GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICK MCCLURE

September 20, 2001
Charlottesville, Virginia

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INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICK MCCLURE

September 20, 2001

Young: This is an interview with Fred McClure for the Bush Oral History Project. I want to thank you very much, Fred, for taking time to do this work. And I'm not going to spend much time talking here because we've got a day and we'd like to use it as efficiently as possible. Fred and I have talked about the nature of the interview. He's asked me some questions, which allowed me to say that the context, the topics that he considers important and the way he wants to address them is what we'd like to hear. We don't have sets of questions we check off and answer, we have a discussion. He's the teacher, we're the students. But we're not dumb—

McClure: As most students aren't.

Young: —except on occasion. We're not dumb, but we may be ignorant. And so, we're here to learn and through us, to have those who come after us learn from your testimony.

The ground rules, as we all understand, are designed to protect and ensure the confidentiality of the remarks that are made in this room. The only time at which these remarks become available for others outside the Oral History Program itself—and we use them only for preparing for our interviews, to educate ourselves—will be those that have been approved and cleared by Fred. The procedure is: we make a transcript, we do a light copy-editing of the transcript, we then send it to you for your editing for any corrections, for any concerns you may have about public disclosure of your remarks. And we can produce language, if you wish, that satisfies your concerns. But we all know that the ultimate purpose here is to make this material available to educate those who come after us and to give a truer picture of the Bush presidency than might otherwise be obtained by people who look just at documents and certainly those who look just at news reports and news pictures of the time.

There's one little thing we go through and that is to identify our voices so that the transcriber will have less difficulty in associating a voice with the names since we don't proceed formally. I'm of course Jim Young and your voice, Fred, is. . . .

McClure: Fred McClure.

Knott: I'm Stephen Knott, an Assistant Professor and Research Fellow at the Miller Center.

Dickinson: Matt Dickinson, Middlebury College.

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McCall: James McCall, Bush Foundation.

Riley: And I'm Russell Riley with the Miller Center also.

Young: Okay. Do you want to start, Fred? We're interested in [Ronald] Reagan as well as [George H. W.] Bush. And since you served in both, though much longer and in a senior staff capacity with Bush, we'd like to hear about how you, as I put it, got into this business and your association with these two administrations and these two Presidents.

McClure: Actually, I have an association with three Presidents. I also worked with President [Gerald] Ford as a White House intern.

Young: I didn't—You see—

McClure: See, I know. I pulled one on you here on the front-end. So we're just going to do a jump-ball right now and just hit it.

Young: Fair enough.

McClure: I'm trying not to become associated with four Presidents, and that's my sole objective in life. Let's see. We'll start the old bio, which, I guess, is a way to kind of get into this and into my public policy service. And if you choose to interrupt that is fine. I'll be more than happy to digress. In fact, you may need to get me back on track every now and then.

First, I thank you all for allowing me to be a part of this project. I think public service is a very noble calling and one that I wish more people had the opportunity to do, even when there are differences in terms of political views, public policy views. The give-and-take associated with governing and the importance of that is to our democracy and our freedoms and our way of life is something I'm proud to have been a part of, if only briefly during my career.

I got started in this, frankly, through having met a guy named John Tower who, at the time, was a United States Senator from the state of Texas. I had been recently elected state president of the Future Farmers of America [FFA] in Texas, and every organization brings the kids to D.C. to, "Come Meet Your Congressman and Senator." I, on a national conference kind of a basis, had tried to make an appointment with Senator Tower, but to no avail. He just didn't have time for the state FFA president who was coming into town.

So instead, I met with the guy who I ultimately replaced, actually, who was then Senator Tower's agricultural legislative assistant, a guy named Larry Combest, who is now a member of the United States Congress. And Larry had been an FFA area officer when he was in high school. And so I went in to meet the Ag [Department of Agriculture] guy, and the Ag guy said, "You know, you really need to go in and meet the Senator." So he drags me in to meet the Senator, and I meet John Tower.

John Tower when he was a kid, a child—His father was a Methodist minister and his mother used to have a number of friends in my hometown of St. Augustine. And every summer, John

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Tower used to spend his summers with his mother and with family friends in St. Augustine, Texas. And so when I was ushered into the room to meet the Senator for the first time, and this was in July of 1972—the Senator and I had a lot to talk about because we had a lot of mutual friends as a result of his spending a great deal of time in east Texas, which gave him a few votes every time he ran. St. Augustine was most definitely a very Democratic-leaning county in our state, and still is.

At that time, we were engaged in a campaign to start the national FFA alumni association. And I, of course, did what I was supposed to do, which was to ask my Senator to join. And he ironically put a hundred dollar bill in an envelope a few days later and sent it to me. And I thought, *Oh, my God. This guy remembers who I am.* I ultimately got to be with the Senator quite a bit on his return trips to Texas when he was doing stuff in the agriculture community and I was there representing the student youth organization. The next year I was the national secretary of the Future Farmers, which meant I got to see him every now and then when I came to Washington, D.C. And thus the relationship resulted in that happening later down the road.

In the interim, after serving as a national FFA officer—At the time there was, unlike the way it is structured today, a junior version of the White House fellows program. It was an official White House internship program that required applications, recommendations, the whole nine yards. And basically what it was, was kids from the ages of about 18 or 19 or so, up until the first year that you would then be eligible for a White House fellows program.

I applied for that program and was one of fifty or so folks chosen to come to Washington and spend a summer at the White House. I worked in the old Executive Office Building for a guy named Pete McPherson, who is now president of Michigan State University. And I worked in the Office of Presidential Personnel, which is when I came to know a guy named Brad Patterson, who had spent a lot of time writing about White House staffs and his career, since he served in early administrations.

I worked in the Presidential Personnel Office, which was interesting because what I got to do, even as a young intern, was to help be the person who screened the letters from members of Congress, ironically, that came in saying how badly—or how perfunctory their letters were in terms of people they wanted appointed to positions in the United States government by the President. We had a lot of fun that summer on top of it. And a number of those colleagues are still here in federal government or here in the city in D.C., so it's a network that started early on.

I guess it was then that I got the bug that maybe I might want to come back up here. Prior to that time, all of my trips to Washington, D.C. had either been on family vacations or coming to conferences. And it was one of these things where I really, really don't want to live in D.C., that's cool—but the monuments and we get to do all the touring all the time—but there was never a way to get into the world of what was going on, and I got exposed to that the summer that I spent here at the White House.

After that summer, I went back and completed my undergraduate degree at Texas A & M University in Agricultural Economics and was in the process of looking for a job. And in the spring of that year, though I was in graduate school, I wrote a letter to John Tower. Now that I

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know what the system is like, at the time, I thought of course this was going to get through to the Senator. But it was a letter to the effect of, "Dear Senator, you don't remember me, but this is Fred McClure and I was this, and now I'm doing this, and do you have a job? And if you don't have a job—" ironically, Tower never served on any agriculture committee "—do you know of anything on either the House agriculture or the Senate agriculture committee where they might use my talents?"

And of course I got this letter back from somebody on the staff which basically said, "Don't call us, we'll call you." In the interim, I was up here for a conference of student body presidents, actually, and during that time—it happened to be Easter recess in Congress—I went over to visit the office. I had been contacted a couple of weeks earlier by Larry Combest, who was then in the Senator's Dallas office, and Larry basically met me in an airport on the way to a job interview at DFW [Dallas Fort Worth airport] and said, "Senator wants you to go to work for him." So after having gotten this blow-off letter, I thought, *Well, this is weird.*

In any event, I came here, went up on the Hill, visited with some folks on the staff, and actually left with the impression that there was no way on God's green earth that I was going to get a job offer. And the flip-side was they left thinking, *We didn't convince him that he really, really needs to come to work here.* Ultimately, Senator called me and said, "Now, are you going to come to work for me or not?" And so I moved to Washington, D.C., at the end of May in 1977. Ironically, that also was the weekend that the Senator married his second wife. So I was joining the staff at about the same time she was, as a practical matter, and she had a great influence on things in the years going forward.

That's how I got back to Washington, D.C. The role I was to perform was to help the guy who was the Ag legislative affairs guy primarily for the Senator. And about three weeks after I got here, he made the choice to go to work for the realtors, and thus all of a sudden I became a legislative assistant to a United States Senator because I was at the right place at the right time. And not only did I have Agriculture, which was my primary area of responsibility, but I kind of got into Transportation and Science and Commerce and Trade and some other things that fell there by the wayside.

The person who was then the Senator's legislative director was a woman named Pam Turner. Pam was my first boss, or at least direct boss, in terms of working for Senator Tower. She ultimately became my boss when I went to work for President Reagan because Pam later, at the beginning of the Reagan administration, was asked by Max Friedersdorf to be the Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs for President Reagan, a role which she occupied for the full eight years of the Reagan presidency.

Max I'd come to know, needless to say, because Max was the policy committee director for the Republican Policy Committee during that time frame when Tower served as its chairman. That gets me to '77. Seventy-seven was a big year in agriculture. Farmers were engaged in the American agriculture movement, which meant we had tractors come into D.C. and all of these guys would come see me. One weekend Tower was in Texas without me and said that he was going to introduce a piece of legislation that was exactly mirroring what the agriculture people in the state of Texas seemed to be saying, which was 100% parity for the support of the agricultural

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commodities that they produced. Of course he comes back to town and I chastise him properly for having done such a thing, and he says, "You're my Ag guy, you make it happen. Take care of it."

So what ultimately happened was that the farmers would come into town and would come to see me. And since Tower was on their side, I'd just tell them which offices to go to and they went off. Then they'd come check in at the end of the week and tell me what their reports were, which was nice because they got out of my hair. One of the guys I met during that process, who is relevant to this discussion we're having as well, came up on that American agriculture movement visit to D.C.; I met Rick Perry outside the caucus room of a rally that they were having in 1978. Rick Perry, of course, is now Governor of the state of Texas. The Rick Perry part is relevant because it goes to the Persian Gulf War discussion that we'll have later. So that's how I first met Rick.

In 1978, Tower was engaged in a very close re-election campaign with a guy named Bob Kruger, who had been a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Tower ultimately won that election by less than one tenth of 1%. But in June of 1978, we had a massive change in our campaign leadership, and the guy who had been running our state offices in Texas as state director had moved over to run the campaign. And Tower asked me to go back to Texas on a temporary basis. So I moved back to Texas and I ran his Austin office—was state director of all three offices on a daily basis—and continued to do agricultural legislative work here in Washington, which was an interesting chore doing it from afar. And that was before CSPAN and before televisions in the United States, so I did it on the telephone, which was not hooked up to speaker boxes. It was a very interesting experience in governing.

