



President George W. Bush Oral History Project

BRIEFING MATERIALS

Harriet E. Miers

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Prepared by M. Joel Voss, Research Assistant

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Presidential Oral History Program

MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED OR CIRCULATED

HARRIET MIERS NEWS TIMELINE

Prepared by M. Joel Voss

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 06/22/2010

- 1967** Harriet Miers graduates from Southern Methodist University with a B.S. in mathematics. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- 1970** Miers graduates from Southern Methodist University's School of Law. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- 1970-1972** Miers clerks for U.S. District Court Judge Joe E. Estes.
- 1972** Miers is the first woman hired at the Dallas law firm of Locke Purnell Boren Laney & Neely. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- 1978** Miers becomes partner in her law firm. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>)
- 1985** Miers is the first woman elected president of the Dallas Bar Association. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- 1989** Miers begins a ten year term on the Board of Editors of the American Bar Association (becomes chair in 1998).
- Miers is elected to a two-year term on the Dallas City Council. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- Miers's friend, Texas Supreme Court Justice Nathan Hecht, introduces Miers to George W. Bush at a Texas political dinner. (*The New York Times*, 10/04/2005)
- 1992** Miers is the first woman elected president of the Texas State Bar Association. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)
- 1994** Miers serves as general counsel for Bush's Texas gubernatorial campaign and as governor. (*Austin-American Statesman*, 11/18/1994)
- 1995** Miers recommends Alberto Gonzales to Bush as counsel. (*USA Today*, 01/05/2005)
- 1995- 2000** Miers serves as chair of the Texas Lottery Commission. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>; *The New York Times*, 10/04/2005)
- 2001**
- January* Miers is named staff secretary and assistant to President-elect Bush. (*Austin-American Statesman*, 01/06/2001)

Miers investigates alleged acts of White House vandalism such as computer keyboards missing the letter “W” reportedly done by departing former Clinton aides. (*The Bulletin’s Frontrunner*, 01/25/2001)

2003

June Miers is promoted to deputy chief of staff for policy. (*AP Online*, 06/27/2003)

August Miers participates in a meeting concerning the state of the economy headed by Bush. (*The Associated Press*, 08/12/2003)

September Miers joins Bush at a memorial service commemorating 9/11 at St. John’s Episcopal Church, where she reads the 62nd Psalm as part of the service. (*The Washington Post*, 09/12/2003)

2004

November On the 17th, Miers is promoted to White House counsel after Bush nominates White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales for attorney general. Karl Rove replaces her as deputy chief of staff for policy. (*The Washington Post*, 11/18/2004)

2005

March On the 2nd, D. Kyle Sampson, Gonzales’s chief of staff and counselor sends a memo to Miers in response to a reported earlier proposal by Miers to replace all 93 United States attorneys after the 2004 election with attorneys who are more loyal to Bush and hold conservative ideals. (*The Washington Post*, 03/20/2007)

April Rep. George Miller (D-CA) asks Miers to cooperate fully with an investigation into the Department of Education’s hiring of commentator Armstrong Williams. Reportedly, Williams was paid by the Bush Administration to comment regularly about “No Child Left Behind” during his TV and radio talk shows. Secretary of Education Rod Paige defends the action as standard practice. However, on the 14th, Bush admits it was a mistake. (*USA Today*, 01/07/2005, 01/14/2005; *The Associated Press*, 04/14/2005)

After a successful initial interview with Vice President Dick Cheney, Miers brings Samuel Alito, Jr. into her office to discuss his background in preparation for a potential Supreme Court vacancy. According to numerous reports, Chief Justice William Rehnquist’s health is deteriorating rapidly from thyroid cancer. (Jan Crawford Greenburg *Supreme Conflict*, New York: Penguin, 2007, p. 294; *The New York Times*, 08/03/2005)

May On the 3rd, Miers and other Bush Administration officials interview John Roberts concerning the potential Supreme Court vacancy. (*The New York Times*, 08/03/2005)

On the 23rd, Miers interviews Roberts for a second time. (*States News Service*, 09/27/2005)

June It is reported that Miers's office will be the center for Roberts's nomination. (*The New York Times*, 06/20/2005)

July On the 1st, Miers is reportedly the first person at the White House to receive word of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement. (*The New York Times*, 07/02/2005)

