



## **GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

### **TRANSCRIPT**

#### **INTERVIEW WITH DAVID Q. BATES, JR.**

September 21–22, 2000  
College Station, Texas

#### **Interviewers**

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## TRANSCRIPT

### INTERVIEW WITH DAVID Q. BATES, JR.

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**Young:** This is a Bush Presidential Oral History project interview with David Bates, former Cabinet Secretary in the Bush White House. What I'd like to do for purposes of identification for the voices, is—I've spoken my piece, but I'd like to go around the table so that you can just say a few words, identifying the voice of David Bates, and you can do the same thing. Present at the interview are David Bates, James Young, speaking, George Edwards, Melissa Walker as the note taker and John Wittemore as the taping professional. So, say some words for the machine.

**Bates:** Well, thank you and pleasure to be here. I thought I'd first talk about how I got to know President Bush. I grew up in Houston, Texas and was a friend of Jeb Bush, currently Governor of Florida. We got to be friends probably when we were nine years old and played sports together, so I knew President Bush as a father of a good friend. Jeb and I continued to be friends through college. The summer of 1978, I had just graduated from law school and was getting ready to take the bar review course and the bar. I had accepted a job to go to work for a Houston law firm starting around September 1, 1978. I saw George Bush on Memorial Day of 1978, and he asked me what I was doing and I told him that, and he said, "Well, look, instead of going to work for the law firm in September of '78, why don't you go to work for the law firm in mid-November of '78? Because I'm going to be doing a lot of speaking on behalf of Congressional and senatorial candidates, gubernatorial candidates in the fall of 1978, and depending on what kind of reaction I get, I may run for President in 1980."

So I said, "Great." My wife said, "Great," and the law firm said, "Great. We'll see you in mid-November." Fortunately, we didn't have children at the time. So, when I went to work for him there were two other people working for him. One was Karl Rove, who currently is campaign manager for George W. Bush's campaign for President, and Margaret Tutwiler, who was the scheduler. She eventually became the principal press spokesperson at the Department of State. I was the third person hired, and I was hired as his personal aide to travel with him. We traveled—We went everywhere. We rented a King Air for that period. We traveled under the auspices of a political action committee called the Fund for Limited Government. But it was just the two of us traveling. We went everywhere. I mean all over the country.

The reaction he was receiving was very good, very positive, and it was obvious to me that he had made many, many friends in his stints in Washington and had gained a lot of admirers for his stewardship of the Republican National Committee during the Watergate days. It was clear to me in mid-October that he would be a credible candidate and it was also clear to me that he wanted

to run, so I asked him if I could stay on with him and he, fortunately, said, “Yes.” So I did stay on and that—

**Young:** After November.

**Bates:** After November. Right. So I stayed on. Starting January 1, 1979, he officially became a candidate, legally became a candidate. So, it was George Bush for President at that point, although he didn’t formally announce until May of ’79. Jim Baker came on to be campaign manager. Then we got rid of the King Air because we were saving funds, so we were flying commercial. I remember we were just carrying our own luggage, flying coach class. Finally, he talked Jim Baker into letting us fly first. But in 1979 we traveled—I think one time we were away from Houston for maybe—It was a four-and-a-half-week trip, I mean without returning home to Houston. He campaigned a lot in New Hampshire, a lot in Iowa. But we would spend a lot of Saturday nights and Sunday nights for instance at his sister’s house in Boston or if we were campaigning in the south, we’d spend the night at his mother’s home in Florida. I’ve never seen—He just worked so incredibly hard. In that job, I would try to help him as a personal aide. The kind of normal role of a personal aide is just try to keep him on schedule, do anything I could to help him. Help him remember to whom he was speaking and whom he needed to acknowledge and just try to take names of people that came up to offer to help. I remember at the end of each day, I would just empty my pockets of business cards and notes and addresses of people, but eventually would get that in order and send it back to Houston. It was a very, very interesting period.

When we first started traveling nobody recognized him, but eventually he won the Iowa caucuses in January of 1980 and made the cover of *Newsweek* with the title, “Bush breaks out of the pack,” and had a picture of him jogging. It was a very strong field in 1980. Connally was running, Howard Baker, Bob Dole, Jack Kemp. Most people, when he first announced, said, “Well, gosh, the logical candidate from Texas is Connally,” and everybody kind of pooh-poohed him, but Bush was the last man standing. Quickly the others dropped out of the race and President Bush stayed in and won the Iowa caucus, then came back and lost New Hampshire. As I recall, Reagan got about fifty-one percent of the vote and President Bush got twenty-eight percent and then the rest of the field was like at twelve, ten, around there. Twenty-eight percent was actually very good against Ronald Reagan. Unfortunately, we did not manage the expectation games that well. Reagan had gotten forty-nine and a half percent against a sitting President in 1976, Gerald Ford, in the New Hampshire primary. So, we should have known that he had a very hard-core base and that we would be lucky to do what we did. But, you know, we won Iowa. We got a little excited, so the expectations were we could possibly beat Reagan, but that was unrealistic.

**Young:** Could you talk a little bit about the reaction to the defeat in New Hampshire? I mean did it crush everybody?

**Bates:** Yes, and it was a blow. No doubt about it. But he was a very resilient candidate. He just had an awful lot of drive. It didn’t get him down too much. The one thing about that campaign, since he was such a long shot when he started, the group of people, the kind of core of supporters that we had in that campaign, they weren’t there because they thought he was going to win. They

were there because they really believed in him. It wasn't a fair weather group of folks. So, one, he was a resilient candidate and then all his supporters were very committed, you know. We had a couple who dropped off after New Hampshire and started—

**Young:** Looking for greener pastures?

**Bates:** Yes, but he kept on. Then, actually the next week, he won the Massachusetts primary in a close race and then we went south and he did not do well in the southern primaries. Reagan did very well, I remember. Then, from the south we went to Illinois where he thought he would do better and again Reagan did very well in Illinois. I remember a long plane ride. The night of the Illinois primary we flew from Illinois to Connecticut. I remember he was just very quiet. It was just the two of us on a small jet that the campaign had leased. I remember that he spent a lot of time just looking out the window and it was clear to me that he was thinking about whether it might be time to get out. But the next morning he came out charged up and we had a really good event in Connecticut. It was clear to me he'd made up his mind he was going to stick in there. I remember a David Broder piece at the time saying that this is it. Connecticut is do or die for Bush. That next week, he won the Connecticut primary. It put him back in the race. By that time, it was a two-man race. It was a big win.

It just seemed like about every time you about had him out in 1980, he'd just get up off the mat. From Connecticut the race shifted to Texas and he did very well in the Texas primary. Reagan had defeated Ford in Texas in 1976 by approximately sixty-eight to thirty-two percent—just a wipe out. And President Bush got—it was forty-eight, forty-nine percent against Reagan in 1980. So, it was very close. I remember President Bush had visited Bill Clements, the Governor of Texas, before the primary and, based on their conversation, we kind of thought that Clements might endorse him if he got close. We felt like we were close enough, but Clements ended up not endorsing, which was a bit of a disappointment.

**Young:** Was this the first campaign you had ever worked on?

**Bates:** Yes, officially. Then after Texas was Pennsylvania, a significant primary, large state, and he beat Reagan in Pennsylvania, which was a really big win. But, despite our winning Pennsylvania, Reagan kept picking up delegates, and winning caucuses in the mountain states. Bush would win, Pennsylvania, and ended up winning Michigan, another big industrial state. But the day he won Michigan, Reagan won Oregon and ABC News said, "By our calculations we think Reagan's over the top now."

So President Bush, over the Memorial Day weekend in 1980, finally pulled out. I think Jim Baker had a very hard time getting him out of the race. He wanted to keep fighting and felt like he had a chance, and like I said, he doesn't have any quit in him. But Jim Baker finally persuaded him to, and over that weekend he withdrew.

**Young:** Was that, so far as you know, was that on the expectation that another time—this wouldn't foreclose another time?

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** The time was not now.

**Bates:** Right. Right. Exactly. And Jim Baker was right. Having kind of traveled with President Bush the whole way, I felt like he did. You know, “We can still win this thing.” That wasn’t realistic. What Baker was thinking was long-term and if Reagan were to lose, then George Bush would be a strong candidate in ’84, or he would be a credible vice presidential candidate. And that was the right way to think. Reagan had, for all practical purposes, locked it up and all he would do at that point was alienate party people who thought that he ought to get behind Reagan. He had a little bit of a debt left over in his campaign. Kept a few people on the campaign staff including me. I spent the summer up in Kennebunkport between the convention and Memorial Day. He made a few trips to pay off his debt, which he did in that summer and we kind of got his affairs in order after the campaign, thanking supporters, writing letters and getting rid of the debt, that kind of work. No contact with Reagan at all, or really his people, that I can recall.

Everybody kind of started to think, Well, he would be a logical vice presidential choice based on winning Michigan and Pennsylvania and Connecticut. I mean, excuse me, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, doing well in Texas, having the foreign policy expertise that Reagan didn’t. People started to think he’s a very credible candidate. So we went to the convention.

**Young:** If I could interrupt. You said, “People started thinking,” but what was George Bush thinking? Do you know? Can you guess?

**Bates:** I think he was—

**Young:** Had that in mind?

**Bates:** Yes. I think he wanted to be Vice President. I mean, he didn’t talk about it, but my sense is he would be pleased to be picked.

**Edwards:** Did he do anything at all to advance his candidacy?

**Bates:** No. No. I mean, except for being very supportive of Ronald Reagan in everything he said. He wasn’t bitter. He became very supportive, but he would have done that anyway.

**Young:** Anyway if he weren’t—for the future?

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Was it a strategic choice to not do anything to advance his candidacy, feeling that was the best way to actually advance his candidacy?

**Bates:** Yes, and again, George Bush would do that anyway, but I think it also was the right thing to do, because just in my personal observation, the people who engage in self-promotion for the VP [Vice President] rarely get it. That usually kind of backfires. I recall that we’d get word that

Reagan had said this or that or Nancy said this to somebody, but there was no real communication between Bush and Reagan. We went to the convention in Detroit. I would for future scholars recommend an article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* from late July, 2000. It was written by Richard Allen about how George Bush was selected, and it's fascinating. It talks all about the negotiations with Ford.

I talked to President Bush about it and he said, "I don't know if this is accurate or not, but it seems to me like it's on the mark. Although there were a couple of other people in the room with Reagan who say it's not, my sense is that it is on the mark," and that's kind of my sense too. That convention was very interesting.

I remember the fateful day of Wednesday. He went to a lunch, kind of a party lunch during the convention. A lot of party people there and there were a lot of other potential vice presidential nominees. I remember [Richard G.] Lugar was there. I remember Kemp was there. But anyway, after the lunch, we went and exercised, jogged, and then went back to the hotel. Maybe did one thing before that, before the jog. I remember getting off the elevator in the concierge area of our floor at the hotel, and there was a TV on and [Walter] Cronkite was on the air and he was talking about Gerald Ford, the possibility of Gerald Ford being the Vice President. I remember it took us aback, and that's when we first started hearing about the possibility of Ford being the VP nominee. Then, we went to the room and heard more about it as the early evening went on.

He had a previously scheduled address to the convention that evening, and it was by design before the convention started that it was going to be a very short, supportive speech. His view is: This is Ronald Reagan's convention, I don't want to get up there and go on and on. I just want to be short, sweet, supportive of President Reagan. Vic Gold drafted the speech, with editing by GHWB and Dean Burch.

I remember, we left the hotel, and all this talk about Ford. It sounded as if it was really close to happening. I remember getting to the convention and he was in the runway to go up to the podium to be introduced and Jim Wooten of ABC News was there. I remember President Bush asked Jim Wooten, "What do you hear?" And he said, "Well, I hear it is a done deal and that Reagan's and Ford's Secret Service agents are on their way over to the convention hall because Reagan is going to announce Ford later this evening." So President Bush just kind of shrugged and then shortly after that, he was announced onto the podium.

**Young:** That's a pretty good expression.

**Bates:** Shortly after that he was announced on the podium, he gave this very short, supportive speech and I remember all the analysts kept saying, "Well, you know the speech was very short. He must be mad." Anyway, we walked back to the hotel. Then I remember at the hotel—we were staying at the Pontchartrain—we walked into the lobby and there were all kinds of press by the elevator, waiting to interview him. We didn't have Secret Service agents at that time because he was no longer a candidate. All this press was at the elevator and he kind of looked at them and said, "Ah, let's just go have a beer." So we went into the bar to have a beer to avoid the press. We were convinced at that point it was all over.

The press showed clips of him in the bar. Eventually we made it up to his suite. It was a pretty big group of folks up there because all his supporters were in that hotel. In his suite there must have been thirty or forty people in there, friends, family. We had a little bit of a wake. It was fun, but you know, a little sad. It was all coming to an end, we thought. I remember everybody finally left. I was staying with Jeb in a room next to the suite. Ten minutes, fifteen minutes after we'd left the suite, I remember the lights were off. We were in our respective beds. There was a knock on the door and Mrs. Bush said, "Jeb, come to the suite, your dad wants to say something to you." Then she said, "David, you come on in too."

We walked in and he said, "I've just gotten a call from Ronald Reagan and he wants me to be Vice President." It seemed like a minute after that, Bill [Wilson] Livingood of the Secret Service walked in the suite. He said, "I'm going to be the head of your detail." And Bill Livingood is now the Sergeant of Arms of the House of Representatives. As Bill walked through the door, he was followed thirty seconds later by a team of Secret Service agents.

**Young:** That made it real.

**Bates:** Oh yes, yes, absolutely. The next morning (Thursday) I remember he and Mrs. Bush went to have breakfast with the Reagans, and I could tell they were tense. (On Wednesday night, Reagan went to the convention and announced it was George Bush.) The breakfast was in the Reagans' suite at a different hotel, then they went down to do a joint press conference together on that Thursday morning. VP nominee Bush spoke again on Thursday evening as the VP nominee. I remember that both Reagans, particularly President Reagan, were very gracious at the Thursday morning breakfast, which put the Bushes at ease. I also remember Reagan telling a joke in the elevator to the press conference.

**Edwards:** Yes.

**Bates:** Thursday or Friday we started kind of meeting. On Friday morning VP nominee Bush met with Lyn Nofziger, who told Bush that he would really like to have Jim Brady on our airplane traveling with the Vice President as opposed to Peter Teeley, who was Vice President Bush's press secretary and had been during the 1980 primaries. Vice President Bush just nicely told him, "No, I want Pete Teeley," and that was really it. When we got to the general election in the fall, after Labor Day, they had two Reagan people on the airplane. One was a lady named Annelise Anderson, Marty Anderson's wife, who was a policy person, and the other was a representative of the treasurer's office to handle bills. We were very autonomous. I think that it helped that Jim Baker had joined the Reagan campaign. He helped us I think get more autonomy. Moreover, the vice presidential nominee was a good campaigner and had good sense and good judgment. Vic Gold wrote most of his speeches and remarks that fall, and he had autonomy too.

**Young:** Were there any occasions when—There are almost always bound to be some occasions, maybe not in this case, where there's a mismatch—

**Bates:** Well, to be—Yes.

**Young:** On themes or on people?

**Bates:** Yes, the mismatch I remember the most is in August, the Reagan folks had wanted VP nominee Bush to go to Japan and China to highlight his foreign policy credentials and the foreign policy credentials of the campaign. We went to Japan first, as I recall. We flew out, did an overnight in Alaska, with a party event there, and then flew to Japan, where we spent two or three days. This is typical George Bush. We were staying at the Okura Hotel and he likes to get rubdowns. He's always enjoyed them. I remember him telling his Reagan advance men, whom he didn't know, "I want to make sure that I pay cash for that rubdown I get. No rubdowns on the hotel bill that go back to the campaign. I want to do that. That's a personal item. I want to pay for that myself."

Japan was uneventful but I remember he met there with our Ambassador Mike Mansfield, who was gracious and insightful.

When we (our party was Bush, Dick Allen, Dean Burch, Jim Lilly, Pete Teeley and I) got to China, Reagan had a press conference and had said that he was going to, in so many words, upgrade the liaison office in Taiwan, which, of course, sent the Chinese over the edge. I remember there were two or three subsequent statements from Reagan on the same issue, which made it difficult for Bush to know what line to take. I remember one meeting with a very senior—it may have been—VP nominee Bush would know—but maybe Chou En-lai. As they were meeting, his counterpart was brought a note with another clarification. President Bush said, "Uh, well," because it contradicted what he had just said. So it was a very difficult three or four days.

I remember a lot of back-and-forth and it was good we had Dick Allen there, because when we got back he could say, "You know Bush really did try. He was a good soldier. He tried to make the best of this situation and he was very supportive of the President and it was very difficult for him." So I think that worked out. We flew back via Hawaii and spent a night there and did a camp party event. We then flew to L.A. Reagan and Bush did a press conference there and got on the same page, and then the flap died down. But it was a kind of dicey three or four days. In terms of a left hand/right hand type of problem, that's the one that stands out in the 1980 campaign.

I think it would be interesting if the Library asks President Bush about the convention in Detroit in '80. The other thing I think would be interesting is to get him to talk about this trip in China. He laughs about it now, but it was tense.

I remember that '80 campaign. I remember going to the debate in Cleveland. There wasn't a VP debate in '80. There was just one presidential debate, and that was Carter and Reagan. They debated in Cleveland about ten days before the election. The race was very close up to that debate, and then Reagan just took off. Not immediately, but the tide just really started moving in Reagan's favor. But I remember, the weekend before, we flew back to D.C. on Saturday night. We campaigned in Pennsylvania on Sunday then flew back to D.C. Then on Monday morning we flew from Washington to Peoria where we met Reagan for a joint appearance around noon, the day before the election.



I remember Jim Baker flew with us out of Washington to Peoria and Jim Baker had the most recent polling data from Wirthlin and he was very surprised—pleasantly so. The numbers had changed just in the preceding few days. After the great event in Peoria, Reagan flew on to California. President Bush flew on to Houston. They both had big welcome rallies in L.A. and Houston Monday night. The election was Tuesday and it was called very early. As a matter of fact, they don't even call them that early anymore. It was called before the polls closed in the west. Bush had a gathering at his house before he went to the Westin Hotel where he was going to watch it and do a speech after the results were in. It was called before we had even gone to the Westin.

So that's my recollection of '80. My wife and I moved to Washington and I worked at the Departments of Commerce and Treasury and spent some time in a law firm in Washington, actually the Washington office of the Houston firm I was originally supposed to go to work for in '78. Then I went back to work for VP nominee Bush in early 1986 as a deputy to Craig Fuller.

I will say one more thing about the '80 campaign. By the end of the '80 campaign, of course, we were flying on a United charter, 727, and probably had eight or nine staff members, ten staff members maybe, and carried probably twelve to fifteen Secret Service agents. We always had about twenty members of the press on the plane. But to contrast that with the way we started in '79, when it was the two of us traveling coach. We carried our luggage. It was a very interesting transition.

But, back to '86, I served as a deputy to Craig Fuller. The position was an—eclectic one. I did a lot of different things.

**Young:** Before we get into that, could I go back—

**Bates:** You bet.

**Young:** —to the campaign and ask you to talk a little about—This was your first campaign, so you're not a seasoned veteran of these things.

**Bates:** Right, right.

**Young:** But could I ask you to talk a little bit about, from your observation—you were with Bush everywhere—what his strong points, and not-so-strong points as a campaigner were?

**Bates:** One, he has just a tremendous amount of stamina. I know at that point he was 56 years old. When we first started traveling he had just turned 55. I was probably 26 when we first started traveling the summer of '78. I'm now 48. I cannot believe the things he did when he was 56. I mean, I could not do them now at 48. One thing—

**Young:** You might if you were running for President.

**Bates:** Well, one thing I'm convinced of, there are a lot of traits that one must have, characteristics one must have to be President, but certainly a prerequisite is stamina, I mean an

extraordinary amount of stamina. (Obviously, a candidate does get more adrenalin.) You look at Clinton. He certainly has it.