And what happened was, because Tower was traveling every weekend, I'd spend the week in Austin and then the weekend I'd be traveling with him. This was probably the summer of 1978. There was also a guy who was running for election, running for office for the first time—running for the U.S. House of Representatives on the Republican side of the ticket—a guy named George W. Bush. Tower and I were traveling in what would have been the Congressional district for George W. Bush, out in the Midland-Odessa part of our state, and one George W. Bush traveled with Fred McClure and John Tower for about three days out in that neck of the woods, and that was when I first had any relationship with the Bush family. And I developed a friendship with George W. Bush and his family going from that point forward.

In 1978, Bill Clements was elected Governor in the state of Texas. Tower had come to Austin; we were there together. On inaugural day, we were walking back from the capitol in Austin to Tower's office and we run into this guy, and Tower says, "Fred, I want you to meet this guy because I don't think you've met." I say, "Okay." "I want you to meet Ambassador George Bush." And so on Congress Avenue in 1978, or '79 actually—January '79—about six months after I'd met his son, I met the President, or the then-ambassador, who was in the process of beginning to run for the Republican nomination for President in 1980.

I subsequently left Tower. I started law school a couple of months later. I went to Baylor University. I wanted to become a trial lawyer and practiced law in Houston, Texas. Tower tried to get me to come up here and go to school instead—the idea was I'd come down until the

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campaign was over and then go back. But because Baylor is on the quarter system, I was able to get in in February. So therefore I opted not to and made the unfortunate mistake of—I shouldn't say unfortunate. But I made the statement, which of course came back to haunt me, which was, "You know, Senator, if you ever, ever need me to do anything for you, then just pick up the phone and call."

And ultimately in 1983, he did. At the time, the guy who had been on the Armed Services Committee staff at one point, who was then the Senator's administrative assistant, Chief of Staff, was a guy named Will Ball. Will ultimately had the job of Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs during part of the Reagan administration and, for a period of time, was my boss when I worked for President Reagan. Will was the Assistant, Pam was a Deputy Assistant, and I was one of the Special Assistants to the President during that time frame.

I came back to work as Tower's legislative director. Six months later, he made the decision, or at least he publicly made the decision, not to run for re-election. I of course accused him of fraud in the inducement in getting me back up here. Indeed in his book, *Consequences*, he wrote about the day he and I rode to Texas and he told me that he was leaving the United States Senate, which was a very difficult moment, but I got a great compliment from my friend and political mentor. Were it not for John Tower, I doubt that I would have gone into public service in the fashion that I did, nor would I have had the chances to serve in the capacities that I did.

We're now to August of '83. Tower asked me if I would stay on as long as I could, although he realized that I probably needed to get on with my life. And I said I'd stay on as long as I can. And I ultimately decided to stay through the Republican convention in '84, which took place in Dallas. And since we were hosts, I figured it would be kind of more cool to be with the host state Senator than in some other capacity.

Somewhere in the interim, and this kind of puts the Justice piece into perspective, President Reagan went to China. And during the time that he was there, I believe he was in China when this took place, he nominated a woman to serve as Deputy Attorney General. That woman had previously served as Assistant Attorney General for Lands and Natural Resources, which was the name of it before they changed that division recently. Her name was Carol Dinkens. William French Smith had been AG [Attorney General] from the beginning of the President's tenure and Carol had been an Assistant Attorney General. Because of her role in Lands and Natural Resources, she got tied up in all of the Rita Lavelle—I can't remember that scandal. There was a name for it and it has something to do with the Sites—Superfund Sites and all that kind of stuff. Because Carol was the assistant AG for Lands, they used to say she was the interface with EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and Interior and all those guys.

Anyway, Carol left and went home. She went back to practice law at Vinson and Elkins. And during that time frame, the Deputy Attorney General, who might have been at that time—No, that's not right. I can't remember who the deputy was. But the Deputy left and Carol was asked by the President to serve. Carol was nominated by the President when he was over in China somewhere. And Carol calls up John Tower's office and says to me, "Look, my name is Carol Dinkens. I've just been nominated by the President to serve as Deputy Attorney General, I'd like the Senator to introduce me. What do I need to do?" And so since I handled judiciary—that's one

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area that I kept to myself because of my legal background in my overall legislative director responsibilities—I got her telephone call. And I said, "Well, I don't know you, but send me your résumé and we'll see if I can work out a deal where the Senator will come to introduce you."

One thing led to the other and needless to say he did. The reason that's relevant is because the summer of the Republican convention, I get this phone call one day. And I'm getting ready to leave Tower, but haven't decided what I want to do yet and it's from Carol Dinkens. And Carol Dinkens says, "Fred, I think you need to come be a lawyer in the government." I said, "Okay." So she said, "Why don't you come work for me as Associate Deputy Attorney General?" I said, "Okay. What do I need to do?" And she responded laughingly, "Send me a résumé." So I sent Carol a résumé and ultimately at the conclusion of the Republican convention, went to work at the Justice Department as Associate Deputy AG.

Young: William French Smith—

McClure: Well, that was at that—Ed [Meese] had been nominated. French Smith had decided, "I don't want to come to Washington, D.C. anymore," and was basically living in San Francisco—

Young: I see.

McClure: Or Bill was. And Carol was basically running the department as Deputy Attorney General because Bill was hanging out at his law firm and being retired on the west coast. Ed had been nominated and Rudy Giuliani had left to go to New York. And so there were lots of faces and moving parts taking place at that time.

And Carol divided up the staff in such a fashion that the three of us who served as Associate Deputy Attorney Generals had areas that we were responsible for. As stuff flowed up from the divisions, we were the sign-off point in terms of what recommendations we'd make to the Deputy in terms of how she would react to any policy decision that she was engaged in. One of those persons, by the way, who was my fellow Associate Deputy Attorney General was a guy named Phil Brady. Phil and I ultimately served together on President Bush's staff when Phil came back to be Staff Secretary.

The areas that I had responsibility for were stuff that flowed up out of the civil division, lands and natural resources division, the tax division, civil rights division, and anything that came out of the Congressional piece only because of my prior experience on Capitol Hill. I also was a White House liaison. I was the individual who had the wonderful opportunity of telling Frank Keating that he could not come to work at the Justice Department when he had been serving as a U.S. attorney out in Oklahoma. That was my first interaction with Frank, which was, "No, you can't have a job." The reason was because we had a hiring freeze on until Ed was confirmed, which took a little over a year, if I remember correctly.

Brad Reynolds was then the Assistant AG for Civil Rights and so we had some pretty tough, hot issues going on in the Justice Department during that time. I left the Justice Department the day after Ed came to work for the first time, and moved to the White House. That six month time

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frame became the third time I'd been approached by the people in the legislative affairs shop about joining the Reagan team as one of the special assistants. So the third time I said yes, and I left Justice, as I said, the day after Ed got there. Actually Carol left about four days later.

Young: Was he wanting to put his own people in?

McClure: No, I think it was one of these things—Well, yes, he wanted to put his own people in, that was one of the reasons we had a hiring freeze. But it was okay for his own people because they were people who were coming from the White House with whom he had involvement in selecting in the first place since he had moved from Counsellor to the President to be Attorney General. So it's not like he wasn't playing in that game all along.

Carol was ready to go back to Texas, which kind of goes to the way I ultimately started doing business. Carol got kind of called on the carpet during all the investigations associated with Superfund because of her role having been Lands and Natural Resources Assistant AG back in the early part of the administration. And one of the jobs that I had on the side was to help prepare her for those instances where she had to explain what her little scribblings and notes were on the side of briefing papers from long ago and to prepare her for any legal challenges to that. That is when I decided the less stuff I write down while I serve in public office, the better off I'm going to be because I can't remember notes that I wrote yesterday. How in the world am I going to recreate them six or eight years later, or longer?

So historians will have great fun reading the official documents in the archives of President Bush or—Well, my name's not on many of the Reagan ones. But on the ones in the Bush administration, for my three years of service there, they're pretty cut and dried and there's—Even the memos to him are ones that people look at and go, "What in the world was Fred talking about?" But he and I developed a way we could communicate such that he'd get that—

Young: So that's why we're doing this.

McClure: That's why you're doing this, I know. I know. I'm hopefully not going to help you any more. Anyway. So I learned from that experience with Carol to be very careful about the things that I wrote down, or at least those things that found their way into public records. I joined the White House staff as special assistant, I guess it was February or thereabouts in 1985. With me on the Senate side was Nancy Kennedy. Pam was the director. I think Larry Harlow was there at that point in time. And it was just the three of us on the special assistant side.

One of the chores I ended up having responsibility for, which is mentioned in some of the briefing papers is—What we did, and subsequently I did not do dissimilarly when I became Assistant to the President, was to divide up the Senate into areas of responsibility where the special assistants and the deputies split up basically the committees of Congress. The same thing worked on the House side. And so it was my day-to-day responsibility to have at least a working knowledge of what was going on in each of the committees to which I had been assigned, one of which was the finance committee. And the finance committee was in the process of—I can't remember whether I got there before or after the first tax reform balloon went up and got shot

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down, but I had responsibility for helping with the tax reform efforts that ultimately became law in ’86.

And that probably sticks out more than anything else, just the—Well, a couple of things. That’s one of the two things that sticks out a whole lot in terms of that service because it was—

Young: Why does it stick out?

McClure: Well, it sticks out because it took so much time, and it was such a centerpiece of what President Reagan was trying to accomplish. This was all post Graham-Rudman [Graham-Rudman-Hollings Act], and we’re now at this point in time where he’s finally getting to the tax reform. We’re taking people off the tax rolls, and we’re lowering the height of the rates as well as decreasing the number of categories in terms of taxpayer rates.

It was also at the end of that time frame when the Senate was controlled by Republicans. The House was, at that time, controlled by the Democrats, but the margin had eroded since the 1980 elections. The number of blue-dog Democrats, that conservative group of folks, was still fairly high, but it had—and you can look at the record to get what it was. It started out at 190, or something thereabout in 1980, and had begun to decline. As a result, it was more and more difficult to build the kind of coalitions that we tried to build, which were basically centered around our Republicans and what conservative Democrats we could get to be a part of that. Most of those conservative Democrats came from the South; they came from Oklahoma through Texas all the way over to Florida and up the east coast, which ultimately became Republican strongholds, at least in the Congress, during the years of Reagan and immediately after.

Riley: But you were primarily working the Senate side?

