Jack Guy, for example, I did some thumbnail sketches of Guy from your point of view, what he was like.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you got your tape recorder going?

Q Yes, it's right there.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Well, let's see. I wrote down -- did you get my answers to these things?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: I can just give you this. But I wrote -- I think you had -- let me see what I said on that -- although I can do it just to begin. I always thought Jack was a very -- I knew he was a good pilot. He was an exceptionally confident pilot. He had a little more seniority than I did, I think. I think maybe he got his wings a little earlier.

He was a very friendly person -- outgoing southern boy -- good old boy from -- I guess he came from Georgia. He lives there now. But I can't remember too much to set him apart. We had great friends -- Barbara and I, after all this experience, why, we lived together there in Virginia Beach, and we were very good friends.

MRS. BUSH: Is he sort of a hot boy -- hot pilot -- Jack?

THE PRESIDENT: Not so much of a hot pilot, because nobody could be very hot flying a TBF. But he was a self-assured pilot in a kind sense of the word. I mean, he knew what he was

MORE

doing. And I've always thought he was one of our very best pilots.

Q How about --

THE PRESIDENT: Cool, fine pilot. Southern accent, became fast friends, loved his wife, Bee. Saw them as a couple after he went to Virginia Beach until the end of the war. Melvin: Serious, steady, respected. Not a barrel of laughs. But you'd ask him advice on things. And he's just enough older -- I don't know how old he was when he was this, but --

Q About eight or ten years older.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. So in other words, 28 would have been old in those days, you see -- for me.

Q For you, it would have been, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: For me. We'd all ask him -- we'd kind of laugh about him behind his back a little, because looked like Mortimer Snurd. Remember Mortimer Snurd had no chin?

Q Had no chin and an overbite.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, overbite -- exactly what Melvin had. But we laughed with respect, because the guy knew more than we did and he was better than we were, and he was a seasoned pro. He got his wings, I think, before the war started. He was a steady -- not a lovable guy at all, but discipline us. But he didn't say a hell of a lot, but he was always dependable. He'd give you good, sound advice. I forget --

Q Was he a role model in a sense?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, in a sense that I had respect for people that knew what the hell they were doing out there. And he was one of them -- and he was in that sense -- but Gar Hoal, then, as the executive officer, filled in as the guy that cared about the problems and more the comrades. Although, he was a little older than me, and again, there were respect -- he had two and a half stripes, I think. And he was enough senior that we had respect.

But he was also a friend. I mean, he was easy to relax -- well, like he is now, kind of. And he did the hand-holding part for the commander of our squadron in the Executive Office.

If you want to throw in, Bar -- Bar remembers. Her recall is so much better than mine.

MRS. BUSH: I didn't know those -- they were not with you. I was not with you when they were there.

THE PRESIDENT: You knew Gar, but you just met him, is all, I guess.

Q That first basketball game. I have -- 98 percent of the book is about you and the Navy. But the publishers have asked for a little bit more than --

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, at our game down in Rye. Now, Bar, you may recall that one. We went down -- when I just met you, and then Jimmy asked me to play the game in Rye. And I don't remember who we were playing against, but I was --

MRS. BUSH: Rye High School, weren't you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I was on the team at Andover -- not a starter. I was about number six on this five-man team.

MRS. BUSH: He came up and cut in on me, which I was

furious about. So you, Poppy Bush -- you said, yes. And he said, "Go over and stand on the side. I'll be over in a minute when I get rid of her." And so then he came over and asked you to play on the team the following Wednesday night, or whatever it was. And you said you --

THE PRESIDENT: And I saw this as a way to -- it was my hook shot to endear myself to my wife -- future wife. Girlfriend.

Q And you invited the family.

MRS. BUSH: No. Didn't have to invite my family. Once they heard he was coming, they were there. They went to see Jim play, supposedly. But they all came. I certainly didn't invite them. They all came down to look at him.

THE PRESIDENT: Look me over.

Q That story in Donnie Radcliffe's book wasn't accurate, because she had it you had that you had invited them over.

MRS. BUSH: Of course not. Of course not. My mother knew about George Bush the day after I met him. I slept until 11:00 a.m. By that time, she had had her -- I had told her the night before I met this really nice man -- person. I met a lot of people. When I woke up in the morning, she and Maggie Lufkin had already talked. She knew all about him.

THE PRESIDENT: Who asked the question about -- no, about our parents being friends? I think my dad and Mr. Pierce knew each other fairly well.

MRS. BUSH: They did the club car together, I know that.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, they were in the club car together, and they were both golfers, and they knew each other and liked each other.