**Edwards:** Right.

**Bates:** Bush had an incredible amount of stamina. He would go the extra mile. He likes people, which helps him as a campaigner. And that shows. He's always been best in a setting where people see him in person (rather than on TV) and are around him and see how friendly and warm he is. I remember so often in '79, he'd finish a speech and make sure he stopped in the kitchen to thank the people in the kitchen. He'd always stop to sign an autograph. He, you know, is a prolific note writer, thank-you writer. As his personal aide, I can tell you, he showered the United States with notes and thank-you notes, and so many people to this day say, "I've still got this note from George." And that's all genuine on his part. Not only does it make him an effective candidate, but it's genuine.

I remember in that time, at the end of the day, we'd be on an airplane going somewhere, after the usual five events. We'd get on an airplane and I'd give him a list. He'd want a list, about six handwritten notes he'd want to do. I remember him always doing all this work, his notes and everything. Finally we'd got everything done and he'd put his briefcase down, then he'd order a drink. But never before. He was so disciplined. And always going the extra mile. He was accessible to the press, which, I think, helped him in '80. His definite strengths were—

**Young:** People skills.

**Bates:** People skills. Definite strength. The other thing that we did in Michigan and Pennsylvania and Texas, during the primaries and then in the general election or as the VP nominee were "Ask George Bush" town halls. He is very good in a Q and A format, where I think you get to see more of his intelligence. You get to see more of his warmth. The traditional podium speech is not one of his strong points, although his speech at the 1988 convention was fantastic, best of his career, and clearly helped him to win that election.

**Young:** But the podium, the speech to the mass audience, was not, I guess, his strength. As it was with Reagan.

**Bates:** Right, exactly. Reagan just has a way of making words come alive. But that is not Bush's strong suit.

**Young:** Reagan had lots of professional experience?

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** And that wasn't really a large part of George Bush's experience.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Edwards:** Okay, so in 1986 you reconnect.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Edwards:** With the Bush office in a formal position.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** As assistant to Craig Fuller?

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** And your main responsibilities then?

**Bates:** Well, it was a kind of a utility role.

**Edwards:** This is George Edwards speaking, by the way.

**Bates:** It was a kind of “Jack-of-all-trades” role. I did a lot of different things. I was, at least unofficially, liaison to, when I first came on, his political action committee, which was the Fund for America’s Future. Then, probably in January of ’87 I think, legally, he became a candidate for President and the George Bush for President campaign started. In the first term of the Reagan administration in the VP’s office, there were a lot of people who had worked on his ’80 campaign. By the time Craig had become Chief of Staff, taken over for Dan Murphy, most of the staff had not been involved in his 1980 campaign. Pete Teeley was gone. Shirley Green was gone. Chase Untermeyer was gone. I was the person who had worked in that ’80 campaign. So I was kind of a contact point for a lot of the people that he had made friends with in that campaign. I probably spent a third of my day just talking, taking calls from friends and supporters around the country.

**Edwards:** Let me interrupt one second. So there was never any doubt, when you came back in 1986, that this was in preparation—

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Edwards:** —for a campaign?

**Bates:** Right, right. He was definitely going to run. Around, January of ’87, maybe late fall of ’86, the committee called the G6 started up, which was Craig Fuller, Bob Mosbacher, Roger Ailes, Lee Atwater, Bob Teeter, and Nick Brady. Originally, Dean Burch was a member too, but then he was named head of Intelsat and had to get out of politics. I was the executive secretary for that group. The G6 was where they thought through the major issues of the campaign.

**Young:** Did you keep records of those meetings?

**Bates:** Yes, and I did turn them over to the Library, a lot of them.

**Young:** Okay.

**Bates:** So they're with the Library. My recollections of the VP's office is that we went through a lot of things that Al Gore went through, a lot of the valleys they went through here before he got the nomination. Running for President as a Vice President is very difficult. It was particularly difficult, I think, for George Bush because he's just such a loyal person by nature. It's hard to forge your own identity when everything you say has to be the party line. You're obviously being very careful in what you say, as opposed to just reacting, you know, from the heart, or from, you know, your own judgments. You have to tailor everything you say and make sure it does not vary from the President. Bush had some serious opponents lining up against him: Bob Dole, Jack Kemp, Pat Robertson. I remember the really difficult time was late spring, but—

**Young:** Late spring of what—?

**Bates:** The first sign of trouble was losing the straw poll in Iowa in the summer of '87. That was kind of an indication that—

**Young:** That was the one that Robertson—

**Bates:** Yes, he won the straw poll.

**Young:** Yes.

**Bates:** That really presaged what happened in January of '88 at the caucus where, as I recall, Bush came in third. I mean, it was Robertson, Dole or Dole, Robertson, Bush. There was only a week between Iowa and New Hampshire and, boy, I just remember—oh, the shrieks and moans from his supporters and cries that the sky was falling, but he came back and won New Hampshire thirty-three-thirty-one.

**Young:** Sununu was very helpful at that time, wasn't he?

**Bates:** Yes he was. Sununu was very helpful for him. And then he won South Carolina and Carroll Campbell was very helpful, Governor of South Carolina. And of course Lee Atwater, campaign manager, that's his home.

**Young:** That's his home.

**Bates:** South Carolina. And that was the Saturday before Super Tuesday, and Super Tuesday that year—fifteen states voted in the south and he won every one and that was it. And so, really the nomination was over March 15<sup>th</sup>. Then it was the spring of discontent, as I recall. We had to spend a lot of money to get the nomination, in advertising and with the real push in New Hampshire and South Carolina and Super Tuesday, and we didn't have a lot of money left. Campaigning as Vice President is expensive. You are on Air Force II and you've got a big entourage and you can really go through some money and we did. There wasn't a whole lot of money to travel in the spring after he won the nomination. So he couldn't go out.

I do remember reading about nine months ago the Gore folks asked the Chief of Staffs of the Cabinet departments to come to the White House in person, where the Gore folks told them, “Be thinking about some events in these key states that the Secretary can do that the VP can join him in.” Which is basically saying they had the same problem. They’d run out of money and they were looking to travel, to do official events with the Secretary and I think they noted, as I recall it, the states where they’d be particularly interested in going, which just happened to be Ohio, Michigan, et cetera. I thought, *Holy cow! If something like that were to come out—If there’d been a story about that out of VP Bush’s office, we probably would have had an independent counsel for abuse of taxpayer money.*

**Young:** Nothing to forgive.

**Bates:** We weren’t able to get out there and say a lot of things. Then that spring and early summer became very difficult for the Reagan administration. Iran-Contra hearings were going on. And then the independent counsel started his investigation. [Edwin] Meese was having difficulties over the Wedtech issue, but [William] Weld, who was an Assistant Attorney General, left the Justice Department in protest because of Meese and then there was an independent counsel appointed on Meese. He was ultimately cleared. Then you had Donald Regan. He had to leave, and then his book came out about Nancy Reagan’s astrologer. It was a really down period for Ronald Reagan. As a result, it was a down period for us.

I remember that May, June time frame—July—a lot of people kind of saying, “He really needs to kind of separate himself from Reagan,” or “He really needs to get out and say this on that.” I remember Bush though saying, “Look, I’ve been loyal for seven and a half years as VP and I’m not going to start being disloyal now.” But there were a lot of people urging him to distance himself or break away on this issue or that issue, and he resisted it. But it was not a good time. We weren’t able to kind of get out of Washington that much, get any kind of message out. Reagan was having a tough patch. Then [Michael] Dukakis had a good convention. Dukakis came out of his convention up seventeen.

I remember a little bit about the VP selection process. I was not part of it. Bob Kimmitt headed it. But I do remember, a week and a half before the convention, he had the G6 in his VP office and he kind of went around the table asking each G6 member who they thought ought to be the VP. There were a couple of folks who said, “[Danforth] Quayle.” I don’t remember exactly who, but I do remember that Roger Ailes and Bob Teeter—Quayle had been a client of theirs—both thought well of him. Don’t remember if they actually said, “Quayle,” but I know that in previous meetings they had spoken well of Quayle. I do remember that I said, “Elizabeth Dole.” The VP kept his own counsel on who he was going to pick. He apparently kept his own counsel there until the very last on Quayle.

At the convention, I was running the box where Mrs. Bush sat, and figuring out who was going to be sitting next to her. For instance, Coretta Scott King sat next to her one night. I remember that was a big plus for us that she came to our convention. It was a very good symbol. The thing I remember about the convention was that his press conference, and then at his speech, it looked to me like he was a different person. I think that in his own mind he had said, “Look, at the

convention, that's when I become a candidate, and that's when I can become my own person." It looked to me that at the convention he just had had weights lifted off his shoulders.

**Young:** You mean a different persona?

**Bates:** Yes, a different persona, yes. He was his own man.

**Young:** Not Reagan's Vice President?

**Bates:** Exactly. And he looked more confident, more forceful. It looked like he was standing taller, literally and figuratively. I remember just being like, *man*. For me it was—I remember being struck by that. I think that change in persona came through at the convention. I also think he gave an excellent speech. The content of the speech was excellent. His delivery was excellent. He had obviously spent a lot of time on it. He came out of his convention up four points and really never stopped from there.

[BREAK]

**Young:** I'd like you to comment on Reagan and Bush, as two kinds of political animal, one in the Presidency and one in the Vice Presidency. These were Presidents of very different backgrounds, experience, and a certain visible, at least, difference, in the kinds of persons they projected themselves to be in public. And there were a lot of makings for conflicts there, particularly when you have President Reagan with a dedicated band of Reaganauts and a somewhat different constituency in which at least the right wing or conservative Republicans figure very large, and yet they're all seeming to get along together. Is that just appearance? Is that real? How do two such different people coming from such different places on the political spectrum and such different personal backgrounds work and how do their staffs work together, if they do?

**Bates:** Well, I think, one, Vice President Bush made it clear to everybody that worked for him that not only was he going to be supportive of President Reagan and be a team player, he also expected everybody on his staff to be the same way. He said Ronald Reagan is President. He calls the shots. So that was kind of hammered in to everybody who went to work for him in the VP's office. So that's one thing. The President and Vice President Bush had a weekly lunch, and there was never one leak coming out of them. The Vice President never discussed, never told anybody what they talked about. And I think that President Reagan trusted George Bush, and that was clear to his staff. I think when he first became VP, there were some Reagan advisors who were suspicious that he was—

**Young:** There were bound to be.

**Bates:** But I think his being a team player just proved to everybody—I mean, he won over the most suspicious. I think when Reagan was in the hospital from the assassination attempt, the way that the President was so careful not to look like he was trying to take over. Contrast with Al Haig.

**Young:** In contrast with Al Haig. That made a lot of difference.

**Bates:** Exactly, didn't land the helicopter on the south lawn when he flew back from Texas even though it was the kind of a situation that could have been justified. It could have been rationalized that he needed to fly and land on the south lawn, which the VP normally does not do. But he didn't want to do that. He didn't want to give that appearance, that the situation was either critical or that he was assuming control. So I think he just won over folks. I think it helped having Jim Baker as Chief of Staff in the White House. I think Jim Baker certainly had his share of those same kinds of issues to deal with.

**Young:** Sure.

**Bates:** Folks being suspicious of him, and in some ways it may have been tougher for him, because, whereas Vice President Bush didn't have to make decisions, Baker had to make decisions. And when you make a decision as Chief of Staff, there are always going to be some aides that aren't happy. You're never going to please every aide. But I think he dealt with them well. But that was a very tough job for him, I know. I think he was very happy to get to Treasury. He did a tremendous job as Chief of Staff. But that clearly is the toughest—I mean, you can't ask for a tougher job, and it was even more tough for him because of this issue you raise.

**Young:** Yes. You refer to the trough Reagan got into: Iran-Contra. He didn't appear in public very much, if at all, for a while. My impression, maybe it's wrong—

**Bates:** He, Reagan, didn't?

**Young:** Reagan didn't.

**Bates:** Yes, right.

**Young:** My impression is that once the Bush campaign got started, Reagan started appearing in public more over the—and made quite a few campaign speeches and went around stumping a bit for Bush. Isn't that the case?

**Bates:** He did, and as I recall he gave a very good speech at the convention and, yes, his popularity picked up right around the time of the convention. He was coming out of that trough. It coincided nicely with VP Bush kind of becoming his own man.

**Young:** President Bush.

**Bates:** Becoming his own man at the convention and having that great speech. So it was both of them. I think that's right.

**Young:** I have, not in connection with this project, but I have talked to some of the Reagan people who were involved in that public comeback and it was, the public resumption of the public Reagan and he enjoyed it immensely.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** His road shows. He just loved them.

**Bates:** Yes, and these—

**Young:** With Charlton Heston there, and somebody else, down in North Carolina.

**Bates:** Right, and he's so terrific on the stump. It would be interesting to chart his favorability ratings, but my sense is exactly that. Right around the time that our campaign kicked in, and the convention, he started getting an upswing too.

**Young:** Then the final question I have on this is about after the election, after Bush had been elected, but was still Vice President, did you notice that Bush took or was given any more assertive, or more important policy or personnel selection—

**Bates:** After—

**Young:** After he was elected. After it was clear he was going to be inaugurated. That he, Reagan, either delegated more to him or he could then assume a larger role, you know?

**Bates:** Yes, and I'm trying to think of that time. My sense is that he didn't. He was spending so much time after the election involved in high-level personnel selections for his administration, the Cabinet Secretaries for instance. I'm also sure he and Jim Baker had a lot of conversations about foreign policy issues in that time frame. My recollection is that in that time frame, December, January, he spent a lot of time on transition issues. And forward thinking on policy, as opposed to getting involved in policy deliberations, the final policy deliberations of the Reagan administration. I remember him doing more forward thinking.

**Young:** Brady had been appointed Treasury Secretary and was to be held over. So, for example, do you have any sense that Bush played some kind of role in the selection of Brady?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** And it was natural. It was not a source of conflict because he was going to be President.

**Bates:** Absolutely, and I know he recommended Brady. When the stock market had that big swoon in '87, in October of '87, Brady was appointed to a commission to look at how to avoid big market swings. Brady's commission came up with some recommendations on how much the market could fluctuate. Brady had done a good job in that role, which made him a logical person to be a successor to Jim Baker. When he left to be campaign manager, Brady came on in July.

**Young:** It was before the election.

**Bates:** Yes, and I'm sure that did—



**Young:** Maybe to some extent in anticipation. Of course there must have been certain policy issues in which Bush may have already been involved that would have crucial bearing on the formation of his administration.

**Edwards:** Savings and loans crisis—

**Bates:** The savings and loans crisis was something that was dealt with the first week of our administration, so there was obviously some work being done on that during the transition by Brady, with Darman and Sununu involved too. The other holdover was [Richard] Thornburgh and I'm sure that VP Bush weighed in on Thornburgh too. Those were the two.

**Young:** I think those were the two.

**Bates:** Those were the two: Thornburgh and Brady. I'm sure he weighed in on those.

**Young:** Want to get into the transition a bit and then the formation of the—?

**Edwards:** What was your role in that transition?

**Bates:** Well, it was—One, I was on the George W. Bush secret committee. I don't know if it was a secret committee, really more just unofficial, but it was Margaret Tutwiler and myself and I think Ron Kaufman, and Fred Bush and George W. (Maybe Rich Bond too?)

**Edwards:** This was to place the loyalists?

**Bates:** To make sure the loyalists were placed.

**Young:** Chase Untermeyer?

**Bates:** Chase? Well, Chase was not—

**Young:** He wasn't on it?

**Bates:** No, Chase had been working on the transition. Of course, Chase can tell you exactly when he started. But he, Chase, had been a DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary], Assistant Secretary of Navy and he'd left probably around April of '88. Chase can tell you for sure, but in the spring of '88 he started doing some thinking about the transition, particularly on the personnel area on transition. I do remember meeting at the VP's residence one Saturday, a rare Saturday that the VP had off. I remember because Texas and Oklahoma played that day, so it was probably around October 8-10, and Jim Baker was there and Chase and myself, but Chase gave a briefing about the transition. I was there, not because I really was that involved in what Chase had been doing, but because I knew a lot of people from the old Bush days and that I would be involved in the transition.

**Young:** That was one reason you were on the secret committee?

**Bates:** The secret committee, yes.

**Young:** You ought to explain for the record, just say what this committee was and what it was doing.

**Bates:** The “so-called” secret committee was established by George W. Bush to make sure that Bush loyalists were thoroughly considered for positions in the Bush administration. But I don’t remember a lot about this Saturday, only Chase talking about where he was in his work and the Vice President talking a little bit about what he would like to see happen. I don’t have—Chase takes notes so he can tell you about that Saturday meeting. But anyway, as I said, Jim Baker was there. I was there, so I remember that aspect. Jeb Bush asked me to help do a blueprint transition for him in 1998, and I recruited Chase and Lanny Griffith, who was in the Bush White House as a liaison to the Governors, to help me. We basically put together a transition blueprint which—on Election Day plus two in ’98, we turned over to his staff so they had a road map of what they needed to do. It involved Chase doing research on the appointments that the Governor of Florida would have to make, what were the priority appointments and what was the time frame in which he’d have to make these appointments.

He did a memo to whomever was going to be the personnel director on exactly how he ought to structure his office. We researched the budget they would have for their transition office; we had a memo on the inaugural activities and Lanny and I did a draft one-hundred-day schedule that included recommended outreach activities.

But that’s obviously the type of thing that Chase was doing in 1988. But a lot of emphasis on the personnel side of it, which is, of course, overwhelming task for the federal government. One thing I remember about the transition period. Somebody asked me a couple of days ago, “Why did he pick A & M?” And I said, “Well I’ll tell you, the Aggies did a really good job in getting to him early.” I remember a meeting in early December, a guy named Michael Halbouty, who is an oil man from Houston, came to see President Bush, and one of the first things he said was, “George, I want you to put your library at A & M,” and President Bush said, “Holy cow, I just got elected. I can’t.” I remember Halbouty saying, “You’re not going to have to raise a lot of money.” It was an effective sales pitch from Michael Halbouty and although he didn’t end up choosing A & M until a year and a half or two years later—

**Edwards:** ’91.

**Bates:** Michael Halbouty had a real effective sales pitch and his Aggie friends were talking to him early and often and they did a great lobbying job. He may have had it in the back of his mind, too, that Baker may want to do something at Rice at some point. I think Yale was out, just because of the receptions he’d gotten there as President. But I do remember that early December meeting with Michael Halbouty and the Vice President saying “Holy cow, Michael. I’m not even President yet.”

**Young:** Not exactly a transition—

**Edwards:** Not high priority. So you were working on the secret committee and anything else? Any other roles in the transition?

**Bates:** Craig Fuller was going to the private sector. Tom Collamore had been head of administration in the VP's office. He was going to go to Commerce and what I tried to do in that time frame was help all the folks in the VP's office. I spent a lot of time just making sure that they were placed. Then, in early December, or mid-December, the President asked me to be Cabinet Secretary, so I started at that point to think about that job and my staff. At the same time I was trying to help these other folks in the VP's office. I remember too, getting notes from—this was the time period before Sununu came on and when Chase was at the transition—VP Bush about people that he wanted for the White House staff. I remember a note I received on Gregg Petersmeyer, as well as one on Joe Hagin, who ended up being our scheduler, while Gregg Petersmeyer became the head of Points of Light.

**Young:** Those were coming to you?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** And Chase? Or just to you?

**Bates:** Well, they were coming to me because Chase was worried about Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of departments and Assistant Secretaries. Chase was not worried that much about the White House.

**Young:** The White House, I see.

**Bates:** And it was in the time frame before Sununu came on.

**Edwards:** After you knew you were going to be the Secretary to the Cabinet, and of course some of the Cabinet members were already selected, but were you involved in any kind of—

**Bates:** No. No. I really wasn't. That was Bob Teeter and Craig Fuller and Chase and President Bush. That's my recollection. I really don't remember being involved in that.

**Young:** There was a lot of press reporting and speculation about Craig Fuller's not being passed over for Chief of Staff. There was a kind of assumption that he would continue as the President's Chief of Staff and also a lot about Teeter and what role he would play. I think he was mentioned often, too, as a potential Chief of Staff or, if not that, what?