McClure: I was primarily working the Senate side in that process, but I’ve forgotten what our numbers were. I want to say that they were maybe 45, maybe 42 or 3. There was a nice margin in the Senate, and so having to go after the [David] Borens of the world and the [John] Broes of the world and the Howell Heflins of the world—who are a number of those southern tier Senators—was a chore that I spent a lot of time working on because I started out with less than 50 votes on everything that we had to do. So we spent a great deal of time trying to develop relationships. And as such, I developed some very good relationships during that time frame, more directly than I had when I’d been Tower’s legislative director, needless to say. Plus I’d been gone for six years or five years, whatever, but got to know those groups of Senators, in addition to the Republican Senators who were serving, as a part of that process.

Riley: Were there any organizational or personnel changes in the Senate shop after the ’86 elections when everything flipped?

McClure: No. See, I was there from February of ’85 until November of ’86, so I was there for one two-year time frame.

Riley: I’m ahead of myself.

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McClure: And there was a flip in '86, but I'd left and I created a hole. At the time actually, we were operating shorthanded. It was just Nancy Kennedy, Larry Harlow, and myself along with Pam.

Riley: But what you're suggesting is that despite the fact that the formal control was there, the southern Democrats were still a powerful force—

McClure: They were a very powerful force—

Riley: And so when you were there and you had to work through them, you couldn't just rely on your—

McClure: Right. The margin was decreasing. You could rely on our numbers in the Senate, but again, you always had—It's just like in the House. You had this core of Republicans, who were what I would describe as more moderate to liberal, who you could not always count on to toe the party line in terms of what President Reagan might have wanted in the conservative agenda he was advancing.

Riley: Right.

McClure: So to me, Jim Jeffords is no big surprise is what I'm trying to say. Anything that he's done—Jim and others like Jim—I mean we even had some difficulty with the man for whom my wife worked, John Hines, and [Arlen] Specter because of the part of the country they were from, and what they had to do to get re-elected, and some of the issues and challenges associated with their constituencies. I'm sorry. Matt?

Dickinson: Just to clarify. So in '85, when you're talking about the 40-45 votes, that's a coalition that you could start with, that you could count on.

McClure: We probably could count on that. We could probably count on the 40-45 votes, even though our number was—I think it was 52-48. We can look it up. But it was very close, so if we lost a couple of guys or gals, we didn't have 51 votes.

Riley: Plus you wanted to have 60.

McClure: And we didn't have a House to backstop. See, one of the great things—and this is just a Fred McClure philosophy—I think about the first couple of years of the Reagan administration was that number one, he had, of course, a mandate, if you will. One can argue whether it was a mandate or not, but he was elected President and it was okay. Secondly, Republicans had control of the Senate for the first time since 1954. Thirdly, there were 190, 192, of the 435 members of the House who were Republicans and then the boll-weevils, if you will, made up another 70 or 80 more. But you always had to discount part of those 190 House Republicans; you'd lose 20 of them because they came from the northeast, for example.

And so massaging those numbers, I believe that probably one of the reasons there were such early successes in the Reagan administration, which got more difficult as his term progressed,

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was because he had those numbers. And he had a Republican Senate that could backstop a House that was still controlled by Democrats and you could work your way to a degree of compromise, which was actually what we ultimately did on tax reform. You could ultimately work your way to a ray of compromise because you had enough numbers to sustain vetoes, to invoke closure in the Senate, or to have a high enough of a vote—and this is relevant to the veto strategy, by the way, that we used in the Bush administration—on amendments to show that you had veto strength.

Now, as we were getting down toward '86 and tax reform—we're post '84 elections now—numbers weren't—The President was looking great, but the ability to do policy things was waning because of coming to the end of his administration and folks getting ready to run for President in 1988.

It was in 1986 then, or '85, that I became reacquainted with the guy who was then Vice President of the United States, primarily because the Senate legislative affairs office hangs out in the Vice President's office on Capitol Hill. And secondly, there were a number of times where we chose to call the Vice President in to service in terms of telephoning and lobbying—or lobbying more directly—members of the Senate, and the House even, with whom we knew he had good relationships.

We used him quite often in that capacity and quite often the Vice President would respond directly to the person whom he knew had initiated the memo. So I'd get him lobbying somebody on some missile system in some DoD [Department of Defense] authorization or appropriations bill, which were always the tight votes, and he'd respond directly to the person who asked him to make the phone call. So that's how I got to know George Bush.

Young: How did those requests for him to do something get to him? Did they—

McClure: That process has not changed dramatically—Well, I'm going to presume that that process has not changed dramatically. It was no different from what it was when I was Assistant to the President, and likewise I don't think that's the case at least in the current Bush administration. Whenever a decision is made—and this is a legislative affairs-initiated lobbying telephone call request of a President, and you'll see throughout the archives these recommended telephone calls. And on those recommended telephone calls, the ones for the President are no different from the ones for the Vice President: who we want you to call, what we want you to talk about, where the person is on this particular issue, and by the way, here's some talking points. And then there's space for them to write and send comments back.

Which reminds me of a—Don't let me forget to talk about a telephone call I got President Reagan to make once and how I learned a lot of things. Anyway, just remind me. It involves South Dakota—I think it was Jim Abnor, if I remember correctly.

And how the calls were initiated was as follows: we in legislative affairs are checking our vote counts and somebody is leaning for, somebody is leaning against. This guy said he's got to talk to the President, or this guy's got to talk to the Vice President, or this guy really needs to talk to the Secretary of the Treasury, whatever. And we in legislative affairs would decide how much of

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the President's or the Vice President's capital we'd want to use and make the decision as to whether or not we'd raise it to the level that these guys and gals would actually get telephone calls from the President or the Vice President, as opposed to members of the Cabinet or somebody on the White House staff. And once we collectively made our decision in legislative affairs, a piece of paper would go to the Vice President or the President from the Assistant to the President, so it would either go from Friedersdorf and [M. B.] Oglesby when they were both running the shop—because I had several bosses.

When I started, they were co-heads. Max and MR. were both co-running the legislative affairs. Max had come back. This was Max's second incarnation. Actually it was his third incarnation, since he did it for Ford, too. Anyway, he had come back and then Max subsequently left, and MR. was all by himself. And then when MR. left, Will Ball became the assistant for legislative affairs. And when Will left, Alan Kranowitz became the assistant. So President Reagan had five over eight years.

Young: So the White House Chief of Staff at this point was—

McClure: I had both of them. I had both [James] Baker and [Donald] Regan. They did the swap shortly after I got there, if you go look at the time chain. So Don was now Chief of Staff and Baker had gone over to be Treasury Secretary.

Young: Was there a difference there that you could see between Regan's way and Baker's way?

McClure: Let me get back to that. Let me finish the Congressional telephone request issue right quick. We would decide, and ultimately the Assistant to the President then goes to the Chief of Staff and says, "Okay, this is how we want to use the President's time." The Chief of Staff says, "Okay," and then the Staff Secretary gets the document in to the President or Vice President. Now, in the case of the Vice President, my presumption is that it would leave our hands and go—and I just don't remember this—directly to the Vice President's Chief of Staff and they'd make their decision, make the phone calls, and we'd get the answer back.

Young: Craig Fuller or—

McClure: And it could have been just a phone call to Craig. There's probably some paper record of it, but it was a little bit easier to do. Anyway, when the President gets through making the phone call, most of them would write notes on them and those notes then go back to the Staff Secretary; the Staff Secretary makes sure that's safe for archival purposes, and copies are made, and they go back to the people in legislative affairs or go back to the assistant for legislative affairs, and then it ultimately goes to the person who initiated the request. So that's kind of the circle, and it just goes on and on and on and on.

I didn't have the privilege of having a whole lot of time dealing with Baker as Chief of Staff because the Baker-Regan swap took place at about the same time that I went to the White House, in February or March, and I don't know the exact dates. So the experiences with Jim in that capacity were limited. My relationship with Jim actually—Again, this goes back to 1978 because

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when Tower was running for re-election in 1978, Jim was running for attorney general in the state of Texas, and lost.

And I remember distinctly a conversation—I can't remember who Tower was talking to. Clements? We're in Wichita Falls, Texas, God forbid, and didn't know what the election results were. [Robert] Dole had called and said, "John, just hang in there." We can't declare victory yet, the night—It's the next day before he does. And Tower made a comment to the effect—Because Clements was running, he said, "Probably the only one of us who really deserves to be elected to the office that we're running for is Jimmy Baker, and he's the guy who got beat today." Because Jim would have made a—I don't know whether Jim would have made a good attorney general or not, but he thought he would. So in any event, that was kind of an interesting moment there.

Anyway, so my interaction with Jim was limited as Regan came over and became the deal. Here's one of those differences—and it's a difference that we tried mightily, and successfully I think, to institute when I returned to the White House in 1989. During my two years in Reagan's administration, the senior-most members of the staff spent a great deal of time making sure that—I shouldn't say making sure. That's not the way I should say that. The senior-most folks—assistants to the President—had more interaction with the President than did anybody else on the staff, so deputies would get some interaction, but most of the time it was assistants to the President level.

I probably was in—Let's see, I did two Air Force One trips during my two years with Ronald Reagan, if I remember correctly. One was to New Hampshire when we were stumping on a day trip for tax reform, and it was that day that I met this guy who was then the Governor of the state of New Hampshire, a guy named John Sununu, for the first time. The other trip, I remember, was a trip to Texas that I ended up staffing because Lloyd Bentsen was on the flight with us and a couple of other folks. And so because of the Texas ties, I got to do that travel trip with the President.

I remember maybe two Oval Office meetings during the two years that I was there. And one of those was because there was nobody else in rank higher than me available to go to the meeting at the time, therefore I was the legislative person in the room. So I can now go to the story. The President recognized me, but if he had been put in a situation to say what my name was, he would be probably pretty hard-pressed. And I am not alone in that regard; there were many others of us who occupied that same role. And so unless you were a deputy, and then more specifically assistant to the President, your interaction with the President was fairly limited. In fact, one day—I cannot remember what the issue was, I probably have a copy of it somewhere—we needed to call Senator Abnor about something and I was the one who had initiated the piece of paper that ultimately went to the President for the telephone call.

And Abnor started talking to the President about something that didn't have anything to do with the reason we were making the phone call, which of course is nothing abnormal with regard to either Abnor or the President. It just happens. These guys just want to have a conversation and they use it as an opportunity to bring up whatever it is they want to. And the goal of the legislative guys is to get the answer you want, number one, and number two, to hopefully get any

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feedback that is necessary in the event that these guys say something that they shouldn't or that they say something which would be useful in terms of going forward.