For the first time, Miers is mentioned as a possible Supreme Court nominee. (*The Richmond Times Dispatch*, 07/02/2005)

During early to mid-July, Miers and Card schedule a flurry of phone calls and meetings to discuss replacing O'Connor and possibly Rehnquist. They contact Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) to urge him to press for a restrained and dignified confirmation process for the eventual nominee to replace O'Connor. They also contact Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Charles Schumer (D-NY), and other key Democratic leaders. (*The Houston Chronicle*, 07/07/2005; *The Associated Press*, 07/08/2005; *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 07/09/2005; *The Washington Post*, 07/09/2005; *The Washington Times*, 07/13/2005; *States News Service*, 07/19/2005)

On the 17th, Miers responds through email to White House discussions surrounding the "war on terror" and CIA prisons. She argues that "there must be a clear and concise and compelling description of the current legal framework under which we are and have been conducting the war on terror." Miers suggests that the U.S. tie its legal policy to specific international standards. (Barton Gellman, *Angler: The Cheney Vice Presidency*, New York: Penguin Books, 2008, p. 350)

On the 19th, Bush nominates Roberts to fill O'Connor's seat on the Supreme Court. (*The Washington Post*, 07/20/2005)

Miers sits in on all interviews with Roberts. (*The Washington Post*, 07/20/2005)

August Miers, her staff, and the Department of Justice help Roberts prepare for his confirmation hearings by holding mock hearings and "murder boards." (*The Washington Times*, 08/05/2005)

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) sends a written request to Miers requesting documents relating to Roberts's time in the George H. W. Bush White House and other government jobs. Miers responds to Leahy's request and acknowledges that most of the documents that the Senate Judiciary requests will be available shortly. However, the documents must first be reviewed in order to ensure that matters of

personal privacy, national security, or other issues that fall within constitutional privilege are omitted. (*States News Service*, 08/10/2005, 08/11/2005)

September

On the 3rd, Rehnquist dies. Miers already has reportedly met with Administration officials to discuss a possible Rehnquist replacement. (*The New York Times*, 09/05/2005)

On the 5th, Bush nominates Roberts to replace Rehnquist as chief justice of the United States Supreme Court. (*The Washington Post*, 09/06/2005)

On the 21st, Bush holds a meeting with senators about possible Supreme Court nominees. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) suggests Miers to Bush as a replacement for O'Connor. Coincidentally, Bush has already interviewed Miers as a candidate to replace O'Connor. (Jeffrey Toobin, *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, p. 287; *The Washington Post*, 10/04/2005)

On the 29th, Miers attends the swearing in of Chief Justice Roberts. (*The Associated Press*, 09/29/2005)

October

On the 3rd, Bush nominates Miers to replace O'Connor. (*The New York Times*, 10/04/2005)

On the 4th, Bush cites executive privilege and will not release documents relating to Miers's tenure in the White House. Conservative groups and talk-show hosts begin to attack the Miers nomination because they fear that Miers's conservative credentials are questionable. Specifically, they are concerned about the lack of published material concerning her positions on issues such as abortion and gay marriage. *The Washington Post* reports that close confidants of Miers suggest that religion has shaped her personal values and may affect her judicial decisions. (*The New York Times*, 10/05/2005; *USA Today*, 10/05/2005; *The Washington Post*, 10/05/2005)

Miers starts her courtesy rounds on Capitol Hill. She is scheduled to meet with Senators Cornyn, Leahy, and Mike DeWine (R-OH) to increase support for her nomination. On the next day, Miers is scheduled to meet with Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS). The courtesy visits reportedly raise concerns about her qualifications to serve on the Court and her conservative credentials, especially on abortion. (Toobin, pp. 290-294; *The Washington Post*, 10/05/2005; *USA Today*, 10/06/2005; *The New York Times*, 10/07/2005)

On the 6th, Bush asks former Senator Dan Coats (R-IN) to assist Miers during the Senate confirmation process. (*USA Today*, 10/07/2005)

Bush consistently rejects the initial calls, primarily from conservative groups, to withdraw Miers's nomination. Bush argues that he knows Miers's heart and that

she is the most qualified person for the Court. (Toobin, pp. 293-297; *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2005)