MRS. BUSH: I know that your father --

THE PRESIDENT: Respected each other.

MRS. BUSH: -- knew my father by reputation of football playing. Because he was older than your father.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Mr. Pierce was a real athlete. I mean, he was one of the great star athletes out there at Miami --

MRS. BUSH: They were both from Ohio.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and he was from Dayton and my father was from Columbus. And so the name Monk Pierce in college days was a big -- big competitor. He had -- four-letter man and he was a hell of an athlete, and particularly in football, where he and Red Blake -- were they in school together, or --

MRS. BUSH: Believe it or not, they were -- Red was much younger. But daddy went back to school later, because he worked his way through -- something -- but your dad, everybody knew. He was head of the USO, and --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he was --

Q Was your dad head of the USO during the war?

MRS. BUSH: First USO.

THE PRESIDENT: He followed one of the Rockefellers -- John D. as a -- not the head of -- you know, the guy that raised all the money for it. I guess president of it or chairman of it or

something.

Q While you were in the service?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, or maybe just before I -- maybe it was '41. But anyway it was '41 or '42 in there. I remember his going off to New Orleans, and we had a picture of him. We thought that was amazing that somebody would go all the way to New Orleans for something, and leaving the East Coast.

MRS. BUSH: You'd see your father. I mean, your father was prominent. So I knew Daddy knew him. They were in the same club car.

THE PRESIDENT: He was the managing partner of his business in those days. Brown Brothers Harriman, which was -- not tremendous, but --

MRS. BUSH: Both played bridge going to work every morning. Different --

Q That may have been the tie. You know, the Simmons hardware thing, I didn't quite understand it. U.S. Rubber and Simmons Hardware -- were they in any way --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think they were connected. Dad went to work for Simmons, and --

Q Mattress or hardware?

THE PRESIDENT: Hardware. Simmons sent him down to Tennessee, and there was a very interesting story of how the guy -- my father ended up keeping a gun in his drawer -- Mother told me all this -- because the guy that was running it was a crook. Something like that. And anyway, I don't remember the details of it. But then I don't know how Dad got back in the --

Q U.S. Rubber.

THE PRESIDENT: -- U.S. Rubber Company back in Milton. But then, he left that and went to what became Brown Brothers Harriman. He went with the Harrimans. See, Roland Harriman was a great friend of his -- "Bunny" Harriman, he was called. And that was Averill's younger brother. And Averill had a lot of dough in the firm, but never participated. And Roland Harriman, Bob Lovett, Knight Wooley -- Lovett, you remember in the Defense Department -- and they were all partners. They became partners --

Q Yes. I know the letters were censored. But generally speaking, when you were writing from the ship, what were you able to say?

THE PRESIDENT: Not much. Just that we -- we've got them, but they were --

Q Do you have the letters?

MRS. BUSH: To his mother.

Q Really?

THE PRESIDENT: I've got some, but they're very private.

Q Oh. You quoted one -- you let me quote one letter briefly, which had to do, I think, with Crume -- Crume hadn't sworn at you yet, is what you said.

THE PRESIDENT: I just hardly remember Crume. I remember he was my --

MORE

Q No, but we got a quote from the letter, which was great. But the rest are private. Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, only because there are certain -- I've got levels of privacy in my life. I retain some.

Q It gets harder to do.

THE PRESIDENT: It gets almost impossible. But I have to do that. But I did go back and remember the letter I wrote -- to recall a letter I wrote my mother from the submarine.

Q You do?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I don't have that.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I know you don't. But I mean, if you want some recall, I can probably give you some -- I told her -- see, we couldn't say where we were or any details of the accident. But in the letter, I told her that I bailed out of the plane and that I worried about my two crewmen being killed, and I was sick to my stomach and that I paddled like mad and that the fighter planes came down and zoomed the raft. I mean, that all is written down there -- hitting my head, and when I got on the plane, the doctor put medicine on there -- although they dropped some medicine -- one of the planes -- in a big kind of a balloon -- dropped it down there.

So that is all written down to her. But I didn't know the results of the whole thing, and I didn't go into much detail as to any location or anything of that nature.

Q But you told her you were all right.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. But it didn't get mailed for 30 days, because we stayed -- roughly.

Q Did you say you were on a submarine?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Picked up by a submarine.

MRS. BUSH: Is that how your mother knew you were not --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know. That's a little hazy, and she wouldn't remember now, anyhow.

