WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 2 WITH ANDREW FRIENDLY

November 4, 2009
Waltham, Massachusetts

Participants

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Russell Riley: This is the Andrew Friendly follow-up interview to the one that we did in 2005. We like to visit Andrew every four years to see how things are going and to get additional reflections on the Clinton Presidency. Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to do this, and thank you to Matt Dickinson, who's here in Waltham, Massachusetts, for the interview today.

I was rereading the first interview last night and I have to confess that I got about halfway through it and I thought, *What in the world did we leave undone?* It was about 175 pages. Fortunately, I did make some notes. I'm a pack rat when it comes to these things so I was able to put my finger on what the residue was. I wonder if there was anything in particular that came to mind when you were reviewing the original document where you thought, *Boy, I didn't talk about that.*

Andrew Friendly: I should have made some notes and thought about things to expand on, but there's nothing that specifically comes to mind. I guess it helped to reinforce, put things in context, in comparison to administrations since then.

Riley: Right.

Friendly: How we did things and how I imagine subsequent administrations have learned from our mistakes and our accomplishments. It has been fascinating watching the [Barack] Obama administration, specifically around health care and how they've been taking a different path, along with a number of my former colleagues who are now back in the administration. Then to see the discipline, which I talked about a little bit in the last interview, that the George W. Bush administration had, and again, how that contrasted with the lack of discipline that we demonstrated at the beginning of the term in the early years and how much of that has carried over into this first year of Obama so far. Those comparisons and contrasts struck a chord.

Then to see some of the names that I referred to and to see which people have moved on, everybody from Rahm Emanuel, who is now Chief of Staff for Obama, to talking to—I skimmed through the schedule that was amended back at that interview to remind me of the people and the players and the timelines. Jim Woolsey, for example, former CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] Director, who, in my current world of investing in clean energy, has created quite a high profile for himself in advocating for clean energy, energy alternatives for national security reasons. So it's interesting to see how many of these worlds are still tied together.

Riley: There are two big pieces that we didn't deal with last time. We really didn't talk much about your scheduling or the travel portfolio, which picks up in '94, and then the work that you did with Mack [Thomas] McLarty on Latin America. I think that was the rationale for deciding that we needed to come back and do a follow-up interview. I made a note of some things that I could come back to and deal with in relation to those things.

Friendly: Okay.

Riley: But if I could follow up here, because there was a brief mention of both Woolsey and Rahm in the first interview, but I don't think we ever dealt extensively with those two figures. We did go touch on them close to the end of the interview and did character sketches. Rahm is a curiosity to me in that first year because he was fired at one point and then unfired or just kept showing up? What was the story with him?

Friendly: I first met Rahm in February of '92. He was the finance director—I believe that was his title—for the campaign.

Riley: Right.

Friendly: Rahm, as you well know, was closely tied to the Daleys in Chicago. He signed on to the campaign early. He had the nickname of "Rahmbo," which has continued with him because he does not suffer fools gladly. He is a very strong personality, combustible and profane and all of the things that have been well documented since he ran for Congress and now Chief of Staff. But I always got along with him very well. So I got to know him at the very beginning, when he was doing the fund-raising, the finance role for the campaign.

Riley: Did you have a reputation before you met him?

Friendly: This was pretty early on in my involvement in the campaign. In fact, when I first met him, we were doing a fund-raiser in Miami at Victor's Cafe, which is a famous Cuban American restaurant. He came in guns a-blazing and complaining and bitching and moaning about us, how the advance people were screwing things up. I said, "Who in God's name is this person?" He was so atypical from the rest of the campaign staff who were considerate, thoughtful, nice, and quiet—

Riley: Southerners.

Friendly: Yes, southerners. And here comes Rahm, who was abusive, to say the least. But I came to appreciate him. I didn't have a great deal of interaction with him during the campaign itself, but got to know him better during the beginning of the administration when he was political director, in the political office. He was—I'm trying to remember the specifics—in part a scapegoat for the failures of the '94 midterm elections when we lost so many House seats, lost the House, and it was widely viewed as a referendum on the failed Clinton efforts of '93 and the beginning of '94. Rahm felt the brunt of that but then he stuck around as one of the "white boys." It was Rahm, George [Stephanopoulos], and an assemblage of others. Rahm and George and Paul Begala and James [Carville] had a very tight relationship from the campaign and continued that through the White House. To this day, they are very close.

He continued to run a number of different projects, and probably the most successful was NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]. So he would be put in charge of these special projects. After the political office, after either being fired or demoted or reassigned, he went off to run these individual efforts. We set up a war room and he would be charged with coordinating that campaign. Again, I'd have to confirm, but I know he was central to the NAFTA fight. I think he also did the gun ban, the ban of assault weapons, and some others.

Riley: So he becomes the head of a war room or a miniature war room type of thing?

Friendly: Like a mini-campaign, a war room. We would have a lot of these campaign efforts to take specific projects. The first one was the health care effort in '93. Obviously, that did not work out. But we then took central policy causes and would create a war room with a person running that operation. He would help to pull together lots of different folks from the political, legislative affairs office, the Cabinet affairs, so that there was a concerted message and everybody pulled together. Rahm ran those different mini-campaigns within the White House.

I don't remember the timing of when he left and went off to do banking in Chicago with Wasserstein Perella, but he did that then for at least a couple of years. His timing was impeccable in that Wasserstein was bought up by—I'm trying to remember which bank it was that bought them in New York, and Rahm made a great deal of money. It allowed him to go back to Chicago and run for office.

You get a sense of how extraordinary he is. The articles are numerous about Rahm's family from his brother Ari [Ariel Emanuel].

Matthew Dickinson: Ezekiel [Emanuel], Eke the Zeke.

Friendly: Zeke lives across the street from my parents in [Washington] D.C. He is actually quite intimately involved in the current administration in the health care debate. Rahm's brother Ari is the super-agent in Hollywood. If you watch *Entourage*, he is the Ari Gold character in *Entourage*, who is also profane and ruthless.

Riley: I'll tell you off the record some time my Zeke story; he was a classmate of ours at Harvard.

Friendly: Rahm gets elected as a junior Congressman from—I think it was [Daniel] Rostenkowski's old seat in Chicago. Within a couple of years he is in a senior position in the House. It is a testament to his extraordinary skills but also perhaps a testament to the quality of the rest of the Members of Congress that Rahm is able to dominate so quickly. [*laughter*]

Riley: How did he get along with Clinton?

Friendly: They loved each other. They got along very well. They were different personalities but the President respected Rahm's political talents enormously. I think he respected his sharp elbows. That's not something that Clinton has, but it was useful to have somebody like that because there were so few, frankly, in the rest of the administration who had that "go-for-the-jugular" approach. I won't say win at all costs, but it is certainly more a hard-nosed, hard-driving, sharp elbows approach.

Riley: But there was never a question about his loyalty.

Friendly: No, there wasn't a question about his loyalty, but I do remember after the '94 campaign, the President again felt ill-served by his political advisors. Reading through the transcript, the President was caustic in that summer and fall of '94. I don't know, there may have been one or two Members of Congress running for reelection who were willing to have him show up, but very few. Here is the brightest political mind in the country, the President of the country, the leader of the party, and no one wanted to be seen with him.

Dickinson: Can I follow up on that? This may come out in context when we talk about Mack McLarty, but since you raised the role that Emanuel is playing now, political scientists often debate this trade-off between having a Chief of Staff who is really strong, more than a figurehead, makes the trains run on time, but the cost is that he becomes a lightning rod versus, I guess the other extreme would be Mack McLarty, who didn't really enact discipline, from my sense. Where do you come down on that?

Friendly: I am much more for the former, having lived through the two years of Mack's leadership. Again, I respect Mack enormously. I think he was a very successful businessperson, very smart guy, very nice guy. I think his role as super-Ambassador was one well suited for him. But in the White House you need that discipline, the hard-charging person, the organizer, the person who will hold people accountable, and will set parameters of responsibilities, instead of having people with open portfolios of responsibilities.

Dickinson: Is there a possibility, though, when you think about Andy Card, somebody who was behind the scenes, less visible than Emanuel, can you go too far in being the public face?

Friendly: Absolutely you can go too far. You can overshadow the President. You can be—certainly, there is that risk of Rahm overshadowing the President in some areas. The difference is, and I think Card knew this—look back at Don Regan from the [Ronald] Reagan administration and [George H. W.] Bush One having somebody who understands Washington, who understands how the Hill works, and that give-and-take between the executive and the legislative branches, who knows how to work that bureaucracy. That's critical and that's something that Mack lacked.

Mack had no Washington experience. He had corporate experience. You could argue that his corporate experience also was—it was not Wall Street experience, it was not Fortune 50 experience. It was Fortune 100, Fortune 200 experience. Not to diminish the role he played at Arkla [Arkansas energy company], but he was a very big fish in a very small pond in Arkansas. He and Bill Clinton were golden children. But I'm not sure he was ever cut out to be the right Chief of Staff. Having that experience in the bureaucracy—look at the success that Dick Cheney had when he was Chief of Staff back in the '70s, and again, Regan and other Chiefs of Staff, even [John] Sununu for Bush, until he became a lightning rod.

But understanding how to work the two branches, how to work the bureaucracy, as well as how to make the trains run on time, is critical. That's why I think in many ways Leon Panetta was successful. I don't want to blame Mack for the train wreck because Bill Clinton put Mack in that position. He also didn't have strong deputies as enforcers.

The difference with Leon and then Erskine [Bowles] was that you did have a person in charge who also understood how to pull all these things together. But you also had the strong deputies who could help be those enforcers and help keep people within their portfolio.

Riley: According to the original design, Harold Ickes was going to be that enforcer, as I recall.

Friendly: I'm trying to remember who Mack's original deputies were at the time. One was Roy Neel, who was [Albert, Jr.] Gore's person, from Gore's office on the Hill. Great guy. In many ways his was a similar personal character as Mack's. Affable, very smart. He did have some of the Hill experience. I don't remember if there was a second deputy with Roy or not. But then there came the division of labors. Harold came on to do the political stuff.

Riley: But he was—if I have my chronology right, they were actually slotting Harold for that and he got into some trouble during the transition period, which made him radioactive.

Friendly: So Harold was left out. The thinking was, after the reelection—Harold ran the reelection in '96. He was deputy chief of staff, ran the political operations in the reelection with the expectation that he would become Chief of Staff. Then Erskine came in and was made Chief of Staff instead. Harold was pushed aside, in effect, and left the White House altogether.

Riley: Sure.

Friendly: I'm not sure why, what the background was for that. But Evelyn Lieberman, who had been Hillary's [Clinton] deputy chief of staff to Maggie Williams, came in with an enforcer role. I don't remember the specifics of who all those others were.

Riley: That's okay. The sequencing is not as important as it is to get a sense about those roles.

Friendly: But those roles, having somebody with—there was perhaps only one deputy at the beginning. It was just Mack and Roy Neel. Neither of them played that enforcer role. So you had people with these broad portfolios who freelanced and ran—

Riley: I think maybe Mark Gearan, at some point there, was also a deputy but—

Friendly: He was.

Riley: He's got the same problems that you're talking about.

Friendly: He does. I think Mark is a fantastic guy, wonderful, sweet, very smart guy, but again, not having the bull whip, the enforcer role.

Dickinson: Is there a risk in the enforcer role of narrowing the range of opinions that get into the Oval Office?

Friendly: Certainly, and I think the derogatory term, the "white boys" of Rahm, George, Gearan, Mack, Roy Neel, gave some feeling of look, he's being surrounded by all these guys who look just like him and these are the opinions that he's getting rather than a broader set. Hillary obviously had a very strong role, and Carol Rasco. There were a handful of other women

involved, Dee Dee Myers, but they didn't have the same access—well, Hillary certainly did—but the same influence that the others did.

So when you do have somebody with that strict enforcement the risk is that you're only exposed to a certain number of roles. But that's why Clinton would listen and have these meetings that would go on way past their scheduled time so he could hear every last opinion and rethink things. It's a fine trade-off between the free-flowing nature where we were at the beginning of the administration and the more structured, organized role. Part of a strong effective Chief of Staff is having those debates largely done before they get brought to the President, and that wasn't the case at the beginning. Those debates were being done in the Oval Office with the President instead of having the consensus presented.

The NSC [National Security Council] was much stronger, more regimented, more formal. The debates would happen within the NSC, within the State Department, the NSC and the DoD [Department of Defense]. Then Tony Lake and team would come with a recommendation and obviously the President would continue to debate it, but at least it came with a consensus opinion to the President.

Dickinson: Was that more a function of process or the personalities involved?

Friendly: I would argue at the beginning it was certainly more a function of the process. With the NSC you had a well-established support structure in place when we started. Tony and Sandy [Samuel Berger] both had some experience in that structure and you had all the support to go with it. With the rest of the agencies, first of all we had the long time before staffing up everybody. You had a great deal of turnover at the high levels without the support structure and without having the formal lines of process in place within the West Wing as well as within the agencies.

Riley: Let me get at some of what I think Matt is talking about by asking you this question. We heard in the first interview a pretty thorough assessment of Mack's strengths and weaknesses, and we just heard you now indicate the virtues of having a stronger Chief of Staff. What about, from your perspective, were there detectable deficiencies or problems when Leon and Erskine, and I guess later John Podesta, although you may have been gone before—

Friendly: Yes, I knew John in the role of Staff Secretary, not Chief of Staff.

Riley: Then let me limit the question to the other two Chiefs of Staff. You do have a stronger centralized function. What was your assessment on the downside of those two, if you have any?

Friendly: I wasn't in the role as aide for Erskine and Leon as Chief of Staff. I was only his aide for a brief part of that. I think probably a downside was the limiting of that full debate. The President loved, he fed off that free-flowing debate. But he was also widely criticized for allowing these debates to go on and not bringing them to conclusion, letting these meetings be free-flowing and not structured enough. There was a concerted effort by Leon and Erskine to bring about more structure, to bring consensus opinion to him before finalizing it.

So I have to say the trade-off of having a disciplined, organized structure where people played their roles and didn't have the free-flowing open portfolio, it was a whole lot better on so many

different levels. The organization of message, the organization of events, of people's responsibilities, that trade-off was worthwhile.