Miers receives support from conservative evangelical leaders James C. Dobson and Pat Robertson. (*The New York Times*, 10/10/2005; *The Washington Post*, 10/15/2005)

On the 10th, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission releases 2,259 pages of documents relating to Miers. Most of the documents concerned Miers's tenure as chair of the Texas State Lottery Commission. (*The Washington Post*, 10/11/2005)

On the 12th, Dobson states that Rove did not offer assurances about Miers's votes if the Senate confirms her. (*USA Today*, 10/12/2005)

After a turbulent start to the Miers nomination, the White House repeatedly shifts its confirmation strategy away from Miers's religious and personal characteristics to her overall qualifications to serve on the Supreme Court. However, according to *The Washington Post*, critics claim that Miers's writings are weak in style and analysis. (*The Washington Post*, 10/15/2005)

On the 17th, Miers meets with Senate Democrats to discuss her views on constitutional law, particularly abortion. After the meeting, Schumer states that "Ms. Miers had neither affirmed nor questioned some long-established precedents of the Supreme Court." (*The New York Times*, 10/18/2005) On the Republican side, Arlen Specter (R-PA) states that she supports the right of constitutional privacy found in *Griswold v. Connecticut*. Soon after, Specter's spokesperson asserts that Miers has not taken a position on that case or on the right of privacy after she tells Specter that he misunderstood her. (*The Washington Post*, 10/18/2005; *The New York Times*, 10/18/2005)

On the 17th, Bush meets with a group of former Texas judges at the White House who support the Miers nomination. (*The New York Times*, 10/18/2005)

Reportedly, Senate Judiciary Committee members are worried about Miers's delay in submitting her nominee questionnaire on time. (*The New York Times*, 10/18/2005)

On the 18th, documents released by the Senate Judiciary Committee, including Miers's original questionnaire to the Committee, reportedly show that Miers was vetted by few officials in the Bush Administration. (*USA Today*, 10/19/2005)

On the 19th, the Senate Judiciary Committee asks Miers to redo her answers to their questionnaire. (*The New York Times*, 10/20/2005)

On the 24th, Bush, citing executive privilege, continues to refuse to hand over Miers's papers. Meanwhile, Miers's opponents begin airing commercials on *Fox News*. (*The New York Times*, 10/25/2005)

On the 25th, Senators Jeff Sessions (R-AL), John Thune (R-SD), Norm Coleman (R-MN), and Tom Coburn (R-OK) publically reiterate concerns over the Miers nomination based on her qualifications and stance on conservative issues. (*The New York Times*, 10/26/2005)

A *USA Today* poll states that support for Miers's nomination ebbed at 42-43% in favor of her confirmation. (*USA Today*, 10/26/2005)

On the 26th, the White House delays sending Miers's questionnaire back to the Senate Judiciary Committee by one day. Then, on the 27th, Miers submits a letter to Bush asking him to withdraw her nomination to the Supreme Court. She talks with Bush about a replacement and Alito is decided to be the nominee. (*The New York Times*, 10/28/2005, 11/14/2005; *USA Today*, 10/27/2005; *The Washington Times*, 11/01/2005)

On the 31st, Alito is nominated by Bush as Associate Justice. Miers helps in the Alito process. (Greenburg, p. 299)

November After I. Lewis Libby is indicted over the Valerie Plame CIA leak probe, Bush orders all White House staff to attend meetings on ethical behavior, following a series of private meetings with Bush, Card, and Miers. The White House Counsel's Office conducts the refresher courses. (*The Washington Post*, 11/05/2005)

On the 9th, CIA "torture" tapes of Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri are destroyed. Reportedly, Miers becomes "livid" when she discovers the destruction. According to former CIA officials, "[Directorate of CIA Operations Jose] Rodriguez ordered the tapes destroyed in November 2005 because he feared that if the tapes were to become public it would put undercover CIA officers in legal and physical jeopardy." After a three-year probe, the Justice Department rules not to prosecute the CIA officers behind the tapes' destruction. (*The New York Times*, 04/16/2010; *The Washington Post*, 11/10/2010)

December On the 5th, Senator Kennedy asks Alito to provide a fuller explanation of why he failed to recuse himself from a 2002 case involving the Vanguard investment company after telling the Senate in 1990 that he would not rule on Vanguard matters due to his investments in the firm. (*The Washington Post*, 12/06/2005)