Q She sent a telegram from Pearl Harbor?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but --

MRS. BUSH: You sent a telegram --

THE PRESIDENT: -- whether she knew before then that I had been shot down is what Joe -- I don't --

MRS. BUSH: I know I got a letter from Doug West that told me you had been shot down. Four days later, your mother and father called and said that -- something -- that you were all right. But I don't know whether it was your telegram or how they knew that, or whether your letter --

THE PRESIDENT: They didn't get a letter from me for -- it was postmarked October 2nd or something like that.

MRS. BUSH: So it must have been --

THE PRESIDENT: This was September 2nd I was shot down. So it was postmarked with a six-cent airmail stamp on it, and it was a big red stamp. And so she probably didn't get that until -- say it

MORE

went airmail -- I don't know -- 5th of October.

MRS. BUSH: I know she called me and told me you were all right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they may have heard from others. I mean, the carrier -- these guys all went back to the carrier, and they could send mail.

MRS. BUSH: But he sent the letter that said you were missing. That's how we knew you had been shot down. That's how I knew.

THE PRESIDENT: These, you may want. I mean, I tried to just sit down -- don't get me for not knowing how to spell, but I'd rather be held for that than knowing how to write because I can't -- nobody can read my writing, so I just use my little typewriter.

Q I wrote to Doug Williams. I haven't gotten an answer back yet. Because he was in that group when you first went in.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. He wasn't in our class, though, I don't think.

Q He was there at the field.

THE PRESIDENT: He was somewhere there. I think he came there a little after we did. But he was there. I remember he was hanging around the batting cage and all.

But you know, Ted went back -- I don't know where he was in World War II or whether he fought. But he went back out to Korea afterward.

Q And there he became a hero.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MRS. BUSH: Did he?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he was.

Q He was indeed. He wrote a book called "My Turn at Bat," in which he discussed to some extent some of his experiences in Korea. And he mentioned the training, but he didn't mention the unit he trained with, so I couldn't check it back. So I wrote to him, but I haven't yet had an answer.

THE PRESIDENT: Where did you send it? Because you know, he moved from --

Q I sent it to Florida.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Because he moved from the Keys up to near Orlando.

Q It went to a post office box in Orlando.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh.

Q I think I've got the right address. I called the Boston Red Sox, and they gave it to me.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, they should have it.

MRS. BUSH: He might not be a man who answers his mail very readily.

Q Probably not.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Doesn't wear a tie and doesn't answer.

Q This was from -- recently -- biography. I'd just like to reword -- strikingly beautiful in the face -- that's pretty good. That's great.

Got ten bucks a month?

MRS. BUSH: I think that's fair. I think that's probably fair.

Q That's pretty fair?

THE PRESIDENT: How about that laundry? We had to pay cleaning. Had what they called a "pressing contract." (Laughter.) And we'd sent our laundry home in a box.

Q I remember that.

THE PRESIDENT: Remember those laundry boxes?

Q Fiber boxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, exactly. With a strap around it -- exactly.

Q The strap around it. And then you put your address on it, and it was in a little square on the front.

THE PRESIDENT: Exactly. Exactly.

Q I remember that from school.

THE PRESIDENT: So I didn't -- I did the laundry at home, so it saved me a laundry contract.

MRS. BUSH: I think that's fair.

THE PRESIDENT: What was that?

MRS. BUSH: Oh, from Donnie Radcliffe's book. I think that's probably fair.

Q What I'll have to try to do is, I'll try to rework it a little bit, unless I can get permission from her.

MRS. BUSH: Oh, I don't think you need permission. Just say I just said that to you.

Q Well, I had better change it just a little bit.

MRS. BUSH: Yes, change it.

Q Just a tad.

MRS. BUSH: I'm changing it.

Q Okay, you're changing it?

MRS. BUSH: Take out "irritable."

Q All right.

MRS. BUSH: Leave in --

THE PRESIDENT: Who are you calling irritable?

Q You.

MRS. BUSH: You.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait just a minute. I'm not irritable. Millie got a rat.

MRS. BUSH: I saw her. I was with her.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you see her catch it?

MRS. BUSH: Yes. I'm not sure if she did it in, but she sure had it. And the Overbys were saying, "Oh, it's a little chipmunk." I said, "That is not chipmunk, that is a rat."

THE PRESIDENT: A big rat. The groundskeepers found it and brought it in.

MRS. BUSH: Oh, they found it. Oh, good. Then she did it in. But she really raced around it and jumped. It had a long tail. I said, "Do you think that's a squirrel -- a chipmunk?" I said, "That is no chipmunk, that is a rat." Good girl, Mil.