Dickinson: Can you think of an example in which the trade-off worked in the other direction so that Clinton did not benefit from the diversity of opinions because the consensus was achieved—

Friendly: In advance?

Dickinson: Yes. I'm trying to think of one.

Friendly: I don't know off the top of my head.

Riley: Well, we're a bunch of white guys sitting around. [*laughter*]

Friendly: We are, that's absolutely right. You ask somebody, a woman or a person of color or somebody else, about the diversity of opinions and it would be a very different opinion. We made a big point at the beginning of the administration of saying the President was appointing an administration that looked like America, and in many ways it did. There was, I won't say token because they weren't really tokens, many of them were very qualified appointments. They didn't have the access or weren't high enough on the agenda as probably necessary. The President was still surrounded by people who looked like you and me. Hillary obviously had a very strong voice as did—I don't want to underestimate Carol Rasco's role or Laura Tyson and a handful of other women. But there was never a great deal of interaction with Hazel O'Leary, for example, or with Donna Shalala. Donna Shalala was involved quite a bit, obviously, in the health care discussions. The President had a strong relationship with Henry Cisneros and with Ron Brown, obviously.

Riley: They were on the periphery.

Friendly: They were on the periphery.

Riley: Which was different from Arkansas. When he was in Arkansas—

Friendly: As I understand it—again, I wasn't involved with him when he was Governor, but it was a smaller operation, more access, and the President had probably a broader range of advisors.

Riley: And women advisors.

Friendly: Very strong roles.

Riley: Very strong women advisors. It is striking there.

I wonder if I could push us down the road a little bit, again in the interest of time. There was one hint of something that you mentioned in the original interview that I picked up and I want to come back to. We had asked you about President Clinton's relationship with former President [Jimmy] Carter and you'd made a reference to having seen some of this around Haiti.

Friendly: Yes.

Riley: It was a passing reference.

Friendly: I remember clearly.

Riley: That's a fascinating relationship, and I wonder if you had more to say about that.

Friendly: I don't know the history. Here are two leaders, southern Democrats, different generations. But I know that President Clinton, having read the history, felt that when President Carter put some of the Mariel boatlift prisoners in Arkansas, President Clinton had continued to blame him in part for his loss after his first term based on that. That probably set it off. But there may well have been more behind that relationship, the tension in that relationship.

Then we get to the White House, and understandably, Clinton did not want to be seen as Jimmy Carter, the southern Democrat with the failed administration. He wanted to make sure he was seen in his own way. So there was a, not a concerted effort, but a great deal of not bringing Carter people into the administration. Tony Lake was an exception, and Madeleine Albright and a couple of others who had been in the Carter administration, but otherwise it was a whole new crop of people. It had been 12 years, so that was understandable.

I remember a couple of times when President Carter came to visit, and it was a very quiet affair. It's not like they brought the press in to have pictures with the two Presidents. Then, with Haiti in particular, and I can't remember the specifics around the negotiations with trying to get [Jean-Bertrand] Aristide to step down or to be reinstated. We were trying to do a lot to buck him up, and Carter was the Envoy and Tony Lake was the intermediary between President Clinton and President Carter. There was a great deal of stress that President Carter was not following the script, that he was freelancing. That carried over in North Korea. Again, I don't remember the timing, but Carter was seen as not following the script, going off on his own and causing more difficulties in some of these foreign policy areas than helping.

Riley: Did President Clinton have a reaction to this?

Friendly: I remember very well President Clinton being quite upset with how he felt that President Carter was undermining his efforts in both places and was running a little roughshod. I don't think President Clinton felt that Carter gave him as much respect as he thought he deserved. President Clinton felt that Carter looked down at him, and maybe it was some of the personal failings. I don't know what it was, but there was always a tension between the two of them. It was an interesting dynamic.

You would think that here are two former Governors, southern former Governors, who would have so much in common, yet there was such distrust.

Dickinson: So there was no effort on Clinton's part to use Carter directly as a teaching source about, also as you point out the similarities, being Governor of a southern state?

Friendly: I never saw that. They had a number of meetings. They talked a number of times, but it was never, oh, what does President Carter think? It was never a proactive reaching out to

President Carter. It was more of, okay, how do we deal with his freelancing? How do we deal with what he is off doing on his own? That being said, there was a great deal of respect for the things that President Carter was doing around the world and his efforts through the Carter Center. I remember a couple of times doing different Habitat for Humanity events with specific recognition of President Carter's involvement in that group.

I'm trying to remember which year Carter was given the Peace Prize.

Riley: I think it was much later.

Friendly: I don't remember what it was. The majority of the tension came around the feeling of his freelancing.

Riley: Were you at all privy to communications or conversations that he had with other former Presidents, [Richard] Nixon for instance?

Friendly: I do remember the day President Nixon came to visit in the White House.

Riley: Tell us about that.

Friendly: We sneaked him in. It was a very quiet visit.

Riley: How do you sneak in a former President?

Friendly: You bring him to the East Wing or the diplomatic reception room and just drive him in a car all by himself. There was nothing on the schedule. Nobody else in the White House knew that he was meeting with him. Maybe Mack did, there were maybe a couple of people. But it certainly wasn't leaked to anybody that he was coming. There was just one White House photographer. I remember walking with the President over to the diplomatic reception room and greeting President Nixon and then walking upstairs with him. Then they went up to the Residence and that was it. I left at that point. But it was a very hush-hush interaction. He probably then mentioned to the press that he had been there, but there were no pictures released. There was nothing more formal than the President had met him.

Riley: Clinton didn't say anything to you afterward about this meeting?

Friendly: No, he did not. Then President Reagan, I'm trying to remember if we ever met with President Reagan. I think he was sick enough by that time that I don't think we ever met with him. Now, President Bush One we did see a number of times. Obviously, since President Clinton left office that has grown to be quite a close relationship, but it was always very respectful when we met him when President Clinton was in office.

I remember very clearly going to [Yitzhak] Rabin's funeral. That was a little bit like stepping into a wax museum. We took with us President Carter, President Bush, and President Clinton. There were a number of other leaders who were going with us on Air Force One for the funeral. President Clinton had a more deferential relationship with President Bush. In many ways it was, I won't say warmer, but maybe more respectful—there wasn't the same tension that he had with President Carter. I didn't see a great deal of discussion around policy issues between them. That

relationship has certainly gotten a lot warmer since he left office and with all the other work that they've done together. But I'm sure there was still some animosity from President Bush after having lost to President Clinton.

I know that President Bush was very grateful to Clinton and the rest of the administration for the efforts we made to reach out to him and to include him in things. He was also a whole lot more polite than President Clinton. I think the only thank you—President Bush One is famous for this. I got a handwritten thank you note from him for my efforts to help him on that trip. That's not something that we would ever see President Clinton do.

Riley: Carter or Clinton?

Friendly: Clinton wouldn't do that. President Bush did the thank you note. It's almost impossible to ever see Clinton do that.

Dickinson: Do you think these interactions with former Presidents, obviously the funeral was more of a ceremony, symbolic, but the other ones, were they courtesy, were they Clinton trying to build alliances? Was he trying to—

Friendly: It was more a courtesy at that point. Now, the NAFTA, when we got the former Presidents together to push for NAFTA, that was definitely an alliance. Look, here are all these former Presidents, Democrat and Republican, supporting this important effort. That was us using them, but it was definitely a political advance, to advance a policy. There were not—at least I wasn't privy to a number of policy discussions with these former Presidents.

Another time that the Presidents were all together was for President Nixon's funeral. I believe President Reagan did attend that. I think there's a picture of all of them together at that time.

Riley: By the time of the Rabin funeral you were the trip director?

Friendly: I was the trip director, that's right. I wasn't his aide.

Riley: Is there anything more, historically, that was an important episode? How was Clinton's mood at the time?

Friendly: He was devastated, very shaken by the brutal assassination. I remember the assassination happened and, either that evening or the very next morning, we had a quick meeting in Leon's office to plan out what we were going to do and how we were going to go. A military transport plane immediately took off from Andrews Air Force Base; there was a motorcade and some advance Secret Service and some advance people. It was very clear that the President was going to go to the funeral, which was going to be only a day or two later in Jerusalem. So we scrambled very quickly. I remember seeing the President visibly shaken that evening about having lost Rabin.

Then that flight over with the former Presidents and the President and Mrs. Clinton.

Riley: How complicated was protocol on something like that?

Friendly: The plane is beautiful and big and comfortable, but there are only two beds on it for the President and Mrs. Clinton. President Carter and President Bush were in what is called the senior staff compartment, a very nice room about half the size of this conference room with four very large comfortable chairs, but they're not beds. It was an exhausting trip. We flew overnight to Jerusalem and hit the ground running. We spent a whole day at the funeral and the burial. The President did a number of meetings and then flew back to D.C. that evening. I don't believe we even spent the night in Jerusalem; we did a day trip.

So it was exhausting, and protocol-wise of making sure the former Presidents, the current President—and then there was the Secretary of State and a number of other former Secretaries of State with us as well. It was like walking into a wax museum and seeing all these people on the plane together. I believe that was the trip with Newt Gingrich as well. The way the plane is set up in the front, in the nose of the plane is the President's office and compartment. As you go back to the middle of the plane, there is the section where the former Presidents were and there was a conference room. Then there is a staff seating area. Then there is a desk compartment where there are a dozen very comfortable seats around a table for the guests of the President, including Gingrich and his wife. I think there were a number of other senior officials, but he was the Speaker of the House. The protocol of making sure they were all seated, they had the right vehicles. Again, this was all put together on the fly, with very little planning.

Dickinson: And how involved are you in the decisions for the arrangement?

Friendly: Well, we were the guests of the Israelis so we didn't have the setting of the agenda for every place where we were going. We were following the schedule of the funeral. This was in November of '94, is that right?

Riley: That's what I'm checking.

Friendly: It must have been November of '95.

Riley: That's why I was checking, because you said Speaker. My recollection was November of '94, too, but Gingrich wouldn't have been Speaker then.

Friendly: Right, so it must have been November of '95. This was right during the negotiations of the budget. I believe this is the trip that we then returned to Andrews Air Force Base late in the evening and I suggested to the Speaker—

Riley: He goes to Jerusalem the 6th of November, 1995. That was the date.

Friendly: So we arrive back at Andrews Air Force Base after this long trip and the President was taking his time getting dressed, getting ready to come off the airplane, and everybody else was packing up and ready to get off. The protocol on the plane is you wait for the President to go down the front stairs before anyone else goes down the front stairs. So I went back to the guest compartment where Speaker Gingrich was and said, "The President is still packing everything up. You're welcome to leave the plane but he's still packing up." That's when I suggested to Gingrich to go down the rear stairs. It turns out he took that as a great affront, that he was being dissed and sent down the back, the rear stairs of the plane. He also claimed—this was all part of

the discussion afterward—that the feeling was the President shut down the government for these petty reasons.

He also claimed that the President never spent any time with him on the flight over. So we released a photograph of them all sitting together in the conference room as I was briefing them on the logistics of the trip. In effect, he had spent a great deal of time. Senator [Robert] Dole, who was majority leader, was on the trip, Speaker Gingrich, the former Presidents, Secretary of State, etcetera. But he claimed that he never saw the President on the trip over and that he was dissed by being sent down the rear stairs of the plane. He wasn't sent down the rear stairs, but I did say you're welcome to leave if you like but the protocol is you didn't go down the front stairs until the President went down.

That was a decision of mine that will haunt me. That and when the President got his hair cut on Air Force One. I'm not sure that I ever told that story.

Riley: No, I don't think that was in the first interview, do tell. What's the story on that?

Friendly: I'm trying to remember what year it was. I think it was early in '93.

Riley: Let's see, you were in Los Angeles?

Friendly: Yes, it was Los Angeles and I think it was the fall of '93. We went to Los Angeles so many times I don't remember. During the campaign in '92, Harry Thomason, a good friend of the President's, a movie producer, had introduced him to Christophe [Schatteman], a hairdresser to the stars. The President and Hillary got their haircuts by Christophe and he did—for Hillary especially—a fantastic job.

Dickinson: Regularly?

Friendly: Well, it was in '92 during the campaign when they were in California or something. It's not like we flew them around the country to take care of their hair.

Riley: I have to ask, was the President fussy about his hair?

Friendly: He was not. The President wasn't fussy about anything. I mean, look at the way he dressed. [*laughter*]

Riley: I wouldn't know, because from the outside—of course, by the time he's President, he's dressing like a President.

Friendly: Eventually.

Riley: Okay, because I think we did talk about this the first time. But he's got a nice head of hair. I'm looking around this table. There are three guys who are not teenagers any more. All of us have nice heads of hair, and there are some people who are real fussy about their hair.

Friendly: Bill Clinton was never fussy about his hair. He was never fussy about his appearance, period. Over time, he got to appreciate having nice clothes but that certainly wasn't the case at

the beginning of the term. He was still wearing pretty cheap suits and, as I talked about before, he doesn't have much taste at all in fashion. But that being said, when Christophe would come to D.C., I'm not sure how often, but he eventually opened a salon in D.C., and he would come and do Mrs. Clinton's hair and he did, by all accounts, a fantastic job.

So we were flying to LA [Los Angeles]. The President did a number of different events in Los Angeles, and one thing that we were always cognizant of was to try and minimize the disruptions of the motorcades, when the police closed off the intersections. Especially in Los Angeles, when they close down highways there is the impact on the local resources of having so many police and the security.

When we landed in Los Angeles, I think we had been somewhere else in California, the President said, "Hey, if Christophe is around, I need a haircut anyway, why don't you see if I can get it." I called back to Washington and asked if someone could find out if Christophe was in town and if he had some free moments we could, during some downtime during a hold, have him come over and give a haircut. Well, he wasn't in town but he was actually flying into LAX [Los Angeles International Airport] pretty soon before we were scheduled to leave. So we got out to LAX, the plane was parked at this remote part of the airport, and we were doing a small grip-and-grin event in what was an abandoned or an unused terminal building at the far end of the runway at LAX, where the plane was parked.

I said, while we're here, why don't we just have someone pick up Christophe and bring him over here and the President can get his hair cut right before we take off. Well, I made the mistake and assumed that when the President got onto the airplane that the Secret Service would release a number of the police, the local motorcycle cops of the CHP [California Highway Patrol]. We had arrived with the motorcade, and the President had gone into this small terminal building, done a bunch of handshakes, talked to this small group of people, and then went onto the plane. Again, at that point I had assumed that the police would be released, or a good portion of them would be released. So I said, "Let's just have the haircut done on the plane so we can release the police."