And neither Abnor nor the President could remember my name, but the President wrote over in the sidelines, "Jim said that he had talked to our guy, you know, our black guy and blah, blah, blah," and he goes on to write this. And it was absolutely hilarious and of course we had great fun in the legislative shop laughing about that, "You know, our black guy." So neither the President nor Abnor could remember my name during that time frame. Made you feel really good [laughter]. Let's see—

Young: Well, that's what low profile means.

McClure: Yes. One of the other—and this relates to the Bush stuff as well. Surely because of timing and flow of events, I can now at least claim some responsibility for the confirmation of one-third of the United States Supreme Court because I also had responsibility for the [Antonin] Scalia nomination, which you didn't have in your briefing stuff. So I'm just going to throw another one out there on you, Jim. See, I'm doing pretty good.

Riley: It's your low profile, and you've succeeded.

McClure: Scalia was easy.

Young: I said we weren't dumb, but we're awfully ignorant.

McClure: Yes, yes, something like that. "Ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise"—remember, there's more to that quote than gets there. What happened was that when the President decided to elevate Bill Rehnquist to be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, that opened up the slot. Well, you had to get two confirmations and all of the focus and attention was on Rehnquist, which is great. So I just sailed through with Scalia. And of course we set a standard with the Scalia nomination, which is constantly referred to in nominations since then. We're not going to let you get a—I can't remember correctly, but I'm not sure he acknowledged that *Marbury v. Madison* was settled law. I think he said nothing was settled, and anything could possibly change, "and therefore I'm not going to answer any of your questions."

It was great though, because with him it was a love fest. In fact, I remember being accused during the night, I guess, that we were up for Rehnquist, so this was like '87—I lost my year again. It must have been '85 or '86. And my daughter was four or five years old. For some reason, I had to bring my daughter up in the middle of the night and she was walking the halls of Congress with me. And Senators were accusing me of stooping to new lows—"Bring your child up here to make us feel bad." "Oh, you've got to vote for. . . ." But she was sleeping on the couch in the Vice President's office.

In any event, Scalia was a breeze because all of the focus and attention had been placed on Rehnquist. And it was the first time an Italian had been named to the Supreme Court and that carried, believe it or not, great weight. I remember—

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Young: Would it make sense at some point to break out from all these court nominations that you were involved in, and just—

McClure: Well, I'm going to be done with Scalia pretty quick and then we'll do these other guys as we get to them because each of the remaining two are significantly different—even from each other.

Dickinson: And so your responsibility for Scalia is because you're the liaison with judiciary, is that right? Or how does this—

McClure: Yes. I had judiciary as a part of my committee responsibilities, that is true. In that configuration of legislative affairs, at that point in time, Nancy Kennedy handled all nominations. All of them. They all ultimately came into her bailiwick and responsibility as a member of our Senate team. Ironically, that's how I ended up getting [John] Ashcroft, which is a whole other story. So Nancy had her hands full with Rehnquist as did MR. Oglesby and Pam. And I just got Scalia because he was the leftover, and somebody who knew something about the people on the Judiciary Committee was the guy who had responsibility for it. And so I did that one in conjunction with the Justice Department and counsel's office.

Riley: Was there really a sense that the Rehnquist elevation was going to require this kind of effort? Or was it just a matter of routine because that was the Chief Justice role?

McClure: I think it was kind of a combination, Russell, one which was yes, it comes with the CJ [Chief Justice] responsibilities. But two—Not that the Chief Justice has any more control over what the nine individuals on the Court do more than anybody else because most of the time they really ultimately don't, unless they happen to vote on the prevailing side during conference. Otherwise, "You can write a dissent, too, Mr. Chief Justice or let somebody else write it." But he had a—

Riley: He had some baggage.

McClure: He had some baggage, yes. Ultimately, I think he got 78 or so votes. You can check it, but I think he had 20 to 25 or so folks who voted against him. And I think Nino was 99 to 0 because somebody was absent, if I remember correctly, because I did pretty good on my first one.

I've got a side story on Scalia—a couple of side stories. Alfonse D'Amato, who was then the Senator from New York, was running for re-election that year. And Alfonse used to use his mother religiously in his campaign commercials. "Religiously"—that's not the word I should use. There's probably another word I should use. But anyway, Alfonse always used his mother and she talked about what a great boy her boy Alfonse was—I guess it's "shamelessly." That's the word I was looking for. But he was quite proud of his shamelessness. And I remember taking Scalia in to see Alfonse, and after the hugging and all this Italian stuff going on, he says**,** "I'm going to vote for you, Nino. Come on, I've got to show you these new commercials that my momma just made for me." And we sit down in Alfonse's office and watch videotape of his mother's commercials. It was a love fest all around the board.

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What I also remember was that [Howell] Heflin was then a lower ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, but also [Dennis] DeConcini was on there. Every Italian in the Senate wanted to come and introduce Nino, which they did, on the big day of the hearing. And I remember—Now, these are not be the exact words, but I think they'll give you the effect. They'd finally gotten all the Senators giving their opening comments and they're getting down to Heflin. And the judge, as I called him—He used to call me Senator because of Senator Jim McClure. So we'd see each other in the hall and I'd say, "Judge." "Senator." "Hey, how ya doing?" Howell, when it got down to him, says, "Well, my great-grandmother's cousin twice removed by marriage was an Eye-talian," something to that effect. But go back, look at that record and it's hilarious.

It was a love fest. And he sailed right through and that was my first Supreme Court nomination, which is decidedly different from either of the other three. Decidedly different. Other than the fact that he would not admit anything was settled law—which of course never, ever again will be allowed to happen with a Supreme Court nominee, but Nino got away with it and ergo his service as an Associate Justice.

Riley: You, I guess, had to sit down with him and go over his judicial record at the time to be prepared to do—

McClure: I didn't do as much of that as I ultimately had to do with the two subsequent Supreme Court nominees. Scalia was pretty self-contained. My primary role with Scalia was making sure he got to every single Senate office that I needed to get him to, both those that are perfunctory, as well as those—It's a kind of funny thing. When you get these candidates who are real popular, every Senator in the United States Senate wants to see them, go out, have a press statement, "So-and-so came by to see me today." But there are some that you really, really need to do.

The way that I have always approached it—did it then and afterwards and even last January—was once you get done with the leadership, meaning minority and majority leader, you've got to go by and see Senator [Robert] Byrd and Senator [Strom] Thurmond because of their pro tem roles—I don't know which year—and all that kind of stuff. And then you go to your committee of jurisdiction. You get your committee of jurisdiction done and then you go after those people who you want to come out and say positive things for you because they will have an impact upon others that you're trying to have an impact on— like triangulation, if not bank shots. And you want to take them in to see those individuals who might be troublesome, and you can perhaps go in there and solve their problem. There are some you go see just because you don't want them saying he didn't offer to come see me.

As a practical matter, you offer him up to everybody. I put them in priority in terms of the ones who have got to act first—committees of jurisdiction. For example, and I will roll forward a little bit, one of the things I did with [David] Souter was we went to see all these guys who had been AGs when he was attorney general in the state of New Hampshire to build a body of support amongst those individuals; that gets you the [Joseph] Liebermans of the world, or people who had been prosecutors like [Patrick] Leahy, or people who have had similar career experiences.

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With Ashcroft, I took him to guys who had been Governors when he was Governor. So we'd go see Zell Miller, or we'd go see one of the Senators who is now from, what is it? [Earl Benjamin] Nelson from Nebraska. So you try to find kindred relationships where these guys will be hard-pressed not to support the candidate. But like I say, when they're real popular, everybody wants to see them because it's good bull back home for their constituents. And whether they ever talk to these nominees again is really totally immaterial; after they get their first hit back home, then it's all paper.

Okay, Scalia. . . .tax reform. . . .

Riley: I want to go back and ask one more question about tax reform and—

McClure: I don't remember much, but go ahead.

Riley: This was principally [William] Bradley's bill? Is that correct? In the Senate?

McClure: Who did we end up with? Remember there was this trial balloon that Regan sent up—the first one—when he was in Treasury and that one didn't go anywhere. And then the second one—I forget what we called them. I probably would have to look it up. We can look it up and I'll think some more about it. But I can't remember whether it was ultimately. . . .

Riley: I just remember Bradley being a moving force behind the '86 legislation, and my question was whether—

McClure: No, it was [Robert] Packwood's bill.

Riley: Packwood's bill.

McClure: It was Packwood. Packwood was chairman at the time, Bentsen was—It does bring up another story, I tell this one actually publicly. Bentsen was ranking on the other—No, Russell. Russell Long was ranking on the other side, followed very closely by Bentsen during tax reform. And I remember—Let me tell you something. This is something that is important. Going on in the middle of mark-up of tax reform was a free trade vote on—was it Caribbean basin initiatives? But they had to break one day in the middle of the mark-up to have this vote on a trade-related issue. We'll have to go back and look that up.

And I remember, it was one of these things where we needed Senator [Samuel] Hayakawa's vote because Sam was on the committee at the time. We couldn't get him to give us an answer, so we asked him, "Well, what do you want?" It was something we needed to do because we had to get to a tie vote. The tie vote in the committee would have made it like 10-10, which would allow us to do whatever it was we needed to do. It was a trade matter. If we go back and look, that was right. And it was a hearing, just right smack dab like a Wednesday or something. That was that one other meeting I went into the Oval Office because I happened to be the only person who knew a little something about it—everybody was focusing on the tax deal.

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Anyway, we subsequently found out that Sam was upset and wasn't talking to us because he'd never had an opportunity to ride on Air Force One with Reagan going home. So we put him on Air Force One and we got his vote. Plain and simple. He just needed a ride. "Okay, you can ride home with the President to the Golden State." And we did and we got his vote. Those are some of the small ones; the others got much more complicated.

Riley: But going back. The basis of the question was the extent to which you were organizing your work in concert with the—

McClure: Policy side? My job in that role in legislative affairs on tax reform was basically counting votes and taking care of people's problems, and if somebody needed to talk to somebody associated with the administration, to make sure it took place. I absolutely knew nothing about policy, other than the fact that we were about to pass a piece of legislation that was going to hurt middle income America—á la me—more than anybody else. And my colleagues on the Hill, who were also doing tax reform legislation, agreed with it because of the way we were compressing the tax rates and all that kind of stuff.

Our roles and responsibilities on the policy side were almost always limited to execution of a policy that had already been enunciated or formulated. The variation on that occurred in those rare instances where we communicated something back to the policy shop because of the interactions we were having with members on the Hill where we needed them to tweak some policy because we needed to get one guy moved over further into the column without losing somebody else. By the way, that whole policy thing was something that I changed when I became Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, which we can talk about when we get there.