Q Good for her.

THE PRESIDENT: She's a hell of a hunter.

Q I would say. The live picture of airmen being beheaded. Do you remember that one?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do. I remember pictures of it, but I remember we saw -- they'd show us pictures in the wardroom there, and hear the latest atrocities. And I don't know whether that was part of our training or not, but I mean, it pretty much put into focus the kind of people we were up against in that context.

Q Well, name, rank, and serial number was it, theoretically, for all of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They didn't give us real training -- that I remember. Now, others may have recalled. Joe, I've lost my real recall for detail of that nature. I just don't --

Q I don't know because I wasn't in the Navy. But in the Army, we got a lot of instruction on prisoner of war --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we did. Because we were less apt to --

Q You were never expecting to get shot down.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you read that book Katake?

Q Katake -- by Searles?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Interesting plot.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there's great documentation in the back about Chichi and the war crimes trials. God, almighty.

Q Well, we've got -- as you know, I found the Japanese documents.

THE PRESIDENT: It's amazing.

Q And presumably from the battalion that shot you down.

THE PRESIDENT: This is fascinating. You went and found this somewhere -- some guy in Japan?

MORE

Q And the times are right, and I gave that all to War Bird Salvors, who are apparently going to try to locate the plane. The real problem is that they can't pinpoint the exact location of the antiaircraft batallion on the island, and therefore, the coordinates for them --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't see how they can find a plane this much later. But maybe they can. It'll be interesting.

Q Well, they've tracked water movement and so forth and so on. I haven't any idea -- they're using sonar and whatever the latest devices are.

THE PRESIDENT: Amazing.

MRS. BUSH: Then we'll get rid of that myth that you called your plane "The Barbie."

THE PRESIDENT: The paint won't still be there. It was Bar III, wasn't it?

Q Barbara III.

MRS. BUSH: Barbara III.

Q Well, I have it Barbara.

MRS. BUSH: Barbara is right. And the myth is, it was the Barbie. Nobody ever called me Barbie.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought it was Bar. Maybe not.

DON: I've got a picture of it. I just had one produced.

MRS. BUSH: It's The Barbara.

DON: Or II, or whatever the case.

THE PRESIDENT: I lost so many planes, I don't know. Maybe that was the one --

Q And the other thing that's confusing is, was it 2X or 3X? I mean, that doesn't bother me a bit, but --

MRS. BUSH: Two what?

THE PRESIDENT: There was two --

Q Two X is what we've got --

THE PRESIDENT: No two is the number.

Q Two X was the number.

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. You've seen the logbook, haven't you?

DON: The one in the sea was 3, because 2 was out of commission and needed maintenance or something that day.

THE PRESIDENT: They weren't -- I don't think we were two -- you know, you could fly any one of them; they all flew the same. But we did have one we kept clean. I used to go out and wash it with our crewmen and --

Q Did you? Did Poletti wash it, too?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes. We all just pitched in. I mean, pilots trying to do their part on it.

MORE

Q When they were depth charging the Finnback, did you have any particular duties?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we sat in the wardroom -- the pilots did. And that was Beckman and Tom Kane, and one guy who was like a steward in there. He was panicked, I was scared. (Laughter.) The other guys were scared, but that guy was really panicked. And it was -- no, we just had to sit in there and be still. And they did have headsets so you could -- I guess they didn't even have that. You could -- somehow, I remember hearing from what was going on, but -- but it was scary. It was scarier for me than being shot at in a plane. I mean, in the airplane, you could control your destiny to a degree and you could see the puffs of smoke, and you knew what the problem was. But in that submarine, we just -- of course, we hadn't been through it, we hadn't been trained as submariners.

First thing you know, you're sitting down there, submarine's still and you're hoping like hell they won't put one of these on top of you -- shakes. And the real submariners weren't that worried about it. I mean, they've been through it all. But the skipper, I think I told you, something that -- he got decorated. He got a silver star for the -- which is a hell of a high decoration in those days, for the total tonnage that we sank. We got bombed by an aircraft, we had to go up top to charge your batteries, and then every once in a while we'd have to dive. They'd just run and surface at times in the daytime.

One thing that was kind of interesting that I don't know whether I gave you was watching the very next day after I was picked up, seeing -- the skipper let me look through the periscope. We were periscope depth, and we saw -- we were right off Chichi Jima. And we saw a plane come in and go up on its nose. It must have hit a pothole. Because we were bombing that airfield, or trying to. And you could see it. I mean, it was just weird. You're sitting down there off an enemy-held island and watching the business start coming back from the mainland down there to replenish what we had tried to do in the day before.