It turns out that the Secret Service can't release the police until we're airborne. The assumption was that once he got on the plane they would stop and hold the air traffic in anticipation of his departure. Well, the President gets his hair cut on the airplane. I then make the mistake—they had pulled the front stairs away. I then walk Christophe back down the famous rear stairs of the plane and it goes right near the press section. I say to him, "Thanks so much for coming." He goes off the plane. So then the press find out that the President has gotten his hair cut onboard Air Force One by Christophe, the famous Hollywood hair cutter.

To add insult to injury they call an FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] spokesperson who mistakenly says, "Yes, as soon as the President gets on board we shut down the air traffic." There were probably 20 planes that were held up for 25 minutes or so. After an investigation it was clear that not a single plane was actually diverted or held up because they didn't hold up the air traffic until the pilot called for clearance to say we're about to depart. But that was the story. The President had gotten his fancy haircut by a Hollywood hairdresser onboard Air Force One while holding up dozens of planes.

Then when it came out, I remember George having to deal with why are they getting their hair cut by Christophe? The first answer is that they have a personal services contract or something ridiculous with Christophe, where instead of being charged $250 or $300 for a haircut they had some flat rate. It was just bullshit. But then it fed this whole perception that Bill Clinton has lost touch with people, that he's getting these $300 haircuts on Air Force One.

I remember we went off to New Hampshire very soon thereafter to do a campaign event and there were people with signs saying, "Nice haircut, Bubba." What it drove home is that you've got to get the facts out quickly because people's perceptions are that we held up dozens of airplanes while he was getting his hair cut, that he was paying $300 for a haircut. But those perceptions held. It took four days or so to correct the story, but it didn't matter; the damage was already done.

Dickinson: Were there repercussions for you personally from the President?

Friendly: Not from the President, and it wasn't just me who made the decision. I remember talking to Bruce Lindsey, specifically saying, "Listen, Bruce. Christophe is flying in, let's just get this done." In retrospect it was not a good decision, just the optics of having him cut—he should have just had his hair cut in that old terminal building. It wouldn't have been a story. They wouldn't have seen Christophe, they wouldn't have noticed. People would have just assumed he was taking a long time shaking hands and that's the whole event. To be clear, the thought was we were going to be able to release these police officers faster.

Riley: Could you tell the difference between Christophe's haircut and the White House barber's haircut?

Friendly: Well, there is no White House barber.

Riley: That's right.

Friendly: There is a small room, a kind of dressing room/hair salon, upstairs in the Residence and we'd bring in somebody to do Mrs. Clinton's hair and occasionally cut the President's hair. I couldn't tell the difference. But Bill Clinton's hair is pretty basic hair. Men's hair is hard to screw up, right? Now, you can tell the difference for Mrs. Clinton when Christophe did it versus somebody else. You could definitely tell.

Dickinson: As I recall, that became an issue for a while because she was changing hair styles to create different political perceptions. Just following on that point, you're planning trips, and every Presidential staff that I've ever talked to complained that the media scrutiny has become more pervasive, more omnipresent. How much do you have to think about, not just the logistics of we've got to get the President from A to B, but obviously you're thinking the media perception. Did it become more difficult with the introduction of cable? Cable is coming into its own.

Friendly: It was an issue from the beginning of the campaign all the way through, the way things were going to be perceived. Whether it was where we would stay, where we would do an event, how we would get there, what he'd wear. It was always a question of how would this be perceived by the broader audience? From who was going to be on the stage with him, whether

the event was going to be open to the press or not open to the press, it was a major component of everything we did.

Dickinson: What I'm trying to drive at is, did it become more difficult when you're now generating these 24/7 news cycles as opposed to just—

Friendly: The story of the day. So that was really only starting. There was a 24-hour news cycle because obviously CNN [Cable News Network] was big, but it was precursor to Fox News, precursor to MSNBC [Microsoft/National Broadcasting Corporation Network]. The Internet had not taken off. But there was definitely a realization of a much faster news cycle. In fact, the stories of the war room in '92; we were so fast to react that we caught the Bush campaign off guard. They were still operating in the single news cycle mentality and we were very good, very quick, about setting the agenda and responding and getting ahead of news stories because of this appreciation that the cable news was changing the game and that there were these additional outlets. It wasn't just the three networks; it was also radio and also local television.

Riley: Talk radio, in particular.

Friendly: Talk radio as well.

Riley: In this context, because this is something that we said we were going to come back to, one of the things that we had mentioned last time was the business of putting a schedule together and what it takes to make a trip happen.

Friendly: Yes.

Riley: Why don't you take a deep breath and talk us through what the mechanics are like for thinking in broad terms about scheduling.

Friendly: I'll give a little bit of a picture of a domestic trip and then an international trip as well. I'd moved in December '94 to be the trip director. Wendy Smith had been the President's trip director during the campaign of '92 and then the first two years in the administration, and I took her job. Stephen Goodin came in and replaced me as his aide. Have you spent time with Stephen?

Riley: Yes. Were you burned out at this point?

Friendly: I was. I was burned out. The wonderful thing about that job as the President's aide is you get incredible exposure. It's a job like none other. But there's also no real room for advancing. It's a mechanics job. You get great exposure, but you're not really shaping things. You have this great opportunity but there's no real logical advancement.

Wendy was exhausted, tired of doing the job as trip director. It gave me an opportunity to take over that role. I think there was a fair bit of hesitation that I was too young for the role of being trip director, which is a great deal of responsibility, of helping to plan all the trips with the scheduling department and the advance teams and then going on those trips to help execute them. Actually, on the haircut trip I was still his aide. Then I had the trip director role in the scheduling and advance office.

The way a trip would be scheduled and planned, everything would often start with a meeting with the communications, the scheduling, and the political departments and trying to advance a certain agenda. Let's just take health care, for example. Usually we would pick a targeted district. So if they were trying to find a vote with a certain Member of Congress and it was in a certain media market, you went to highlight a point, either to support that member for having come out in favor of the position, the legislation, or to put some pressure on that member, or to highlight something in that district or broader, in that media market.

Then we very specifically, early on in '93, went to the smaller media markets where you could get a much bigger impact. It was a much bigger deal to go to Chillicothe, Ohio, when you're President than it was to go to Chicago. It's a big deal to go to Chicago, but you're lost in the noise of the Bulls and everything else going on in the city. When you go to Chillicothe, Ohio, it is a big deal for Chillicothe and all the surrounding areas. In fact, it's a big deal for the whole state. Here is the President of the United States and the whole roving circus coming to their town, spending a night in a Best Western or some other hotel. You have stories leading up to it for three days and then you dominate the news that whole day and a day or two after. And you pull the media from all the other media markets.

So the matrix used to figure out where we were going to go and what we were going to highlight would be dictated from these meetings with the political, scheduling, and communications offices. Legislative affairs as well. All these people saying here's the agenda, we want to do an X type of event in this congressional district on this day. At the beginning of the term it was usually done with only a couple or three days of advance notice. We certainly got better at being able to map things out faster, or to map them out in longer term.

So you pick a town to go to. The scheduling and advance office would send out an advance team to start working with the local either government offices or the Congressional offices, to pick that location where you're trying to highlight the event, to drive home that message. Sometimes it would just be a school gym. Sometimes it would be a hospital, or if you could find a location that would highlight that same message. That's when the scheduling and advance teams took over. There was always, for each day and sometimes a couple times in each day, a scheduling desk, a person who was responsible for coordinating all the pieces of the trip with the advance team. As we got into even more complicated trips, we would have two, three, or four stops in a day. Especially during the campaign, you'd often have two or three desks helping to coordinate all those stops, coordinate the advance teams.

My role as the trip director was to work with the scheduling desks and the advance teams on the group in tying all these pieces together. Understanding who it was who was coming on the trip with us, what the political message was, what the actual logistics of the site that we were going to would have. So if we were going to a high school, how was the site going to be laid out? Is this going to be a round table or a rally, or a larger speech? Who would be on the stage with him? What the backdrop would be? What the speaking order was going to be?

We would have these daily, and oftentimes two or three times a day, trip calls where we would get on the phone with the advance person—this is pre-Internet days—and we would go through the minutia from the time the plane took off at Andrews to the time it landed to every step in between. From who's riding in the motorcade, to who's riding in the limousine with the

President. How far it is to the site, the drive time to the site? Who will greet him when he arrives? What will he see? Will he do a tour? Will he do a roundtable? If it's a discussion, a roundtable, is it open to the press? If it is, how big a space will it be? Can it accommodate all of the traveling press plus all the local press? Do we have to do a pool of the press? Does he then do a larger speaking event? If so, what's the speaking order? Who's on the stage? What is the message on the backdrop? How do we accommodate the press for filing their story so that there would be a press advance team?

We're coordinating with the press office on the timing of this. After every event you would allow half an hour or 45 minutes of press filing time for them to file their stories. You'd have to set up a filing center where you drop telephone lines. Again, this is pre-Internet so you didn't have the ability to file on the go as quickly. The photographers would have to drop their film to get processed and flown back for the wires. Slowly this changes. You now have the Internet and you're doing digital photos and the filing time has probably shrunk more. There's a 24-hour news cycle so it's not as compelling, but you would try to do these events early in the morning, early afternoon. That would be the one-message event. Then, during that filing time, the President would be doing perhaps local interviews. You don't want to step on the story that you just created with that event, but you would also do a reception with the local political people. You would do potentially radio or other interviews, all to drive home that same message.

So you're thanking the Member of Congress, this is really the reason you're going to their district, you're giving them high profile, or you're putting the pressure on them by going to their district to step up. All those mechanics, then you're working out the time for filing and you're often going on to another city to do this all over again. My job as the trip director was not only to help with the planning of all that with the scheduling desks and coordinate the advance teams and then the traveling party, helping to shepherd, to herd that party, but to make sure that the President was briefed.

As soon as he would come on board the plane, I would greet him and tell him who was on the plane with us. We were usually traveling with a Member of Congress because they always wanted to have that photograph of them getting off the plane together to their home district. And then who was traveling with him and what the broad outlines of the schedule were going to be.

This is usually the first time he's focused on the schedule of that day. More often than not he'd want to change something around. He'd say, "How could you have the mayor introduce me when we're going into this Congressman's district?" or "How could you have a—" what he'd call a real person, somebody who had a compelling story to help advance the message of the event "—have that person introduce me versus the Member of Congress? Where is the speaking role for the pols?" So he would also have input into what we had scheduled. Then I would get back on the telephone as we were flying to that destination and say, "You need to change this around, he's not happy with that."

Then again maybe we would go to another city after that, and we would always be running late too. So we'd always be trying to figure out how to compact the schedule or alter things around, reshuffle things so that we didn't miss the filing window, but we also didn't cut anything out of the schedule; we'd just have to try to shorten it or expand or do something to adjust. Then I'd be that connector between that first city and the next city. So my role making the changes onto that

next stop and understanding the flow between one city and the next, the people who were traveling with us, and being the troubleshooter on the plane as we went from city to city.

Much of my role was also being the liaison, the coordinator with the military, whether it was the military aide, the White House Communication Agency, WHCA, who did the telephones and the podiums and the sound systems and the like. The military, who did everything from the airplane to the helicopters, and the Secret Service. More often than not we would have some type of change in the schedules and had to make sure that they all knew all of the changes. The President's aide—me at the beginning, then Stephen Goodin, then Kris Engskov—was that person who was still worrying about the President, what he had to do, from the phone calls he had to make to the speeches he had to give, the briefing materials he had to read, etcetera. So that was a domestic trip.

On an international trip you magnify that by ten times because you're often going to two, three, or four countries and often two or three stops per country. And these were multiday trips. You had a much bigger traveling party. We took two 747s, one was a backup plane and the other was Air Force One. We had a full traveling press airplane. It was a traveling circus, where you were leapfrogging sometimes the Secret Service and the support infrastructure from one city to another stop later on in the trip. You had advance teams in every one of these cities, with the White House Communications Agency and Secret Service support. You had press advance support in each of those cities. More often than not when we knew there was going to be a big trip, whether it was a summit that would have been on the schedule for months, whether it was a D-day commemoration or some other long-planned trip, we would send two advance trips ahead of time.

So a couple of months in advance we would send what was called a site survey, which would be a very small group. Well, not very small; seven of us or so—myself, the director of the advance office, a member from the military office, Secret Service—and we would do the very preliminary outlines and meetings with the host government and the embassy in place.

Dickinson: So you were actively involved in the site—

Friendly: In the site selection. We would go to these host countries and we would meet with them and hear first the expectations of what they had for our visit. More often than not they did not mesh with our expectations for the visit.

Dickinson: Because they're trying to get something different out of it?

Friendly: Yes, they're trying to get something different out of it. They'd say, "This is how state visits go," and we'd say, "That's wonderful but we don't want to do that." Or a state visit is a three-day affair, and we'd say, "We have a day. Let's talk about the day version of the state visit." They'd say, "Well, we don't do state visits in a day; they're three days." We'd say, "We will be doing it in a day. How do we do it in a day?" There's that kind of discussion.

In some places we'd say, "We want to go and do a speech to a large crowd." They'd say, "You don't do that in this country." We'd say, "But we'd like to." It's give and take, a lot of involvement by the Embassy, the host Embassy, the Ambassador, and the DCM, the Deputy

Chief of Mission. Then you would do a great deal of negotiating with local security. The Secret Service always had issues around dealing with their host government security.

Then there are the logistics of the hotels. How do you bring a traveling circus of oftentimes close to 700 people to overwhelm these small cities, especially when we're doing summits, large-scale summits? Whether it is the G8 [Group of Eight] or, at that time, the G7 [Group of Seven], or the APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] summit, when the President is one of many other leaders coming. Obviously, we are the biggest traveling party, the biggest traveling circus. We have the biggest traveling press contingent, which I know currently has shrunk considerably because of the economics of news gathering.