**Bates:** Right, right.

**Young:** And it seemed to drag out for quite a while. Do you have any insights on that?

**Bates:** No, I know Craig wanted to be Chief of Staff, and Vice President Bush liked Craig and was very happy with the job he did, likes him to this day, but he spent so much time with Governors in that '88 campaign. He relied on Governors in his campaign. VP Bush, of course,

had the Washington background. He knew Washington. He'd held all these Cabinet positions. I think he felt like it would be helpful for him to have a Governor to—and I think he also saw the job that Sununu had done as head of the campaign in New Hampshire and he obviously saw ability there and obviously knew Sununu was very intelligent and had a good grasp on domestic policy. These were not VP Bush's strong suit. He realized at that time Governors were driving a lot of domestic policy. So I think he knew he was going to be spending a lot of time on foreign policy, where his expertise is, and I think he thought that Sununu had the executive ability and as well as the domestic policy ability.

**Young:** He did, I think, announce Sununu fairly early.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** It wasn't the first announcement, but I believe it was in late November. So, Sununu was already announced as his choice of Chief of Staff fairly early in the transition. My understanding is, tell me if this is incorrect, is that Sununu himself then began to play a considerable role, with Bush, in selecting the presidential staff, the White House staff.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Though there were a lot of Bush choices there and they weren't necessarily Sununu's choices, but he was involved. Was he involved in your selection?

**Bates:** I don't think so.

**Young:** Yours came sort of early.

**Bates:** The President and I talked about that position and so I think it was kind of a—

**Young:** Fait accompli?

**Bates:** Yes, though when Sununu came on, I remember sitting and talking to him about it. I remember the Washington wire section of the Friday *Wall Street Journal*, it was the Friday after Thanksgiving, speculated that I might be named Secretary of the Cabinet. I can still remember that to this day. I was named probably early December, right around the time of Sununu.

**Edwards:** Now, when you discussed this with President Bush can you tell us what his concept of your role was going to be?

**Bates:** Well, he, as I recall, I told him I wanted to stay on if he wanted me and I didn't really have a job in mind, and, as I recall, he suggested this. I remember his telling me often that he did not want his Cabinet to feel shut out. He had been a Cabinet member himself and I think he, at certain times, felt, you know, kind of adrift or a little out of touch with the White House. So he made—it was made clear to me that he wanted his Cabinet to feel in the loop so to speak and have access to him.

**Edwards:** So the liaison role was prominent in this discussion?

**Bates:** Right. Absolutely.

**Edwards:** Were there other elements that he was concerned about at the time?

**Bates:** That was—

**Edwards:** Was there a policy development role, or coordination role or—?

**Bates:** Not a great deal of conversation on that other than that he wanted them to be able to feel like they were able to give their input on decisions, absolutely.

**Young:** Showing that he was aware that this was not always the guidance—

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** —by a President, or at least the guidance assumed by the—

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** Because [Bob] Haldeman or [John] Ehrlichman said, “Jump,” they jumped.

**Bates:** Exactly. We did some things when I was at Treasury—Don Regan was the Secretary of Treasury, a very good Secretary of Treasury I would add, not made for the role of Chief of Staff of the White House but a very good Secretary of Treasury. Reagan had his Assistant Secretaries give him a management brief each Friday, talked about what they’d done that week and what they were going to do the following week, any kind of major announcements, any major speeches, any major regulatory announcements in their purview. I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary at the time and oversaw the commercial activities at Customs and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and foreign assets control. I would get reports from them, which I would summarize for my Assistant Secretary to send to Regan. But it was a very good tool, because I found out a lot of things that Customs and ATF were doing that I would not have known about otherwise. I would have eventually found out about it, but I was able sometimes to find out some things that they shouldn’t have been doing, or they could have been helped in the way they were doing it. So it was a very useful tool.

So anyway, we started a Cabinet report.

**Young:** Yes, was that your model?

**Bates:** That was the model, and my staff just had to work like crazy on it. We’d get these reports on COB [close of business] Thursday, and then they would summarize the report for the President. He read them religiously. I remember, a couple of times he didn’t have it. They had delivered it to Camp David on Friday night and a couple of times in my year and a half as Cabinet Secretary, there was some hitch in getting it to Camp David, and I remember getting

calls from him on Saturday morning saying, “Where’s the Cabinet report? Where is that?” I think it really helped. It kept him apprised of what was going on. I think it helped him a lot in his press availabilities. He held them often. It was very helpful to him in terms of being conversant in what was going on in his administration.

I do remember at a Cabinet meeting he talked about this. He said, “Now when you all turn in these reports, the day that your Cabinet reports, feel free to put a personal note in there to me and Dave will get it to me, along with the official Cabinet report you send.” And they would. Different ones would do it. I remember only one time having to tell a Cabinet Secretary that I thought he was pushing the envelope too much. It was actually Bill Reilly and I thought it was a little bit of an end run on the policy process, premature advocacy. He’s a great guy and I called him and he said, “You know, you’re right.” So I just sent it back to him. But the rest of them were personal observations, thoughts, et cetera.

The other thing we did, he tried at least once a month to have a one-on-one lunch, no agenda, with each Cabinet Secretary. It would just be Sununu and myself, although I remember when Thornburgh came, Boyden [Gray] did too. I think those meetings were very effective. I remember in the spring of ’89, President Bush had a Cabinet dinner, and it ended up being one of these glorious Washington spring days and evenings and we ended up having it in the Rose Garden. And it was a wonderful evening. I remember in the summer, July of ’89, he invited all the Cabinet out to Camp David where they engaged in different activities and sports and then stayed over for dinner. I remember just what an impact it made on the Cabinet. So President Bush really wanted the Cabinet to feel a part of the team. I would always relay information to him about the Cabinet and tell Sununu if he needed to know it.

Fortunately, because I’d been with the President for so long, a lot of these Cabinet members felt like they could say something to me to pass along to him without having to come over and meet with him, because they knew it would get there. And Sununu didn’t make me go through him. I was one, along with Boyden, who had a preexisting relationship with President Bush that he did not disturb. I was always careful to brief Sununu if anything ever came up in a conversation I had with the President that he needed to know about.

**Edwards:** Let me go back a couple of steps before we leave it, taking the smaller issue first. These personal notes that the members of the Cabinet could send, those were unmediated, I take it. They weren’t staffed. They just went directly to the President.

**Bates:** Yes. I gave them to Jim Cicconi, but he knew to send them—

**Edwards:** They were passed through directly to the President?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Edwards:** The Cabinet reports. You told us what happened in Treasury, but as far as the report from the individual Cabinet member to you, which then your staff summarized for the President, that dealt with what the Cabinet member was doing? Their entire department?

**Bates:** The Cabinet member and the entire department, too. For example, a major policy speech by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, that kind of level, a major policy announcement or major regulatory development. Again, it was quite useful to us. For instance, we found out that two were working at cross-purposes or that two were working on the same track and didn't know it. So it prevented some train wrecks and allowed us to coordinate and complement actions to accomplish a similar purpose. We also sent the report to all the other senior staff. The senior staff got the same report that the President got, the summarized version, with the backup documents that the department had sent over. So each of the senior staff got that. I think it was helpful to [Marlin] Fitzwater, Dave Demarest, and Fred McClure, people who had to work with the Cabinet department regularly.

**Edwards:** About how long was this report?

**Bates:** Boy, I wish I had Michael Jackson here with me because he was responsible for really pulling it together. It was just a monumental task and he did just a superb job on it. I think in my year and a half as Cabinet Secretary, I think I caught two typos the whole time. I mean, one time customs had announced some drug seizure and it was a question of billions versus millions of dollars. It was something nobody would have caught, but Michael went running around Friday night and putting a new sheet in everyone's report. The report itself was in bullet format—the summarized version for the President was around ten pages. Now that sounds kind of intimidating, but it was spaced, in bullet format and it was by department so you had breaks.

**Edwards:** Sure.

**Bates:** It may have been less than ten. It was a pretty quick read. It was pithy. We didn't send him the actual reports from the Cabinet. He did have questions sometimes about the report. The President would have a question and we'd send that back to the Cabinet Secretary to provide him more information.

**Young:** With whom did you mainly interact in the departments? Was it the Cabinet Secretary?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** The deputies, the Chiefs of Staff?

**Bates:** The ones that I interacted with most were the Cabinet Secretaries and their Chiefs of Staff. And on occasion with the Deputy Secretaries. My staff had about four people who were responsible for a particular department, and they would stay in day-to-day contact with the Chief of Staff, who was their contact.

**Young:** Each had a certain portfolio of departments?

**Bates:** And they would stay in daily contact with them. After Sununu's staff meeting, I had a meeting with my staff. I would tell them what went on in the senior staff meeting, what we were trying to accomplish that day, what the line of day was, and then they would go back and call their contacts. Another thing President Bush did was to have three or four lunches when I was

there with the agencies that weren't Cabinet departments. You know, with NASA [National Air and Space Administration] and—

**Young:** I was going to ask about them.

**Bates:** —OPM [Office of Personnel Management], Ex-Im [Export-Import] Bank, Peace Corps, and OPIC [Overseas Private Investment Corporation]. As far as I know, that hadn't been done before, but again, it was just his wanting to stay in touch, keep these people on the team. I think we scheduled those about every three months. Lynne Cheney was there as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, as was the head of the National Endowment for the Arts. We usually did it in the Roosevelt Room and the agency heads would each spend five minutes briefing him on what was going on in their department.

**Young:** Your brief included more than the Cabinet departments then, the Cabinet-level departments? It included things that weren't departments?

**Bates:** Yes it did.

**Young:** There was something in one of the statements made and when I think of how many of those there are in the executive branch, it looks like an awful lot.

**Bates:** Yes, it was a big task. You know a lot of weeks they didn't—an OPM or a National Endowment for the Humanities didn't make—there wasn't anything of significance for the President to see in the Cabinet report, but I think we got reports from them too, and they, occasionally would be in his summary.

**Young:** But not from the regulatory commissions?

**Bates:** No, we—

**Young:** You couldn't touch that?

**Bates:** No. We couldn't touch those and—

**Young:** That wasn't said in the accounts, so I wanted to make sure.

**Bates:** We did have a reception for them. Boyden and I were there. Boyden was the one who could have policy contact with them.

**Young:** Except communications.

**Bates:** That was Boyden's shop. As I recall, they did have them over to the White House one time when I was there. I remember being there. We did it in the mess, a reception in the evening, but they were really hands off. Of course, John Dingell who was—the Democrats were in the majority then—chairman of the House Commerce Committee saw those as his, as creatures of Congress. That was his attitude, but of course, they are creatures of both.



**Young:** But, obviously, the White House couldn't ask for advance notice of a decision that's coming up.

**Bates:** No.

**Young:** From the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] or—

**Bates:** Absolutely. I remember at one point there was (this was after I had left) some syndication issue at the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], which pitted the networks against Hollywood. It had to do with reruns. Anyway, the CBSs and ABCs were opposed to what Hollywood wanted, what Jack Valenti and his forces wanted. It had been a long-running battle. But Sununu and the White House felt like the FCC, as a policy matter, ought to decide it in a way that favored the broadcasters, but to send that message, Sununu had to write a letter to a Congressman or a Senator, who had written him asking the White House position and of course supported the broadcasters. The legislator then made that letter public, which then thereby indirectly sent the word to the FCC that this is what the White House favors.

**Young:** Yes, those interventions can be very problematic.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** As you know from Sherman Adams.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** Cabinet members are not all equal, except in certain constituencies.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** Obviously the State Department with Jim Baker and the Defense Department with Dick Cheney were not quite at the—you obviously had more to do with the business of some Cabinet agencies than others.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And from talks I've had with members of previous administrations, I've found that the White House staff always has ways of defining who are the problem people and who are the people who don't give us problems.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** Who carry the water and all of this and all that. So, that's my question to you. I don't ask you necessarily to name names, but the amount of time, depending on the kind of issues and the kinds of conflicts between parties that might arise, requires some political, a lot of political work.

**Bates:** Yes, sure. Right.

**Young:** It's not just the liaison. It's not just brokering.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** Because you're also having to carry the President's water.

**Bates:** Right, exactly.

**Young:** And his message. So when you talked, in the little talk you gave at the Miller Center earlier, you know, you spoke of the gravitational pull, and almost all of it away from the White House, to the Congressional committees, the constituents, the professionals.

**Bates:** The press.

**Young:** So this is a—for at least some kinds of political scientists, this whole question of the relations between the President and the Cabinet members or the line departments, and where the White House staff figures into that becomes a very interesting question and it comes out in different ways in different administrations and with different departments, sometimes ending up with Siberianizing of a department.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** As in Nixon's case, kicking somebody out. Sometimes it reaches press proportions. Sometimes it doesn't.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** So this whole area of the political side, not just the informational side, but the political side, of the management of this problem, I'd like to hear you go on about that.

**Bates:** There were some issues. Lou Sullivan comes to mind as somebody who, when we first started, and I think this had more to do with just his not having been in the government before, I used to get a lot of complaints about him from Dick Darman and his, Darman's, deputy. What's the guy's name?

**Young:** [Thomas A.] Scully?

**Bates:** No. It was Bill Diefenderfer, but I remember getting a call from him. He thought he'd had an understanding with Sullivan and then Sullivan went up to the Hill and said his position was not the one on which Diefenderfer said they agreed. But by the time I left at the year and a half mark, Sullivan was becoming a star in the Cabinet. I remember telling Sununu when I left that not only was Sullivan the most improved, but he was clearly becoming a really good Cabinet member.

**Young:** Were you a coach?

**Bates:** For him? I'm a conciliator by nature, so I would usually be the good cop. But I would try to reason and rationalize and coach the Cabinet member.

**Young:** Because I don't think Darman would have wanted to coach [laughter].

**Bates:** No, absolutely not. And then Bill Reilly. Bill Reilly stands out as somebody who was a challenge because Bill was an advocate, and he was an advocate before he joined the Cabinet and he had a tough bureaucracy to deal with, too. He was a challenge, but he improved, as far as I was concerned. There were some leaks during policy deliberations that probably came out of EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], but I don't think it was a case of Bill doing it. I think it was a case of Bill going back and briefing staff and probably not being quite as careful about whom he briefed and what he said. Bill was maybe a little too much of an advocate initially, but he really got a lot better.

I remember having quite a bit of difficulty with the head of the National Endowment of the Arts, a guy from Oregon, I think.

**Young:** [John E.] Frohnmeyer, wasn't it?

**Bates:** Yes, Frohnmeyer, who ended up eventually leaving, but I had a lot—and I remember Lynne Cheney—

**Young:** A lot of people were on his tail.

**Bates:** I remember Lynne Cheney helping me a lot, having a lot of conversations with her in terms of exactly what guidance I should give Frohnmeyer. Frohnmeyer, as I recall, just would not say that there are clearly some things that shouldn't be funded by the federal government. I mean, there are some things that are just clearly over the line, but he wouldn't say so. It wasn't so much as a case of you need to define what's out of bounds, but just some recognition that there are some things that will be so obscene and so bad that clearly the federal government should not fund it. But we couldn't get him to say that and it really caused a lot of turmoil.

**Young:** But he was picked, supposedly, as somebody who wouldn't represent—

**Bates:** He was picked by Sununu, because Sununu was a friend with his brother, who was, I don't know, Lieutenant Governor of—or his brother was AG [Attorney General] or Lieutenant Governor of Oregon. Anyway, Sununu knew his brother, was friends with his brother. I finally said, "This is your problem. I can't do anything more on this thing. I've tried."

**Young:** He didn't volunteer to help.

**Bates:** "Maybe you can have some luck with this guy. I can't." So that was very difficult.

**Edwards:** Let me pursue this general line a little bit more. Most of what, of course, departments do is implement policy. We've talked a little bit here, one example, even at a symbolic level, of a difficulty implementing policy. Now you talked in some detail earlier about acquiring information for the President and giving him a heads up and alerting him, which gave him an opportunity to intervene if necessary in some policy implementation. But there are also long-standing issues that all Cabinets deal with, all departments deal with, policy implementation, and new administrations may view the vigor or lack of vigor in the enforcement of rules or whatever differently. Now, did your office have a role in trying to move departments in one direction or another regarding these long-term policy implementation issues?

**Bates:** Yes, but I wouldn't say I had the lead role. There was Roger Porter's office, the policy office that was involved in that. You had OMB [Office of Management and Budget]. Obviously, there is a budgetary aspect to every policy decision, and so OMB is very involved in moving departments a particular way. You've got Roger Porter's office and then my office is involved, too. So yes, as part of a team, really.

**Edwards:** A broader effort.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** Either you or—along this same line—Michael Jackson, in that transcript of your talk at the Center, made reference, I can't remember the exact language, but you made reference to the fact that there were some issues that the White House staff, by this I assume Sununu and Darman, wished to keep in the White House and not—

**Bates:** Right

**Young:** Not to have it—

**Bates:** In a policy process.

**Young:** Yes.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And I think you mentioned the tradeoffs for this. The President, by keeping it close, you lose something in return for what you gain. But, my impression is, of course OMB at least has an institutional interest and certainly a weapon that was wielded very much by Darman, to move this or to prevent that from happening or to prioritize in a way that might have not been, you know, the happiest political solution, from your point of view.

**Bates:** Yes, OMB is traditionally a powerful office. Add to that the fact that Dick is so bright and always so well prepared. In our system some departments are just traditionally strong departments, but its strength is also determined by who heads it. If you've got a strong personality with a strong portfolio, they can wield a great deal of power. Dick certainly did in the Bush administration. As I said, he had the purse strings and not only that, he's got a forceful

personality. He's probably the brightest guy at the table and also the most prepared—just a formidable force in any kind of policy deliberation.

**Young:** Can you give us some examples of the issues that really were examples of significant conflict in which—between, let us say, the White House or Sununu or Darman point of view on what should be done and the departmental point of view.

**Bates:** I'm trying to think of some of the issues that went in the EPC [Economic Policy Council] and the DPC [Domestic Policy Council] and one that didn't. EPC we did—I remember one of the first issues we had in the Bush administration, response to the minimum wage. A lot of trade issues, we had to decide whether—

**Young:** This was E?

**Bates:** Economic Policy Council, EPC.

**Young:** Not DPC.

**Bates:** On minimum wage, the President did raise it, but not to the extent that Congress wished. I remember the voluntary restraint agreement on steel. We had to determine whether to extend that for another five years or let it lapse. We ended up with a compromise position of two years. A lot of these section 301 trade issues we did in the EPC. We developed the national energy strategy in the EPC. For the DPC, we developed the administration position on the Americans with Disability Act, the Clean Air Act amendments, and the national drug policy. An issue I remember spending a lot of time in Sununu's office on that wasn't in the EPC was a housing initiative (HOPE) being advocated by Jack Kemp. The meetings involved Sununu, Brady, Kemp, and Darman. I don't remember a lot on the issue but do remember that it was a little contentious. Jack Kemp could be a challenge from time to time, because he is so enthusiastic and when he feels strongly about something, he's ready to implement it right then and there. Of course, that's a positive thing about him, but in a Cabinet setting, it can present its challenges. But I can remember that one getting a little contentious.

**Young:** It's been reported. I think it need not be repeated on the tape, but it appears in [indecipherable].

**Edwards:** Related to that, and in earlier oral histories, you talked about the honest broker role of your office. It seems, as best I can understand it, but I'd like clarification, this is when policies were not necessarily directed from the White House and the development wasn't from the White House, but presumably one Cabinet may develop proposals, but enough Cabinet office—one Cabinet department I should say, another department had another interest in it, so they were overlapping and there was disagreement. So could you talk about that and that role?

**Bates:** Sure, I remember, it seemed like probably every week, you'd get a call from one Cabinet member saying, "So-and-So is doing this and I've tried to talk to him and we haven't been able to." So I would try to call the other Cabinet Secretary to see if I could settle the dispute. That happened pretty often, usually with agencies that have some overlap, Interior and Agriculture,

and Transportation and Energy, or EPA and energy. I can remember talking to Admiral Watkins quite a bit about EPA and Reilly and trying to talk to both of those two. Most of the issues didn't need to go to EPC or DPC. They just needed a little fine tuning or a little more recognition of what the other guy was doing, that type of thing.