Q Interesting time. The total experience affected you -- you know, it was a rite of passage on one level, but it affected you in your own thinking about war and your own thinking about violence and man's inhumanity and all that sort of thing. I'd like to try to get some kind of -- not a statement, but a thought.

THE PRESIDENT: A thought now is that I think I -- this maybe is a little weighty, but I think back on that, and knowing what at least that level of combat was about, it puts in perspective the human side of a war. You go to put your kids in Panama, and I must say that I had in mind my own experience of combat experience -- thinking about life and death kind of thing. It's just a little -- that was present as I was thinking of, do we go or don't we go into Panama, sitting down the hall here at the next floor down, listening to these guys saying, well, we'll commit these and the losses will be this and -- in my mind, I must say during that time I went back a little to those months that I was out there.

Q You can translate it into your own --

THE PRESIDENT: A little bit. A little bit. And not saying that my experience would -- I had to have that experience to decide to go or not go. But there's -- having been in combat, it just kind of rounds out your experience for being Commander In Chief. Or, at least for me, it's not necessary, it's not essential. We've got generations of kids today who will be president I hope like hell never had to fight, or never had to go be in a war.

But for me, it was an experience that that part of it stays with me a lot. What's it mean to send somebody's kid to war? That kind of thing.

MORE

Q What's it mean to be shot at, what's it mean to lose

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, shot at and lose some friends, and it's the human side of it.

Q It brings --

THE PRESIDENT: And it's -- again, it's quite personal, but it's -- just rounds out your overall experiences.

Q But when you went away, you were -- see, I can identify, because I'm a year older than you are -- went into the Army at about -- just on -- I had my 18th birthday and came out when I was 22. And I was certainly not prepared to go back to what I had started before.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Too much had changed. I had changed too much, I had seen too much. It altered my perspective on almost everything I had planned for, and had anticipated doing. And I suspect the same thing was probably true of you to some extent. I went back to college and finished college and got my degree.

THE PRESIDENT: So did I, yes. But I wasn't sure -- one of these letters that I referred to, just looking at it knowing we were going to talk, I wrote and asked advice from my dad as to when I came home whether he thought I could get a job or what he thought I ought to do. I mean, I was 20, and I'd like some advice.

So I wasn't that certain that I was going to go back to college, but I did -- G.I. Bill -- probably the same as you did.

Q Same thing. Sure. Five years of school.

THE PRESIDENT: Barbara and I were married, and we lived in -- marvelous years there, and just wonderful. Then went off to get a job. But --

MRS. BUSH: I'll bet I know what your dad's advice was.

THE PRESIDENT: Go to college.

Q Was it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Well, when you went to college, you studied, I think it was economics, wasn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Economics, yes.

Q Was that with the idea of getting into his business, or just the idea --

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the idea of getting some background. I really didn't want to go into his business. In fact, I'm not sure technically I was ever offered a job. I thought they had antinepotism rules. But my uncle, my mother's brother, Herbie Walker, who was one of the original owners of the -- small 10 percent owner of the Mets -- he offered me a job out of Yale -- a good one. I mean, if I wanted to be a broker -- he was in the brokerage business. G.H. Walker and Company. But I just didn't want to do that. I just wanted to go off and do something different. And so Neil Mallon, who is a great friend of my dad's -- one of his closest friends, offered me this job in Texas. We went up to Cleveland and saw him, and he spelled out a lot of different things.

But what you really ought to do, he said, is go out to Texas. There's a training program and all this. And so off we went. You never heard of Odessa in those days, but it proved to be a marvelous thing --

MRS. BUSH: Got a Midland friend downstairs right now.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes.

Q From Midland, Texas?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. One of the first guys I was in business with, a guy named John Overby. But it was the right -- I mean, I wouldn't have changed any of that.

Q But going to Yale, I'm sure that most of your classmates are all G.I.s, too.

THE PRESIDENT: Most of them. And a lot of them came back. Some stayed there. What happened is, when I got out of Andover in June of '42 and went into the service, a lot of them -- I'd say a big percentage -- went on to college for a while. Then the war ended, so a lot of them came back and -- but the people that started Yale -- and I believe we started in October of all things -- a funny time frame. Wasn't it October?

MRS. BUSH: Summer session, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Started longer summer -- it was all screwed up. But anyway, in October they were almost all veterans -- vets.

Q I remember when I was in the service that I had a girlfriend at home also, and that was the most important thing, I think -- those thoughts. That must have been uppermost in your mind --

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes.