But at the time it was an enormous undertaking to move the President around in a foreign country. You always had the military support for the communications, for the transportation, helicopter, airplane, and the Secret Service for the vehicles and the general security. Then you had the political impact of what is the—we always had the eye on what was the schedule back home. How did we impact the news cycle? What was the political message that we were trying to communicate by this visit, by this stop? When he gives this speech here, what is the message that he is giving to the local audience, the host government audience? Plus, what is that message going to be back home, and how do we ensure that that message isn't done in the middle of the night so that it misses the intended audience? How do we end up reacting to the agenda being driven by people back home?

Countless times on foreign trips, there were more confrontational discussions with the press. This would drive the President nuts. The press would focus on whatever scandal is going on back home, whether it was Whitewater or Ken Starr or whatever the issue was. The President was always embarrassed at these press conferences that we would have after meetings with our host government because the American press would always ask questions about domestic American politics or domestic issues and almost never ask questions about the foreign policy issue that we were covering with the host government. It would anger the President to no end that they would be fixated on these issues—the U.S. press would be—whereas the local press would ask substantive questions about whatever the meetings were, or the relationship between the United States and that country.

Riley: The host governments would be warned that this was likely to happen?

Friendly: I think they knew that this was likely to happen, but the President was always embarrassed and would say afterward that he was sorry. He would often lose his temper. There are plenty of examples when we were in different countries and the U.S. press would be fixated on the latest scandal back at home.

Dickinson: Building on Russell's question about the logistics, if you could talk in two parts, first about who is coordinating you or who is approving—you're making a lot of crucial decisions here and trying to bring a lot of different threads together. At some point you probably have to go to someone and say—

Friendly: When we had these daily trip calls, trip meetings, we would have representatives from all the different offices, so we would have a representative from the press office and the political

office and Congressional affairs and communications, etcetera, all these different places. The scheduling desk and I would be running these trip calls with the advance people on the phone. We would be walking through everything. We'd be going along making decisions and say—this is the benefit of my having had that job of being the President's aide for two years. I knew what he liked and what he didn't like. I knew what he would want. If we'd show up at some city and So-and-So wasn't there, I'd know he'd be upset or I'd know he would want to have that person included on the program.

But then each of the other people around the table would know their marching orders as well as to who was to be included. At every meeting there would be some question to go back and say, we don't want to have Congressman X introduce the President because it just doesn't look right. He's there supposedly talking about health care and Congressman X hasn't made his decision about health care. So the Congressional affairs person would figure out if that's okay, if they're comfortable with that. Then we'd make a decision. The reality is, we'd get to the airplane and I'd walk through with the President, again really for the first time, how we planned out the trip.

He'd say, "How could you not have Congressman X introduce me? What are you thinking?" Okay, good point. The Congressional affairs office said they didn't want him there. "You're crazy. We're going all this way and we're not going to have Congressman So-and-So introduce me?" So then I'd call ahead and say, "Guess what? The President wants Congressman X to introduce him."

Dickinson: So your advantage going into the trip director's job is that you have this personal experience. But for somebody who is coming in for the first time, is there an institutional memory? How do they get up to speed? I'm interested in the logistic on how you learn this.

Friendly: You don't. The only trip directors that President Clinton had were Wendy Smith, who had spent a year on the campaign with him in '92 and knew him very well; myself, who had spent two years with him as his personal aide; and then the last trip director was a guy named Kirk Hanlin, who had been an advance person all through '92 and was then one of the four White House advance people from '93 until I left the job in '97. So he had been working for the President for five years as an advance person, knew him very well, had done countless numbers of trips with him, and knew the mechanics of how trips went. I spent three weeks with him, walking through the mechanics of the job, and I went on two trips with him as well.

Soon after the President had hurt his leg at Greg Norman's house—he tripped and tore his knee ligaments—we went on a trip to Finland. Embarrassingly, the President was in a wheelchair and had to be taken off Air Force One in a food service truck. How else do you get the President, who was in this horrible leg brace, down the stairs? So they rolled up this food service truck to Air Force One, rolled him onto the truck, and lowered him down. [*laughter*] It was about as humiliating, embarrassing as you could get.

Riley: Were there cameras to capture that?

Friendly: Absolutely, the whole thing. I remember—let me back up. I was making a lot of these decisions, but not in a vacuum. There was always a traveling Chief of Staff person on the trip with us. Bruce Lindsey often played that role. Bruce was on almost every single trip. On many of

those trips he was the acting Chief of Staff, the traveling Chief of Staff person, but he played a much bigger role, as we've talked about before. He was the President's best friend, he was his consigliere, he was his hearts player, he was his sounding board, etcetera. So whenever we had these big decisions, I would run them through the traveling Chief of Staff, through Bruce, and often, obviously, through the President as well.

Riley: Was your reporting line through the communications director?

Friendly: As trip director I technically reported to the director of the advance operation, Paige Reffe, who was Director of Advance at the time. More often than not, I really just reported to the Chief of Staff or the traveling Chief of Staff person and to the President.

Riley: Think back. You must have a lot of good stories about these foreign trips. Are there any in particular that you can share with us? You must have gone on a hundred of them.

Friendly: Yes, I talked a little bit on the last interview about going to the Kremlin with the President and having too much vodka and having to do the radio address in the middle of the night half drunk.

Riley: We did get that one.

Friendly: The touring of the Louvre with I. M. Pei; staying on the *Britannia*, the Queen's yacht, for the commemoration of D-day; staying at the Emperor's guesthouse in Tokyo, which is a very ornate French-like chateau in the middle of Tokyo.

The challenge with these foreign trips is that they were always overscheduled. We were always jet-lagged, the President was always exhausted, and we were always running late. Running late in the United States, when you're at the White House or when you're going to visit Toledo or San Francisco, that's one thing. But when you're holding up your host, the host government, the Queen of England, the Emperor of Japan, the Prime Minister of such-and-such, that's something else. We would try to buffer as much time and try to give it as much leeway so that we weren't late, but there were plenty of times when we were rudely late to our host. That created even more tension.

So you add that on top of the jetlag, on top of trying to do too much, and responding to whatever else was going on at home. That was part of the challenge with these foreign trips. You always had the agenda you were trying to drive when you're on that foreign trip and the back-to-back meetings with the host government, with the opposition leaders. You always do a major speech to try to generate a news story rather than just a photograph of the two leaders sitting together. The President would always want to see something of the place where he was.

Riley: Sure.

Friendly: Then you'd have greetings with the embassy staff and you'd do dinners and other events. On top of all that you'd have to be dealing with whatever political issue or domestic U.S. issue was going on at the time. He'd have to do phone calls back to the States for that. So these trips were always exhausting.

Riley: Did he like doing foreign travel or was it too big a pain?

Friendly: He liked it. He absolutely enjoyed doing it, but he resented being in the bubble, always being—we talked about this before—cooped up and not being able to see anything. We went to Jerusalem three or four times and we stayed at the beautiful King David Hotel, which has an incredible view of the Old City. The second or third time, something like that, he said, "How is it that I am maybe 300 or 500 yards away from the Old City and I see nothing of these places when I go to them? I'm cooped up in these hotels, in these meeting rooms."

But the reality of taking the President of the United States on a tour of the Old City, the Israeli security and the Secret Service would be apoplectic. It is not an easy thing to take the President on impromptu tours of places, not to mention all the hangers-on that we always had. You had the U.S. Secret Service, the foreign security, the press that traveled with us, and the host government people. He would begrudgingly give in but he always felt incredible restrictions about how he was limited and controlled.

I'll have to keep thinking about some of the highlights of foreign trips.

Riley: You reminded me that there were some of these mentioned earlier. You've already told us about the President descending in a food service truck. Were there other memorable—I mean, we like to rubberneck.

Friendly: We went to Canberra and Sidney, Australia, and then had a great trip up to the Great Barrier Reef to Port Douglas. We stayed right near Port Douglas in Cairns. We went on a boat out to the Great Barrier Reef and did snorkeling and scuba diving. You almost felt real.

Riley: Everybody?

Friendly: Not everybody, but a good-sized group of us. There were probably 50 of us.

Riley: But the President was not—

Friendly: The President went snorkeling.

Riley: Oh, he did.

Friendly: Yes, the President, Hillary, and Chelsea [Clinton] all went off snorkeling with a Secret Service agent to one part of the Reef and the rest of us went off to another part and left him. A group of us did what was called a "resort scuba dive," where they give you 30 minutes' worth of instruction and then they take you down only 40 feet, but it's pretty fantastic. They wouldn't let the President do that. The Secret Service said, "No, that's a little bit too dangerous but we'll let him go off and snorkel." The rest, maybe ten of us who had done this resort dive, came back up beaming, saying, "My God, that's the most fantastic experience ever." He was a little resentful that he didn't get to do that, and that we had gone. [*laughter*]

When we were on our first trip to Korea, we went up to the DMZ [demilitarized zone]. He went up to Yeolseo for an interesting photo op of him standing on a lookout looking over into North Korea. Unfortunately, in the first picture that was taken, we had prepositioned the press pool

down below to get a picture of him looking out across the DMZ. He was given some binoculars and put them up to his eyes to look, but the lens caps were still on. [*laughter*] It was a normal thing; you put the lens caps back on the binoculars when you set them down. Well, that's great until the President of the United States is looking through binoculars with lens caps on. He quickly realized they were on and he took them off, but the picture had already been taken. Here's the blind President looking across the DMZ.

Then we did an event with the U.S. troops that were stationed up there. With this trip director job you get exposure to pretty surreal places, from palaces to places like the DMZ to Tuzla. I talked briefly about going to Sarajevo in January of '96. The President had committed troops to go to Bosnia to try to hold the peace. We went on a site survey, a preadvance trip to see if we could take the President to Sarajevo as part of that. We went to Hungary, where there was a staging air base, then to Tuzla, which was the beginning of the very rudimentary base where the American forces were going to be. Then we went to Sarajevo to meet with the American general who was leading the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] contingent in Sarajevo.

I remember vividly when we arrived on January 6. The general had been there on the ground maybe only a week and he said, "Are you kidding me? You want to bring the President to this place? I'm just getting my stuff together. The last thing I need is the distraction of trying to take the President coming here." Then it was very clear from the Secret Service that they did not have any interest at all in bringing the President to Sarajevo; it was just too risky. But that night we stayed in the remnants of the Holiday Inn Sarajevo. Half of it had been bombed out and there was literally plastic hanging in some places. When you came off the elevator, there were no lights except some emergency lights in the hallways. Plastic was draped over the side of that building, outside the building, in the bedrooms. It was January 6, which is the big celebration night in the Christian church, right? It is the night of Epiphany, when the three kings came and delivered their gifts.

Well, no one had told us that. So at midnight, or close to it, there were fireworks and guns were shot off. We had just flown in from Frankfort on a military cargo plane and we were told we had to wear flak jackets and helmets, and to sit on a flak jacket because if people were shooting up, you didn't want bullets to come through the bottom of the plane and through you. So we landed and the plane engines don't stop. We got into a motorcade and we started going off on the site survey. We still have this fear. We're sitting exhausted, having flown overnight to Frankfurt and spent the whole day looking at sights around Sarajevo.

Then we get to this hotel, half of it is bombed out, and in the middle of the night explosions go off. We're thinking that we're in the middle of it again until we realized what was going on. So we didn't take the President to Sarajevo, we took him to Tuzla. Those were challenging logistics. This was the first time that the President did not fly on Air Force One, the 747; we took him on a C-17, a cargo plane. We ended up flying to Aviano, the Air Force Base in Italy—

Riley: The rationale being identification or—

Friendly: Identification, but also the thought of security, that they can protect him better on a C-17 than they could on Air Force One. I think it was more for the identification. So we flew to Aviano, did a small event there, and then put him on the C-17 and flew him into Tuzla. Before

getting in, the Secret Service made him get up and sit in the cockpit, in the jump seat of the cockpit, because that's the armored part of the airplane. An agent was up there with him, and they flew to Tuzla.

Nothing happened at all, but it was a realization of the security risks. More importantly, there was definitely a political agenda of him going. He had just committed all these troops and he wanted to show the solidarity and the commitment to this effort in Sarajevo. But there was complicated logistics and we were really pushing the envelope with the Secret Service about what they were comfortable with.

Since then, the number of times President Bush went to Baghdad and the challenges of doing that, and there was the President. I'm trying to remember the other trip when the President went to Afghanistan, maybe when they switched planes.

Riley: Pakistan, I believe.

Friendly: To Pakistan, right. They did a little swap and a little deception about which plane he was going to fly in on.

Riley: Then came in straight up and down.

Friendly: Yes.

[BREAK]

Riley: We're back after the break. Matt, you had a question.

Dickinson: I wanted to follow up on vacations. You talked about domestic and foreign trips. This may have been covered, but I didn't see it in the previous transcript. They have taken on an importance in all sorts of different ways. Is it a chance to be a true vacation, but it never seems to be, but also a sort of a political symbolism? Where do you go? How much time can you spend?

Friendly: You see it now again with the Obama administration. Both Obama and Clinton. Neither of them had money. They didn't have second homes, vacation homes, unlike the Bushes or the Reagans. So the political implications—vacations were hell. I touched on it a little bit before. It was never a vacation for me because, both as his aide and trip director, when I would go on them—and I didn't go on every one, but I did do a number of them—I was the bad guy who would go with him. I'll come back to choosing those vacation spots and planning for it, but as I talked a little bit about last time, I would be the nag with the Clintons on what they wanted to do, who they wanted to see, where they wanted to go, because the planning required—it just didn't happen automatically.

You had to make sure the Secret Service were ready and the press wasn't around and the mechanics happened, that people were there to play golf with him. I felt uncomfortable to constantly be that nag, and there was the hassle.

Dickinson: To make them think before.

Friendly: Think about what they wanted to do. When you're on vacation the last thing you want to be doing is planning everything out. You want it to be spontaneous.

Obviously, the politics of the vacations were well documented. Not going to the Vineyard, having to take [Richard] Morris's suggestion, going to Jackson Hole, which in and of itself is, I guess, more American, but still pretty chic, to people he was hanging out with, from the [James] Wolfensohns to Harrison Ford to all these other very wealthy individuals, in one of the most beautiful playgrounds in America. I went on the second Jackson Hole trip and we did a day trip up to Yellowstone, which was just spectacular. They had great pictures of the President and Mrs. Clinton and Chelsea in the fields looking at these wild elk and other animals.