Young: The record should show that these comments pertain to Reagan.

McClure: This is all Reagan. And if I'm in the other place, I'll tell you. But now this is all Reagan.

Riley: Exactly.

McClure: Those of us who served in the role of special assistant to the President did not have a huge role in the direct development of policy, unless it was a situation where we changed policy as a result of the interaction that we had gotten in terms of the feedback.

Riley: Sure.

McClure: So that's truly when you're in the middle of this role. Our role was to go out and say, "Okay, here's what we're going to do. Where are you? If you're not there, Senator or House member, then what do we need to get you there? Can we get you there?" And then it would go off in all different directions: judges, bridges, people appointed to office—

Young: Rides.

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McClure: —all of the normal—rides.

Young: Boxes.

Riley: The one last question on that, and that's why I raised the question about the sponsor of the bill, is the extent to which you're camped out in their offices, working with the sponsor and his legislative people, or if you're really a completely independent and apart operation.

McClure: It's really an apart operation. The actual policy folks in that instance—Now, I'm having to really dredge back memory, but my suspicion is that, if I remember correctly, the lead policy folks on tax reform were the guys over at the Treasury Department. There was some involvement from OMB [Office of Management and Budget]. OMB was not as strong—Well, [David] Stockman was pretty strong, but Stockman was strong when you got down to the budget nitty-gritty, not so much in the arcane changes in the tax code, unless it was going to have some significant impact upon revenue and therefore have an impact upon the budgeting process. And that was all a game being played with the guys over at Treasury. So that was started in Regan's shop and ended up being in Baker's shop.

Riley: But on the pure legislative end of things, where you're counting your votes and trying to get the vote on tax reform in particular. You're working with Packwood or. . . .

McClure: Yes, I'd work with the staff director of the finance committee—I can't remember who it was then. And if that staff director or somebody who was taking the lead on tax reform called me up because they knew I was the guy on the finance committee and said, "Fred, Senator Hayakawa needs a ride, okay?" then that was my role in terms of making sure that it got through that process. But it was not a policy role.

Riley: Right.

McClure: It was purely a mechanics role and that's the way it was at least the two years that I served as—And frankly, it was not until I became assistant to the President that I learned a lot more in terms of how that pyramid worked, which I changed. I can't give you more on that.

Dickinson: Were there any other battles during that Reagan eras that particularly stand out? We've talked about tax reform, Supreme Court nominations. The one you handled was not a battle—

McClure: Oh, we had a lot. During that time frame we had Contra votes, we had whatever the one is where the Vice President had to always break the tie. That was a missile-related vote, or—It wasn't B-2 bombers. No, it was the one his mother would always call him on and ask him why he broke the tie. But if you go back and look at those—Was it SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative]? I can't remember what it was, but there was a series of votes, like six out of eight years or four out of eight years, where he had to break the tie. And he joked that his mom would call him all the time and say, "Why did you vote for that?"

Dickinson: MX [Experimental Missile]?

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McClure: Was it MX? It might have been MX. So MX, Contras. And that's what I was going to digress on, which goes a little bit in that direction. Even though we had responsibilities for our subject matter areas—we were the keepers of the vote tally, we were the ones who gave the assignments to our colleagues on those—when it was something that rose to serious presidential level interest like MX, Contras, all that kind of stuff, we all were just given our group: "Here's your assignment." Pam would say, "Fred, you've got these six guys." And if we picked up other information in that process, we would pass that information back. We weren't the lead person.

If there was paper to go to the President for briefing paper purposes, if there were meetings that were going to be held in the cabinet room involving Congressional leaders, somebody had to do the talking points, somebody had to decide who's going to be on the invite list, somebody's got to do the telephone calls—what we wanted the President to say. The special assistant or deputy, depending on which committee the deputy took responsibility for, always drafted that piece of paper. So I drafted stuff, for example, that President Reagan would use in Congressional meetings involving tax reform. I did the first draft of them and that was what he used for his talking points. And it kind of goes up the chain: the deputy looks at it and signs off on it, the assistant, and then he gets a couple of policy vets and ultimately that paper is the paper that becomes the real record, if you will, of what a President—assuming they don't go off the reservation and start talking about stuff they're not supposed to talk about, which they also will do. Although Reagan did it less frequently, I'm told, than did Bush.

Dickinson: So Reagan would stick—

McClure: Reagan would stick to the script. He did that exceptionally well. And he'd stick to the script and you just hoped the rest of the conversation stuck to the script—everybody else around the table. But we always had people there to help get the President through if necessary, which is the way they do now. That's not a big deal.

Riley: But the inference, then, is that your work on domestic issues and foreign policy issues is pretty much indistinguishable in terms of the role that you were playing in the process.

McClure: Yes. It really was. I happened to have tax reform because I was doing the finance committee so I was talking to lobbyists and reporters. You'll find stuff where I'm quoted, or whatever, during that time frame, but I was the point person for tax reform on the Senate side. Substantively, if you think about it, guys, when you finally get down to it, in most pieces of major legislation, the public debate or argument centers around four or five different issues. Whether or not some company that makes airplanes in Wichita, Kansas, gets a tax break that lasts three years versus five years is really not the issue. The issue is what the tax rates are going to be, how many people are going to be taken off the tax roles, numbers of the poor, for example. Are the rich going to—It narrowed it down to some very basic—

As is the case today, you don't have to know a whole lot about the policy except here's where you want to be, here's where somebody else wants to be. The question is what arguments move the people—i.e. the voters, i.e. the elected members—in the direction where you want them to go? Now, there would be the little bitty small things that if some guys had come to me talking

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about depreciation schedules and three- versus five-year useful life, I'm just going to say, "Hey, I will get you with the folks at the Treasury Department and y'all can work out that problem." Because the revenue impact is $500,000, and in a bill as big as that, those weren't the kind of revenue impact things that we were talking about. It was decreasing tax rates, less burden, getting poor off the tax rolls, and that's what it boiled down to.

So I could have become a tax expert and then gone and opened a tax practice, but it would not have been because of my tax expertise that I gained during the work on the tax bill. It just wouldn't have happened. Now, there were guys over at Treasury who could or guys on the committee, staff for the committee, who actually did all the writing and the arguing with the Ways and Means committee on the other side when we went through the conference process. But I just needed 51 votes.

Young: And sometimes it [inaudible].

McClure: Yes, yes. But OMB—Again, if memory serves me correctly, Stockman was not as involved in the tax reform thing as he was in some other issues. That's like Stockman being involved in the Contras. It just didn't work out that way.

Young: Okay.

McClure: But we did Contras, MX. We had the annual fights on abortion. In fact, I think during that '85-'86 time frame, we added another abortion fight that we hadn't had before, if memory serves me correctly. It started out in Labor/HHS [Health and Human Services], then it went to—Well, in addition to Labor/HHS, we had an abortion fight on the D.C. [District of Columbia] Appropriations bill because of the fact that money is fungible and when the money comes here, it gets mixed up with the other moneys. So we had a D.C. fight every year. We had one that was associated with the Department of State because of the Mexico City policy in terms of population planning. And then we started having one with DoD because of whether or not federal funds could be used to fund abortions that took place on military installations.

So on each of those four appropriations bills, assuming that they didn't end up being rolled into a continuing resolution or some combined resolution that was omnibus in nature, we had four fights a year on each side. And if you go back and look, I'm sure we went through at least that many on each of those bills. That was before we got sophisticated and started having the stem cell debates. Then it was just a question of money, which is the only place government—or those who were proponents of the Hyde Amendment—could figure out a way to deal with the issue on a regular basis. And it's just the dollars.

Riley: You left in November of '86.

McClure: Yes. I announced my resignation two weeks before the first story appeared about Iran-Contra.

Riley: You announced it, but you were around after—

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McClure: And then I was gone. No, I was gone. In fact, the first story I remember on Iran-Contra—I remember I went to Mexico with a buddy of mine, to Cozumel for a few days. And we woke on Election Day in 1986, acting like we really didn't care, but frantically looking for a newspaper. I remember this Continental Airlines flight that he and I finally got on about noon. I couldn't find a newspaper anywhere because the local sports bar, which was the only place that got *USA Today* and did not open until 2 o'clock afternoon, had not gotten its shipment yet, and were leaving at noon from Cozumel. And this plane that we had been on had been in Albuquerque that morning and somebody had left the Albuquerque *Journal* in the seat pocket. I thought, *Oh, God. Real news*, because I was walking down the aisle and "Republicans Lose Senate" was the headline.

We had a gubernatorial election that we lost in Texas on that same day and it was like "Oh, Hell." But I quit. And this buddy of mine's in the Air Force and I'm reading all the election articles. I'm seeing my buddies who work for [Peter] Domenici being quoted in the Albuquerque *Journal* even though they're my friends here in D.C., and my friend reads this little two-paragraph article about some cake. And he looks at me and he says, "Fred, this is going to be big stuff." I'm saying, "Nah, nah, nah, nah." And it subsequently turned out to be a huge issue. But that's when I left.

Riley: Just before Thanksgiving.

McClure: That's right. And I was gone and I moved to Texas Air Corporation.

Riley: The only question I had was whether given the fact that a midterm election was coming up, did you have any role serving as the liaison between the Hill and the White House in terms of the campaigns going on in '86? Were there members saying—

McClure: In a—How would I describe this? In a not structured formal role, yes. Because guys, because they knew us—The way we did it and the way I did it when I became assistant was that the people on the Senate legislative staff, including the deputies, basically came to the office in the morning. We had a staff meeting at some ungodly hour and then we all went to Capitol Hill. And most of the time we spent 90% of our day, 80% of our day, on Capitol Hill, either at committee hearings, or chasing down Senators trying to get their votes, or visiting with their senior staff. Because there were, and this still happens today, some members of the United States Senate—and I'll focus there because that's what I was doing and that's where my expertise was—where you could talk to the administrative assistant, or Chief of Staff, or even the legislative director and be 99% confident that that is exactly what their Senator was going to do.

Then there were times when we really wanted to confirm it with the Senators themselves. So they might be up on the floor voting on something that we did not even care about—it could be legislative branch appropriations, it could be some minor change in transportation law and we'd already done our thing at the committee level, or the guys at DOT had done our thing at the committee level—and so we really didn't care. And the guys in the Senate are doing their speeches, and doing the Congressional record, and getting on C-SPAN [Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network]—all that kind of stuff.