Q -- see Barbara. Everyone had a girlfriend, or had someone.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q And it was important.

MRS. BUSH: Which girl did you think about?

THE PRESIDENT: Thought about you a lot of the time. (Laughter.) No, but that was it -- and the mail -- the letters were all full of that stuff.

Q It took so long for the mail to get there that Mail Call was a big event.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, gosh, we looked forward to it.

Q Particularly on a ship it was a big event.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, if you got five letters, it would be the biggest deal in the world. You'd take them back to your little room and read -- read and reread. It was everything. Mail was everything.

Q Then. The outgoing mail was also important. Were you writing letters every day?

THE PRESIDENT: Close to it. Not every, but I wrote a lot. And then we censored -- we had to censor other people's mail.

MORE

Q You were censor for a while --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had censorship. Everybody's mail got censored. I don't know how high up you had to be, but it was sad censoring mail -- particularly for the enlisted guys. You almost felt you were prying too far into their lives and stuff. But that was our duty. And somebody censored ours, too.

MRS. BUSH: I don't really remember any -- much censoring -- your letters.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MRS. BUSH: How about his mother's letters? Were there a lot censored, or was he a careful writer?

Q Some of them -- sections cut out.

THE PRESIDENT: They just took a little razor -- somebody took -- they censored it.

Q Cut them up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, a little --

MRS. BUSH: I thought they blackened them. But they cut them out.

Q I know my letters -- a few of them -- blackened.

One more question. Is there anything that you didn't like about the book that you would like to have changed?

THE PRESIDENT: I've got to confess no. I wouldn't suggest it if I didn't. I mean, I didn't see anything I thought was --

Q Inaccurate?

THE PRESIDENT: -- inaccurate is the point. I may have highlighted -- I think I went through it.

Q You did.

THE PRESIDENT: But I did it awful fast, Joe. So I didn't do you a fair job of editing. But I tried to point out a few things that might have been factual, you know.

Q I wanted to be fair to you. You were very fair to me, and I wanted to be fair to you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I couldn't fault it, and I thought it was -- I do think this -- as time goes by, as we get older, we may exaggerate some of Nado's stuff -- maybe a little exaggerated. And it may be the same for some of these other guys. I mean, I hope mine is not. But I think some of them were inclined -- now, here I'm President -- to dramatize it. I was a courageous guy and -- hell, I was just one more guy, really, doing -- it wasn't any -- it was our job. Everybody was -- and you know that from the service. But you know how it was. I think as I read it --

MRS. BUSH: Peoples' memories do --

THE PRESIDENT: As I read it, his became a little more dramatic, but I didn't want to correct the guy.

Q They were from him, so I thought it was okay. But --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MORE

Q -- the highlight of his life.

MRS. BUSH: Was it ever!

Q He's made a career of -- that's fair to say --

THE PRESIDENT: But on the other hand, as I've told you, I don't have a lot of recall. But I don't remember it as certainly heroic and all of that. I mean, it was just -- God, it was almost like --

MRS. BUSH: It was heroic, but everybody else did it.

THE PRESIDENT: Getting shot down is? I mean, why isn't it heroic not to be shot down?

MRS. BUSH: Well -- say it was heroic, everything you did was heroic. But everybody did heroic things.

THE PRESIDENT: All I'm saying is, if you went out and set the time warp back and recite with quite -- say, Nado's drama what went on, this guy -- I mean, you know, look what happened to Joe yesterday and Deck Hool, or whoever it was --

Q That's Nado's recollection, and it's in his mouth. If he wants to say you're a hero, that's fine.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. But what I'm saying is, you know, just as a general point, I think peoples' memories are inclined to dramatize as we get older.

Q Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: My problem is, I'm inclined to forget as I get older.

Q My war stories are great.

THE PRESIDENT: Are they really? Congressional medal?

Q They're much better now than they were when I got out of the Army. They've improved over the years.

THE PRESIDENT: Which were you -- in the Pacific or the --

Q I was in the South Pacific. I was a combat correspondent --

THE PRESIDENT: Is that right?

Q General Richardson was my commanding officer. And I covered Iwo Jima -- a lot of unpleasant things. But what we did was, we went in with the troops, and then when someone was wounded, it was our stories that the pool of reporters, of civilians picked up, and they wrote those. They took our stories back from the front, and then rewrote them and sent them home.