On the 22nd, Kennedy sends a request to Judiciary Committee Chairman Specter requesting a subpoena for documents belonging to *National Review* editor William Rusher that may expose information about Alito's involvement in Concerned Alumni of Princeton (CAP), a conservative group founded by Rusher

that opposed the admission to Princeton of women and minorities. Alito included his CAP membership on a 1985 job application for a position at the Department of Justice under Reagan. During the hearing, Alito denies having participated actively in the group, and claims that he did not know until recently that CAP advocated beliefs discriminating against women and minorities. (*The Washington Post*, 01/10/2006)

2006

January

On the 10th, Kennedy questions Alito further on Vanguard, his alleged deference to “government over individuals,” and Alito’s concept of executive power, focusing on Alito’s advocacy of a presidential signing statement that was issued in December by Bush to exempt the executive branch from the recent John McCain (R-AZ) sponsored torture ban. (*The Washington Post*, 01/11/2006)

On the 24th, Alito is recommended 10-8 along party lines by the Judiciary Committee. Two days later, Kennedy and John Kerry (D-MA) call for a filibuster of the Alito nomination. They acknowledge the possibility that the filibuster may fail, but hope that extended debate will draw further attention to Alito’s record on abortion, civil rights, and presidential power.

On the 31st, the Senate confirms Alito 58-42.

February

Amidst congressional and public fury over the handling of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Miers declines to offer Michael Brown, the former head of FEMA, executive privilege protection concerning investigation of the Hurricane Katrina relief crisis. (*The Washington Post*, 2/10/2006)

March

Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA) reads a news report that might suggest an ongoing domestic surveillance program and reaches out to Gonzales. Miers and Gonzales talk to her separately to state that there is not a “broader program or an additional program out there involving the surveillance of U.S. persons.” (*The Washington Post*, 03/03/2006) ¹

Miers attends an event honoring retired Justice O’Connor. Miers states that the event “is a wonderful opportunity for so many people to express our appreciation for her wonderful contributions. She’s been a remarkable public servant.” (*The Washington Post*, 03/07/2006)

April

Amid staffing changes at the White House, White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten reportedly reaffirms his support for Miers. (*The Washington Post*, 04/26/2006)

May

It is reported that Miers’s office will coordinate the selection process to replace U.S. Court of Appeals Judge J. Michael Luttig, who will be leaving the 4th Circuit

¹ This entry was corrected after its inaccuracy was brought up by Ms. Miers. See transcript for clarification.

to take a job at Boeing. Luttig had been interviewed for a Supreme Court nomination. (*The Washington Post*, 05/18/2006)

Miers's long-time friend, Judge Hecht, is admonished by the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct for improperly using his office as judge to support Miers' bid for the Supreme Court. According to a report by the commission, Hecht conducted approximately 120 interviews in support of Miers. (*The Washington Post*, 05/24/2006)

On the 27th, Miers attends a meeting called by Bush where he tells his aides that he plans to seal any documents relating to the Jefferson probe in order to prevent further escalation. At the center of the probe is a raid conducted by FBI officials on Congressman William J. Jefferson's (D-LA) office. Jefferson has been under investigation for bribery since 2005. Allegedly, "he took hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes in exchange for using his congressional influence to promote business ventures in Africa." (*The Washington Post*, 05/27/2006)

June Miers attends a state dinner honoring Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. (*The Washington Post*, 06/30/2006)

October A Texas appellate judge panel dismisses the reprimand on Hecht. (*The Washington Post*, 10/21/2006)

2007

January On the 4th, Miers steps down as White House counsel. Bush "reluctantly" accepts her resignation. Reportedly, Miers's resignation occurs because of the need for the White House to reshape the Counsel's Office amid increasing confrontations with Democrats over Bush policies. Additionally, some reporters believe that rumors of Miers's resignation may have been circulating as early as last year, when Bush reshaped the White House staff and hired Bolten as chief of staff. Miers states that her role in vetting nominees for the federal courts was "among the most rewarding of my experiences." (*The New York Times*, 01/05/2007)

March House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-MI) wants investigators to interview Rove after the White House confirms that he sent complaints concerning David Iglesias, a New Mexico U.S. Attorney, to Miers. Iglesias is one of eight prosecutors who were asked to resign by the Justice Department. (*USA Today*, 03/13/2007)