**Edwards:** Did you find that that generally solved the problem?

**Bates:** Yes, that generally solved the problem. I had a lot of that in my job. And sometimes calls from Cabinet members about OMB and sometimes about—occasionally about Roger Porter's shop. But I will say, Darman was, being a Cabinet member himself, Darman made himself accessible to the Cabinet members, and was always willing to talk to them. So I don't remember having to go to Darman that often with a complaint from a Cabinet Secretary. They didn't always agree with him, but I think they felt that they could always get in there and talk to him. And I will say, the budget process—I sat in on the budget meetings with the President, and there was an appeal process that Darman set up where the Cabinet Secretary, if they felt strongly, could come in and appeal an OMB decision directly to the President.

**Young:** So they didn't have to use you as the appeals bureau?

**Bates:** Right. They would make their appeal directly to the President.

**Edwards:** It's a quarter to twelve, so we might want to think about what we do before we stop for lunch.

**Young:** I was just listening too closely to what you said to have a question in my mind. Sort of took me by surprise. Did you have much to do with helping out in the Cabinet or with Congressional matters or with helping them to get the attention of Congressional legislative affairs staff? Was any of that business part of the concerns that they brought to your attention, put on your plate?

**Bates:** Yes, but I don't remember—Fred and I were friends before, and I can remember relaying a concern to Fred on occasion, but I don't ever remember having a disagreement with Fred.

**Young:** I didn't mean that. I didn't phrase it well. What I was really trying to get at was, since all the Cabinet members have their own Congressional legislative affairs—

**Bates:** Yes, they worked closely with Fred's shop.

**Young:** They did?

**Bates:** Yes, their congressional affairs offices worked closely with Fred's shop. And the spokespeople at the department worked with Fitzwater and Fitzwater's people.

**Young:** So that was not a significant part of your agenda?

**Bates:** Right. No, and I'm sure Darman's shop had a lot with the Assistant Secretary for Administration, who oversaw the budget in all these departments. You get involved in all of those things, but it was more relaying some concern of the Secretary, some nuance or that type of thing.

**Young:** The appearance was, I mean, trying to look comparatively over history, there have been in President's Cabinets in the administrations, there have been some titanic struggles involving Cabinet-level officials. And there's an old saying that all of us here who write or were training in politics, in political science in my generation, we were all exposed to General [Charles] Dawes's—who was the first director of the budget bureau when it was still in the Treasury Department—advice to the President. He said, "You have to understand, Mr. President, that the members of the Cabinet are the President's natural enemies."

**Bates:** Interesting.

**Young:** Now, then he was building up the budget bureau. He had an agenda when he said it. "I'm on your side and they're your natural enemies."

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** But it has been a maxim that has probably influenced a lot of research and so, therefore, whenever we see cases of a department pursuing its own agenda, which it must, but then coming in conflict with something that the President has committed to or the White House is pushing for the President, you can get some titanic struggles played out in the press and with Congress getting involved.

**Bates:** Sure.

**Young:** I didn't see any of those titanic struggles in the Bush Presidency and so, they've been frequent enough historically that it might be of interest to try to figure out why.

**Bates:** Why?

**Young:** And, you know, there could be several theories. One is that this was a government of colleagues, not strangers.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** It could be somebody was doing a lot of good work—

**Bates:** Well, yes.

**Young:** —to either keep it out of the public eye or to get it settled. So, you could think of a number of things, but you are in a position to talk about this and I think it is historically important. How should people understand this absence of sometimes very fundamental controversy? Because you did have a Kemp, who acknowledged his dissenting rights and role in

the administration, but it never brought the house down. It never turned into a—You had a few conflicts but not many, but you had them, surely, between the Bakers and the Cheneys, but it didn't turn into what you saw with George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger fighting a public battle with each other for the mind of the President.

**Bates:** Right. You know, I think probably first and maybe foremost, it was that the President really sets the tone for that. If they witnessed a President who was Machiavellian or who they felt would take credit for whatever was good and kind of hang them out to dry for anything that was bad, if they saw a President who was like that, it would have resulted in more insecurity among the Cabinet and less harmony. But he was so gracious and was so inclusive and such a team player himself. I really do think the President sets the tone. I know he set the tone ethics-wise in his administration by his own conduct. I think he sets the tone on ethics by the type of people he hires. You know, most of them are not going to cross the line, but even some that are not really in his mold, they mind their P's and Q's because he sets such a strong example.

But if you set a different example at the top, there will be a different result. For instance, Erskine Bowles by all accounts is just a decent and honorable guy, but as Chief of Staff in the Clinton White House he was calling around to the private sector to get people to put Webb Hubbell, after he was indicted by a Special Prosecutor, on a payroll. In my opinion, Erskine Bowles's normal impulse would not be to do something like that. He would only do something like that if he's in an environment where a particular tone is set at the top. It's set at the top for a lot of different areas and I think in terms of the collegiality, it came from the top. It was clearly hammered into me—and I think he made it clear to Sununu and others—that, “I want people treated with respect, decently, and I want people to feel like they've had a say and I want them to feel included.”

**Young:** There are other possible explanations though, not explanations but thoughts on this matter that others may have. Before I suggest getting your reactions to some of those, the President, you say, did not use others as lightning rods for himself. Which is a well-known presidential strategy, sometimes called politely blowing a trial balloon.

**Bates:** Right, right.

**Young:** So, if it is shot down, there's deniability. But, that was not, I gather, his *modus operandi*. I'm trying to figure out sort of what his *modus operandi* was, because it is hard to figure out, because he's not gone into print or talks very much about the kind of way he deals with people, so people have to figure that out from results and the observations of others.

**Bates:** He's just very straightforward. He doesn't ask anybody to do anything he wouldn't do. You know there's not a devious bone in his body. He's not a game player at all. I don't think he relished always saying no. He appreciated it when Sununu and other people could say no for him, but he never, on the other hand, led people on. If he felt it was something that couldn't be done, he would say, “Well, I think that's going to be hard to do.” He may not be the one who finally says no, but he wouldn't be saying, “Well that sounds like a good idea. That sounds like something we could maybe do.” He would rather say, “This could be real tough. I'm going to have to talk to John about it, but I see some problems with it. It's a good idea, but I see some



problems with it.” Then he would talk about it. He didn’t pit one person against another, never did that. Just very straightforward and very willing to shoulder responsibility and blame for things. He would bend over backward to take the blame rather than putting it on somebody else.

**Young:** One of the risks that a President faces who is this way is that the kindness, the fairness and the sort of subtlety of the people skills here can intimidate bearers of bad news or hard news, because they don’t want to appear to have violated the norm, or the relationship. They might not want to give the President bad news or say, “You’re wrong and you can’t do this.” Was that at all—Would people come to him with really bad news and say, “You’re doing this wrong, George or Mr. President, and you really ought to do it another way”? Did he welcome that kind of thing? Maybe there was no cause to do it, but sometimes there is. Or say, “I think we’re going down the wrong track here and you’re going to pay a big price for this.”

**Bates:** No, he did not shy away from getting bad news, and I did not ever feel like I couldn’t say something to him that was not good news. I remember when I first started back on the VP staff, I got a letter from somebody, a friend, that was quite critical, and I debated whether to show it to him, just because I wasn’t sure it would be constructive. But I decided to show it to him and I told him when I showed it to him that I’d debated giving it to him. And he said, “No, I want you to. I want to see things like this.” That was in ’86. So no, he did not send out vibrations that he didn’t want to hear bad news.

**Young:** It was either Dick Cheney or—

**Bates:** I know in ’92, and I wasn’t there, but late ’91 and ’92, I know he got conflicting advice on the economy. He had some advisors who were more optimistic than others, but I think the problem there may have been, he was getting different advice on the economy and people are telling him how to respond publicly in different ways. So he was—

**Young:** Yes, there was that. There were also different ideas about when to begin and what to do in the reelection campaign. We can talk about that later; I don’t wish to raise that now. But I think this is very important because as you say, the President sets the tone. He also sets the tone of how people deal with him and there are historical cases where Presidents want to use—In fact, I think it was—it was either Haldeman or Ehrlichman who said that, “The President wanted me to be the Berlin wall.” Wanted to protect himself from reality in effect, to keep Congress off his back, do this and do that. You know, George Bush is at the opposite extreme, it seems.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Though every President has to have a nay-sayer around him, otherwise he can’t ever get any sleep.

**Bates:** Absolutely. He’s just a very open guy and, as I said, not a devious bone in his body, just very straightforward. And I think as a result, he puts people at ease around him. I think that if games are being played at high level, then you get more suspicious and something goes a little wrong and you think it’s a sign of a conspiracy. Everybody starts watching his own back.

**Young:** Well, the more you're walled off, the more conspiratorial things seem and in fact, may be. You may create your own problem to some extent.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** Before we break for lunch, I'll just give you another little story, not in any oral history. I can't remember whether it was Don Rumsfeld or Dick Cheney speaking years ago, speaking of their experience as White House Chief of Staff—

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** —under Ford. And the story went that some member of Congress or somebody important, some important constituent would come to the Chief of Staff and say, "The President is—You can't let him do this. He's committing suicide. I mean, he's doing this. You can't let him. It's wrong. You have got to talk him out of it." And either Rumsfeld or Cheney said, "I'll get you an appointment. You tell him." You probably have heard this story.

**Bates:** No, I haven't, but—

**Young:** You go in, get him the appointment and then the person comes out and, you know, Gerald Ford is a very nice, mild-mannered man too, and besides, he's President, and Dick would say, "Well, did you tell him?" And he said, "Well, no. We didn't get around to it."

**Bates:** There's a lot there.

**Young:** So, you know.

**Bates:** And I do think there's some of that. I think it's a little less on the inside, the people on the inside, but the people who don't get to see him very often, they'd go in there and they want—

**Young:** They want a good experience.

**Bates:** Yes, and—

**Young:** And it's not their job to keep things on track, so there is that difference.

**Bates:** But I have seen that. I've witnessed that same phenomenon.

**Young:** Well, I think the food is going to be brought in in a minute, so why don't we have a break?

[LUNCH BREAK]

**Young:** So, maybe you can talk about the high points and low points, because every Presidency has them.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And also some of the accomplishments and the disappointments. High points and low points are very visible events. I'm not going to deal with the external events, which—the changing world and all that, which is very dramatic, and sort of dominates most people's thinking about the Bush Presidency. One of the downsides of that is that everybody seems to have a pretty good idea about what went on and why and how decisions were made and the President's relationship to the end of the Cold War.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And all those issues, the unification of Germany. Whereas the domestic side exists sort of out in the limbo.

**Bates:** Um-hum.

**Young:** My prediction is that the old conventional wisdom, or the press wisdom, that the Bush administration had no legislative accomplishments to speak of, is already evaporating as people begin to concentrate on it. This is more George's area than mine.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** But it will not come out to be the wasteland in terms of effective Congressional-presidential relations that it was characterized as being at the time. Another will be, of course, the economy and the phase of the recession and the bounce back.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And the fact that the public perception, or the public campaign, public education on that subject didn't follow that curve, so it was a mismatching of [indecipherable].

**Bates:** Sure.

**Young:** Another big thing is going to be the budget deal as well as the disabilities act and things like that. But the budget deal, which is sort of perhaps, I don't know, a watershed in the relations of this President with Congress? Did everything just go downhill after that, or what happened? But it is a very significant event, both because of how it was done and the publicity that was given to the secrecy of the way it was done, so there's a lot of features of this that are unusual as well as the outcome itself, which was a compromise and for which the President suffered greatly.

**Bates:** Politically, absolutely. I left the White House June 1, 1990, so I really was not that involved in it. I know there had been some deliberations before I left, but the famous press release that was kind of the incarnate press release almost. Nobody really wanted to get out and say it: "We may have to raise taxes."

**Edwards:** Revenue enhancements.

**Bates:** And it was a press statement from the White House or something.

**Edwards:** Tacked up on the wall.

**Bates:** It was one of those. Nobody wanted to get out there and say it. And I think that was about, as I recall, mid June, late June, something like that. So that was after I had left. I do remember in the spring of '89, that same time frame in '90 or '89, I do remember talking to the President about the budget and he said, "You know, it's going to be really tough to get through. I'm not sure how we do it next year without something having to give." I remember him making that comment in '89. Apparently there was a Cabinet meeting on the budget deal just before it was to be announced. I'd left. But where there were some pretty strong opinions stated I understand. Maybe the Vice President and Jack Kemp spoke up.

**Young:** This was before or after?

**Bates:** This was before it was concluded, but—

**Young:** But it was known where it was going?

**Bates:** Yes, that's my sense. You know, I don't think his advisors—I don't think Governor Sununu realized just politically how much of a problem it was, based on what the President said at the convention in '88. You know, I think in some ways the President may have sensed it more. This may be 20/20 hindsight, but our side didn't get out there to make the case as to why we were doing it, why it was necessary for the White House to do that. Of course, I know at the same time all this was going on, you had the buildup for the Gulf War, which the President considered more vital to the nation and the world than this, and he felt that his hands were somewhat tied in the domestic area. He didn't want to shut down the government in the middle of the buildup.

I think it was the right thing to do. I think that the spending cuts no doubt helped this economy, no doubt helped create this boom that we're in. Maybe there's an argument that it would have been better for the economy not to raise taxes, but as a political reality, the only way you're going to get those spending cuts was to give on taxes. Facing big Democratic majorities in both houses, and politics is compromise and to get those spending cuts, which were very effective and very real, he had to give on taxes. And he didn't give that much really, twenty-eight to thirty-one percent in the top rate—it could have been much worse. The problem was what he had said at his convention.

I do remember in the '88 campaign, Bob Mosbacher kind of, at some point—this was during the primaries—someone was talking about a Shermanesque statement on taxes and Mosbacher was saying, "Well, you know, are we sure we want to be so—?" I do remember Mosbacher saying that. "Are we sure we want to—?" I don't think in connection with the Peggy Noonan speech at the convention, but it was maybe a little before that. That hurt us with our Republican base, going into the '92 election. It opened him up to [Patrick] Buchanan running against him on the right. So it was a right thing to do from a policy standpoint, good government standpoint. No

doubt good for the economy and helped create this boom we're in, but politically it was very damaging, no doubt about it. You know, a lot of the ads that Clinton ran in the '92 general election harped back on this. The guy that breaks his fundamental promise, and that type of thing. So it was tough. I still think he could have overcome it.

**Young:** Well, that was going to be my question. Should this be thought of as an example of some unanticipated consequences? I mean, you did have a lot of very intensive closed-door investigations, consultations and negotiations ending up at Andrews Air Force Base I think, that themselves created a suspense factor, it seems to me. Wait and hear what happened. What are they doing? What are they doing? And leaks begin to start and so forth.

But should this be thought of as a case where eyes were on the immediate issues and how to reach the compromise and forgetting the watching world, or forgetting the anticipated, the consequences of the President's appearing to go back on his pledge?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** It was blindness? Or was it done knowingly? I know you weren't there.

**Bates:** My sense is, a lot of it is what you're saying. They got so wrapped up in the process and the deal itself, that they really weren't thinking about the politics of it. I mean, I guarantee you that in the Clinton administration if they had backed off on something, or changed course on something, which they have a lot, they are out there spinning furiously as to why they did it and why they didn't violate their principles. Our guys were really wrapped up in the deal itself, I think.

**Edwards:** If you let me interject just for a second, there was this overwhelming imperative though. I mean, the deficits were so high.

**Young:** Of course.

**Edwards:** It was like we have no choice. We have to do something and it doesn't really matter in some ways, the longer-term consequences politically.

**Bates:** Yes, there was that imperative. And I think as far as the President was concerned, he felt like he couldn't hold out. That he couldn't go to the wall, couldn't play chicken with the Democrats because of what he was trying to accomplish in the Gulf War. He had to do something about the deficit. There was that imperative there and further, he had to worry about this other issue.

**Young:** Of course, but a lot of that was Reagan, an inheritance. The problem that brought it to a head was the size of the deficit and the deficit control, spending control. Part of this package, which was really quite an accomplishment, got almost entirely obscured in the press treatment of it and it concentrated on—

**Bates:** Don't—"Read my lips, no new taxes."

**Young:** Yes, on the President is inconsistent and what conclusions do you draw from this, that he doesn't stick by his word, that he's weak, something like that.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** Actually, I think every Reagan budget involved a tax increase, but you never heard that. He called it something else. I don't know what. I think they've acknowledged this, that they did increase taxes, but they managed to sell it as consistent with the pledge. So it may not be—it may be that this is, for your reaction, it may not only be that people lost a sense of how this would seem, the principals did, but that apparently there were no spin doctors around to think of it.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Or if they were, they didn't know about it. It would be quite possible for a President to come out and announce a great triumph. You know, and, "I've done the right thing."

**Edwards:** This is related to, in general, that President Bush was just not interested in that kind of management and spinning? I mean, he always put a—

**Bates:** In a lot of ways he was from a generation that didn't really—He was from an older generation that was just coming into this kind of new communication, hyper communication, pundits on the TV all the time. I think he was more of a school, you do the right thing, things will take care of themselves. You don't have to—that's going to get through to people and—But you know, in this era of ubiquitous communication, you've got to be out there framing the debate all the time. He wasn't a part of that, and the other thing that I think happened in his Presidency, right around 1990, there was a generational change taking place in the national media. A lot of the Hugh Sideys and those types were retiring and you have a lot of baby boomers, a lot of whom were much more advocates, more liberal than the people they were replacing. You had a change in the newsrooms when he was President.

**Young:** Much more competitive, too. Much more [indcipherable].

**Bates:** Much more competitive. Now I'm told Hugh Sidey wrote him a note after the—it would be a part of the library if he did. He wrote him a note after the '92 election where he talked about this, how he was very disappointed in the press and just thought that they had an ax to grind and that their reporting was unfair. But, that was going on. Also he was not a TV person. He was not a TV President. To him, actions speak louder than words. He'd just always kind of been that way. It's not what you say. It's what you do. And, with ultimate judge, that's right, but, you know, in the political world, often what you say is extremely important.

**Young:** This also was, to the extent that the memory of it was still alive, the fact that this was one of Reagan's strong suits.

**Bates:** Right. Exactly, and I also think—

**Young:** And Bush was very different in the way he came across, as Reagan was from Carter. Carter was no good on this either, and he also believed that virtue was its own reward. He has now acknowledged, “I didn’t have enough sense about public perceptions, how much they matter. I thought actions matter.” Very similar.

**Bates:** Very similar. And I think, besides his advisors such as Sununu getting too wrapped up in process—I also think there was a bit of a sense of “Can we get it out there and—”

**Young:** Or that people will forget about it by the time it really matters.

**Bates:** Maybe it will kind of go under the radar screen instead of just anticipating.

**Young:** Worst case.

**Bates:** Again, I wasn’t there, but my sense is that it wasn’t like, “This is going to be a problem. We’ve got to do something about it. We’ve got to figure out a good communication strategy to deal with this.” My sense is that wasn’t done because it wasn’t acknowledged. There wasn’t an internal acknowledgment that this is going to be a problem. It was almost kind of like—I don’t think anybody wanted to say that. Because if you went around saying, “This is going to be a big political problem,” it’s like, “Should we do it then?” “Well, we’ve got to do it.” So, if you’ve got to do it—You understand? This is what I think went on. It’s like, “Be quiet. This has got to be done.”

**Young:** So not even the people in whose lap this would fall, the people who now have to sell—as Bryce Harlow used to say, “You’re giving me a lead boat to sail across the pond.”

**Bates:** They may not have been really given a whole lot of guidance.

**Young:** Yes.

**Bates:** They may not have been given a whole lot of guidance.

**Young:** Or they may not have been entirely in on the loop.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** What was—? I don’t know, but this—

**Bates:** I bet you they weren’t. My sense is, there was this recognition this has to be done from a policy standpoint, but it was almost kind of like, dwelling on the politics of it may keep you from doing the imperative, the policy imperative. So you know, it was a very—

**Young:** It was kind of mystifying.

**Bates:** It is. A lot of times, when you’re convinced that something’s the right thing to do, then you’re loath to admit that it’s going to be a political problem. You know what I mean? And so, I

think, it is hard for somebody who convinces himself that a certain action must be taken but that it is a political problem. Internally, they are telling doubters that it's got to be done and we can take care of the communications. I don't know. That's just my sense.