THE PRESIDENT: See, I think in terms of objective analysis. A Marine going ashore in Iwo Jima -- I mean, that's where the heroism really was. We were -- clean laundry every night, and we were eating well. And for a few minutes, our lives were in danger, or you might risk -- you know, do something to try to save another -- mate who got hit when he tried to show me where the raft was.

These are almost routine. But when I look down -- when we covered the landings in Guam and Saipan, which we did, and saw those battleships -- you know, God, it was the damndest array of power -- raw power. And then you see the boats going in. I'm way

MORE

the hell up here in safety -- we had control of the air. We didn't control the anti-aircraft, but we controlled the air where nobody was going -- pilot was going to come and shoot us down. We had air cover and we had the torpedo bombers that were going to go in low.

And we could see these guys -- these Marines. I'm saying to myself, Jesus, I'm lucky. I'm in a line of work that is -- we all felt -- all the pilots felt that way. Said, gee, look at these poor grunts down there going in -- and these -- you know what I'm talking about. That was the stuff where the real courage was.

It was brought home to me -- we've got a doctor who is the most gentlemanly doctor, and he's almost a society -- his manners are impeccable. And when I get rude or ugly or say vulgarities -- occasionally slips into my conversation, Barbara always holds up a guy named Lilo Crane. And I think of the guy as the sweetest, nicest, very gentle kind of a fellow.

Then it turns out a couple of years ago, we found out that Lilo Crane had the Navy Cross, I think two Silver Stars for real heroism. So then we get our thing -- in and out. So it's very different, and it's -- that's the only part -- I mean, I'd just --

Q Well, what provoked me into starting this book in the first place was when I had read in your own book, "Looking Forward," that you had flown 58 missions. And I thought to myself: Anyone who flew 58 missions in my book at least, or the way I look at life, in the service is a guy to be admired and certainly had done something important, brave and significant.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of them weren't very hero -- some of them were rather --

Q Just getting up there with the awareness that someone -- at least with a squad or a company, you've got company, you know? But you're up there all alone. And I went out to see the Avenger one day at Chino Airport. There's no way you could get me into that thing. That's the biggest single-engine plane I've ever seen in my life. It's so --

THE PRESIDENT: It was big.

Q -- it's so cumbersome and impressive-looking.

THE PRESIDENT: There's a good side to that, though. It was the easiest plane to land on a carrier. And the reason is, it has such a big wingspan and it was such a stable aircraft. You could screw it up. But those fighters were hotter. But it was a stable airplane, and that was one of the nice things about it. I wasn't a hot pilot. I didn't like all that --

Q Landing on an aircraft is something that is absolutely beyond anything in my --

MRS. BUSH: Did you ever see the size of George's aircraft carrier?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: It had a narrower deck than the CVEs --

Q Really?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It had the narrowest deck of all. It had a longer deck than a CVE, but it was a cruiser hull, so it was a fast carrier. We had two CVLs -- what we were on -- converted cruiser -- and two CVs would make a task force -- task group. Task Force 58.3, 58.4. And then you'd have destroyers and cruisers in the group. But ours, the converted cruisers, were fast. They keep up with the big guys, the CVs, but they had the narrowest deck. So that

part could get a little hairy. You didn't have much room to move sideways.

But all of them -- it didn't matter how long the deck was, because you were flying into barriers. I mean, they had -- if you didn't get a wire, you'd slam into a barrier. Today, if you don't get a wire, you push the throttle forward and you go around again, because the deck's canted.

Q First, you have to find the carrier.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter.) That was harder in those days. Today, that's a cinch.

Q Yes. Then, when you find a spot in the middle of the ocean, you have to get down from the sky onto it. There's no way in this Earth I could try that.

THE PRESIDENT: You know how they found a carrier in those days? They give you a code every day, and the code -- they sent out letters. It was like the ship in the middle, and they'd send out an E or a C or a B or an A or whatever it is. So you'd listen for Morse Code. And if you got a B, you'd look at your chart and you'd see what area was supposed to be covered by Bs, Cs, Ds, and -- it was really primitive stuff.

Then, if you crossed over into an A, the A came in, then you'd know you were on certain heading out there.

Q No way I could do that.

THE PRESIDENT: That part was kind of fun. The only thing is, if the radio went out, then you had another problem. (Laughter.) And the weather -- I didn't like night carrier landings and all that stuff.

MRS. BUSH: Other than that, you weren't --

THE PRESIDENT: Those are just your original. I think those are nothing --

Q May I have these?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think you gave them to me. Yes. And that's what I think I answered -- the questions.

Q Can I have the --

MRS. BUSH: Don't worry about --

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you take the whole damn thing?