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Meanwhile, we'd be hanging outside the door saying, "Okay, we know he's going from here to there when he gets done," because we'd secretly gotten the secretary to tell us. And so if I need my ten minutes with John Heinz, I'm going to have to wait until he comes off the floor, we're going to walk down the steps together, walk across the lawn of the Capitol headed back to his office in Dirksen building. That's what we did. Most of the time we'd buttonhole those guys when they were coming on or off the floor on votes. And that was when you found them and you'd catch them when they weren't even thinking about what it was you wanted, but you were there kind of skulking, hanging out. And it was a way to get to know the members of the Senate very well. And as a result, I knew all hundred of them exceptionally well and they all knew me by name, except Abnor when he forgot.

I must say that that, coupled with my time at Texas Air after the Reagan White House, helped me immensely when I became assistant to the President. Because the group of 100 was not substantially different from what it had been when I was there in '86, and the new ones I'd gotten to know in between when I was in the private sector.

Riley: Going back specifically to the campaign question—

McClure: Oh, yes. I didn't get there, and that's where I was headed. So if in that walk across the line with Heinz, Heinz said, "Fred, I need Baker to come do a fundraiser for me in Philadelphia," or "Fred, by the way, we might be talking about the MX missile, but I can't be with you guys on this vote because if I vote this way on this nominee or on this labor issue, we can't handle it back in Pennsylvania and it just won't work." This is on the edge of the politics side.

And my deal is to then go back and say, "Okay." I call up Baker as Chief of Staff or his legislative assistant and I say, "Look, this is what I got back, and you guys need to run this through the deal and see if Baker wants to go do this or not, and one of us needs to get back to Heinz." And then I'd hang up, get done with that conversation, and the next telephone conversation would be to the person who was my colleague who was handling that labor issue, say it's Nancy Kennedy. I would say, "Nancy, I just talked to Heinz. He's going to take a walk on this one because it's going to affect him in his re-election campaign and he just can't be with us." And she would say, "I didn't know."

Well, then we would have to go find somebody else. Or we'd work a deal. And by the way, this didn't change substantially when I did my latter job. We'd work a deal. Okay, we got three votes to spare and we got somebody like Steve Symms who's up. Because Steve Symms and Don Nichols were in that bunch of folks who were elected in 1980 and Steve Symms and Don Nichols were about the only two—there might have been one more, maybe D'Amato—the only three who got re-elected in 1986. And Paula Hawkins and all those guys from the South just got kind of poured out.

Well, there were some conversations with Steve because that year we had a late session. The session that last year before the '86 election just kept getting further and further closer to Election Day, and Symms was saying, "Fred, I am going home. So you're going to need to find somebody else to be the vote that you need. Because I'd much rather be out there campaigning to get re-elected so I can be here for you six years from now than to stay here for this vote when

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you can go find somebody else to get the vote." And so the political aspect of it was in the realistic give-and-take associated with vote-taking and vote-counting more so than it was in me giving political advice. Or I just funneled it back to our guys who were in the political shop—[Lee] Atwater and those guys who were there at the time—and said, "Hey guys, so-and-so, here's the deal. Y'all decide what you want to do. They want the President for this fundraiser." And I was out of it.

[BREAK]

McCall: —it's worse.

Young: In what respect?

McClure: In terms of the camaraderie and the nature of the working relationship and the way members got along and how members would deal together on issues as adversaries in one moment, and in the next moment they were not. But you just moved on to—And I guess the personal stuff really started in the confirmation process. Everybody goes back to the [Robert] Bork nomination which was not—And I didn't handle that one. Which is probably why he didn't win [laughter]. But that, followed by the—What's the guy's name who had done marijuana in the past—

Riley: [Douglas] Ginsberg.

McClure: Steve. Not Steve. Doug. Then it started getting to new levels in terms of the personal background stuff and what would be used by various groups to not attack an individual necessarily—The problem with Bork—No offense to you guys who've chosen this as your profession, but Bork decided he wanted to be the professor. And wanted to engage in extended long debate with the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee on arcane points of law, which only people who studied that particular arcane point of law would really give a damn about. And he just got deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper into the abyss and could not extract himself from it.

Riley: Was it your sense he wasn't coachable?

McClure: That Bork wasn't coachable? Yeah, he ain't coachable. You know how you guys are. Oh, that's right—you guys are the exceptions. You know how some of your colleagues are. That's what it is.

Young: Indeed we do.

McClure: Indeed. But we were saying, "Bob, this is not the time." And I'm sure it was quite frustrating for the guys who were in legislative affairs and handling the nomination because Bob ended up doing exactly what—So then we had two extremes.

Two extremes, two standards had been set now in recent history in terms of Supreme Court nominations and ultimately other kinds of nominations that they decide at the Senate, or some

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group decided that the Senate needed to oppose for whatever reason. You had the Scalia standard that we'd set in the '80s, which is, "Don't say anything, don't give them anything, don't admit to anything. Just say, 'Vote for me.'" And then you've got this other standard, which was Bob, which was the other extreme—which I watched from afar because I was in the private sector then—which is, "Let's engage. In the battle of intellects and wit, or intellect, I will prevail because I'm right." There are some members of the Senate who feel that way too, now, some of whom are my friends. So you had that dynamic going on in terms of nominees.

What you find, or at least what I found, and what I played a part in with the guys, took a different tack. Then you had this whole other element on nominations—and this is kind of across the board. This probably gets its most scrutiny in the Judiciary Committee, more so than any other committee of the Senate, and that is all of the writings or pronouncements, and whether or not one is held accountable, even when circumstances may have been different than what they wrote. When I did Ashcroft a few months ago, John had some 24 years of public service. Well, my God, there's so much stuff out there he hadn't even seen that he is charged with having knowledge of from a local column in the Columbia *Post Dispatch* or whatever, to something that was a tape on a radio station.

And so you've got all of those extremes and those writings. Those things have provided great fodder. It changes the way you prepare a candidate of any sort, but particularly a Supreme Count candidate, where you've got a lifetime appointment, it changes the way in which you prepare them for what they ultimately will face when they become nominees and actually face the Senate firing squad.

Young: Do you want to go into that now and then backtrack to getting in—

McClure: We can get back to that when we start talking about these other two nominations, but it's just the extreme and actually I think that's a fairly useful study.

Okay. How did I get back in? This is another Tower thing, believe it or not. When I came back to work for Tower in 1983 as his legislative director, I took, as I indicated earlier, responsibility for the Judiciary Committee only because that put me also in the role of handling all of his recommendations on nominees for the Court, nominees for U.S. attorney, nominees for U.S. marshal—or recommendations, excuse me. So I kind of shouldered that responsibility for Tower. In addition to that, I had issues in the Judiciary Committee. Beyond that, I just ran the place and had all these other folks who did all the substantive work as we worked it up the way.

That year, in 1983 or '84—must have been '83—the Senate was considering a major overhaul of the bankruptcy laws in the U.S. And at the time, a guy by the name of Frank Lorenzo had owned Continental Airlines. Well, actually he had owned Texas International. He bought Continental Airlines, then got rid of Texas International, kept the Continental Airlines name, and subsequently declared Chapter 11, I guess it was. Yes, Chapter 11, which is where you pay them back. And during the course of those bankruptcy amendments, the unions, which were opposed to Frank's taking Continental into Chapter 11, had made an impassioned plea to their supporters in the Senate to make whatever changes they made in the bankruptcy laws retroactive to the date

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on which Frank—or Continental Airlines on Frank's behalf—filed Chapter 11. So it was a retroactive application of a law—an *ex post facto* application.

I'd never met Lorenzo in my life and Tower's got me in the office. It's me and Frank and Tower and we're talking about this. And Tower just turns to me and says, "Okay, McClure. That's unfair. So it's your responsibility." He turns to Frank and says, "Frank, I'll do everything I can to make sure that this law is not made retroactive because you did what the law said you could do," which meant if you filed Chapter 11, you could unilaterally abrogate collective bargaining agreements and nobody had to sign off on it. It just happened. And you got rid of union contracts and you started all over. Well, that's what Frank did to lower his labor costs.

Which reminds me. Tower was in mark-up one day in Armed Services committee and he sends me—me, McClure—to the cloakroom in the Senate to tell Strom Thurmond— "You go tell Thurmond that he better not get that amendment passed and that he's just supposed to do nothing." And I said, "Senator." And the Senator's said, "Yes, but you go tell Strom." I said, "Okay, fine."

We won. And it was not made retroactive. But that's how I got to know a guy named Frank Lorenzo. Therefore, when I left the White House—

Young: Finish the Thurmond story.

McClure: That's another Thurmond story. He said, "Freddie, what did he say?" And I said, "Senator, Senator Tower's in mark-up. He told me to tell you blah, blah, blah." And he said, "You tell John he's got to get over here." And I said, "Well, uh, Senator—" I called Tower up and I can't get through because he's doing mark-up, and I'm yelling at the staff director, "McGovern, get him on the phone, I've got to—" Anyway. That's how I came to know a guy named Frank Lorenzo, as a result of meeting him working for Tower and this whole bankruptcy legislation since Continental was based in Houston.

So when I left the White House in 1986, I went to work for Frank Lorenzo and was government affairs staff vice president for Texas Air here in town. At that point in time, between when I said yes and actually got there the latter part of November, Texas Air had bought Eastern and owned New York Air, owned People's Express, Continental, the bankruptcy remains of—We were the largest airline company in the world with the exception of Aeroflot.

And we had this horrible, horrible day. I wasn't there yet, but it was a horrible, horrible day; we opened in November all joined together and it was just hell from that day forward. But that's when my relationships outside the Texas delegation began to grow in the House of Representatives because I spent from November of '86 through January of '89 getting to know specifically members of the Florida delegation because that's where Eastern was located. And secondly, I got to know members of the House Transportation Committee because that was the committee of jurisdiction for the airline company. So that's how I got to know the likes of people like Norm Mineta, for example, and others who became good friends.

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Likewise, because of what the unions were doing, or what we were doing vis-à-vis our unions at Eastern at that time, in the midst of negotiating a contract—or trying to negotiate a contract—I got to know people like Newt Gingrich, who was also on the Aviation Committee but was still a backbencher. But he was beginning to raise a little hell amongst Republican ranks in the House, which ultimately kind of rolls forward to my first year working for Bush. And John Dingell and the guys on the Commerce, Science, and Transportation one day called me on the carpet. He wanted all these records and stuff—of course to this day John doesn't know he wrote that letter. But we became good friends, too, as a result of that process. So that's how I got to know members of the House.