**Young:** In other words, what you're saying is that the staff really wasn't anxious to anticipate the trouble this would cause.

**Bates:** That's my sense.

**Young:** Or to have a contingency strategy.

**Bates:** I wasn't there, but that's my sense.

**Young:** Then, on top of that, the President would not—As you've described it, he was not a President who would normally think in terms of covering his rear on this.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** That wasn't his main concern anyway. It wasn't his way of thinking. Instead of, as sometimes happens—

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** It is the concern of the President that drives it.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** It seems to me that perhaps there's another piece of this. What do you think? And that was that very soon after that he had a Republican defection from the Republicans in Congress who signed off on this deal.

**Bates:** [Newt] Gingrich and everybody. Yes. Yes.

**Young:** So you look at the series of events, the secret deal in the smoke-filled room, a President breaks his pledge and then the chickens fly the coop on the Congressional side. I wonder if anybody anticipated that who was on the Congressional watch, that it was going to create a big problem with Gingrich.

**Bates:** That, I just don't know. You try to convince people this has got to be done. It's the right thing to do, and in trying to be an advocate for that, you probably minimize the—

**Edwards:** The downside?

**Bates:** And you just start to minimize it internally and you've got to convince yourself almost. You know, the key guys were just so wrapped up in the deal. The communications people



weren't in the loop. All the key guys involved in the deal itself, the communication people out of the loop, the President not being the one thinking that way.

**Young:** Well, Darman, who is a central figure, of course, in the deal, was not himself an outside-the-beltway politician. Sununu, however, knew that world and was also—So that's a little bit harder to explain that the Chief of Staff, who had been such a powerful figure in the campaign and with the Republican constituencies, and the Governors, that he wouldn't be—or maybe he didn't have that much to say about it. I just don't know.

**Bates:** No, I think he was very involved. I think he was just convinced that this was the right thing to do.

**Young:** He may have thought that he had Gingrich.

**Bates:** I think he did. Sununu admired Darman's—Darman could be—I mean, he could be persuasive on Sununu. And once Sununu makes up his mind something's the right thing to do, he's very firm. I'm sure he thought it was the right thing to do. He's not one to back down when he's convinced something's the right thing to do. So I'm sure there was a little, "Nah, you're being—" You know what I mean? But it was a very difficult thing, no doubt about it. Right thing to do, but just—

**Edwards:** We're talking about some of the policy successes of the Bush administration and one of your roles was to deal with the councils.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Let me ask you the open-ended question: How did that work? And then let's move to follow up on that a little bit.

**Bates:** I think it worked for the most part. I think for the most part, it worked fine and—On the issues that we had in there, we talked about this before, the process is a little more cumbersome, a process involving different agencies. It's a little slower. It's a little more cumbersome. There's possibility for more leaks. On the other hand, you had people feeling they were part of the process and you have issues that are thoroughly vetted as opposed to when you have a smaller group. But I do think, for the most part it worked, and—

**Edwards:** Could we taken an example? The Clean Air Act, if you'd like another example, but just take us through your role and working that, developing a—

**Bates:** The Clean Air Act was probably not that typical. A typical one would be more like on the EPC, like the voluntary restraint agreement on steel, whether to lift it or not, because it would be zero to—You would have Commerce arguing it ought to be extended for five years. You would have the Department of Labor saying it should be extended for five years. You would have Treasury and OMB and CEA [Council of Economic Advisors] saying zero, and Carla Hills ended up saying two. An option paper was developed in a working group, an Assistant Secretary level group, and Carla would present it when the Council would meet. The options paper would be refined by the full Cabinet, and then they would meet again with the President. Carla would

present it then with her honest broker hat on. After the presentation of the issue, the President would ask questions of her, then he would usually go around the room to ask how people felt about it.

**Young:** Ask of the council members themselves?

**Bates:** Right. What was their recommendation and why they recommended it, and usually go around the room. Then usually he would take two or three days to decide the issue, I mean, a couple of days, unless there was some—One time we had an EPC meeting on an agricultural export enhancement program, whether to extend it, the same type of issue. I remember, after the meeting, he invited Clayton Yeutter and Carla and Bob Mosbacher to lunch, and they talked a little bit more about it. I was there. They talked a little bit more about the issue at lunch, which was kind of unusual, but after the meeting he would take a couple of days to decide the issue, read the options paper again. He'd pick up the phone and call people, cast a pretty wide net. He'd ask Governor Sununu what he thought. I'm sure he talked to Roger Porter more about it. So, I mean, that's the typical issue.

Clean Air Act was an immense undertaking, because it was highly technical. Lot of work done at the working-group level. The product that came out of there wasn't a piece of draft legislation, but it was quite extensive, as it had to be because of the subject area. They were the first extensive amendments to the Clean Air Act ever.

**Young:** It's a real breakthrough.

**Edwards:** Nothing happened in the Reagan years.

**Bates:** In that I just remember an awful lot of internal deliberations, not only in the council, but outside the council, too, just in drafting the option papers.

**Edwards:** I'm trying to get a sense of the contribution of the Cabinet Secretary to this process. I mean, you've described people coming together, President Bush's interaction with them, but was there something that we should know about the facilitation of this deliberative process on the part of you and the people who worked for you?

**Bates:** The Executive Secretaries of the DPC and EPC were responsible for overseeing the working groups and putting together the options paper for the meeting. That's what I would oversee them doing. Now Roger Porter's office was very involved in that whole process also. His people were always part of the working group and Roger was very involved in that also. Roger wanted to be and I'd let him. So he was kind of a collaborator on everything, so I tried to let him play a role.

**Young:** In this process, to the degree, it seems to me—this academical thinking, theoretical thinking—to the degree that the, let us say, the Domestic Policy Council or you could use the economic policy, the Domestic Policy Council was really effective in policy development, presenting a consensus view or defining the options for the President, it would seem to me that,

not Roger Porter personally, but anybody sitting at the head of an office called policy development would be rather in competition with that.

**Bates:** With that.

**Young:** Because the origins of the policy development office in the White House were precisely to move the locus of decision sort of out of the hands of the departments toward—close to presidential or presidential staff control. So, did your role involve any significant liaison between the Cabinet members involved and Roger Porter?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Or was he sort of left out in the cold, or only selectively brought in?

**Bates:** No, Roger was extensively involved up and down the process and he had a lot of contact with them. He was a part of it. Roger probably would have been happiest if he had the councils under him, and I realized that, and so I let him be a part of this. As a matter of fact, somebody was asking me, “Well, ideally, what do you think?” I think you could put the policy councils under a policy advisor or you could put them under a Cabinet Secretary. If you put them under a policy advisor, he’s going to need staff to oversee that whole process. If you put them under a Cabinet Secretary, in my opinion, then your policy office would be an in-house think tank, headed by a Daniel Patrick Moynihan type doing forward thinking, working with the agencies on big ideas for State of the Union or some revolutionary approach to some social issue or problem. If you’re going to let the Cabinet Secretary run it, then that’s what I would do with the policy office, make it more of a kind of a small think tank. If you’re going to have a big policy office, if you’re going to put the councils under the domestic policy office, I still think there’s a role for the Cabinet Secretary to play a liaison role and be the Cabinet’s advocate in the White House and make sure their point of view is being dealt with, and that Cabinet events with the President are properly scheduled, and Cabinet events are properly considered by the scheduling office for the President and that type of thing.

Now, I think it is possible to have—if you had two Deputy Chiefs of Staff and one of the Deputy Chief of Staff’s sole responsibility was, or just about his sole responsibility, was to deal with the Cabinet, and he had some staff for the liaison function for that, I think that could possibly work. So, that’s how I think I would probably do it. Now, Roger had a big staff and I think Roger kind of wanted to do it. From kind of a management—how you would draw up an organization, it probably wasn’t the best way to do it, but, you know, at least while I was there, we made it work.

**Edwards:** Let me follow up on that. You have said at other places, and other people have said similar things, that the organization is very highly dependent on the individuals as opposed to any kind of flow chart or process that you might formalize. Could you elaborate on that a little? I mean, you’ve already begun to say something about that. That in your experience in watching the White House work, and particularly because you had such a coordinating role and had to deal with so many different people. Could you comment any further on that?

**Bates:** Yes, I agree with the premise. I agree a good organization chart can keep you out of some internecine warfare, which a bad organization can lead to, but just because you have a bad organization chart doesn't necessarily mean you have to have that, if you've got some individuals in there who just have a mindset to make it work. But force of personality and people's personalities do play a big role in what their Cabinet department or what their office in the White House—how dominant it is, and there's no doubt about it.

**Edwards:** We've talked about communication between the President and the Cabinet and information you've prepared for the President and other ways that the Cabinet could communicate with the President, the informal personal note way, the more formalized weekly report way, Cabinet meetings and all that. But you've also mentioned that you could be the advocate for the Cabinet and to make sure that they were included when they need to be included. That is beyond these elements that I just mentioned.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Could you discuss that a little bit?

**Bates:** For instance, you're in a scheduling meeting, and some people are talking about a good scheduling event to do, or something, or some type of event to do. "Wait a second, Education's doing something, and this would be perfect for that. You could highlight that program." It's that type of work, being an advocate. A Cabinet Secretary having a question of what's going on. I don't remember, but if they felt like they were being left out of something, or their point of view was being overlooked or something, you could, if they had a legitimate case, you could do something about it. If it was a misguided fear, you could reassure them.

**Edwards:** Right.

**Bates:** You know, look into it and assure them that—

**Edwards:** So if a policy is being developed and they felt that they were not in the loop on this and really needed to be in the loop on this, and perhaps it was inadvertent, but at any rate, they would talk to you and you would arrange for them to meet with the people who were developing the policy?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Or see, at least, that some information was appropriately—

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** You might even get it on an agenda.

**Bates:** Exactly. Yes.

**Young:** I see. Did you ever have to carry the President's water to a reluctant department or did that mostly fall to Sununu, if there were such cases?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** If a department is not doing what the President would like.

**Bates:** Yes, there was that. And usually that came from Sununu to tell them to—

**Young:** Shape up.

**Bates:** So did I. One of them may have made a comment in the newspaper. It was a little bit off the party line and I would just remind them of that line.

**Young:** Stepping out of line. But I mean, in terms of, let's take education for example, whether there is any relevant example here, I don't know. The President had a substantial number of public statements and commitments to make about education. There is a Department of Education, which also has a bureaucracy of its own, that was there before the President was and will be there after he leaves.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And who might have some of their own ideas. The Secretary has to work with both or maybe side with one as against the other, I don't know, but whatever the reason, is there a case, in education or some other area, where the President wants certain things to be done that he can speak about or announce or show or to get through the mill in Congress or to get some backing in Congress for, where the department is more or less sitting on its hands? In those cases, did Sununu get on to you and you get on to them, or what?

**Bates:** And that was usually more of a collaborative effort, again because—The councils were kind of more involved in policy development and deliberation.

**Young:** Right.

**Bates:** Once the policy was in place, and it is to be carried out, a lot of the accountability for that rests with different folks. It rests in Congress to some extent. It rests with—you know, OMB has—There are certain budgetary milestones. I was involved, and I did some of that. I'm trying to think of any concrete examples. Education, of course, Roger Porter was very involved in the whole education –

**Young:** One of his—

**Bates:** And so, he was very involved with the Department of Education.

**Young:** There was a change in the Secretary.

**Bates:** Yes, there was.

**Young:** To get somebody more compatible or something or more well known.

**Bates:** Exactly, a little more energetic, I think.

**Young:** Lamar Alexander.

**Bates:** There was some of that. It seems like you're more involved with—I was more involved with either policy deliberation, development process, or trying to make sure turf wars didn't start. Or making sure a Secretary toed the line in a hearing or if a Secretary felt he was cut out of something that he got—More involved with things like that as opposed to looking at—

**Young:** At implementation of policy.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** At the follow through.

**Bates:** Yes, yes, because—

**Young:** If something's decided— There was one little incident.

**Bates:** Not to say that that wasn't important.

**Young:** But that was not mainly in your realm, I guess. I did notice a little note in one of the little documents that we picked out for a sample, a little note to you, or I think it was to Sununu, copied to you, on his typewriter from Camp David, about he wants to—He is reminding everybody of aid to black businesses in the Small Business Administration. That comes from Camp David.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** He wants to make sure that something is being done about this. This was some time in June, if I recall correctly. He was going to make a speech or something. Sununu either gets in touch with you about it or you get it directly and then in early July there's a memorandum from Bates to the President—

**Bates:** “Here's what's being done.”

**Young:** —saying, “Here's—” Now, between those two documents, the receipt of the President's instructions, or request, and “What is being done,” did you just find out what they were doing or would you start moving some action responsive to the President's needs in the Small Business Administration or in Commerce?

**Bates:** Yes, certainly find out and if—Usually in a case—

**Young:** You could make some suggestions.

**Bates:** Yes, and usually in a case when the President writes a note like that, it has a way of kind of shaping—You know if it hasn't been running on all cylinders, that in itself has a big way of helping ensure that it does. Not only do the managers of the program itself get into gear, but the higher ups (Deputy Secretary) who may not have been paying that much attention to it start to focus on it so it is—When the President writes a note like that, if there is a problem, it is darn near self-correcting. It really gets everybody on their toes at the agency.

**Young:** But you're the one who has to carry back the response.

**Bates:** Absolutely. We would go and find out and ask questions and make suggestions and things like that. But I would have to say, in all honesty, that the note itself really has a way of spurring any needed action. Of course, that raises a good question. Well, what about cases where the President hadn't focused on something, but it needs a push. There are a lot of ways that—In the State of the Union the President says we want to accomplish this that and the other. So there is a strong focus on the things you talk about in the State of the Union. Then there are some things that are in the budget. The budget and the State of the Union are closely tied together. So there's kind of command focus by everybody in the White House on those issues. But on the ones that aren't there? You've got the press. The press helps—

**Young:** They keep track of promises.

**Bates:** They keep track of promises, so that keeps people on their toes. You've got Congress, oversight committees keeping track.

**Young:** Either pro or con.

**Bates:** Pro or con. Exactly.

**Young:** To resist—

**Bates:** So there are some things that—The Cabinet reports were a very good way to monitor—

**Young:** Well, that's what I was going to next bring up. The President would make notations on those documents Saturday mornings, on Friday briefs and they would occasionally presumably be, "Get busy on this," or "Follow up on that," or "Do better than this," or "Move this ahead," and then you would pass that down the line?

**Bates:** Absolutely. That would all be tracked and reported back to him, because when he asked you to do something, he remembers he asked you to do it. Apparently, if Winston Churchill gave you an assignment, about two hours later he'd call you and ask, "What's the answer?" or "Have you done it?" President Bush is like that. Not only does he want you to do it, but he wants you to tell him that you've done it. Of course, he's made me that way, so every assistant that I get I have to keep saying, "Have you done it?" and, "Oh yes, I did that two weeks ago." "Just tell me."

So he's changed me. I can't say I spent a lot of my time looking at program management and policy implementation in detail, because you just can't. You're dealing with so many fires, brush fires all day. Of course my staff would obviously track things of interest. But the Cabinet report was a big help in terms of uncovering any problems at an agency. But it's kind of ordered chaos. You by nature have to deal with the bigger items and the bigger picture.

**Edwards:** Should we talk about—After a year and a half, you leave.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Edwards:** You want to talk about that? And then you come back.

**Bates:** I came back. I was gone for a couple of years.

**Young:** Things may have been different when you came back then when you first left.

**Bates:** Gone for a couple of years, and then, of course the Governor Sununu problem happened. That hurt. I think there's a possibility that had Sununu been there he may have kept Buchanan out of the race. Sununu was identified with more the conservative end of the party. Buchanan hurt President Bush a lot. Buchanan was out there just calling the President a liar. It was just very harmful. I think Sam Skinner was a very good Secretary of Transportation. I think, like Don Regan, he wasn't—and hindsight is 20/20—the best person to be Chief of Staff. I think Andy Card would have been a good Chief of Staff. Andy was a very good Deputy Chief of Staff, and I think he would have been a good Chief of Staff. He had the right set of skills to do it and I just think Sam Skinner was not cut out to be Chief of Staff. It's not the case he was a bad guy, or not smart enough. It just takes a certain set of skills to be a good Chief of Staff.

**Young:** Let me get back a little bit. Were there any reasons that should be noted for your leaving and then returning?

**Bates:** No, I really enjoyed the Cabinet Secretary position. I enjoyed being in the White House when he was President, but I had been in the Vice President's office about three years before, and then went through the transition, so after a year and a half, I'd been really in the White House for four and a half years, which is a long time in the White House. My wife and I were both ready. She was ready for me to go. I wanted to see more of my family. I came back after Labor Day in 1992, a week after Labor Day.

**Young:** How did that come about?

**Bates:** When Jim Baker went back to the White House and he brought some people back and so, I came back in connection with that. As I said, Margaret Tutwiler was the second person involved when I first went to work for President Bush in 1978. Margaret joined Baker in the fall of 1992 and Margaret was instrumental in talking me into it and getting me back there.

**Young:** So you came back as part of the Baker change.



**Bates:** Yes, and it was just too little, too late. I think it probably should have been done in early August or late to mid-July.

**Young:** Why couldn't it be done or wasn't it done then?

**Bates:** Well, I think probably President Bush was reluctant to ask Jim Baker to do it. I don't think Jim Baker was really—

**Edwards:** Was dying to do it.

**Bates:** Which would, again, have been good if Andy Card had been there. But Baker did start to take hold of things. The campaign was awful. It was certainly the least fun time that I had worked for him, those two months. The press was so tough. It is emblazoned in my mind. Robert Lichter did an analysis of national network news reporting on the economy during the campaign. This appeared a couple of months after the election. I saved it. National network news reporting on the economy, in the last month before the election, was 96 percent negative. So any time the economy was mentioned, it was in a negative context. In the last three months before the election it was 91 percent negative. You know, that's when the economy was growing three, four percent.

**Young:** A question of the aggregate figures not matching the perceptions.

**Bates:** We'd do six events a day and one of them wouldn't be that great, or one-half of one wouldn't be that great and that would be the one that would be reported on. It was just brutal. Our people were flat. I think if you're in office for 12 years, some of your people get complacent. You forget how it feels to be out of the White House. And a lot of our people were complacent. Some of them were disaffected by the tax hike. [Ross] Perot really hurt. Perot directed all of his fire, 95 percent of his fire at President Bush.

Bush really had three opponents when you include the press. He was not the driven candidate that he was in '88 and '80. I mean, which is to be expected. He was, one, an older man; two, I really don't think he had a burning desire to run again. In my own mind I don't think he did. He's such a man of duty, honor, and country. I think he felt like, *The good Lord put me here. I'm healthy enough to run again. It would be a contentious primary fight in my party if I were to step down.* And I think he enjoyed being President. I think he also knew that he had accomplished an incredible amount in the foreign policy area and that really, things were in very good shape on the foreign policy front, and on the domestic policy front he was just looking at four more years of big Democratic majorities in Congress and with a Congress that was increasingly obstructionist. Obstructionist is really the only way to put it. I was going to say recalcitrant, but that doesn't go far enough. I mean, they just shut it down the last year, year and a half. They didn't want to give him anything, even if it was good for the country. They just shut it down. I think there was a side of him that kind of said, "I've accomplished everything I can accomplish on the foreign policy side. What am I going to do? I don't enjoy a pitched political battle every day with a bunch of obstructionist Democrats." But on the other hand there was a side of him that said—

**Young:** But he wasn't a quitter, as you say.

**Bates:** Exactly, he never—

**Young:** There was no quit in him.

**Bates:** So he wasn't going to do that.

**Young:** But he was kind of reluctant.

**Bates:** He may tell me I'm crazy for saying that. Reluctant may be—too strong but he wasn't driven.

**Young:** I'm just trying to characterize what I'm hearing, not what's right. Not what's correct. Sometimes we like to think, some of us, about the difference between campaigning and governing. Earlier you had referred to the Vice President's campaign as Vice President as a lot more difficult than that wonderful time when he didn't have the big plane and the expensive entourage and all the public duties. He was a freelancer on his own. However, that did not prevent Bush from doing a very good job in that campaign and winning the Presidency, though he didn't have the burdens or the advantages of the Presidency on his side then. Reagan had that. Is it possible that this was part of the problem of his inability or somebody's inability to put together a really good campaign? Some people think incumbents have a great advantage over outsiders, and here was Bill Clinton who had never had any experience in Washington at all, another Reagan, another Carter, whatever.