Q Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you need any fancy souvenirs.

Q That's right --

THE PRESIDENT: I wear them -- I don't have mine. But if you need any other color or anything, just give a holler to Don and we'll try to -- because you've been most.

Q These were very, very helpful, and I'm most grateful.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The trouble with Don, he's become a Naval historian out of all of this -- this project and a couple of others. I don't think any others have been written with this much research. In fact, I don't think any -- you know, we just have articles and magazines --

Q Well, I've been through -- I went through everyone I could find.

THE PRESIDENT: The people?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Did they all remember the same things, or did they remember differently?

Q They all remembered the same things. The only place where there was any discrepancy was with Hugo Partland, who recalled a ruby broach, which he said that you had and he took from you, and you don't remember it.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't remember it.

Q And apparently, Mrs. Bush doesn't remember it, either.

THE PRESIDENT: A ruby broach. I don't --

Q Do you remember a ruby broach that you gave to Mr. Bush at one point to trade with the natives? That's the story that Hugo Partland told me.

THE PRESIDENT: I can't remember that at all.

MRS. BUSH: If I had a ruby broach, I would have kept it.  
(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: But did you ever find a guy named Jerry Redman?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: He was on the Finnback. And he's a guy that came in here the other day. But his is social. Kind of knew -- Long Island socialite guy.

Q Jerry Redman?

THE PRESIDENT: Redman. And I don't know whether he got his address -- he was just one of the officers. The only thing -- because there's kind of an interesting -- like Ted White's family, my mother and dad turned out to know the Whites, and they're kind of socialites from out there in --

Q Minneapolis.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. What's the other town -- St. Paul? But Redman comes out of kind of a social pass and knew our uncles and all that kind of thing. He's now maybe three or four years older than I. But he stayed in touch, and he -- the reason he may have some recall, is that he, having known the family, he was -- Jerry Redman.

Q Ironically, I walk every morning with a friend named Ted Nant who is from Minneapolis -- a theater owner. He's a close friend of Justin Bemis, a man who has given several million dollars to the university. And he and Bemis -- as a matter of fact, this weekend, he put Bemis on Bemis' plane.

THE PRESIDENT: Is Bemis a wealthy guy, I guess?

Q Very wealthy.

THE PRESIDENT: Bemis Bag Company?

Q Bemis Bag Company. He's very wealthy.

THE PRESIDENT: And nice, nice people.

Q So I spoke with Justin Bemis and asked if I could talk to his wife, and she said, by all means. And I called Barbara, who was Ted White's sister.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We've stayed in touch and Don has seen them. They've been here -- the Bemises.

Q I talked with Delaney's sisters, and they gave me --

THE PRESIDENT: Did they? We had a letter -- did Don give you the letter from her to me -- the sister and stuff?

Q I have one. I don't know if it's the one I've used. Did you give me a letter?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't we have a letter from Delaney's sister to me? It was a very nice, sweet letter. It was a little personal, but I used have --

DON: No, we don't have one.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we do, Don.

Q I quote one in the book. She gave it to me.

THE PRESIDENT: It was in a little white envelope. I remember it. Not an eight-by-ten, smaller. I think it was typed.

Q She said you had written a -- letter to her. That's hard work, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: It is.

Q White's letter.

THE PRESIDENT: Jim White, yes, he died.

Q You sent a letter the other day, and I must say it was kind of thoughtful. I'm not a busy person. Butch -- had a loss in his family, and you sent a letter to him about a week or so ago.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Don is the thoughtful -- Stan -- what's he doing now?

Q He's retired.

THE PRESIDENT: He stayed in, didn't he? Yes.

Q He flew the X-15, and he retired after 25 years with NASA, and he lives in a very small town in California. I drove up to see him, and he was fixing a school bus --

THE PRESIDENT: Is Lou Grabb -- Sacramento's --

Q District principal, and he is retired and lives in a nice home. I drove down to see him. I've met some wonderful people.

THE PRESIDENT: Paletti -- Frank Paletti?

Q Paletti I spoke with on the phone. I didn't see him.

THE PRESIDENT: He was an apple grower, I think.

Q Still is.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: The only sourpuss we had was this guy up in Connecticut. I'm going to win him --

Q Majeuski --

THE PRESIDENT: Majeuski or something like that who, in the campaign said that this was all -- and his own pilot was Don Melvn, who had --

Q I didn't even bother with him, because it was during a campaign and I just thought someone --

THE PRESIDENT: It would be interesting to call him and -- because you get another side of it.

END

MORE