But we went on what the press referred to as the "death march." We flew up on the helicopters from Jackson to the park and he did a press event. He spoke to a bunch of park officials and volunteers and rangers in a little meadow. Then we took a car and drove up to a lookout point, where we had a picnic lunch. We were given the option that we could hike down from there, that it was only about a five- or seven-mile hike from there down the hill, and the cars would pick us up there. And Clinton said, "Yes, that sounds great. We'd love to do that."

Well, no one had briefed the press to be prepared for that. We had a bunch of the press pool. There was a group of 10 or 15 of them who were with us and the Secret Service and press advance people, but these guys were carrying their big, heavy cameras and they didn't have the right shoes or equipment. We weren't prepared; we didn't have enough water. The President and family ran off ahead and may have done one posed picture at some lookout point. But I ended up trying to pick up the rear, helping the press who were going with us. We offered for them to jump ahead and we'd meet the Clintons at the end, but they said no, we have to go along with the Clintons. Many of the press were totally out of shape and lugging these huge cameras. I remember having to carry some of the camera equipment for some of the photographers. In a pool report afterward, the press called it the death march. The Clintons loved it. It was a beautiful spot and wonderful, but there was a fair bit of frustration from the press side with us for doing that.

In terms of the politics of vacations, I wasn't involved with Dick Morris's selecting Jackson Hole the first time around. Then we added fuel to the fire by making it look so political, so after he was reelected, he went back to Martha's Vineyard. Now that the political ramifications are out of the way, it's okay for him to go back and hang out in the Vineyard with Kay Graham and Vernon [Jordan] and the others. I'm not exactly sure why it was seen as so elitist, versus Jackson, but it was what it was.

Riley: Sure.

Friendly: Then on other vacations, after the very first failed vacation, which was the stop that I talked about in the last session, of going to Hawaii on the way back from Japan, when we stayed

at a public hotel and Mrs. Clinton tried to go down to the beach. That was a disaster. After that first failure, we realized that you need to find a private house where you could keep people away legitimately. It wasn't a public beach, it wasn't public properly. Then things got better; it just got to be easier. But it was always the scramble of finding whose house we were going to use. Were they going to be able to donate it or were we going to pay something for it? Had they been vetted? What were the politics of using that place? Then there were the challenges of actually leaving them alone to let them play.

Riley: There was considerable discussion last time about that. I have a couple of cryptic notes to myself from the last time that I threw out before, and then I want to head to the '96 campaign and what that did in terms of your scheduling job. My note just says "voice recorder given by his dad." Did your dad—

Friendly: Oh, yes, at the beginning of the administration—my dad had had this experience from working in the Carter White House. Two or three days before the President was sworn in, in '93, I got the call to join him as his aide. My father gave me a little pocket voice recorder and said you're never going to have time to keep a dairy but just take this and at the end of the day make some notes. Well, I never got around to doing that. In retrospect, I'm very glad that I didn't because even though I clearly lost a fair bit of history by not doing it, it would have been subpoenaed and would have opened up a whole slew of challenges. That has been well said, that it is a great failing and so much history is lost because people don't keep diaries any more, don't keep journals or this kind of documentation.

We talked a little bit during the break about Taylor Branch and the project that he undertook with the President. I remember at the beginning when Nancy [Hernreich] explained to me that Taylor, this well-known author, was going to come. He was a friend of the President's and he was going to come and do a project where he was going to work with the President, once a month or so, to help recollect, pull out his thoughts, and record them. So that first day that I met Taylor—he came one evening to the Oval Office and they were going to walk over together to the Residence—I remember saying to Taylor, "What a great idea." I thought this was a really neat thing they were doing, a very important thing. He said, "At some point I imagine the President will want you to do this with him. I don't imagine myself doing this all the way through." I don't think that he ever thought that he would be coming every month, or whatever it was, every couple of months, for years.

I never did do that. I never did take it up. The President had a great relationship with Taylor, where he was able and willing to be much more open. I do think, thankfully, it was kept quiet. Kelly [Crawford Friendly] and Nancy and I and maybe Betty [Currie], there were only a handful of us who knew that this was going on. It gave the President great freedom, and this was a way to recollect so that he had this resource for his book, and now also Taylor for his.

Dickinson: And there was no concern expressed during the Starr investigation or anything about this becoming relevant?

Friendly: No one asked me about it and we certainly didn't tell anybody about it. You see, there was almost nobody who knew this was going on. Obviously, had I been asked, I would have said, but no one knew, no one asked.

Riley: I said that we had been doing work on this with Taylor for probably three or four years before we became aware of it.

Friendly: As to the recorder, I never ended up doing it. I never kept a journal, never kept a diary, never did any of the voice recordings. In many ways I'm glad I didn't. On the other hand, I would have had a much richer memory of different things that happened.

Riley: Did you know Josh Steiner?

Friendly: I knew him in passing, I didn't know him well. But there's a lesson right there.

Riley: What about the '96 campaign? How does entering a campaign season alter the way that you're thinking about trips and/or—

Friendly: Dramatically.

Riley: Okay.

Friendly: There's a political overtone to everything we did, obviously. When you're in the White House, there's always a political overtone. He had been doing fund-raisers leading up to '96. It was well known for a while that Dole was going to run against him. There had been so much work to overcome what happened in '94 and with Dick Morris's triangulation to pick out specific smaller, I call it "small ball," policy initiatives that he could push through to show some success.

But then, like the story of going to Bosnia points out, that was seen as a pretty political trip. It was clearly the President putting his reputation on the line about sending troops to try to quell what was happening, to hold the peace there. It ended up being successful, but he was so clearly tied to it that he felt a need to go to show his commitment to that. That was the beginning of a very busy year. There was a very fine balancing act of what trips you could do, political and official, and the blending of the two made life more challenging.

When I talk about the mechanics of a trip and the mechanics of doing both jobs, I was one of the few staffers who was given the ability to do both political and official jobs. I actually had a political pager and an official pager, a political phone and an official phone, and used one for each.

Dickinson: This is to keep the budgets separate.

Friendly: To keep the budgets separate, that's right. I'm sorry, cell phone and pager, one for each.

Riley: But your salary was—

Friendly: My salary was always the official. Again, I was one of a handful of people who was deemed an official traveler for my role. Bruce was one, as Chief of Staff representative, myself, Stephen Goodin, and maybe one or two others. There were very few of us who could do both of these trips. But on a number of them we would do a political—it got to be very expensive to do

just a political trip because the campaign would reimburse the government a full first-class ticket equivalent. It never covered the cost, but a full first-class ticket for each political traveler on a plane. So we were very careful when we were mapping out trips on delineating which is political and which is official. We would often blend the two roles on a trip so you could take official people with you and do some type of a policy event and then combine it with a fund-raiser or some type of political event.

Riley: So if you're already in a local for an official event—

Friendly: Then it became a formula of how much time the President spent doing the political. That's where it was quite important to keep track of how much time he actually spent doing the political, so the formula was used to split down the cost of the other expenses of the trip that the DNC [Democratic National Committee] or the campaign had to reimburse. It impacted who would come on the trips, how they would get there, if they'd fly commercial separately or they'd come on the plane with us. Then there were the mechanics of the speaking roles and the like.

It was not untenable but it became a considerable burden. We would have a mirrored operation with the campaign that we did in the White House with scheduling desks, press desks, political advance people, and all of that support, people who could do both the political and the official trips. There were very few of these advance people who could do both of those. So there was a fine line of figuring out which was which and assigning those to each. National Security Council people were always obviously official. There was always someone from the NSC on the trip with us, the military aide, the doctor, the support staff, etcetera. But in terms of the political staff or the White House staff, there were only a few of us who were official travelers.

Riley: What about decisions about where to go?

Friendly: Decisions about where to go were a combination of the White House political office and the campaign political office. That's where the lines got a little bit more blurry. When Harold Ickes, as the Deputy Chief of Staff, took on the political role, he was in the White House but was allowed to coordinate with the campaign on the political agenda. So much of that was dictated with the campaign but through Harold's office, and then coordinated through the scheduling office of either the campaign scheduling office or the White House scheduling office.

Before these trip meetings we would determine when we'd cover the political part, when we'd cover the official part, who would participate in that trip call from the official staff for the official part, and then we'd break and have the political team join from the campaign. So it was a balancing act. All that being said, it is still an enormous advantage being an incumbent President, having all the trappings of office and all the support, the built-in press coverage and the like, rather than being the insurgent outsider.

Dickinson: Do you remember when the emphasis began to shift from, this is just official, the President is doing trips for governing purposes, and now we'd really better look for campaign—

Friendly: We had the luxury of not having competition, the primaries. We did go to New Hampshire and we did political events there. We did a lot of political events, fund-raisers, DNC events, supporting other Members of Congress and campaigns. We tried to in '94, not terribly

successfully, but then in ’95, gearing up for the reelection in ’96. We did a bunch of these events. That was ad hoc, and mostly coordinated through the DNC.

It took a long time, if you remember, before the campaign officially got underway and before we got an official campaign budget and campaign manager, before we started to do full political campaign events. That was pretty late in—it must have been late spring of ’96. We did a handful of pure political events around the New Hampshire primary and a couple of others, but not that many. We let the Republicans fight it out among themselves. Then it really kicked off in the summer and the fall of ’96. We did the train trip to the convention in Chicago and then we started doing a bunch of pure campaign political trips in the fall of ’96. But we had the luxury of being an incumbent, having a strong economy, and frankly of having a weak opponent.

Dickinson: Was that the view inside the White House? Could there have been a stronger candidate that you were worried about, Colin Powell or somebody?

Friendly: Certainly everybody was worried about whether Colin Powell was going to jump in or not, because people were much more scared about him than Dole. It was very similar, in many ways, to the Obama-[John] McCain comparison. You have a young, vibrant politician in Obama and Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton had the advantages of being the incumbent President and riding pretty high in popularity because the economy was quite strong, we were at peace, etcetera. He had turned around the perceptions from the failed ’94 midterms by having these smaller successes. Running up against a person like Bob Dole, who rightfully was a war hero and a very accomplished statesman and successful politician, but he was really no match for Bill Clinton, generationally, energy-wise, ability to connect with people. Fairly or unfairly, he was seen as a much grumpier, not as warm, not as embracing, charismatic figure.

Dickinson: So there was a sense of confidence from the beginning?

Friendly: I think there was confidence. There was a sense of confidence, but there was always that thought of never take anything for granted, and we took nothing for granted. Look at how much money we raised. Look at how we were a well-organized machine. Bill Clinton, to his credit, is a brilliant campaigner. There’s no one as gifted.

Dickinson: That was my next question, and I don’t know how deeply we can go into it. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about him—again, you may have covered a lot of this in the previous—

Riley: Not in the context of the reelection, so let’s focus on that.

Dickinson: Did you see a different side of him when he was back on the campaign trail?

Friendly: He loved it. He fed off those crowds. He fed off the minutia of the politics. I talked briefly about this in the last interview. He is a political animal at heart and he knows every—I wouldn’t say he knows every single precinct, but he knows how he did in every congressional district in the ’92 campaign, and he had it well mapped out as to where they were going to target in ’96. He was a voracious reader of polls, the polls of politics. He lived that. He loved it.

Then when we would do these events, he fed off of that, the energy of the crowds. He loved that retail campaigning. He loved shaking hands, getting in front of people, getting a crowd excited. He would get exhausted but he fed off that energy at the same time.

Dickinson: Not even at the tactical level but thinking strategically, how involved was he in planning these trips, or did he allow—

Friendly: He was—again, not at the tactical level, but at the high level—very involved in planning the geographic focus, the areas of where we were going to fight. There was a great deal of coordination that he was intimately involved with on the campaign.

Riley: There was a series, I think there were Wednesday night political meetings. Were you ever privy to those?

Friendly: I did not attend those, no. I was the trip director at that time, but those were the ones held in the Yellow Room of the Residence.

Riley: Right.

Friendly: So they were not in the official working area of the White House, on purpose; they were held over in the Residence. That was a pretty broad group, including the Vice President's team and the DNC folks and the campaign team, with Harold leading those. I knew that they were going on, but I was not involved.

Riley: Would you see work product from those meetings?

Friendly: Certainly, yes, we saw the target, the themes, the messages, and the focus of where we would go, what we would do.

Riley: So it is safe to say that that was—

Friendly: Those were the sessions—again, not having been there, but knowing what came out of them—where the President was intimately involved, where we were going to go, what we were going to focus on, what the messages were going to be, how we were going to divide and conquer, with the Vice President and other surrogates.

Riley: Let me offer a piece of speculation and see whether you think it resonates or not. That is that there seem to me to be—

Friendly: Have you talked to Harold, by the way?

Riley: Yes, we did. He was a very good interviewee, as you might imagine. We got the real Harold based on what I heard from others.

This builds a little bit off your question about confidence going into the '96 election, because it was not confidence in late '94 and early '95.

Friendly: Oh, it was anything but. The Election Day—whenever it was in ’94, right around now, 15 years ago today—was humiliating. Again, the President was caustic and no one wanted to be seen with him. The impact of losing the House was shocking. He took it out on Stan Greenberg; he took it out on Rahm. He thought the whole DNC was a failure. Dave Wilhelm was a big—it certainly wasn’t clear, he wasn’t taking the blame himself or blaming the failed health care effort or all the other things that we had done incorrectly. He was looking for other people in field operations. We talked the last time about when he reached out, when Dick Morris was included. It was earlier than that; it was earlier in ’94.

Riley: You did check on that then?

Friendly: Yes, there was a clear impact on people being either demoted or punished for that failure and how were we going to rebuild after that.

Riley: The President’s own mood, just to—

Friendly: It was pretty gloomy. It was gloomy in the fall of ’94 when here is the political animal who lives for the campaign fight and not being allowed to be involved. I look back at the fall of 2000 similarly. I know a lot of people have written about how Gore did not use Clinton enough. Certainly, by Clinton’s view, he would have been much more effective and it would have been a much closer election. Or it couldn’t have been closer, it would have been that Gore would have had a much easier time had he used Clinton, and Clinton was itching to be used, as is well known. Again, I don’t know if there is anyone as politically astute as Bill Clinton, and being marginalized, put on the sidelines, killed him.

Riley: Sure. Let me continue with my questions. So in late ’94, early ’95, you’ve got a gloomy mood, but then by the early part of ’96 you’ve got a great sense of optimism.