Counselor to the President Dan Bartlett denies that the White House played a central role in creating the list of fired U.S. attorneys. However, Bartlett states that through Miers's office, the White House ultimately "signed off on the list." (*The New York Times*, 03/14/2007)

On the 20th, under growing pressure from Congress, Bush offers to hold private meetings between members of Congress and Rove, Miers, and two other officials. Democrats reject the offer because they want White House officials to testify under oath instead. (*The New York Times*, 03/21/2007)

On the 21st, the House Judiciary Committee authorizes subpoenas to force Rove, Miers, and Sampson to testify before Congress concerning their role in the firings of U.S. prosecutors in order to see if political matters played a key role in the firings. (*USA Today*, 03/22/2007)

May Monica Goodling, a former Justice Department official, testifies before the House Judiciary Committee concerning her role in the firings of eight U.S. prosecutors and the hiring of individuals at the Justice Department based on political affiliation. Goodling claims that she had little contact with White House officials, including Rove and Miers. (*USA Today*, 05/24/2007)

Miers returns to work for Locke Liddell & Sapp as a member of their Litigation and Public Policy sections. (<http://www.lockelord.com/hmiers>)

June On the 13th, Congress issues subpoenas for Miers and former political adviser Sara Taylor. (*USA Today*, 06/14/2007)

On the 28th, Bush formally invokes executive privilege, thereby blocking congressional subpoenas for Miers and Taylor. According to *USA Today*, “Now Congress must decide whether to take Bush to court or seek contempt citations against Miers and Taylor.” (*USA Today*, 06/29/2007)

July Miers refuses to appear before the House Judiciary Committee to testify. Taylor testifies before the committee but invoked the right of executive privilege on many questions. (*The New York Times*, 07/14/2007)

2008

March The House Judiciary Committee files a lawsuit in federal court, which claims that Miers is not immune from testifying based on executive privilege. Additionally, Miers and Bolten must identify all documents being withheld from Congress. (*The Washington Post*, 03/11/2008)

June On the 23rd, Congressional lawyers ask U.S. District Judge John D. Bates to order Bolten and Miers to testify before the House Judiciary Committee. The move is considered unprecedented because Congress is asking the court to order Bolten and Miers to comply with a House subpoena compelling their testimony. Judge Bates states, “Whether I rule for the executive branch or I rule for the legislative branch, I’m going to disrupt the balance [of power].” (*The Washington Post*, 06/24/2008)

July On the 31st, Bates rules that “the White House had no legal basis for its position and that Ms. Miers is bound by the subpoena to attend a congressional hearing.” The White House is expected to appeal the ruling. (*The Washington Post*, 08/01/2008)

September On the 4th, a U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia grants the White House a temporary delay in turning over documents to the House Judiciary Committee. According to the ruling, the court needs more time to consider a White House motion seeking to defer enforcement of a previous ruling by Bates. (*The Washington Post*, 09/06/2008)

2009

March Attorneys for Bush, Congress, and President Barack Obama reach an agreement to end a long dispute over the scope of executive privilege. The deal will have Rove and Miers testify under oath before the House Judiciary Committee, but no recordings or outside observers will be permitted. However, the interviews will be transcribed and eventually published. (*The Washington Post*, 03/05/2009)

June On the 15th, Miers testifies before House Judiciary Committee. (<http://judiciary.house.gov>)

2010

July On the 21st, the Justice Department announces it has found no evidence of wrongdoing in the firings. (*The Washington Post*, 07/22/2010)

TIMELINES

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- Timeline of the Bush Presidency, prepared by Justin Peck and Bryan Craig, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 04/30/2010.

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- Bradley Patterson, “Javelin Catcher: The Chief of Staff,” in *To Serve the President: Continuity and Innovation in the White House Staff* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008) pp. 40-41.
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- Michael A. Fletcher, “Quiet but Ambitious White House Counsel Makes Life of Law,” *The Washington Post*, 06/21/2005.

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- David A. Yalof, “In Search of a Means to an End: George W. Bush and the Federal Judiciary,” in *The George W. Bush Legacy*, Colin Campbell, Bert A. Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevique, eds. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2008) pp. 188-212.