So for that two-and-a-half to three-year period of time—and this gets to another question, which was my role in the 1988 presidential election. Other than raising money, giving contributions from our corporation, supporting the Republican party, being on some steering committee in name down in Texas, I was supporting George Bush in that process early on. This of course didn't bode too well because Bob Dole was running, as were a few other guys who were then currently serving with whom I was having to deal with as an outside private sector guy. But I had a good excuse with Bush, which was, "I've known him since 1979 and I didn't know you guys that long, that well. And he's from Texas and that's who I'm going to support."

One of the reasons I chose Texas Air, frankly, was I could stay here in Washington, do what I could for the '88 campaign, but still have a foot back in Texas because that's where we were located. And so I maintained my Texas ties as a result of that. We got into some serious bad, bad labor fights as well as drug interdiction fights during the latter days of Eastern Airlines, and that was during the 1988 presidential election. Of course the President got the nomination and I was down in New Orleans for all of that. And he picked Quayle, and off they rode for the fall and won the election.

Then he immediately announced the choice of Baker and who else—Let's see, what did he do? He did Baker, [John] Sununu, and [Brent] Scowcroft, I guess, early on. And he announced that Boyden [Gray] would be his legal counsel going into the White House. It actually was about two or three weeks before Tower's name really was—because Tower didn't get chosen until around about Thanksgiving, if I remember correctly. Maybe a little bit after that because there'd been some controversy over whether or not the President should choose Tower.

Now mind you, I'm here. They're doing all this stuff in Houston and I had no involvement in transition whatsoever. Had no earthly idea that I was even being considered or might be considered to be the President's assistant for legislative affairs. The closest I got to that was some time back in September or October because George had moved from Dallas to Washington in no official role in the campaign other than the fact that he was the son of the guy who was running.

And we were having lunch at Old Ebbets one day. We'd finally gotten a chance to get together and in the course of talking about it—which is, by the way, the way he used to function and my presumption is that he functions likewise now in the White House. We were in the middle of a conversation, probably talking about our kids or something to that effect, and he just says, "Oh, by the way. If Dad wins, would you do something?" And I say, "George, whatever he wants me

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to do, yes, y'all just give me a call and I'll—" And he says, "Okay, fine." And then we went on to talk about other subjects.

I guess probably about the last week in November, one of the newsletters around here in town, *Kiplinger* or one of those guys—maybe it was *Evans and Novak*. I can't remember. But in their little political report they were speculating about who might be the President's Congressional liaison person. And all of a sudden there's my name and there's Tommy Loeffler's name and Powell Moore's name. Powell had been the Senate deputy at one point and also had been Assistant Secretary of State. And maybe there were a couple of other names. Somebody calls me up and says, "McClure, I saw your name in this newsletter." "Oh, really?" And I'd had no conversations whatsoever with anyone.

A few days later, about the first week in December, we're having some serious labor stuff and I chose not to go to the airline operator's meeting, whatever it was—which, by the way, Linda Daschle was then head of—in Hawaii. I decided, instead, to stay in town because of our issues. And I get this phone call one day from Sununu's office saying, "The Governor wants you to come see him." And I say, "Okay, fine. When?" They gave me a date and I went over to the transition up off Connecticut. I went to John's office, waited an hour, hour and a half for him because he was running late, as usual, and he walks into the office and he says, "Fred we've never met." I said, "Yes, we have. I met you when I came to New Hampshire with tax reform with Ronald Reagan." And he said, "Oh, yes. I remember that day. Okay, fine." I said, "But that said, it's good to meet you again."

And then he said, "Well, I guess you know why you're here." And I said, "No, I really don't." He said, "Well, the President-elect wants you to serve as head of the legislative affairs office. Now, I don't want to go through this with you trying to convince you to do this. I mean either you're going to do it or we're going to have to get together again for me to say you're not. But I really don't have time to be talking to you about this." And I'm thinking, *Well*. I haven't talked to my wife. He's hustling, doing something else at the same time and I said, "Well, you know. Yes, I think I'll do it. Yes, I guess. Yes, Yes." He said, "Well, good. You need to come see the Vice President at the White House this afternoon—" it was on the 21st of December—"at about 4:30, 5 o'clock." And I said, "Fine."

So I finally hear from the White House, and I go over to meet the Vice President on that day, and it's kind of dark because that time of the year, at 4:30, 5, it's getting dark. And we sit down, and he says, "Fred, I'm happy you're going to do this. We're going to have fun. It's going to be great, blah, blah blah."

And I said, "Well, Mr. Vice President, there are only two things I'd ask of you." He said, "What?" And I said, "Well, first of all, I want you to promise me that you will tell me about all of your conversations that you have with members of Congress that impact what I do for you. If you're talking to Sonny about playing ball up in the courts on the House that's one thing, but if you get to talking about these guys, I just want you to promise me that you'll tell me so that I won't get blindsided." And he said, "I promise. What's the other thing?" I said, "The other thing is that although I want free rein to pick my staff and the people who work for me and ultimately for you, I want to have at least veto power over the assistant secretaries for legislative affairs at

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the various departments and cabinet agencies." He said, You've got it." I said, "Fine." He said, "We'll see you." And off we went.

And that was the sum and substance of it, other than a personal part of that conversation that he and I shared. It was ironic. That was the day my father died in 1980—December 21st. And the President had also lost his father, but was now about to become President of the United States. And we had a little sharing moment there about how it would have been neat to have them around to see what we were about to do, but perhaps they were looking on somewhere.

So that was the nature of that conversation we had that afternoon. I walked out of the West Wing of the White House under where my office ultimately turned out to be. And it was a huge, special moment to get the opportunity to go back to the White House now for the third time, but this time in the role that I had just assumed.

Young: Was John Sununu with you in that meeting with the President?

McClure: Yes, I think John was. I'm pretty sure he was, yes. John had an office that they'd given him, if I remember correctly, over in the OEOB [Old Executive Office Building] where he was hanging out next to the President's VP office. I can't remember whether—because I'm just wondering if I would have gotten into that other part of the conversation with the Vice President with John sitting there. If that question is headed ultimately to my staff and the assistant secretary's, George Bush held true to that promise to me. So whether or not John was sitting in that room or not, which I frankly cannot remember, it didn't make any difference because the President supported me on it. And so it was kind of—

Young: Did you ever have to remind anybody that the President had—

McClure: No. I only had to exercise that once and I won. So. And that person reminds me of it to this day. His name is Jack Kemp. Of course Jack caused some other challenges during our time, too. In any event, that was that meeting.

The next time, really, that I had any meeting—and I was discussing this with somebody and I can't figure out why I was having this conversation. But I remember one day in the interim—and of course the President's vice presidential records will support this. There was some meeting that he had on Capitol Hill with members in his office as Vice President and his president of the Senate role because we were in the midst of some trade dispute or action having to do with textiles. And this had to do with either Thurmond or [Jesse] Helms or somebody, and I can't remember which one from North or South Carolina on some textile stuff.

And what gets me is that the President had not been inaugurated as of yet, and this meeting took place some time between December 21st, when I said yes, and say January 18th because I got a call in my office at Texas Air, "The Vice President wants to see you up on Capitol Hill." And I said, "Okay." I get a cab, and go up to the Hill, and we had a meeting with a couple of members of the Senate in an office off the floor of the Senate. It was textile-oriented and trade-oriented, and it had to do with something that was going on, but the President had not become President yet and was still in the President-elect mode.

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So he was grabbing me. It was, "I'm having a Congressional meeting. I need McClure," which, by the way, continues like that chattel discussion we were having, "I know he's not working for me yet, but come on." So anyway. Then we all gathered across the street from the White House.

Dickinson: Blair House?

McClure: Blair House. We all gathered at Blair House for a senior staff meeting with the President. I think it was the day before or maybe two days before the inaugural and then all of a sudden we were thrown in the midst of all the inaugural stuff and we all went to work on the morning of the 22nd. So I had one month to put together my staff, in essence, although I had the luxury of a couple of weeks after.

One of the great things about that transition, at least from my personal perspective—and probably to the President's benefit as well—was that it's not like we were changing political parties in terms of control of the executive branch. So even though everybody had been asked to resign, and they all did—which is the traditional way that the Presidents do it in modern history—John, or somebody, then sent out a note saying, "Now y'all stay until we tell you we don't need you any more." So unlike what [William J.] Clinton went through, unlike what Reagan went through, unlike what Carter went through, unlike what George Bush 43 has gone through, you didn't have this gap in terms of populating government.

Thus I did not start immediately with what became my first legislative affairs staff. Pam Turner stayed on for another month, month and a half, and helped with nominations and stuff. Nancy Kennedy stayed on. Over on the House side, Nancy Dorn, who is now the Vice President's legislative person, stayed on on the legislative affairs staff. And I think I might have kept one more on the House side so that I had time to build my staff.

And just like every other administration that goes into office, everybody has to go in and cut costs, so we had crazy salaries and slots that were taken away that had previously been there so we could show how lean and mean we were going to be. And other than the assistants to the President who got the max that they could get and arrange, for everybody else it was, "Okay, here's your number. You see if you can figure out a way to work this out with how many people you need." I believe that the Senate works best with four people: the deputy and three special assistants, and that the House works best with five. I started out, I think, with three and four, if I remember correctly, with the exception that I had Pam, who helped for a little while and a couple of other folks who helped on the House side.

The other—And I'll go back to my staff. I'm sorry, Jim. What?

Young: Of these people you had, how many were already in that office when you came in? How many were holdovers?

McClure: That's what I just told you.

Riley: All of them.

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McCall: All of them I brought in with the exception—I made my own team, but to help us out on the front-end, Pam stayed around on the Senate side and Nancy Dorn stayed for a year. That was the way I kind of snuck in another position, I just didn't get rid of her. And Pam stayed in on the Senate side just helping out for about another month because we had nominations.

We were going to the Hill with—We were trying to get rid of the Iran-Contra funding thing. And actually we did it without a fight. Most people forget that, but that was one of the early-on victories in the Bush administration: we never, ever again had a serious problem with Contra funding. We resolved it, we came to a resolution, and people didn't even kick up dust about it. That was one of those early little victories in the beginning days of the Bush administration.

Young: So the other people you had on the staff were not dealing directly? There were more than that number, were there not?

McClure: Yes, I hired a staff. That's what I said. I hired a staff. I didn't do it fully. John cut back the number of slots that we had, but I picked a staff between December 21st and January 21st and then I added a couple more when I got done finally. I had my full complement probably, I think, by mid-February.