Friendly: You do. I’ll have to go back through the record of what happened in ’95, but we started doing the small ball. The Welfare to Work was a big one, that’s not small ball. But then we started to do a number of smaller, more manageable, legislative battles.

Riley: Right. School uniforms, telecommunications—

Friendly: They’re not insignificant, but they’re not the grand sweeping visions that the President came into office with. To be fair, we were seeing quite a strong economy. The impacts of the rebuilding from the budget battle of ’93. You were starting to see the economy roaring in ’95, certainly ’96, and the mood changed. You could point to accomplishments.

Riley: The government shutdown.

Friendly: The government shutdown was a huge one. That was a big battle. The President, instead of being wishy-washy, he stood his ground, right? I don’t know whether it was a true conviction or it was enough of Dick Morris’s polling suggesting that this is a battle you can win. Having won over Newt Gingrich, as Gingrich talked about, saying he felt like Bill Clinton sweet-talked him and took advantage of him. He won him over. Whatever it was, it was clearly after that shutdown, there was a sense of victory.

Dickinson: Do you remember, in your role as trip director, the specifics of the budget battle, integrating trips to particular—

Friendly: Yes, I do. I don't remember specific trips but I absolutely do remember the budget battle, targeting specific congressional districts and members to push for their support. Very clearly in '93, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky in Pennsylvania, who moves the deciding vote and said to the President, "I will support this, but it will mean the loss of my seat. And in exchange for my support, I want you to come to Bryn Mawr, to my district, and do a town hall discussion as to why this is important." He did. She did lose. I think he gave her some ambassadorship or some appointment afterward. In this random small-worldness, I think her son [Marc Mezvinsky] is now Chelsea's boyfriend.

I remember vividly that specific battle and a number of others. I'm not a student of the economic history, but I think a number of people would point to her vote and the impact of that budget battle as a key catalyst to the economic growth that came afterward.

Riley: What about the business of fund-raising headed to '96?

Friendly: That was one of the things that disturbed me the most about Washington. I touched on this a little bit in the last discussion, but I believe the money has corrupted politics. So the need for money in order to pay for the advertisements, to pay for the consultants, to pay for the media, the polling, all of that stuff, is now so enormous that it dominates so many aspects of governing. A family friend, Tim Wirth, who was a former Senator from Colorado, Member of Congress, we were calculating how much money he needed to raise on a daily basis while in office in order to be competitive, to be reelected six years later. It was just a staggering amount. I can't remember; it was something like $25,000 or $50,000, whatever it was back in '94 or '92 in order to be able to compete. It is only exponential now, that amount.

But it clouded so much of what we did. We did so many fund-raisers. We spent so much time raising money for the DNC, for the DCCC [Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee], the DSCC [Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee], and then for the campaign for the reelection and money for the President's library. I wasn't involved as much in the library fund-raising, but there was always a fund-raiser event at some level for some component. The President, to his credit, was enormously successful. Terry McAuliffe at the DNC was enormously successful in helping to put the President in a position where money wasn't an issue. But it came at a very high price in the amount of time dedicated to it.

I don't believe that there is a quid pro quo specifically, that if you give a check for $25,000 you will get X, but there were plenty of examples of if you give $25,000 you get X access. That's what it's all about. It's the access to the President. It is an unfair advantage for campaign contributors to have access. It's not just access to the President but access to other leaders in the administration, and it continues to this day. You have an unfair voice just in having that access. You may well be able to find specific examples of a person giving X money and then seeing some type of legislation written for that. I'm sure there are plenty of examples of that. I didn't see that. Again, what I saw was these people who wrote the big checks, people who raised a lot of money, having an unfair access to the leaders of the government.

The amount of time it required to raise that money, not just the events, the big fund-raisers we'd do, the small dinners the President would do, the parties that we would hold at the White House, the teas, the coffees, the inviting over for movies, dinners, etcetera. The thing that's the most important for the President is his time. He never has enough of it. There are so many demands on his time. When you look at how much time was spent raising money, to me it's just sickening, the requirements of it. I don't know how you get away from it until you do caps and public-financed campaigns. It's a real blight on the system.

Dickinson: Did the President view it as an extension of campaigning, which you said he loved, or did he ever express—

Friendly: I think he was frustrated by the amount of time commitment requirements, but it gave us a huge advantage too, and he knew that. He knew that if we could raise X amount of money, (A) we could keep people on the sidelines, and (B) we could outspend—remember how we were so preemptive in running ads in '95 and '96 and setting the agenda? We did. We ran ads much earlier than other people because we had such a war chest that we could run those ads. That helped to set the agenda, it put the Republicans on the defensive, and so the President saw it as a necessary evil and as a component of a successful campaign.

Dickinson: That's actually an issue that I wanted to ask you about. I'm glad you raised it because it was done outside the major media. It was remarked upon in the major media markets that you were actually running these campaign ads on defining your opponent, and nobody really reported on it.

Friendly: Because it wasn't done in Washington, right? You look at the press—this is less true now with the blogosphere and democratization or the broadening of the media—and you can't get away with it for as long as we did, running in smaller media markets, running on cable channels outside Washington, where it took longer for the press to pick it up. Today you run ads and someone in the blogosphere or elsewhere picks it up pretty quickly. But you also have many more outlets to run ads today. It's much easier, as the Obama folks successfully pointed out, to build a grassroots organization. I'm not sure if it was Dick Morris or Harold or who it was who came up with that strategy, but it ended up being quite successful. It was all predicated on the ability to raise enormous amounts of money to be able to afford to do that, to set that debate ahead of time, to paint our opponents in a certain way, and also to marginalize any risk of—I don't think there ever was a risk of having opposition in the primaries. But there just wasn't even consideration.

The parody "come and see us" was well documented. It is remarkable. I mean, the platform that the President had, the ability to be on the news every single night, the ability to raise larger sums of money, to not have to compete in primaries, it is an incredible advantage. You teach this stuff all the time, I'm sure. It's not true just for the Presidency; it's true all down the line in politics.

Riley: Were you privy to the discussions about the overnights in the White House, or was that a—

Friendly: No. I knew that people were coming, because it was on schedules that So-and-So would be over for dinner and staying in some room. I guess it was part of the necessary evil that

we saw this was how you paid back people for their largess and for their efforts to raise money for the President. I never saw it as illegal, I just thought of it as a little unseemly that we were spending so much time raising money and thanking these people who had raised money for us. Now, again, it put us in a very strong position for reelection, but the amount of time required to raise that money just about dwarfed everything.

Riley: What about the Vice President's role in doing this too? He got in some considerable hot water in '96.

Friendly: I knew of his involvement. He was a very good soldier in the campaigning he did. I never saw him pushing back on the amount of time he dedicated to fund-raising, the amount of time he dedicated to campaigning. He's very much a political animal, like Bill Clinton. He was not nearly as gifted as the President, but very strong, very successful as well.

Riley: Was somebody from the Vice President's office usually involved in your meetings about scheduling and trips?

Friendly: Not unless it was something that we were doing as a joint meeting. The Vice President's office was always involved in the political affairs discussions, in the Wednesday evening meetings. The Vice President was usually there too, and oftentimes Tipper [Mary Elizabeth Gore]. So the higher level of the strategy of dividing and conquering, who's going where, the coordination of the message and the events, but if it was just a Presidential trip they wouldn't be attending.

Riley: You had indicated last time that you felt there were occasions when the President wasn't really happy to see that Thursday lunch come up. Could you say a little bit more about their relationship?

Friendly: I think there was enormous respect. I wasn't there toward the end when it soured, clearly, when the President felt like Gore wasn't using him enough. I wasn't there when the Monica [Lewinsky]—I wasn't his aide, I wasn't the trip director, when the Monica story broke, and when the Vice President clearly felt damaged and hurt by it, as we all did. But the times that I was there, there was a great deal of respect. There was camaraderie, a great deal of humor. They enjoyed each other's company. At the same level, there was this tension and a level of frustration. The Thursday lunches were an opportunity for the Vice President. Every week he came with a pad, a laundry list of items that he wanted to go through. It wasn't a casual, "Hey, Bill, let's catch up, chew the shit, talk sports." It was, "Okay, let me tell you about X, Y, Z that hasn't been done or I think you should push," and things like that.

The President would dawdle and push off and dread going into those lunches. I don't know if he was being beaten up, but it was always this laundry list that the Vice President had. I don't remember ever having seen the President having a list going into those lunches. It was always the Vice President who came in with a list of things that he wanted. But the Vice President used to live for those lunches. Those were very important ones on his schedule and things would be juggled around to make sure that they happened.

Riley: You continue in the trip role for a bit into the second term, is that correct?

Friendly: Yes, again similar to the role as the President's aide, I got burned out after the campaign. It's also true that once you've done it for a while there are not too many places to advance. It's fun, it's interesting, but after you've done it for a while it gets a little repetitive. You get to go to some interesting places, obviously, but you don't learn a whole lot more.

I actually applied to business school in the winter-spring of '97, so at Christmas and right during the second inauguration of '97. I ended up getting into Kellogg [Graduate School of Management] that April or May of '97 and intended to go, but just before then—actually not just before then, in February of '97, Mack had been playing this role that he started. I'm trying to remember when we hosted the Summit of the Americas. I think it was in '96 in Miami. That was President Clinton's attempt to pull together all the leaders of Latin America in Miami.

Mack had stuck around in the White House but didn't have a strong portfolio. By giving Mack this job of pulling together the Summit of the Americas, making it a success, it made Mack a super-Ambassador to the region.

Riley: Right.

Friendly: In planning that event, he did a lot of meetings in advance to make sure that the agendas, the deliverables, were lined up, and he did a lot of work with the State Department. It was in many ways a perfect role for Mack, the super-Ambassador role. So the President formalized it in the end of January or beginning of February of '97, and made him the Special Envoy to Latin America. It was a new job, new role, that pissed off people in the State Department and the NSC, except they knew that here's a man, Mack, who had the ear of the President, any time he wanted, on an issue that had so far been ignored largely by the administration, i.e., Latin America.

So there was a grudging acceptance of having Mack in that role to raise the profile. There was the Summit of the Americas, then there were three visits to Latin America scheduled for that year of '97, a trip to Mexico—my timing may be all off here.

Riley: That's checkable.

Friendly: Then the follow-up to the Summit of the Americas in the spring of '98, to Chile for the second Summit of the Americas. Then a Latin American swing to Costa Rica, Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela. So in one year it was going to be a pretty high importance, and there was this continuing discussion of expanding NAFTA to the free trade area of the Americas to counter the Mercosur Pact, which was the Brazilian-led effort to create a counterweight to NAFTA without the U.S. I had written my thesis on Mexican politics, had always had an interest in Latin America, and wrote to Mack and said, "Listen, with this new role, if you're looking to staff out your office, I'd be very interested in talking to you about it."

So we talked. He offered me a job with him as his assistant and then he—I had left, or I had told, I guess it was Erskine, he was the Deputy Chief of Staff then, had just been appointed the Chief of Staff, that I wanted to step down as trip director and take this role with Mack in this yet-to-be-defined post. Podesta was the Deputy Chief of Staff at the time. I remember trying to deal with John. There were a great number of challenges between the political staff, Erskine and Podesta

and others, about what is this role that Mack has created? Did he cut this deal independently of anybody else with the President? Kind of giving him a little bit of arm's length saying you can't mess with him because he's the President's very close friend, so we're going to do what the President wants, but why should Mack keep his office in the basement of the West Wing? Why should he have his whole staff? Shouldn't this be in the State Department? Shouldn't this be under the NSC? So there was definitely that tension. But at the same time, Mack was very close to the President, had this direct line to him. So begrudgingly they found ways to accommodate Mack, keep him in the office in the West Wing, give him a small staff, and make room for him.

Riley: Where was your office?

Friendly: I had a small office right across, in the Old Executive Office Building, so there were me and two others. Nelson Cunningham, who still works with Mack in the consulting business, and a guy from Arkansas who had been with Mack for years, plus a detail guy, Eric Farnsworth, from the State Department, who had been Mack's one person there, helping on the Summit of the Americas as a detailee.

So I told Erskine and John that I wanted to leave the job as trip director and to help them try to find a new one. We settled on Kirk Hanlin and did this training piece while I went off to work with Mack as well. The idea was to push the free trade area of the Americas on Capitol Hill as well as throughout Latin America, and to push the President's agenda on these trips and make sure that the coordinating of these stops, these trips with Mack's agenda, that the free trade area was coordinated.

It was pretty clear by halfway through '97 that we weren't getting anywhere with the free trade area. [Richard] Gephardt and the unions were not going to go for it. We still did the trip to Mexico. We did a very successful trip to Latin America, to Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and Costa Rica as well. But it was also clear to me that my role, the free trade area, the policy role, wasn't going to go anywhere. I had deferred for a year from Kellogg, but I decided to leave the White House altogether in January of '98. I actually told the President and Nancy and Bruce and a bunch of others that I was going to leave in '98. I'd planned to take from February of '98 through until September to goof off, to play, to rest, to travel, have fun, and to take some accounting and other classes in advance of going off to business school.

I told them this, and the President, in a note to him in January, right before the Monica story broke. I said I'd be leaving in a couple of weeks and my intention was to continue to do some advance trips, to go to Africa, to go to China, to do some other trips for the President, but actually to have some time to see the places, to do the advance part of it as opposed to just showing up with the President. Then the Monica story hit. In many ways my timing was impeccable in that I didn't have to stick around the White House, the West Wing, or the OEOB [Old Executive Office Building] during those very dark days.

Riley: Yes.

Friendly: I remember when that story hit—I talked a little about this last time—I couldn't believe it. There was a part of me, in the back of my mind, that said, *My God, this probably is true*. At the same time I couldn't believe that this could have happened, that physically it could

have happened. I couldn't imagine that the President could have carried on a relationship with an intern physically, or that he'd be stupid enough to do that. So I didn't want to believe it. But then again, in the back of my mind, when I saw his denials, I knew that his denials were not denials, that there was this slipperiness about something or other that didn't sit right. So it actually made leaving a whole lot easier.

Riley: Because you had already told people—

Friendly: I'd told people I was leaving.

Riley: So it wasn't as though you were abandoning his sinking ship.