**Bates:** It's a good point. It is kind of the paradox. The things that made George Bush a great President, the things that allowed him to pull off a Gulf War alliance, the character traits that allowed him to do things like that, did work to his disadvantage politically, because he was so trusting. The lack of deviousness that generated so much affection and trust from others and leaders of other countries, and being the straight shooter and thinking about the other guy, not always being worried about his own tail, and that type of thing, it could work to his disadvantage politically. And he was one, as you said, who really did have a notion that governance and politics were two separate things. In politics it was expected you would do certain things. There were certain rules of the game. In governance you didn't do certain things, and the things that made Clinton such a masterful politician worked to his disadvantage in governance. I mean, you're in a situation now where there is a real question of lack of trust with the Hill and with some foreign countries, where he could not pull off an alliance. He has an incredible instinct for self-survival and self-preservation.

**Young:** You're talking about Clinton?

**Bates:** Yes, Clinton. But President Bush, to his detriment, doesn't think enough about that.

**Edwards:** Let's take a little break.

[BREAK]

**Young:** Talking about campaigning and the various elements that might help future scholars understand the great difference between the campaign and—the first campaign—It wasn't the first campaign. The first presidential campaign, the winning presidential campaign, and the losing presidential campaign, which seem to be as different as night and day. Maybe it's not sufficient to dwell too much on the President's own state of energy, state of mind or characteristics, because here again, it seems to me that there was a different cast of characters involved in the second campaign, wasn't there, than the first?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** Sununu wasn't involved.

**Bates:** Sununu wasn't involved.

**Young:** Lee Atwater was gone.

**Bates:** Lee Atwater was gone.

**Young:** Jim Baker—

**Edwards:** Baker came late.

**Bates:** Yes, Baker came late. Baker started more kind of—He started right at the time of the convention in '88.

**Young:** And the convention was very different.

**Bates:** The convention was different.

**Young:** Very different.

**Bates:** The convention was different. Buchanan giving the prime-time speech, unfortunately, became the symbol that kind of dwarfed everything. And our opponents were able to spin that speech as symbolic of the whole convention. I was there. There were a lot of good speeches, a lot of good speeches about a conservative opportunity society that form the basis of Republican thinking now, but Buchanan speaking on the first night in prime time was a big mistake.

**Edwards:** Also true of Ronald Reagan out of prime time.

**Bates:** It was just a big mistake. It was a terrible mistake.

**Young:** Who managed the convention? Whose responsibility was that?

**Bates:** It was Craig Fuller's but I don't think you can blame that on Craig. Everything that could have gone wrong for George Bush went wrong in 1992. One big problem he had was he came to the convention in '92 without having secured his base. The campaign people felt like they

needed to have Buchanan speak in a prominent role and to keep Buchanan happy because they needed to unite the party. Gore had to move left at his convention this year and he got away with it. We didn't get away with it in '92. But the main problem in '92 you had the economy. Brit Hume, who I really admire as a very good reporter, covered the Bush White House for ABC news. He wrote an article, I think, for *New Republic* after the campaign about how Bush lost the campaign because of the perception of the economy. It was an excellent piece and I think the most on target piece of journalism that I saw in the postmortem reports. You look everything the President faced: You've got Buchanan running against him and really attacking him hard. Then Perot getting in there, directing all his fire against him, the economy being perceived in bad shape. Until the fall of 1992, I don't think the communications people got a clear idea what to say about the economy, because there were really two—

**Young:** Talk a little about that.

**Bates:** I wasn't there. I have to say that, but my sense is—

**Young:** I know, but whatever you can observe on that, because there is some testimony to the effect that the campaign really should have been conceptualized much earlier than it was and not simply a matter of not having secured the base by the time of the convention, which was pretty sad commentary given the way it was done the first time, but also that a lot of people were hurting, and a lot of these people were Republican constituents. This is—Capital markets weren't what they should be. During the recession, and there is some testimony that this ought to be addressed and addressed early, much earlier than it was, but this advice did not prevail. And, as far as I understand, there was another point of view which was it's going to get better so don't say anything about it, or words to that effect, or call attention, don't acknowledge a problem because by the time it matters—

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** —which sounds like an economist's argument because it doesn't pay any attention to what people think. It is only what the statistics show they should think.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** So, it seems to me like this is a very big—and then you have a presidential opponent who is making a big case.

**Bates:** Yes, worst economy in fifty years.

**Young:** I feel your pain.

**Bates:** Yes, exactly.

**Young:** What pain? So it's hard at that point to say, "What pain?" Unless you have said it's going to get better and now, "You see, I told you so," to counter Clinton. So anything you can observe on this I think might be helpful.

**Bates:** My sense is—and I’ve heard Marlin [Fitzwater] refer to it when the President was doing his oral history in Kennebunkport a couple of months ago—that we just went for a long time with two different opinions on the economy.

**Young:** So nothing was done. The President didn’t say, “I’m going to hurt. Do this.”

**Bates:** He was kind of pulled. You could tell from his statements that he was kind of pulled. And I think that that same type of to and fro was going on on the tax pledge. I think there were those who said, “You’ve got to address it. You’ve got to apologize,” and there were others that just said, “Don’t.” That’s my sense, that there was also back-and-forth and finally at the convention he said something about it (the tax hike) in his speech. I think that was hard for him. I really do think he felt it was the right thing. But on the economy, I think he was a little confused by the conflicting advice he was getting. I think the communications people were also confused as to what they were going to be saying. Again, I speak just as kind of someone watching it from the outside and then talking to friends who were still in there, but there was no clear message on the economy from the President or the administration.

**Edwards:** So you’re back in the White House in September, so you can observe things closely. Another component of any election is the way it’s organized and some strategic decisions in addition to a communications theme. Do you want to comment about what you saw then? And you can contrast that with ’88? We’ve already mentioned people who were no longer there.

**Bates:** In ’88, then-Vice President Bush spent a lot of time in May and June kind of laying out some positions on the environment, on child care, on health. He was doing that in May and June and putting these serious positions out there, some of what George W. did in kind of the same time frame to good effect. In ’92 we started doing that in mid-, late September. He gave this big speech at the Detroit Economic Club on the economy. That was the first time, he—

**Young:** September?

**Bates:** Late September, maybe mid-September when he gave a big speech to the Detroit Economic Club, but that just shows you how long it took to pull the thing together. It didn’t really start to get pulled together until Baker got over there and that’s too late. September 15<sup>th</sup> is just too late.

**Young:** How was it organized before that? Or was it organized at all? Somebody was doing something.

**Bates:** My sense was that before Baker got there that there just wasn’t a lot of coordination and agreement between the campaign and the White House. It just wasn’t functioning that smoothly. Things weren’t getting done, there was not a lot of direction. That’s just my sense. They were just kind of drifting,

**Edwards:** No one was in charge.

**Young:** Did somebody think they were in charge and it didn't work out? I mean, Skinner had been brought in. Was he there in part to establish a link from the White House to the campaign or was that not part of his job?

**Bates:** Skinner was brought in because Sununu had to leave and so Skinner was brought in because we needed a Chief of Staff. But, I mean, I don't think—

**Young:** Was Teeter involved?

**Bates:** Teeter was at the campaign. The campaign had like three people heading it, Mosbacher and [Fredrick] Malek and Teeter, and it wasn't clear at the campaign who was in charge. And then you overlay that with the White House. When Baker got there it was clear Baker was running the show, whereas before I don't think it was clear who was running the show among the four of them. Again, that is my sense, because I wasn't there.

Now, I will say despite everything that could have gone wrong—Buchanan, Perot, the economy, the perception of the economy—and despite all that against him, I think he was going to win but for Lawrence Walsh. Little known fact nowadays, but the Thursday night/Friday morning before the election, CNN likely voters polling track had him down minus one. And [Fred] Steeper, who was the Bush pollster, had us dead even on that Friday morning before the election. And President Bush was moving. The last couple of weeks we finally hit on a theme that was working—it was trust. He was hitting, “Can you trust this guy, Clinton?” He was gaining ground, winning back the base. His base was coming home. Then that Walsh indictment came out and by Saturday night, Sunday morning we dropped to about seven down. We ended up on Election Day about six down. Of course, it led the news Friday night. Led the news, talked about all Saturday, on all the talk shows on Sunday. Gore was out there saying, “This is bigger than Watergate. This is the smoking gun.”

And Steeper had extrapolated it out that they were going to win this thing. I believe Baker thought we were going to win. I remember, there was a group of them meeting in Baker's office. Baker was out on the road with us but there was a group of them meeting in Baker's office on the Friday morning before the election. Stan Huckaby, who was the treasurer, told me about their meeting and they called Baker and Steeper said, “We're going to win this thing.” Then 11 a.m. Friday morning, boom, the whole argument of trust, it just kind of collapsed with this Walsh indictment.

Everybody was surprised how much Perot ended up with on Election Day—19 percent. Well, the six percent we lost essentially all went to Perot. I think Perot shot up there at the end. They all went to Perot or sat at home. Things have a way of working out, sometimes for the best, and I'm convinced his two sons wouldn't be Governor now if he had been reelected. I think about the battle of Gettysburg. Had [Robert E.] Lee been victorious it may have resulted in two countries, which certainly would not have been the best result for the nation. But if he had won it, that would probably have been the outcome. If you look at that battle, everything that could have possibly gone wrong for Lee went wrong. Despite that, he came within a hair of winning it. But so many things went wrong I see the hand of Providence. It took me a while to come to this

realization about the '92 election. About two or three months after the election, I did say something to him and Mrs. Bush to that effect.

**Young:** Was it any consolation?

**Bates:** It was to her. I think she agreed with it sooner than he did. But I'm convinced he would have won it, but for that Lawrence Walsh, despite the fact that things beyond our control were against us, and then things in our control we fouled up. But despite all that, I really do think he would have won but for that. Stan Huckaby is a guy you all ought to talk to at some point. He was the treasurer of the campaign in '88 and in '92 and got a real close look at both those campaigns.

**Edwards:** Is he on the list?

**Young:** Stan Huckaby is now on our list. Ham Jordan used to say about the Carter loss, the previous one-term President to George Bush, he said, "We had the hostage crisis. We had Ted Kennedy"—not Perot, but Kennedy—"and we had double-digit inflation. We could have won with any two of those."

**Bates:** That's exactly right.

**Young:** So with Lawrence Walsh on top of all the others—

**Bates:** That was it. That was all she wrote. Really incredible when you think about it, four days before an election (contrary to Department of Justice guidelines), an indictment like that, and what I still can't believe is all the furor it caused. It was all about George Bush, nothing about the motives of Walsh, nothing about the timing. It was absolutely incredible. But, anyway—

**Young:** Was this deliberate, did they think? What did Walsh have against George Bush? Or was it not that at all?

**Bates:** I don't think a fair-minded person would have done what he did. What was driving him, I don't know, but a fair-minded person, I just don't think would do that. There were allegations at the time that it was choreographed with the Clinton administration. There were questions about press releases from the Clinton campaign being back-dated. Stan Huckaby can tell you a little bit about those. Some of the press, a couple of the real bird dogs tried to get the hard drive from the computers of the campaign, but were unable to do so.

**Young:** Walsh was a Republican.

**Bates:** Yes, but nominal. He had gotten very bitter toward President Bush and—

**Young:** And everybody involved.

**Bates:** Very bitter. When you look at what this Clinton White House did to [Kenneth] Starr and the offensive that they put on against Starr, and I don't remember anybody in our White House

talking about Walsh. I don't remember anybody saying anything after this indictment. I mean, Marlin tried to say how it didn't affect President Bush, but nobody attacked, even then, nobody from our side—

**Young:** I thought that was sort of the general response that was made. This doesn't involve President Bush. So, you have no ground for attacking, if you're taking the position that it doesn't involve.

**Bates:** But of course, his main exhibit, which was Exhibit A in the indictment, was you know, Weinberger's note saying Bush was in the loop.

**Edwards:** That is true.

**Bates:** Explain the ground rules. If I say something here, can I keep it—

**Young:** Out? Yes, you can. You have at least two options for this. The first of which I hope you don't ask, but if you want to say something and you demand that the tape be turned off, we can do that. I'd rather you didn't do that, but it's up to you.

**Bates:** But if I say something—

**Young:** But if you say it and then you do not want that statement to appear in the authoritative record of the interview, you simply indicate that when you get—

**Bates:** Can you embargo it for ten years or twenty years, or fifteen years?

**Young:** Whatever the law permits you to do.

**Bates:** When would this—?

**Edwards:** You can embargo it for a substantial length of time, I mean, you can, and people do that with their deeds of gift to the Presidential Library.

**Young:** There are legal limits, I think, on how much.

**Edwards:** It's substantial. We can double-check this for you, but until your death, the death of the person you're talking about or ten years. You can do a lot of different things, but you can also just take it out. I mean, your first defense, which we hope you won't use, is—

**Young:** Is not even record it.

**Edwards:** Or then just exclude it, after you say it, after we find out all the facts, or, you can embargo it.

**Bates:** But my transcripts here will be available at the library for historians?



**Young:** Only the version of it that you clear.

**Bates:** Yes, and is it available immediately?

**Young:** No. The transcript?

**Bates:** I mean after I clear it.

**Young:** That's up to you to make a stipulation. You can say—

**Edwards:** You could embargo the whole thing, for years, but we hope you won't do that.

**Bates:** No, but what I'm going to say I would maybe, this particular little vignette, I might want to embargo for ten years.

**Young:** All right, let me tell you what my experience has been with this. This is meant to be reassuring. When we had an interview with President Carter, he was not ordinarily a profane man, but he did have a few things to say about particular individuals that he said, "I don't want this to be in the record." He was content to have it simply blacked out, which the Presidential Library did. So nobody can read that section and the transcript of record shows that there has been a deletion here at the President's option. You can do it that way. That means, you understand, that the tapes will not be doctored, we will not doctor the tapes, but the tapes are closed for as long as the law permits.

**Edwards:** We have an expert here actually, from the Presidential Library. I wasn't thinking.

**Young:** I'm sorry. I wasn't—

**Walker:** This would be considered a deed of gift. It wouldn't be classified under the Presidential Records Act [indecipherable], which goes away 12 years after the administration because this is happening after the administration. These tapes are happening afterward as part of what we would consider our collection, but you would have to sign a deed of gift and in that deed of gift you can say what is open and what isn't open and how long something can be closed for because it is a deed of gift and it is your private property that you would be deeding to it.

**Bates:** So we'll end up doing that for this.

**Young:** If you chose to give it to the library, bear in mind that we will do whatever you ask, unconstrained by any such laws on the copy that is retained at the Miller Center. So—

**Edwards:** I mean you can say, "I never want this to appear in the Miller Center copy," and you can say in your deed of gift to the Presidential Library, you can make everything except the following available and then the following will be made available any time he wants, right?

**Walker:** Um-hum.

**Edwards:** There's really no limit.

**Young:** This is not an official document.

**Edwards:** So it is completely up to you.

**Young:** You are concerned that somebody else will get this or see it and it is not appropriate?

**Bates:** Yes, yes.

**Edwards:** Or it is often the case that people say, "I don't want to hurt someone's feelings while they're alive," or something like that.

**Bates:** Yes.

**Edwards:** The deed of gift simply says until the death of that person. I mean, that's not an unusual—

**Bates:** I'll go ahead and just tell this. I was talking to Jim Baker maybe three or four years ago and we were talking about this whole Walsh thing and he said, "Yes, I remember being at the Ford Library on the Wednesday or Thursday before the election, and we had an event in Michigan at the Ford Library." President Bush had gone up to see Ford on the podium and, a big crowd, and Baker said as he was walking by the press pen, Ann Compton said, "How are you feeling?" He said, "We're feeling good. We're moving." And she said, "Yes, but it's not going to last." He said, "What do you mean?"

**Young:** About what's going to happen?

**Bates:** She said to him, "It's not going to last," right there, and he said, "What do you mean?" and she didn't really say anything, and boom, the next morning, 11 a.m. So the press had already been tipped that something big was coming down the pike. Who tipped them? Whether it was Walsh's office or the campaign, who knows?

**Young:** It is quite possible it was someone on Walsh's staff. I can't guess, but there have been documented cases of that in the Starr case.

**Bates:** Exactly, so whoever it was, was not only leaking it, but saying, "This is going to be huge. This is going to be big. This is going to bust Bush wide open." She was already primed to think, *Your momentum, it isn't going to—* Now whether Baker would want me to tell that story, whether Baker tells that story himself, I don't know, and so I hate to—For Ann Compton or for Baker, I hate to say that.

**Young:** It won't be said, if you don't want it to.

**Edwards:** It's interesting, very interesting.

**Young:** Pretty powerful evidence. Why did Bush choose Skinner to be Chief of Staff? He was, of course, an old—His relationship with Bush goes way back.

**Bates:** He was our '80 chairman in Illinois and just a longtime supporter. He'd been a good Cabinet Secretary—he did a tremendous job leading the *Exxon Valdez* cleanup task force. The President liked him. The President didn't want to pick Baker. He didn't want to make Baker come over and do it, because he knew Baker enjoyed being Secretary of State. There weren't any clear choices.

**Young:** Andy Card was sort of an obvious—

**Bates:** Andy was obvious, but I think probably what hurt Andy a little bit was he—He first met Andy in 1979 when Andy was a younger man. Sometimes when somebody's been with you a long time, you think of him in a certain way, based on your early experiences. But I bet you today, he'd tell you, "Yep, I should have put Andy in there."

**Young:** Skinner was an older friend, probably. He'd also been an executive, and Andy hadn't. He had been—

**Bates:** And Andy looks young. He's older than he looks.

**Edwards:** Andy may have also wanted to move on, and in fact went to the Cabinet.

**Bates:** I think Andy was willing to stay as Deputy Chief of Staff, but I think Skinner wanted to bring his own people in there and there was talk about—Apparently Skinner thought Andy would be good Deputy Secretary of Transportation but President Bush said, "No, I think he'd be a good Secretary of Transportation." Sam Skinner would have been smart to keep Andy as Deputy Chief of Staff. He would have done better if he had. But the best of all solutions would have been, make Andy the Chief of Staff.

**Young:** Sununu was gone. Has been, in effect, before he left. He tried, I think, pretty hard to stay.

**Bates:** To stay. That was a real tense time. That was difficult. I don't think he wanted to leave. That was not an easy time, but he needed to go. He was really becoming a distraction at that point, and it was too bad. He was a good Chief of Staff. When I was there, he was a good Chief of Staff.

**Young:** Tell us, what's your measure of a good Chief of Staff?

**Bates:** He—The problem, well—

**Young:** I'm sorry. I interrupted you.

**Bates:** His door was always open. You could go in any time to see him. He was always accessible. He wasn't afraid to make decisions. One thing that impressed me in, for instance, a

meeting with Congressional leaders or people from the outside, if he felt somebody was taking an unfair shot at the President, he'd just jump in and say, "Now wait a second." He'd defend the President. There were a lot of good things about him. He was extremely bright. He always played the devil's advocate. He made you be prepared when you went in to see him because he asked tough questions. I think he kept the performance of the staff at a high level. You could always go see him. You weren't afraid to take him a problem because he would deal with it. I could always—

**Young:** He had the President's full confidence, too, didn't he?

**Bates:** He did. If he got into a problem, I think it was forgetting that—a problem that a lot of people get into in Washington—the thing that makes them powerful is the position and not themselves. And I think he probably wasn't that wise in the use of the airplane and things like that. In defending the President's interest, he ruffled some feathers. So, when he stumbled there, he had a lot of people who were happy to see him on the ground and didn't really want to see him get up. Maybe he was a little gratuitous sometimes and ruffled feathers a little more than he needed to, and he got carried away with the cars and the planes and it just caught up with him. It's sad, because I think he served the President's interests. Although I wasn't close to him, I didn't have a problem with him.