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HARRIET MIERS SUGGESTED TOPICS

Prepared by M. Joel Voss, with faculty edits

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 07/02/2010

Early Relationship, 2000 Campaign, and Transition

- At what point did it first become clear to you that Governor Bush was seriously considering a campaign for the presidency? Were you involved in early efforts to position Governor Bush for a presidential campaign? What kinds of things did he do before 2000 to get ready for a serious run for the presidency?
- Describe your role in the 2000 campaign. Did you have any responsibilities for helping to resolve the vote challenge in Florida? Did you have a formal role in the transition?
- Discuss the circumstances of your appointment to the White House staff. Were there other positions you were considered for at the outset?
- How difficult was your personal transition from Texas to Washington? What was the biggest surprise to you in how Washington works? Discuss the importance of the transplanted Texas network for supporting President Bush in DC.

Staff Secretary

- Discuss the basic requirements of your job. Did you have a chance to speak with any of your predecessors in this post to learn the ins-and-outs of the job? Was the job in any way redefined as you took it on? Did you have advanced discussions with the president-elect about what specifically he wanted from you in this position?
- What were the major challenges of being the “in-box and out-box” of the President? What approach did you take to responding to the mountains of mail addressed to President Bush?
- According to one previous staff secretary, the job is to “kill ideas.” Do you agree with this? Do you believe the position of staff secretary is mostly administrative or is there room for the secretary to be active in policy as well?
- Describe the working relationship of the staff secretary to other White House offices.
- Describe the President’s work style and how you adapted your own work style to best suit the needs of the President. Describe the system of organization that you implemented or inherited as staff secretary.
- What did you discover in your investigation of vandalism by the departing Clinton staff?
- Did 9/11 change your duties as, or approach to being, staff secretary?

Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy

- Describe your transition from staff secretary to deputy chief of staff for policy. Did your primary responsibilities change? What were your new responsibilities?
- How did your working relationship with Bush change? How did your working relationship with other White House offices change? Describe specifically your relationship with the chief domestic policy adviser and the national security adviser.
- Do you believe the office is more of an operational unit or a policy-making unit?
- Describe your responsibilities in the 2004 reelection campaign.

White House Counsel

- Discuss the circumstances surrounding your selection as counsel to the President.

- Did you make any changes to the organization or operation of the Counsel's Office after your arrival? What were the priorities of the Counsel's Office? Discuss the staffing of the Counsel's Office. What issues and activities most occupied your staff?
- Describe the transition period into Bush's second term. Describe the general atmosphere in the White House during the second term. How did the atmosphere compare to the first term?
- After your appointment, how did your relationship with the President change? How did your relationship with other offices in the White House change?
- Describe the differences between working with Andy Card and Josh Bolten. Were there significant differences in how they approached the role of chief of staff?
- Describe your relationship with the Department of Justice and Office of Legal Counsel? How closely did you work with Alberto Gonzales after he became attorney general?
- Describe the Supreme Court vetting process prior to Bush's choosing John Roberts first for the O'Connor seat and then for the Chief Justice.
- Describe your role in the Roberts and Alito confirmation processes.
- What criteria did you use in selecting lower federal court judges?
- What was your initial reaction after you learned that you were a top candidate for the O'Connor seat on the Supreme Court? Compare the Roberts nomination process to your own nomination process. Describe your preparation for the Senate confirmation hearings. Do you believe that the media treated you fairly during the confirmation process? Describe your treatment by the "conservative base."
- Describe your reaction when you discovered that the "torture" tapes of Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri were destroyed.
- Describe your role in White House discussions of legal policy in the War on Terror, especially treatment of detainees.
- Was your office involved in investigating the leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame's name?
- Describe the U.S. Attorneys firings controversy. How did the long subpoena process affect you and your standing in the White House? Describe your process of testifying before Congress.
- Why did you decide to step down as White House counsel and resume your private life in Texas?

The Bush Presidency in Retrospect

- What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as staff secretary, deputy chief of staff, and White House counsel?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Bush presidency? What features of the Bush presidency have been overlooked or misunderstood by the press?
- How effective was Bush as a public leader, a legislative leader, and a party leader?
- How should the Bush presidency be viewed in history? What were its most significant achievements?
- What episodes or events are especially instructive or revealing for the historian trying to assess this presidency?