Friendly: That's right, let's get out of there. George had already left. He made that comment on ABC [American Broadcasting Company] soon thereafter, saying this could lead to impeachment. There was this dark cloud hanging over us that Jesus, this is incredibly serious. It was all about the lead to impeachment because of the lying in the Paula Jones testimony. So I did leave. I ended up doing some advance trips for the Vice President to South Africa, for the President to Senegal, to China, when he did the state visit to Beijing, and a couple of other foreign trips. Oh, and the President's trip to Chile when he went to do the Summit of the Americas that spring. I got to have some fun on all of those trips. I went for a couple of weeks ahead of time for each of those trips and then stayed and did some traveling as well.

Also that spring I got subpoenaed by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], not because of Monica, because I never knew her, thankfully, but who was it? The woman who accused—

Riley: Kathy Willey.

Friendly: Yes, thank you, Kathleen Willey, who claimed in some article that I had walked in on them, on the President making moves on her, and because of that I was subpoenaed by the FBI. My wife Kelly had to testify; she was subpoenaed as well. Thankfully, we got a lawyer who did it pro bono for us, or actually did it just for whatever the reimbursement rate was from the Department of Justice, so we had no legal expenses. I only testified once to the FBI. For me, it was nothing other than embarrassing. For many of my friends, Stephen Goodin, Nancy, a number of others, and then obviously Betty too, it was much worse, just in terms of the time commitment, having to testify to the grand jury, and the embarrassments. My timing was very good in that sense.

Kelly and I went off to Chicago that fall. We left midsummer and traveled around the country. We did a rafting trip down the Grand Canyon, and Colorado, then to business school in the fall of '98. I remember sitting in Evanston, Illinois, at Kellogg, watching surreally the impeachment votes and the release of the Starr Report and all that.

Riley: Did you read the Starr Report?

Friendly: No, I did not. I didn't read that and I haven't—

Riley: It's not meant to be a leading question because one might—I don't think I've read it in its entirety.

Friendly: Obviously, I saw the highlights of it. I was thrown into the midst of first-year business school in accounting and finance and stuff that I had not a clue as to what I was doing.

Riley: Let me go back because we did talk a fair amount about the Lewinsky stuff, but I'm wondering— We talked a fair amount about it last time, with both you and Kelly, but I want to make sure. Was there any piece of the Latin America portfolio or Mack's work down there that we're missing, that has a kind of historical importance or resonance in the grand scheme of things?

Friendly: It wasn't so much that there was anything tangible, frankly, that came out of those relationships other than the President reaffirmed through having Mack—again, Mack had this super-Ambassador role where not only did the people in the White House appreciate his close ties to the President but, more importantly, that went an enormously long way in Latin America, where his best friend was being sent to represent the United States in Latin America. He met with every leader there and they felt they had a direct voice to the President. And here's a President who had very little interest in Latin America. He talked a big game but we didn't really do much, other than pushing NAFTA with Mexico.

Then he sent his best friend to be the super-Ambassador and that went a long way to improving relations, at least that's from my perspective. They now had, all of a sudden, a direct conduit. Instead of going through the Ambassador, through a junior person in the State Department or a junior person at the NSC, they had somebody with a direct line to the President that they could talk to.

Riley: Why did Mack stay in Washington?

Friendly: Washington has an addictive quality. Look at how many other government officials come to Washington and they stay on after the administration.

Riley: I saw Webster Hubbell in the street in D.C. about three weeks ago.

Friendly: Did you? So Washington is a very easy place to live, but once you've had the taste of that power and you've been at the highest ranks—Mack was a successful businessman in Little Rock, but that's not the same thing as being the Chief of Staff in the White House or being super-Ambassador. You become wined and dined in Washington, you live a comfortable life, you go to the fancy parties in Georgetown. You set up a consulting firm where you trade on your relationships and your entrees, and it becomes part of the culture of that revolving door. Not that Mack or other people are going to go back into government, but you can play on the periphery.

Riley: Sure.

Friendly: Once you're there you can make a good living and you have a very comfortable network of people to live in. Little Rock is a very fine, comfortable city, but it's very sleepy compared to running in circles with foreign leaders.

Dickinson: But the flip side of that, which you've expressed twice now in a particular position, is that you felt a combination of burnout and no place directly above that to go to so you moved

sideways. Talk to us about what that means psychologically, when you do reach that breaking point. You actually stay in the White House—I've done studies of this—relatively long.

Friendly: I did. Five years in the White House is very long. But it's because I did get advancing responsibility. From personal aide to trip director was certainly a big step in responsibility. Then my move over to work with Mack was more for diversity, actually having an experience with policy as opposed to just being an executioner, logistics mechanic. I got a taste of this policy role. And frankly I got to travel with Mack all over Latin America, sitting in on meetings with these Presidents and these heads of state. Instead of being the guy trying to pull the President out of it and being the logistics guy, I got to sit in and listen to these discussions.

So it was a great opportunity for me and I admire Mack enormously for his diplomatic skills and for giving me this exposure. But the White House is a place where very few people move up. Maybe you go from Deputy Chief of Staff to Chief of Staff, or maybe you can go from a deputy to running a department, however it is defined, Council of Economic Advisors or what have you. But it's unusual to do that. Usually people come and do a year or two-year stint and then move back to the private sector or back to academia or what have you.

Dickinson: So in the context of you, if you have advice to give an incoming President about staffing your White House, one of the subtexts of the Clinton White House was how young the junior-level staffers were, and you were among them, you were in there. How do you get that blend of what must be an exhausting job, so you need this—

Friendly: After Obama was elected, people asked, "Would you consider going back?" and I said no. It's hard to compare. First of all, after being trip director I could have gone and found a job in some agency being a deputy chief of staff or being something, I'm sure, in one of the agencies. But after having had the two jobs I had as his personal aide and trip director, it would have been tough to take being so far on the outside but still working in the government, but being so far removed from the West Wing. Plus the hours that you spend.

So going back now, with young children, I can't imagine how people did it. Now the rap that we had so many young people, yes, there were a lot of us young people. Dee Dee and George both were very young in comparison, and then there was a whole slew of us very young, 22-, 23-year-olds, junior staffers. To be clear, we were the mechanics, we were the junior staffers; we weren't the policy makers. We were the people answering the phones and making things run on time, in theory, not that they ever ran on time. But we weren't paid very much, we didn't have families; we dated each other and we were all friends from the campaign and the like. You need that in any White House. You need to have those young people full of energy who are willing to pull seven days a week and 12 hours a day or more.

I don't know. The balance that you're pointing to, though, is that you need to have that experience as well. You need to have the people like a Rahm, like a Larry Summers, the people who have been there before, like somebody who I can't stand, but Dick Cheney or a Don Regan or a John Sununu, people who know the mechanics. The mechanics of how the bureaucracy works and how the executive works with the legislative branch, because without that kind of know-how, that Washington expertise, you stumble like we did.

Dickinson: How much institutional memory existed there in your particular job? And did you see other people in the White House learning the ropes about their jobs? Was there anything?

Friendly: There was almost none for our job. The institutional knowledge—we were lucky in that Patty Presock, who ran Bush's Oval Office, Bush One, stayed over for four or five months to help us understand how to set everything up, and was very helpful in that. The National Security Council is different, and the permanent staff and the staff that held over made that place run much better. There was wholesale swapping out of everybody else in the West Wing. There are a handful of professional secretaries who stayed, Linda Tripp being one, and there were a couple of others, but otherwise it is a whole new crop of people with no experience coming in, learning how—just the mechanics of the place work, plus trying to staff up and push through policy agendas starting on Day One.

We talked about this before, we hit the ground January 21 without a staff; almost no junior staff had been appointed. Thankfully, current administrations since then have learned from those mistakes. The current administration, the Obama administration, was much more disciplined about staffing up. Before I took the job as President's aide, I did talk with Bush former aides. Then I reached out to Reggie Love, who is doing that job now for Obama, to give some insight. But it's the good and the bad. You need the young and inexperienced people to do it, but you also want to have those experienced people to run that place.

Riley: Anything more?

Friendly: You want to take a break quickly and think about things?

[BREAK]

Riley: I'm happy to pursue whatever lines of inquiry, even if they are duplicative of some of what we've covered before.

Dickinson: They probably are, but I wondered if you could step back, because we've spent so much time with this, and very fruitfully, talking about the nuts and bolts of your job and how they integrated into the White House. But if you could step back and paint a broader picture about your time in the White House. What sticks with you as particularly compelling, or if there are lessons you could derive that we could pass on about your experience? Have you thought about—is it enough time, enough distance to put it in perspective?

Friendly: Yes. The first thing is an appreciation for how incredibly fortunate I was to have these jobs as the first jobs out of college. When you look back on how young I was, how naïve in many ways, and yet I was getting to travel the world with the President of the United States and exposed to incredible world leaders. There was also an energy and enthusiasm in being surrounded by so many really bright, competent people and dealing with so many interesting topics. And there is an intensity, an adrenaline rush, that comes from having so many fast-paced events. There is very rarely a dull moment around the White House.

Riley: Did you have time to reflect during the process?

Friendly: Not enough. As I look back on it, when I think about going back and doing it now, there would be the benefits of having done it before, knowing what I know now as opposed to what I didn't know then. The learning curve would obviously be a lot less steep and I'd appreciate what I was doing a whole lot more. The flip side is the time commitment and the wear and tear it takes on you and your family of doing that. It's usually done for a very narrow period of time, a short period of time, a year, a couple of years at most. Then you start the trade-off.

I remember when I got to Kellogg, the first week at business school, the dean said, "Everyone look around. You'll probably not be surrounded by as bright a group of people in your career." I kept thinking to myself, *I just came from the White House where I worked with incredibly successful and bright people and was incredibly fortunate.* There were always some people who made you wonder how they got there and didn't fit, but you look back at the President and Gore and Bob Rubin, Larry Summers, Bob Reich. The caliber of the people, plus George and Dee Dee and Mike McCurry and so many others, it's countless. These are people at the top of their game that you're working with. You have these shared experiences. We're all still very close. I see a lot of these people. I see Stephen Goodin and his family; we're very close with them. I see Dee Dee and family whenever we go back to Washington. We spent so much time together, such formative years together, that we've created very strong friendships as well.

Dickinson: When you think of the hours, and obviously it's a very rewarding experience, but was it a fun experience? I was talking to my dissertation advisor, a guy named Richard Neustadt, who worked years ago in the [Harry] Truman White House. He remarked it was the most fun he ever had in his life. I don't always hear that. It may be because the stress of the job is just—the Truman staff was what—

Friendly: Twenty people?

Dickinson: Yes, maybe a dozen senior people, less than that, maybe six. It just seems with the media cycle everything has become so much more intense.

Riley: They would go on their vacations, right? They'd go on a boat.

Dickinson: They'd play volleyball down at Key West or something like that.

Riley: You could be offline. You weren't out of communications, but you were basically offline.

Dickinson: He'd talk about going down with Truman. He was not invited to the poker games, but that's a big part of what they did. They played poker every night. My sense is that this has changed. Maybe it's not fun, or as much fun. But was it fun for you?

Friendly: There were parts of it that were very fun. There are times—flying on Air Force One, flying on the helicopter, the pomp and circumstance, going to aircraft carriers and watching flight operations, going on tours of the space shuttle, tours of factories, going to see how cars are made, going to the Kremlin and Buckingham Palace and meeting Nelson Mandela. There were definitely things that are not just fun, but once-in-a-lifetime experiences. But then there are plenty of times when you are going to yet another hotel ballroom fund-raiser where my job more

often than not was to push people through the receiving lines, push and pull and keep things moving, and getting photos taken and trying to keep on schedule. The stress of being late all the time and of juggling events and dealing with people's personalities, and people being exhausted. Many of those things were not fun.

Getting back to Andrews Air Force Base at 1 o'clock in the morning after a long trip and then getting home and being back in the office at 8 o'clock, 7:30 the next morning. It takes a toll on you and it's not always fun, but the other times make up for it. My appreciation of walking through the gates or walking through the Rose Garden, being on the South Lawn, seeing history being made, and frankly the friendships you have and working with so many of your friends. Working with people with whom you've had these shared experiences on the campaign, and you can laugh and you can have fun. There are plenty of times when we were on the airplane that we could let our hair down and we could joke and we'd watch stupid movies and we'd play cards.

But then there are so many of the very serious times too. We were very fortunate that we didn't have 9/11 or the Iraqi war. We had other very down moments and a great deal of trauma as well, but there was nothing like they're going through today.

Dickinson: It has always been the case that the nucleus of the White House staff comes from the President's campaign organization. In some ways, many of the techniques that have been perfected on the campaign are now used in the White House. But in other ways I find again and again people say governing is different than campaigning in the sense that the campaigning was all about defining your opponent, winning the news cycle. You're engaged in rhetorical symbols.

Friendly: They're battles versus a war.

Dickinson: Whereas with governing, you have to work with your enemies, you can't just paint them as—

Friendly: And it's much longer term.

Dickinson: Yes.

Friendly: As I alluded to earlier, Rahm was put in charge of some of these war rooms, which were shorter-term battles, shorter-term campaigns where you had a defined policy objective, NAFTA, assault weapon ban, Welfare to Work reform, health care, etcetera. You had a pretty well-defined legislative cycle that you were going to hit—six, nine, twelve months. You had a clear opposition defined, but you also had a lot more give-and-take and you could think of it much more as a political campaign, whereas the need to compromise, the sausage-making of legislation and working across the aisle, is much longer. You do learn the challenges of the campaign.

Now, at the same time, the Republicans also learned some of the lessons from the campaign, the opposition did in '92, so that when we hit the ground running in '93 they helped to define those first hundred days. They set that agenda, gays in the military. We did a bunch of self-inflicted things with Lani Guinier and the Attorney General selection fiascos. So there were a handful of things that were self-inflicted but there was also a lot of work that the opposition did to define

the agenda in terms that we did not want. The gays in the military is the best example of them setting the agenda.

But you do have to take a much longer view, and your enemies today may be your colleagues tomorrow on a different battle.

Dickinson: Did it take a while for that adjustment to be made at the senior level? I know you were not involved in the policy battle so much, but you were—

Friendly: Yes, we definitely saw the reaching across the aisle and trying to find some bipartisan support for different policy agendas. Especially after '94 you couldn't rely on the Democrats because we didn't have the House and Senate any more, but at the same time it was easier to run against them. In many ways, Newt Gingrich was our best friend because we could run against him. We could run against Bob Dole in the Senate.