**Young:** I asked you earlier about President Bush not using people as lightning rods, but in some senses, John Sununu, it seems to me, in ruffling feathers, the President wouldn't have to ruffle them. Sununu would ruffle them, and that is, in a sense, taking the heat for the President. He wasn't doing something the President would not have done. It was doing something the President wanted done in a way that allowed the President to be the kindly presence and made him the SOB.

**Edwards:** In fact, he makes that point when he describes his role, one of which was a spear catcher.

**Bates:** Absolutely. In the President's oral history, the thing with Sununu came up and the President made a lot of positive comments, and really all the staff there did, for the most part. Everybody agreed that he kind of lost his head a little. Darman remarked how Baker could get somebody to do something or stop doing something, but they'd walk out of his office thinking Baker was their best friend, feeling good about the meeting, whereas Sununu would be [banging his fist]. That's his personality. He just has more of an edge to him. Again, that's a big part of being Chief of Staff, is having—I mean a lot of it is people skills and temperament. It takes a lot of skills.

**Young:** I don't remember many Republicans on the Hill standing up for him either when he got into trouble.

**Bates:** Yes, some of that may have been a hangover from the budget deal. I think some of them felt—I think there was some—

**Young:** Well, I think it is quite possible that Sununu felt that some of the people in Congress had walked out on that bill.

**Bates:** There were some raw feelings on that.

**Young:** There was some real bad blood there.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Edwards:** Shall we look at the Bush administration in history, as you think about it now in perspective of eight years later? You served in the core of it for part of it, the Bush administration. What would you want people to think about the Bush administration, to be arbitrary, forty years from now?

**Bates:** Good question. I don't know whether to talk about it in terms of President Bush or the administration as a whole, because they're so closely related.

**Edwards:** Talk about both.

**Bates:** In terms of President Bush, he will go down as just a very fine President who did a tremendous amount to advance world peace. He managed flawlessly the end of the Cold War without a shot being fired. He unified Germany when there was all kind of opposition to it, including from the Soviet Union, but managed to pull it off. And France and the UK were unenthusiastic at best. The Gulf War alliance will—I'm not sure any other President could have pulled off what he did there. I mean, just the advancements for democracy and peace are unprecedented under his administration. And on the domestic front, I heard Roger Porter in Kennebunkport a couple of months ago talk about how a President never has faced such large majorities of the opposition party in Congress.

Not only did he have these big majorities against him, but it was coming on the heels of eight years of another Republican President. I mean, these guys were getting tired of Republicans in the White House and were starting to feel their oats and were wanting to do their part to get us out of there, as opposed to being, you know, agreeable. But despite that, he had some very big accomplishments with the Disability Act, the Clean Air Act amendments, free trade. Trade prospered under President Bush.

So I think despite a very tough situation domestically in terms of opposition and the economy, I think he accomplished a great deal. The country now realizes that they could be very proud of him as President, and that he led the country with great dignity. He was a model President. Given his temperament, background and his expertise, he was perfectly suited to the problems he faced. I mean, on the foreign policy front. I mean, he was so ably suited.

I think the Panama operation took guts. I remember when the Berlin wall fell, he had a lot of advice to go to the wall and cheerlead. He was not going to do that as it would have been absolutely the wrong thing to do. The Soviet's military probably would have gotten their back up and the Cold War may have not ended—or at least as it did. The President's question on all

issues was, “What’s the right thing to do? What’s the best thing to do for the greater good?” Then deal with the politics. But always, “What’s the right thing to do?” is what drove all his decisions, what drove the decisions of his White House and administration. It is much different from Bill Clinton and his administration where, I think, politics drives a great deal of what they do, and drives a lot of their foreign policy decisions. Politics, probably to our detriment, was too much of an afterthought. What drove the decisions was, what’s the right thing to do?

**Young:** You might also address the question—We have a little time tomorrow morning. We might be able to talk about this a bit more, but also think, not only what people should—what you’d like to see people think about the Presidency, but also what they ought to pay attention to. The Bush administration left office, just as the Carter administration left office, labeled a failed Presidency, and in time that basically press image or public opinion image or the public image of the Presidency almost always gets revised. As time passes, as people forget the daily—

**Bates:** I think it already has in his case.

**Young:** Yes, I think it already has—

**Bates:** As evidenced by—

**Young:** But the time isn’t yet here, it will be coming pretty soon, when the historians will go to work on the Bush Presidency and then you’ll see a revision. Some of it has already begun, some of it through biography, but there have been a few others trying to find what was special about this Presidency. You don’t measure it against a successful Presidency, Reagan or something else. You begin to look at it for something, for what was special and distinctive about it, and also, the circumstances under which it operated. So there are certain things that people ought to pay attention to that didn’t necessarily get the main attention that historians will look to, that didn’t necessarily get the main attention of the news making community, the news community, like the fixation on the breaking of the pledge in the budget process as against what now has become apparent, because the benefits of it have become apparent, is the breakthrough on deficit—

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** —management and deficit reduction through spending controls. That was a far longer-lasting part of it, and that becomes more apparent with time. So, we need to help people think about what they ought to pay attention to in the process of the inevitable revision. Let me just point out, you said despite all these Democrats sick and tired of a Republican and wanted to capture the Presidency, but every one of the major, real true legislative accomplishments of this administration, the Bush administration, was done with bipartisan support and if that doesn’t tell you something about the, as of now, uncelebrated people skills of a President in dealing with opposition Congress, it is perfectly apparent what those were when he dealt with other foreign leaders.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** I'm suggesting that that's the kind of thing that we hope these oral histories will help show, and also the things that were really disappointing, you know, to get a balanced picture. It's not what was said at the time and the way, you know, opposition politics produced the news about what's good and bad about this administration, it is what really was strong and what wasn't so strong about it when you look at it over a stretch of time.

**Bates:** Sure. It really does, you're right, point out his people skills and his—getting things done in spite of those Democratic majorities. I think the cleanup of the S&L [savings and loan], the S&L cleanup—

**Young:** That's another thing.

**Bates:** Right at the beginning of his administration. You know the bailout certainly ballooned the deficit in the short term and was a negative politically, but it was the right thing to do for the country. It just shows again this willingness to not act for political expediency, but to tackle tough issues and do what is in the best interest of the country. So I get back to that trait again. Regarding the budget deal, again, political expediency would have said, don't do that deal, but he had the interest of the country at heart when he made the deal and he thought that was more important than his political future. So, I mean, this willingness to do the right thing in spite of the political cost in terms of decisions on trade and in the clean air, health, and child care areas. I think another characteristic is a belief in the market. You know the Clean Air Act, for the first time, introduced market-based solutions for reducing pollution.

**Young:** But it also had a heavy regulatory component. It is just like the tax pledge. It involved more taxes but there was a long-term benefit. It is just the same.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** Analogous, actually.

**Bates:** And there has been a significant reduction in pollutants since those amendments to the Clean Air Act and it has not had significant adverse consequences on the economy. The solutions were not those of command and control; rather they were more market-based. So philosophically, what drove the administration's thinking was the market and lowering of barriers and freedom and free trade.

**Young:** The Reagan rhetoric was, "Government's bad. Big government, get it off the backs of the people. Government is the problem." The Bush rhetoric is, "Use the market—"

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** To balance. Sort of a nice—

**Bates:** Yes, exactly. There is a role for government. There is a definite role for government, but in general there is—The best regulator, the best solutions out there are market-based and the government is there to make sure—

**Young:** To modify—

**Bates:** To modify it and make sure that there's fair play and fair competition, but he definitely believed there was a role for government. He was never in tune or his gut antigovernment.

**Young:** He spent his life in public service.

**Bates:** Absolutely. He cared about the disadvantaged, cared about the disadvantaged all his life, which I think resulted in the [Americans with] Disabilities Act. He cared a lot about race relations and civil rights, thus leading to the Civil Rights Act. I think he ended up maybe vetoing one before he got the one he wanted.

**Edwards:** Yes—

**Young:** Yes, he vetoed the first, what he called, “the quota bill.” There was a lot of politics in there.

**Edwards:** It passed in '91, what he signed.

**Bates:** But when I think of Bush, I think of a Presidency and a President who very much furthered the cause of democracy and freedom in the world and definitely made America a better place and will be remembered for the honor and dignity he brought to the office and I think it's all benefiting his sons right now. I mean, no doubt about it.

**Young:** There is one of the pieces of press or conventional wisdom that Bush really didn't care about domestic policy in terms of his own priorities, or the changes in the world were such that any President—it would have absorbed a great deal of their attention and energy, because though the outcome was good, it could have been explosive. It could have imploded and started a whole bunch of small fires all over, as the old nations were breaking up, the old empire. The Russian empire was breaking up. And so that he really sort of left, let domestic affairs play a lesser role in his own thinking and also afforded him less opportunities.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** He was much more constrained—less opportunities for doing anything that would look like a major breakthrough program. Is there anything to that?

**Bates:** Yes, I think there is. Definitely world events were causing him to focus on foreign affairs. But in addition to that, his whole background was in the foreign policy area. He was, in a way, a diplomat President such as [James] Monroe or [Thomas] Jefferson. All his training was in the foreign policy area and that's where his expertise was. That's where his passion is. I mean, he loves global politics and foreign affairs. He enjoys it. He trusts his instincts in the foreign policy arena. He didn't have as much time to deal with domestic policy. He was less schooled in domestic policy issues and so he was less sure of his instincts in this area.



One thing that did drive him, I think—He was a businessman. He believed in markets and he believed in keeping markets as unfettered as possible. He had that core philosophy, but besides that he didn't have a background like a Governor in dealing with education issues and health care issues and things of that nature. He just didn't have a background in it, and had to rely more on aides for that.

**Young:** His legislative career was short and earlier so that the legislative way of dealing with these issues and comparing all the issues, which come across the desk. Very constituent-oriented [indecipherable] were not part of his long-term training, because all of his offices up until the Vice Presidency had been appointed. He had an organization behind him.

**Bates:** Absolutely. I think he would even tell you, he doesn't have the passion for those issues like he does for foreign policy, but nevertheless, he wanted to improve the environment. He wanted to improve education. I mean, you all saw as you pulled his note out here on minority business, "What are we doing to improve the lives of minorities?" So he did care. He cared about those things but he didn't have as much time for them. He didn't have the background to craft solutions himself. He had to rely more on advisors in that area.

**Young:** Also, it may not have been a time for major breakthroughs on domestic—major new initiatives.

**Edwards:** There was no money in the budget.

**Young:** When Clinton tried major reform of something, it goes bust and he ends up talking up how little steps matter. He made a lot a rhetorical capital out of that.

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** But it comes down to a somewhat similar: you do what you can.

**Bates:** Absolutely. Yes.

**Young:** Shall we adjourn for the day? I can't imagine you don't have—I don't have more to talk about. Overnight something will occur to me, I'm sure.

**Bates:** Well, I'll reflect back as we think—to see if there is anything we left—

**Edwards:** That's actually very handy, because you'll go through tonight—We've covered an awful lot of territory and things will occur to you inevitably and that's good. That's very good. But after six hours or so of sitting here you get—

**Young:** Yes, I have a terribly zealous staff. I keep trying to tell them, "Look, I'm a senior person. I don't have the stamina that you young people do." They keep putting interviews that run from two o'clock to six o'clock and I keep saying, "No, I won't have this." I'm working on them.

**September 22, 2000**

**Edwards:** Yesterday we spent time talking about your role and your office's role in policy making in the Bush administration. Now, you're also a keen observer of the White House. You know President Bush well. I wonder if we could go beyond that to talk about President Bush's decision-making more broadly. You saw some of it up close. Other parts of it you saw maybe one step removed, but there are many different decision-making styles of Presidents and Presidents want information in many different forms. Some are more open than others. Some are willing to tolerate conflict more than others, for example. There are many different styles. So I wonder if you could comment on President Bush's, as you have seen it over the years.

**Bates:** You bet. My observation is that he liked a process that gave him an options paper that had been thoroughly vetted. But he didn't stop there in his decision-making. I referred to a lunch one time after an EPC meeting where the talk was on different subjects, but they talked a little more about what they talked about in the meeting. He would, I recall, after meetings like that pick up the phone and say to a member of his Cabinet, "Well, you said this in the meeting. Tell me a little bit more." So he often would not decide for a couple of days after a meeting that he participated in. So he would cast a wide net. He liked the process but he did not limit himself to the process. He would talk to people outside of it, and I don't think that he felt like he had to make a record of the people to whom he talked.

**Young:** A lot of this was on the phone, wasn't it?

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** He has a reputation—

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** —of doing a lot of phone work.

**Bates:** He did a lot of phone work and, you know, I'm sure that he would talk to Sununu when he would be in there and Roger and Boyden, if it was an environmental matter. I wouldn't be surprised if Darman chimed in with him. And then a lot of phone work to those same folks or other Cabinet Secretaries. So that's the way—He cast a wide net. He liked the process. Then he liked to just freelance a bit.

**Edwards:** Would he have people argue in front of him? I mean pro and con in front of him?

**Bates:** He certainly was not averse to that because that would go on in meetings and in budget appeals and of course in policy council meetings where you have differences of opinion. Now,

outside of the process did he bring two people back? I can't recall a situation like that, although I would think, and Bob Gates could speak to this, that in some of the meetings outside of the NSC [National Security Council] with Baker and Cheney and [Brent] Scowcroft, maybe sometimes the three of them were in there informally and didn't always agree on something.

**Edwards:** Now, regarding the options papers, which would be prepared perhaps by one of the councils, did he have, at various times, competing papers presented to him? That would be a final recommendation, the options paper, presumably.

**Bates:** Right, right.

**Edwards:** More of in the form of a final recommendation, anyhow.

**Bates:** You know, I wouldn't be surprised if Roger sent in a separate paper with his recommendation from time to time.

**Edwards:** I'm trying to get a sense of where the President heard the strongest arguments for various positions. We know there were meetings where he would meet with a range of people. That's one stage in the process. The question is, were those views committed to paper and sometimes substantially different views committed to paper for his consideration or did he rely pretty much on the verbal presentations to hear the range, as he would on the phone, a verbal presentation?

**Bates:** My sense is that he paid more attention to what people were saying in the meeting as opposed to the paper. He likes interaction with people. I think he probably is just a little more attentive in a meeting when somebody is verbalizing something as opposed to when he's reading a paper. Yes, I think so.

**Young:** But would it not be different from the matters that he had to just pass on and the matters that were high on his own agenda of interests. So, I'd like to refine George's question. If it was something that was really very important to him—that is, rather than business of the government in which he had an interest and in which there might have been a conflict that would have to be resolved in which case a council or some group would work on it and present the options or some degree of consensus—but on a matter which was really important to him, that he wanted to take an active role, if there are any such on the domestic side. Would his decision style be any different from the things that he picked out of the pile, so to speak—

**Bates:** Sure.

**Young:** —to be sort of his babies? There's a fairly good record of how he operated on sort of the foreign policy side. On the domestic we don't know, and maybe one shouldn't compare the two, but I'd still like to hear if you can think of an issue that was very close to his heart. Maybe it was an appointment issue, something he was deeply committed to and there were differences of opinion, maybe on the Tower nomination or something like that? It may not necessarily have been a policy matter.

**Bates:** I mean, he's certainly not averse to getting out in front of an issue before it was developed to say, "This is what I want, so get me there." If he felt strongly about something, he was not passive. If he feels strongly about something he will say, "I want to do this and get me there." I'm trying to think of a case. He would do that on appointments. If the staff's due diligence process found it was not the best thing to do, you could talk to him, but you had to have a good case. This is just from my experience with him in working in different roles with him. You could say, "Mr. President, you said you wanted to do this. Let me explain to you what I think the problem is in doing this and why I think you ought to be doing something else." If your argument made sense to him he would agree. But he would often say, "No, I just want to do that. I don't care about that."

**Young:** You can tell whether he's really listening.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** Was everybody agreed on what ought to be done, for example, about the savings and loan bailout? This was apparently one thing George Bush said, "I want this out of the way and done and there are going to be some political risks here and some fiscal consequences." Was there conflicting advice or did he delegate someone to do it or somebody to take the lead and he worked with that person?

**Bates:** I don't have a lot of firsthand familiarity with that because that started in the transition. You know Brady was already at Treasury. A lot of that work was done in November and December. It was done the first week of the administration.

**Young:** Wasn't a good example.

**Bates:** No, but, obviously, that was just something he said—

**Young:** "Do it."

**Bates:** I think Brady, Darman, Sununu, and Richard Breeden to a certain extent were involved and did most of the work was done in the transition.

**Young:** Another element of the presidential style or modus operandi or whatever you want to call it, that you see differ from Presidents to Presidents is the degree to which they want to be involved in a decision before it matures or before an option is presented to them. So, as the saying goes, they want to be in on the take off if they're going to be in on the landing, and some Presidents are well known for shaping the process itself to produce something. They preserve a certain flexibility. At least that's the rationale. Often it works the reverse. The earlier the President is involved, the fewer the options he has at the end of the process. But, just in terms of comparing Bush's way of decision-making or way of managing the process, did he do this or was he confident that he didn't have to?

**Bates:** I think he did it less on the domestic side than he did on the foreign policy side, because as I was saying yesterday, his background, his expertise, his experience was in the foreign policy

arena and I think he trusted his instincts more. I think he was more willing to get out in front of issues there more than on the domestic front. I mentioned how, in the summer of 1989, he made a comment to me that led me to think that we might well have to raise taxes in 1990. You know, I wouldn't be surprised that if he told his negotiators beforehand that, "If we've got to do that, we've got to do it." I mean, I don't think he told them, "Let's do it," but my guess is that beforehand in those negotiations they knew that he could live with that if need be. You know, on education and the environment and disabilities, he had laid down some principles in the campaign, some markers in the campaign that people in his administration used as the guidepost. I don't remember him doing a whole lot more than that. He was aware of what he'd said in the campaign.

**Edwards:** So he laid down basic principles. Staff came up with effective implementation of those principles for proposals that would go to Congress?

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** And he was not involved in an early stage in the staff development, and then of course he signed off before it went to Congress, but it was more signing off and perhaps some refinement at the end?

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Is that accurate?

**Bates:** Yes.

**Young:** And it may have been different on the foreign policy side or the national security side, to some extent.

**Bates:** To some extent, yes, for a couple of reasons. One, there was more room to maneuver. I mean, he had not talked probably specifically about some of these things in the campaign,

**Young:** So, yes, because a new situation arises you know that's not covered. It's not necessarily covered by a promise already made.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** Your reference—I know you weren't present at the budget deal, but you did say something that leads me to wonder what kind of instructions he gave his negotiators in that Darman, Sununu and whoever else were negotiating for the administration with the parties in Congress and maybe the instruction was, "If you have to cede on this, we'll just have to do it," but I can imagine a President sending people in to negotiation, "The one thing you cannot do, you can't give away, is my pledge on no new taxes. So that has got to be reserved for the final confrontation, or something between me and the leaders in Congress, but don't negotiate about that." I could imagine another President who wasn't as comfortable with the delegation.

Apparently, what you're saying is that President Bush was pretty comfortable with the delegation, the working out of the [indecipherable.]

**Bates:** And it's a good point because the kind of pull back on no new taxes happened kind of early in the process, maybe earlier than it should have. Just kind of knowing George Bush, my sense is he sent them in with a lot of flexibility.

**Young:** Yes.

**Bates:** Saying, "Get the best deal you can. Get as much spending reduction as you can. I don't think you're going to be able to get it unless we raise taxes, but just fight like hell for as much spending reduction as you can before you give them taxes." Knowing him, I think that's what he said.