Dickinson: Thinking of the initial policy battles, though, the initial budget battle, which you eventually—you get no Republican support at all. In retrospect I'm wondering—I guess I'm trying to lead you here—is there a sense that, boy, we underappreciated the need to govern with the opposition party? We thought we could replicate campaign techniques—

Friendly: I think there are plenty of people who could talk much better about it than I. I know there were concerted efforts to reach out to find moderates on the other side of the aisle to come across. Whether it is that they have stronger party discipline than the Democrats or what, I don't remember enough of the history of why we were unsuccessful in getting bipartisan support for that. But that was certainly troubling, the fact that the Vice President had to go and get the tie-breaking vote. You don't ever want to win a legislative battle that way, or have Congresswoman Margolies-Mezvinsky be the one deciding vote in the House. It is certainly not a resounding endorsement for your success. But then you also remember that Bill Clinton was elected without a huge majority. If it hadn't been for Ross Perot, it's not clear that he would have been elected in the first place.

Dickinson: I have a few broad questions here. The media. You mentioned earlier that the nature of the media business was just beginning to change. Cable was coming into its strength. I'm guessing the media didn't seek you out necessarily, or did they?

Friendly: No. I think there is kind of an unwritten assumption that I was never going to say anything.

Dickinson: Were there any written rules passed out within the White House on media communication, who could talk, who could not?

Friendly: There may well have been written rules but it was more of an understanding that we were not in a position to talk to the press, and if we were approached by the press, we would call the press office and make sure they knew. My uncle was a reporter for the *New York Times*, Johnny Apple, R. W. Apple. My family comes from journalism as well. So I knew a number of the journalists and I got to be friendly with some of them that traveled with us all the time, but there was very rarely a probing of what was going on. They also knew that I wasn't in a position

to leak. It's much easier to go after George or others who are going to leak selectively or give more information.

We had a lot of interaction with the press just by the nature, the proximity, on the trips. We were with them a lot. But they pretty well knew bounds, and I didn't do interviews.

Dickinson: Did the President—I'm sure he did—but do you remember specific instances in which he expressed displeasure?

Friendly: On a daily basis. Sometimes on an hourly basis. It was a constant battle with the press. I think that's true with every administration. Look at the current fight with the Fox News. It was an enormous frustration that our message was getting lost, that we would say things and that someone would leak something and undercut our story, or that the editorial board at the *New York Times* would harp on one certain area. We talked briefly about the relationship between Howell Raines and Bill Clinton. Whatever it was, it was not a healthy one because Bill Clinton assumed the *New York Times* editorial board was out to get him. Instead of being the biggest proponent of his agenda, they were merciless. It wasn't just them; look at all the other press reports. It was a very difficult time.

The job that George and Dee Dee and McCurry and then [Joseph] Lockhart had in managing that relationship between the President and the press is incredibly difficult. You're serving two masters. No President will ever be pleased with the media coverage; you can't be pleased. There will always be people willing to talk out of school and to criticize anonymously. What was remarkable, almost for the full eight years, was the incredible discipline that the Bush Two administration had in dealing with the press. I'm not sure if that came from Card or from Bush himself, but by and large the discipline in that White House was remarkable.

Dickinson: That actually was my next question. I wasn't going to compare it to Bush, but whether it started at the top, the failure to get that message across was largely a product of the changing news environment—

Friendly: I think it was a function of discipline, and that discipline started at the top. The President was not disciplined, not with the press but in broader terms. We did not have an enforcer in the West Wing for a while. There wasn't a sense of—it wasn't seen that there were punishments for people who talked out of school. Eventually some people were moved around, shuffled around, demoted, what have you, if it was determined, or people thought they were leaking. But we also did proactive leaking, quite a bit. Every administration does that. You feed stories to people. You pick certain reporters you think will treat you favorably that you leak a story to.

Riley: This is the hardest thing—one of the most difficult things for me to communicate to my students when we talk about this, is that leaks are seen as an evil, even among a group of otherwise not terribly astute undergraduates. But they don't understand that there is the upside, that there is a lot of sanctioned leaking that goes on.

Friendly: You do trial balloons all the time to see how something is going to fly. You leak a story that you know is going to be unfavorable to somebody, to put them in their place or to

admonish them or to do something. There are countless times that every administration will do that, sometimes very effectively. Other times it gets a mixed message when you undermine someone else's effort. What frustrated President Clinton so much was the undisciplined leaking. People doing it for whatever, for their own—and he would voice this countless times. "Who is it who thinks that their agenda is more important than the administration's agenda? Who is saying these things out of school that by and large are untrue? What is it that they're getting out of this?" He would constantly say, "Find out who this is. Find out who is saying this stuff, because that person should be gone."

Riley: So it's not the case that you usually have a pretty good idea who the source is.

Friendly: No, you don't. There are a fair bit of assumptions of who these people were, but it was not always clear who it was who was doing the leaking. I touched on this a little bit last time: every morning the President—you could judge, starting from the beginning—he would come down from the Residence to the Oval Office holding some newspaper or holding a copy of a newspaper clipping and fuming. More likely than not it was Mrs. Clinton who had shown it to him and gotten him riled up and saying, "Your staff is not serving you well." He would understandably explode when he walked in to George and then to Dee Dee about how our agenda could get so sidetracked by leaks or by misinterpretations by the press. He saw it as a failure of communications.

Dickinson: Particularly coming from an administration that was noted in the campaign for staying on message and—

Friendly: Incredible discipline

Dickinson: Being very disciplined.

Friendly: And for rapid response and proactive response. For being so proactive about guiding that message and catching the Bush White House off guard, and the Bush campaign off guard, so often. We were extremely disciplined, and then to— But then we found successful ways to go around the White House press corps. If you remember, we spent a lot of time going directly to local press. My God, they were—some local anchor in Topeka or Des Moines or where have you would be absolutely ecstatic to come and have an interview with the President, and by and large they'd be softball questions. The exclusive interview with the President would dominate that news cycle. They would do radio. We did satellite tours where the President would sit in the taping room in the OEOB, the satellite room, and he would do ten satellite interviews remotely. It's incredibly powerful. It's much easier to go around and do these radio tours and the local TV and oftentimes local newspapers.

You don't go through that filter, the jaded—he always called it the jaded—White House Washington press corps who played the "gotcha" politics instead of going to put out a message that people really cared about. Those were his well-worn lines.

Riley: Did that aggravate the problem?

Friendly: In many ways it did, because the Washington press corps said, "Why are you cutting us out? We're not the problem; we're reporting on the dissent within the administration," or

"We're reporting on the challenges that you were having with the legislative branch. You can try to ignore us but we're not going away."

The constant battle that the press office had to fight was appreciating that. These guys aren't going away. They can make your life much more miserable. The old adage is that you never pick a fight with somebody who buys newsprint by the ton or news ink by the ton, because they will outlast you. That's why it's a little peculiar, the current administration's fight with Fox News channels, because it's hardly a battle that you can win. I do understand the rationale of why they did it, but it's a tough battle to win. Similarly, you have to find middle ground with the White House press corps.

So slowly but surely Dee Dee and McCurry would both do exclusive interviews, a bunch of off-the-record things, with reporters. When we were on trips, he'd invite them up to the conference room off the record, play hearts, watch movies, shoot the shit, go have dinner. Sometimes when we were traveling, he'd have the reporters come for dinner, to get to know them, so it's not so adversarial, to understand what they're running, and to humanize as well.

Riley: Did that pay dividends?

Friendly: I don't know. It probably helped appease the President a little bit more, showing that we were—I think probably in the long term it did help appease the reporters too that we were trying to be more open. It was a very much concerted effort with McCurry. McCurry came in, as you remember, because the view from the President and Hillary and Panetta was that we were failing at the game of managing the press well, that Dee Dee and George were in over their heads. [David] Gergen saw that. That was probably why Gergen was brought in.

Then the bigger picture was, there was constantly Whitewater in the background, and then we had Ken Starr. There was always some scandal that the press would harp on and would latch their teeth onto that would overshadow everything else. The Clintons both couldn't understand the fascination with this failed land deal that made us lose whatever, thousands of dollars of money.

Dickinson: They didn't make any money on it. I just have one of the last broader questions. The number of live press conferences has declined. No President, after a while, sees any virtue in them, but it wasn't always like this. Back in the pretelevision days, and that may be part of the explanation, [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt met regularly under certain ground rules with the press, which is, "You can't quote me directly unless I give you authorization." But in return the press got news, they got substantive news, directly from the source. They developed a rapport, an intimacy that served Roosevelt well, but also served reporters well.

Friendly: But look at the number of reporters there were.

Dickinson: There were actually quite a few. They were still in the Oval Office at the time, but they jammed in close to a hundred people.

Friendly: Oh, really.

Dickinson: Eventually, when Truman came in, they had to move it to the old treaty room. But my question is, can you see, in the context of the current electronic Internet blogosphere, a way to re-create that relationship, if not in its specifics, in the general tenor of—

Friendly: I just don't know how the President would have the time to create a relationship with the press corps. First of all, there are not that many of them. The job of being a White House press correspondent is just miserable. The work space has improved since we were there but it is still cruddy. You're cramped on top of each other. There's almost no news that comes out of the White House that isn't spoon-fed to you.

Even when there is news, if you're a TV reporter you're lucky to get 30 seconds on the nightly news that no one watches any more. So your importance has diminished enormously. The newspaper's importance has diminished enormously because there are very few people who read the paper. The difference is that the newspaper and the AP [Associated Press] set the tone for so much other coverage. So that's the benefit. Even if very few people read it, the echo effect of the *New York Times* or the *Post* or the *Journal* and the AP is substantial throughout the rest of the country because, frankly, journalists are lazy, and because their resources are cut so much that they reproduce what they read elsewhere.

So yes, you can target probably a couple of handfuls of reporters, but it's a long-term effort and you have to be committed to that effort. And the President has to have set aside on what is always a packed schedule, a substantial amount of time to nurture that relationship. But there will always be people who feel that they're being left out and will make an issue of it.

Dickinson: So you don't see the payoff versus the time commitment?

Friendly: The problem is that the press always wins. You can never beat the press. They will always have a louder megaphone and they will always be there. Part of the press's job, and this is what the Clintons talk about, the "gotcha" politics, is they report on controversy. The more the controversy, the more the conflict, then the more interesting the texture of the story. Every one of them is competing for a Pulitzer Prize at some level, or to break that scandal. So you can spoon-feed them, you can give them all kinds of access and relationships, but they're going to be looking for that one nugget that's a conflict that they can push.

Riley: I know I should allow that to be the last word, but it brings to mind one other topic in this relation, and that is Bob Woodward.

Friendly: I don't know how the hell he gets his access.

Riley: This was going to be my question, because there was cooperation—

Friendly: Was there?

Riley: With Woodward on the agenda. I'm raising the question only—

Friendly: I don't remember seeing him—well, that's not true. I think maybe once he came in to talk to the President. Clearly, people gave him access. With Hillary, it was all about the health care.

Dickinson: Wasn't it the budget as well, or was that [Elizabeth] Drew's part?

Riley: Elizabeth Drew?

Friendly: Elizabeth Drew is a family friend, a friend of my parents. She was a pain in the ass, but she was a friend of my parents. She would come in and she would harass me sometimes to ask if she could get back on the President's schedule. We did give her access. We had her come in. I guess we must have given Woodward access too, I don't know why.

Riley: That was the question. Did the resulting books, did they set Clinton off? Was he—

Friendly: All the time. Again, you're not going to report on the good things. If you've got something juicy that's negative, that's going to be more interesting. So I don't know why Presidents continue to cooperate with Woodward or with anyone else in that same vein. The only thing is that very few people read the books. It's good for history but very few people read them; though in the grand scheme of things the only things the people will hear when the books are finally published on the broader universe are the things that are negative.

Riley: What the *Washington Post* elects to—

Friendly: What the *Washington Post* elects to excerpt or other groups pick up saying Woodward's new book reveals that Bush and Cheney knew all about the rendition program or whatever it was. It is always going to be one nugget that is going to be negative.

Riley: But I've actually had people challenge the point that you make about the veracity of his assertions, because I've had people—I don't remember whether in the context of an interview or outside, say, "I was supposed to be in a meeting he reported on and those events just didn't happen."

Friendly: How do you contradict that, why contradict that? So what's the purpose of giving him that access? I don't know.

Riley: Mostly, from a President's perspective, the answer is, I don't know. It does make sense if he's snooping around for you to cooperate because there are only two categories of people, you're either a collaborator or a victim, and you don't want to be the victim.

Friendly: That's what I think is the rationale for doing it, but there's no good that will come from it. You can try to set the agenda, you can try to set the focus so that it is favorable, but you're always going to be screwed.

Riley: But I think if you're at the top you just say, "This is not an authorized—I view this as a hostile intrusion and wouldn't give him any more access than—"

Friendly: That's right.

Riley: Bob Woodward will probably read this interview at some point, and he's been on the Miller Center's governing council. I'm not recommending to people that they not cooperate because I agree with you. I think as a first draft of history—

Friendly: It's incredibly valuable.

Riley: It's incredibly valuable work, but—

Friendly: From the political—if you could wait, embargo it until after you leave office, fine. But that's not going to sell books.

Riley: He's also intensely curious about what we're finding because the question is whether it confirms or denies what he has come up with.

In any event, we have outlasted our allotted time. I have to tell you that you have done us an enormous favor by giving us so much time.

Friendly: My pleasure. It's fascinating and I think what you're doing is incredibly exciting. It's worthwhile. I wish I had taken more notes and had a diary to actually refer to, but at the same time I am very grateful I did not.

Riley: I can understand that. I think the important thing is it's not just Matt and I who will benefit from this, but you have provided a wealth of personal recollections as well as an awful lot of reflections on your time there that will be invaluable to people once this comes out. As I often tell my colleagues who write their books and think that writing books is more important than doing oral history interviews, these materials are probably going to be in circulation long after your recent book is collecting dust on the library shelf. So thanks a lot, and give our best to your wife and family.

Friendly: Thank you.

[END INTERVIEW]