**Young:** That's the description of a President who is very comfortable with delegation.

**Edwards:** Another aspect of decision-making style is what you might call the level of civility within the White House. In some White Houses, I mean, it is open warfare among those in the administration.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Other White Houses seem to run more smoothly, and we typically at least think that the President sets the tone or either allows things like that to happen or does not.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** And the Bush White House by and large seems to have run reasonably smoothly and was not noted or characterized by open warfare among the staff. But that doesn't happen by accident, because you've got a lot of high-powered people with a lot of abilities, often substantial egos, et cetera. I wonder if you could comment on the contribution you think that President Bush himself made to the administration running in that fashion.

**Bates:** He is so straight forward himself and so transparent, and has never been one to pit one aide against another. I really do think he set the tone for an attitude of "We're not going to be playing games. We're going to talk among one another in good faith. No backstabbing." He's pretty good at perceiving if someone is playing games and taking advantage of a situation or other people. He doesn't like that, and he doesn't admire that in people. So I think it is a situation that you had a group of people who, for the most part, were collegial and wanted to make the things work. In the few cases where maybe people weren't like that, they minded their P's and Q's, because that was the tone and that was what they saw coming from the top and they knew that acting otherwise would be frowned upon.

**Edwards:** It is interesting just to contrast that with the Ford White House. There was a lot of warfare, although you had a President who, in many ways, had a temperament like President Bush's and was not known as a backstabbing kind of—straightforward, as you say, transparent,

very decent, civil person. And one might attribute that to the mix of people who were in the Ford White House. So I wonder if there is an element there that President Bush's own selection of people—because he obviously chose everyone who was at a high level in the administration. And, did he think about how people might mix together?

**Bates:** He could well have. Besides admiring ability and professionalism, character means a lot to him. How somebody conducts himself, how he conducts himself with others, what their reputation is for getting along with people and working well with people. That's important to him. So, I think he did take that into account in choosing people, no doubt about it.

**Young:** But, he did choose very strong-minded people in his administration.

**Bates:** Right.

**Edwards:** Absolutely.

**Young:** It wasn't blandness.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** And again, I think it is the difference, not that there weren't conflicts and differences among people, but they didn't break out into the gossip in the press and so forth.

**Edwards:** The leaking.

**Young:** Because, you know, certainly in foreign affairs, there were some significant differences between the positions that Baker or Scowcroft or Cheney would take, even on such issues as going to Congress to seek a resolution. That, Bush and Scowcroft sort of detailed in their book. You can see that there are differences, but never—There's always closure achieved without "I told you so" if something goes wrong. The President is about to make a certain decision and there's a way of lobbying the President and so forth. You saw very little of that, and I'm sure it wasn't because the reporters were not—

**Edwards:** Eager to get that and it wasn't because he didn't have strong, able people. So that's why I want to understand the President's contribution to making it work that way. It's an intangible. It's not something one finds in a document somewhere and you say don't do this and therefore that's taken care of. It's more a nuance.

**Bates:** But that would have been frowned upon by him and I think he would have registered his displeasure with whomever, and his way of registering displeasure was sometimes not necessarily saying anything to the person. I mean, not say anything, like yell at them or anything, but to give them the kind of cold shoulder or silent treatment, kind of freeze them out for a while, which can be just as bad. So, the few times I fouled up as his personal aide, I—

**Edwards:** You understood it.

**Young:** He didn't take you to the woodshed, but—

**Bates:** But it was evident that he was not pleased. He didn't even have to tell me.

**Young:** Thank you very much, George.

**Bates:** Forgive me for making him late today and myself and I hope you got to ask everything.

[George Edwards leaves]

**Young:** It was also, as you pointed out earlier, that he had had personal experience with so many of these people. I think that probably might have been quite important in averting—because he could take people's measure before he chooses them. He had such a wide range of acquaintances and personal experiences, as he had with foreign leaders as well.

**Bates:** Exactly. Absolutely.

**Young:** He didn't have many strangers, unanticipated—

**Bates:** He did not.

**Young:** So that problem had been averted probably, so he didn't have that much to manage there. Have you thought of anything overnight that you would like to call attention to? Anything further? We've done a lot, but any things we might not have thought about, areas we might not have explored?

**Bates:** [Pause] You know, we've explored just about everything.

**Young:** A lot.

**Bates:** Yes, a lot. We really have.

**Young:** Yes.

**Bates:** George Bush really led by example, no doubt about it, and he has a—

**Young:** Rather than by reward and punishment?

**Bates:** Yes. And he inspired loyalty, inspired hard work. He had a way of just elevating the spirits and performance of others around him—just a natural ability to do that.

**Young:** However, not all the people in the government were chosen by him.

**Bates:** Right.



**Young:** He had to deal with the Congress. You may not have been in a close position to observe what he did with problem people, or opponents, or people whose votes he had to get that he couldn't stand the sight of them.

**Bates:** Right.

**Young:** That's sort of a different universe to deal with than dealing with your own people, within your own executive establishment. I don't think many people have, in what's written, a very good sense of Bush as somebody dealing with an independent and opposition Congress. The negatives in the relationship are pretty well known. I mean, it was an opposition Congress. It was a very large margin majority the opposition party had, the Democrats had in Congress. It is also true that the minority party, which was his party—In all such cases, from [Dwight] Eisenhower on, there's always a problem for a President of that party, because he has to do business with both sides of the aisle, and in fact, sometimes more with the wrong side of the aisle. So this is a world full of misery, heavy requirements and high risk because any time you make a misstep or don't return a phone call, it's right out on the surface, the complaints. So anything you can tell us from your reflections about Bush in his relations with the members and committees of Congress, or personal acquaintances. He did have some in Congress.

**Bates:** Yes, he did. Of course he was in Congress. He still had some friends in Congress. I think Congress had changed a lot from when he was there to now. When he was there, I think it was a little more collegial. It was less partisan. He bent over backward to deal with Congress. He was just incredible about inviting them to the White House and he showed every member of Congress his usual graciousness. And no doubt he was able to achieve what he was able to achieve because of his meeting them more than halfway.

Now I think that Congress, particularly in the last couple of years, took advantage of his graciousness and one could argue maybe that he wasn't combative enough with Congress. But I think that his attitude and his actions toward Congress resulted in the Clean Air Act amendments. They resulted in the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] and it wouldn't have, if he hadn't done what he did. So, if he'd been combative with Congress, would anything have been accomplished? No. Could some political gain have been accomplished by it? Yes. But he doesn't engage in combat for political gain. If it's combat in the nation's interest? Yes, he does.

You know, it's kind of funny. In foreign policy with [Manuel] Noriega and [Saddam] Hussein, he was tough as hell, and combative as he could be. But you know, with Congress, I don't think that was appealing to him to do that, to play that way. I just don't. You know, that would have struck him as kind of political maneuvering. That's something that doesn't appeal to him. There are White Houses that surely are different. Our White House probably stands out for the lack of hardball playing dealing with Congress in terms of denying access and favors to people who cross you. Again, that tone was kind of set at the top. That's not him.

You know, it's funny. I talked to you about how he's just one hundred and eighty degrees different from Clinton. I mean, the Clinton White House could be just tough as hell with Congress and with domestic constituencies, but when it comes to foreign policy, forgive the partisan comment here, but they have been a doormat to some of these competitors and

adversaries around the world. George Bush is just the opposite. He can be tough as hell with an adversary, can be tough as hell in private, very firm with an ally, because he thought it was in the national interest and absolutely necessary. But on the domestic front, that kind of political hardball is not him. And, as a result, I think that tone, the type of people he chose and the tone he set at the top, the White House didn't do that type of thing. But, politically it may have been a little bit to the disadvantage. On the other hand, he may not have accomplished what he did if he'd done more of that. So it's hard to tell.

**Young:** It's hard. There's a lot that strikes me as analogous to Dwight Eisenhower in dealing with Congress who was the only previous President in peacetime who had experience in foreign affairs, in European and world affairs. He had an opposition Congress for most of the time after the mid-term elections of his first—who was always rising above the partisan politics. Of course, he had to. Who wants to emphasize partisanship and then have to do business with the opposition party, who also had strong defections in his Congressional party and there was a lot of bad feeling there.

**Bates:** Interesting.

**Young:** Oh yes, because he's not paying any attention to us. There were a lot of the Taft people, the Taft wing of the party. So I'm seeing these analogies. And also a President who very much restricted his own—He didn't try to get into the middle of the fray in Congress. He left a lot of that to—He recruited a very professional and experienced Congressional relations staff, and most of them recruited from Congressional staffs so they knew it like the back of their hands and he would maintain the diplomatic relations with Congress, but do none of the real hard negotiating except maybe at the last. But the deal was that the President had to stay out of it, if the staff was to prepare things right. You know, "Leave it to us, Mr. President," and he said, "Well, that's fine because this place is a jungle. You can handle it." He also had the same level of comfort with his staff that not all Presidents have but certainly George Bush had.

So I'm thinking of the two and the thing that I notice a great deal about the success of the Eisenhower Presidency in dealing with Congress is that it didn't ask too much. It did veto, it did nay-say to a lot of the—Lyndon Johnson, by the way, was majority leader (unless with name) of the Senate at that time and he was a pretty good operator and Sam Rayburn was the Speaker of the House. They could do business with Eisenhower, but Eisenhower had an extremely good staff to whom he delegated a lot of responsibility for managing the relations and managing the quid pro quos and doing the headcounts and then the top leaders would sort of meet coming in the back entrance at the White House. Sam Rayburn said he would never be seen entering the front door.

**Bates:** Interesting.

**Young:** He would always come up to family quarters and have their conversations.

**Bates:** Interesting.

**Young:** Yes, Johnson, Rayburn and Dwight Eisenhower, up in the family quarters. Often this is the way, besides the formal meeting, and I wouldn't think that was quite George Bush's style of dealing with the Democratic leaders in Congress, but there's a lot of analogy there.

**Bates:** I agree.

**Young:** So, we have not yet interviewed any of the people—Fred McClure or—We've asked, and some of them have agreed, but we'd really like to hear about it. But, from your observation, in this situation it seems like to me a high premium would be put in the White House on people who could deal effectively with Congress and I'm seeing—I think Sununu did an awful lot of work in Congress. I think Darman did.

**Bates:** Yes. Darman and Sununu did, yes.

**Young:** I don't know about the legislative affairs staff, but I assume they—

**Bates:** Absolutely.

**Young:** So I'm looking at that whole area to find how staff worked as something people really haven't noticed in dealing with Congress.

**Bates:** Roger Porter worked with Congress too, although not to the same extent as Sununu and Darman. Roger had his own contacts such as Kennedy. Of course Fred's shop too. And the President was very good with the notes, called the members, invited members to functions, that type of thing, which he really liked to do, because that's the way he is. He likes people and he likes to do things for people. Plus, he'd been a member of Congress and he knew what it felt like to be included in the White House and that type of thing.

**Young:** So he was aware of the protocol, and the politics of it, but not a prime player in the way, for example, Kennedy was often, taking the Speaker out into the Rose Garden, you know, just really—Of course, as you said, Congress had changed since then. It wasn't—Who was in charge? It was a lot more fragmented.

**Bates:** Exactly.

**Young:** I'm asking you about this, even though you're not the best person to ask because it's an area that we just simply have not fully explored yet, but I think it might be very important in understanding, you know, despite the greater level of partisanship that everybody has recognized on both sides in the Congress, yet he had a record of considerable accomplishment with very little credit given for it. That also, by the way, was true with Eisenhower. The first Civil Rights Act that Congress passed was Lyndon Johnson's baby, the '57 Civil Rights Act, and Eisenhower let him get credit for it.

**Bates:** Interesting. Yes. They do seem similar in that regard now, very much so.

**Young:** I don't know if that had ever occurred to you young fellows.

**Bates:** No, it had not, but I think there's a lot to that, absolutely.

**Young:** I'm not really interviewing now. I'm thinking out loud. Also, it was in Eisenhower's case—The prevailing opinion at the time was that he was the wrong man for the job. He didn't know anything about politics. He was just no good with technique, with tactics or anything like this. He was not very articulate. He couldn't handle the reporters. He bumbled. He mumbled. He didn't get his words quite right. And that's the reputation that followed this general who had been President, and now we're going to get a real politician, Jack Kennedy, in there. Then about twenty years later, when people started going back and studying this Presidency, the whole picture of Eisenhower has changed. You know, he's now being given credit for very astute kind of politics that we didn't recognize at the time, because it didn't fit our mold of the hardball or whatever it is, and yet it was a very—The hidden hand it was called, way of leading. You get others to do things and let them get credit for it, but you really produce the result. You know, Eisenhower did a lot of this with the Defense Department. He was always coaching. Yes, he knew that system like the back of his hand, as he did the nuances of summit diplomacy. He was quite experienced and quite comfortable with it. So, it is something that, as you look to the future, you might think that something like that is going to happen with Bush as people come to study the Bush Presidency in more detail and without the baggage of the press wisdom or the public images of the moment. In this point of view, it is a very interesting Presidency itself. I've given you a lecture.

**Bates:** No. I will just say for the record that there's a biography of President Bush that came out about three years ago by a man named Greene, John [Robert] Greene, and just for the record there were a couple of things in there that I was not—

**Young:** He interviewed you?

**Bates:** He interviewed me, but at one point in the book he said—There was an incident in the first year of the administration where the President gave a speech and he held up a bag of crack cocaine and talked about how the suspect with the crack cocaine had been apprehended in proximity to the White House. In John Greene's book he said I had asked the Department of Justice to get some crack cocaine for the President's speech, which, for the record, I would just say that I didn't have anything to do with. I don't know who in the White House did, but I didn't know anything about the crack cocaine until I read a draft of the speech.

**Young:** This was a speech in which the President was—about drugs?

**Bates:** Yes, but somebody got it from the Department of Justice, but who asked them? I don't know, but I didn't, and I wish he would have asked me before he put that in his book. The other thing is I told him in an interview that when I was in the private sector in the summer of 1991, I would say probably June or July, I had lunch with the President and we were just talking a little bit about whether he wanted to run again. I mentioned it to John Greene to make the point that the President did not have a burning desire to run again, unlike '88 and '80 when he definitely wanted to be President. But he was at the same time not saying, "I really don't want to do this."

He was just kind of saying, “I’m trying to think through the pros and cons,” but I think he kind of took that and made that the opening part—

**Young:** Greene?

**Bates:** Yes, Greene kind of took that comment of mine and made it as a—I thought made too much out of it. He put it at the start of a chapter and as I recall the chapter went on to talk about how he didn’t have his heart in it, and I just think there was too much made out of that. As I said yesterday, I think the President—I think there was a side of him that didn’t—that could see that he had accomplished a tremendous amount in the foreign policy area and Communism had fallen and the world was at peace and Democracy had flourished all around the globe and in Latin America in particular. What more could he do in the foreign policy area? And then in the domestic area he was looking at a Congress, at an obstructionist Congress that hadn’t given him anything the last year and a half of his first term, so what could he be looking at? So I don’t think he relished that, but on the other hand, the man has, as I said, he has no quit in him and he felt like, you know, that he was in good health and he was in that position and it was kind of, “honor, duty, country” and he was going to give it everything he had. But that’s my sense. I felt like Greene took a little bit too much liberty with that.

**Young:** That’s very important to get in the record, as some will read it. In the future, of course, Parmet—When Herbert Parmet wrote his biography of the President—He is one of those, I think there are probably several, who thought the President had a medical or physical problem that robbed him of energy or something like this. The President has said that wasn’t the case. And this puts the finger, I guess, on another thing that’s going to be questioned. We touched upon it yesterday in more detail, this search for some kind of explanation of why the second campaign didn’t catch fire and take off the way it did. Well maybe the President wasn’t—There’s something wrong with the President here. I think that’s what probably feeds the search for an explanation of why. But, Sununu wasn’t there. Atwater wasn’t there.

**Bates:** I don’t think it was the case of physical illness. The older one gets, the less energy one has to a certain extent.

**Young:** Tell me about it.

**Bates:** Tell me about it. I certainly feel it at 48. So there’s a little of that. And I do think that there wasn’t a burning desire there, although the last month of the campaign it kicked in. He wanted to win badly. So the last three weeks, last month of the campaign it kicked in. He was very competitive. Up until that point, he had not been as competitive as he had been in ’88 and ’80, I don’t think, having been there for those campaigns. But he was every bit as competitive in the last month.

The older I get, the more I think most of life is cyclical and Republicans—and, as I mentioned yesterday, we had many things going against us in ’92. Most importantly the economy, but then you had Perot and Buchanan. In addition, we’d been in office for 12 years and when you’ve been in for that long your own people get complacent, start getting a feeling of entitlement. There were Republican constituencies which hadn’t gotten 100 percent support on their issues. They

were grumbling and some of them kind of sat on their hands. You could see it a little bit with Gore here after eight years. What they had forgotten was how bad it is to not have the White House. Some of them didn't work hard enough. The other party was hungry, hungry to get that White House back and they were united.

The press was a big booster of the Clinton campaign. They wanted a change too. Now, not having Lee Atwater hurt too, I think. Lee was a very energetic, very bright, very kind of combative guy. The '88 campaign was very inclusive. I mean anybody who wanted to help in that campaign, Lee Atwater found a role for them. Anybody who walked in that door and wanted to volunteer, Lee would have them doing something, licking envelopes or working on this advisory committee or that, and he had each of those committees thinking that they were doing the most important work in the campaign.

In '92, I remember, I was in the private sector, called over there and had about three people who wanted to volunteer and get their fingernails dirty, and a friend of mine at the campaign told me, "Dave, we don't have any place to put volunteers over here in the campaign." I was astounded when I heard that. And to me that kind of summed it up, because volunteers give a campaign its esprit de corps. Since I'd been with President Bush at the start, back in '78, when I would call with a volunteer in the '88 campaign, they would sign them up. But this was the answer I got. And it was true. I mean, they had so many paid staff.

I remember calling over there one night about 6:15 or something. It was in the summer of '92. It was late summer or something and there was an answering machine on at the campaign. Our people were complacent. We weren't as hungry as they were.

**Young:** That's really quite a vignette about the answering machine and no place for the volunteers. If Bush had been reelected, how do you think the second term would have been? Would it have been any different? Anything substantially different? Would there have been lots of changes of people? Shake ups? Can you speculate on that?

**Bates:** I don't think it would have been a very pleasant time. As obstructionist as that Democratic Congress was that last year and a half of the administration, I just don't think it would have been pretty. I think we'd have had independent counsels running throughout the executive branch on all kinds of things. I think in their own mind they just kind of said, "We've got to get the White House back. We've got to get rid of this guy," and they'd shut things down. I just don't think there would have been much of a honeymoon at all. As I said yesterday, I think things have a way of working out for the best. I don't think it would have been that productive. I think it would have been total gridlock. I don't think he would have been fulfilled or very happy because there wasn't much for him to do on the foreign policy side.

**Young:** Well, you look at what did happen and all kinds of—

**Bates:** Well that was kind of neglect. That was kind of not minding the store on their part, on the foreign policy for the Clinton folks. But, his not getting elected—Republicans were able to win—They certainly wouldn't have won back control of the Congress. Republicans wouldn't have won back control of the Congress in '94, would have probably lost seats. By winning back

control of the Congress, we were able to continue budget cutting, enact welfare reform, and stifle some regulation efforts, all of which helped the domestic economy.

**Young:** But you would have gotten—A second Bush administration would have gotten due credit for the economic—

**Bates:** Yes. Yes.

**Young:** As it was, the Clinton administration benefited from that, though it didn't start it.

**Bates:** Yes, you're right about that.

**Young:** And if the President had won big, you might have gotten some noises from Congress, like you did after Reagan's big win. Well, what can you do?

**Bates:** Yes, yes, exactly, but I think his not making it did allow for the change in Congress and it allowed for his son to be elected Governor in '94. I don't think George, Jr. would have run in '94—I don't think that would have worked with his dad as President, his running for Governor. And then of course Jeb being elected in '98. So I think it was just one of these things that was meant to be and probably worked out for the best. And if his son is elected President—and it's going to be a very close race—but if his son is elected President, his son certainly wouldn't have been elected President in the year 2000 had his dad been reelected in '92. And I think if you asked his dad, "Would you give up the White House in '92 if it meant your son being elected in the year 2000?" he would have said, "That's a deal."

**Young:** So I guess this brings us to the end of our time.

**Bates:** Thank you very much, Jim.