Young: I'm sorry, I didn't ask the question right. I'm interested in the people, not the core that were there to help you out, but how you selected—

McClure: And I was getting there. There's one other thing I want to digress on, though, which I do want to come back to because I think it's important: with one exception, maybe two, every single person who served as assistant to the President at the senior staff level had worked for George Bush while he was Vice President, or had previously served as a deputy assistant or a special assistant to the President during the Reagan administration. The one exception—Well, there were two exceptions. The one exception was John Sununu, who had never worked in either of those capacities. The other exception was a guy named Dave Demarest, who was our assistant for communications. But Dave had worked at USTR [United States Trade Representative] directly for a cabinet level guy. And USTR, because of the nature of that office, does a lot of work with the White House primarily because it's across the street and because of the issues associated with trade.

Everybody else who was an assistant to the President had worked previously at a different level in the White House during the Reagan administration and a couple had done some Ford work. Roger Porter, for example, had worked for Gerry Ford. So all of us have now risen to the big table, if you will, and all of us—and I think it's because of our experiences during the Reagan days—had a deep appreciation for the lack of interaction that we had had when we had been at lower levels and decided that we wanted to do it differently. Too, I think, it reflected George Bush in terms of the way he wanted to run his staff at the White House.

And here are the examples that flowed from it. For example, I did not design my legislative staff significantly different from the way it was during the Reagan days. I had people I picked for many reasons, some of which had to do with the expertise and the relationships that they already

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had. But I, too, divided the staffs up into committee and said, "You cover this committee. These are your three committees. These are your five committees," whatever, and I let them decide.

And so when we were doing things, for example, like Clean Air, Roger Porter took the lead on that in the domestic policy shop, Bill Riley was involved in it as EPA administrator, and Boyden Gray was involved in it just because of his long-standing interest in environmental things, but particularly Clean Air. But every time there was a policy shop meeting having to do with the development of that legislation before we ultimately sent it to the Hill, my two legislative people, who had responsibility for that subject matter area, were included in those meetings.

So when we had rump group work groups on Clean Air, on ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], on whatever the issues were that came up early on in the process, whoever it was on my staff who had responsibility for that subject matter area for the House and whoever had responsibility for the Senate sat in on the meetings with the domestic policy guys—Larry Lindsey, whoever was running it, and also my deputy. I had three deputies, which was a concept we kept. My internal deputy is a person who goes to all these meetings because nobody else has time to go to them. So we religiously did that.

Riley: Don't lose your train of thought.

McClure: Well, and it carried over, because we had some fights with this early on. Remember I told you that I never really went to many meetings with the President either in the Oval Office and even in the cabinet room? The thing that always happened was the following, and Lee Atwater and I had a big fight about this early on even though Lee was not at the White House: I made sure that if there was a Congressional leadership meeting—I did not always do as the Reagan guys did, which was only invite the assistants to the President, whether they had a need to be there or not at that meeting. What I did instead was I invited only those people who really had a need to be there because I thought it was more important that my guys, who were the ones who dealt with members of Congress on a daily basis, be there.

So let's take an example. It's a meeting having to do with Clean Air and it is House members. At those meetings I would have Porter there and whoever his designate was who he wanted to bring with him who had responsibility for that issue. But he didn't get the whole room. I did always make sure that David Bates was there as a cabinet guy, Marlin [Fitzwater] was always invited as press secretary, Demarest was always there as head of communications in the event that there was some issue that needed to be dealt with because Demarest had not only speechwriting, but he had public liaison, media outside of Washington, D.C. Then I had, if it was a meeting of House members, whether it was bipartisan or partisan, all of my House staff was there, if it was a House legislative meeting. All of them. Whether it was their subject matter area or not, for the very simple reason that they talked to these guys and I needed them talking to them all the time. And so that's four chairs in a very small room.

And I'd always invite Scowcroft, of course, and Sununu was always there and [Richard] Darman, or whoever he needed there. But that was the way I got my guys into two positions because the way it had been done traditionally—we called it "white towel duty" in the Reagan days. And we'd go over to the West Wing, hang out there in the reception room off the West

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Wing, wait until the members of Congress get there, sit there and BS with them until it was time for the meeting to start, go walk them down the hall to the cabinet room, and then disappear. And then it was, "Oh, you guys are just waiters," and that's why we called it "white towel duty."

Well, my situation was different. I changed it. My guys not only did "white towel duty," but then they went on into the room and participated in the meeting so that they would know what was going on.

Young: Also wasn't it important for the members of Congress, who were there, to know that you and your people had a presence in that meeting?

McClure: Yes, that's why I did it. It was a two-fold purpose.

Young: It went beyond "white towel duty." You were sending a signal.

McClure: We went beyond "white towel**.**" My deal was, it's my room, it's my meeting. That's the way I started this, and therefore my people are going to be there unless they have some reason that they've got to be some place else. Now, the only time I made exceptions to that—Here's where I changed it. Atwater wanted to have somebody at all Congressional meetings. And basically Lee and I had a falling-out early on in the administration as a result of that, which was, "No, you're not going to have a political type from the outside, from the RNC [Republican National Committee], at a meeting of a bipartisan Congressional delegation. Not only are you not going to have it there, you're not going to have it unless we are having a meeting which is solely intended to be partisan in nature as opposed to something that is really, solidly legislative." So anyway, I won and I had control of my room.

Now, that went both ways. When there was a cabinet meeting, I always sat in because David Bates, who was running cabinet affairs, knew that it was important for me to be there. So I was always present in those and vice-versa; he came to mine for the same reasons.

I had some people who every now and then would get upset with me, but I felt, *You have absolutely no need to be in this meeting.* Why does the science advisor, who also liked to come to meetings, have to be at a meeting on national security? *You don't play in this game.* Why is the banking assistant, Richard whatever his name was who came to do the S & L [Savings and Loan] bail-out stuff that we did the first of the administration—Richard didn't need to be at a meeting on Clean Air. It didn't have anything to do with S & Ls. The assistant for administration who ran everything from cars to cuff-links to the mess to getting the President from place to place, Barney had absolutely no need to be—And this didn't have anything to do with him personally. It was just that there was no need and it was more important that my people were there.

So that's the way we started early on. I think that camaraderie, the way we all operated, held us in good stead in terms of starting out the administration. And it helped my guys immensely in their relationships with members of Congress.

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I tried not to publicly dispute this, and I haven't gone back and looked at the record, but we had a whole lot of people down at the White House for the first few days that George Bush Sr. was President. We had them actually up in the residence and had just a whole flow of folks. In fact, one day we had some Senators up there because people had never been upstairs. Unless you'd been a very special person in the lives of the Reagans or a very special need to be up there, members of Congress never got to the residence. So the President told me, "Okay, I want you to develop a plan, McClure, to get all these members of Congress down here. Just start working on them, get time on my schedule, and we're going to do stuff up in the residence." And he opened it up, if you will.

In fact, one day I was in the middle of a vote early on and the White House operator calls the President. The President, of course, goes over and picks up his phone and the White House operator says, "Mr. President, is Fred McClure there?" And he looks at me and says, "McClure, I'm taking your phone calls. What is this?" I had told them to call me because they needed a vote and I needed to tell Senators to go. But I was up there, and the record probably reflects it more accurately, but I would be willing to guess that during the first 2-3 weeks of the Bush administration, I was in the residence five nights as we just started running people through as he was reaching out to folks. He opened up and changed the style and tone, but without being disrespectful to his predecessor.

Young: Let me—This is a slight diversion—

McClure: That's okay—

Young: —there's a purpose to it—

McClure: —I've done a few.

Young: You knew Bryce Harlow?

McClure: I'd met Bryce Harlow. I knew Larry Harlow. Larry and I had worked together in the Reagan administration. My knowledge of Bryce, other than having met him—I never knew him well—was some writings he had done and actually a lot of stuff that Larry had told me about his dad.

Young: That's what I was wondering because this plan you were setting up in those meetings was something that Bryce emphasized very much in the [Dwight] Eisenhower administration.

McClure: That was the reason that I had made the request of the President when he was President-elect that night in the White House in his VP office because I had read about—I mean it wasn't a total surprise. It was pretty much a surprise when I finally got the phone call from Sununu, but then I had to start thinking about it. So I had to start thinking about people. And I was a month-and-a-half, almost two months, behind the eight ball because it was two months after the election when I started this process.

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But I'd read enough and it was really a history that I had begun to get into when I worked at the White House previously. That was when I first started taking a look at it. But the way I tell the story, and there may be some historical dispute to this, I use this as an example: when the Eisenhower administration woke up in 1954 and realized that for the first time Congress was of a different political persuasion as was then the President, the office was born with the whole thought in mind that we got to have somebody who communicates. And [Wilton] Persons and [Bryce] Harlow took on the responsibility. Well, it happens to be the year I was born so I always can remember how many years. Little did I know that nine months and forty-seven years later, or whatever, I would be—

Young: That's what I was asking, how you learned the history.

McClure: I learned it from Larry and I learned it from reading. Maybe it's just because I was there, but it's my view and I will remain unchallenged in this view: I think that two of the toughest jobs in the White House are the press secretary and legislative affairs jobs. And the reason I think those jobs are tough is because as a practical matter, you have two constituencies. Your effectiveness in that job depends upon the relationship you have with those two constituencies.

You've got your real constituent, who is the President of the United States and the policies that he wants to advance or stop. Then you've got this other constituency, in my case 535 members of Congress, all of whom think they ought to be President of the United States. Then on the other hand, in a press secretary situation you've got all of these guys in the media. And I could not have done my job effectively had I not had media relationships, had I not had relationships with members of Congress, and then a good relationship with my President. And this went back to my years of service for Tower, my years working on the Senate side, and my years in the airline business.

But you know, I could get a feel for what was happening on Capitol Hill by the nature of the questions that reporters from the White House, who covered Capitol Hill, would ask me that we would discuss off the record. They would say, "Fred, I've just got word that so and so's going to do this and so and so's going to do this. Now, do you think that's going to happen, or how are you going to respond?" I also, likewise, used them on the flip-side to communicate messages from me that I could not communicate directly back to members of Congress, and sometimes it made the paper and sometimes it did not—

Young: But rarely with your name on it.

McClure: Very rarely with my name on it because of that great, wonderful relationship. And I had the same relationship with the White House press corps. But my buddies in that process on the press side actually were the guys who covered the Hill because I had known them; and even though you're working for the White House, when you spend 90% of your day up there hanging out by the finance committee waiting on tax reform votes to get done, you're there with the guys who cover the Hill. So even though a lot of my Hill friends in the media were then at the White House, there were some who still covered the Hill, like what's his name, who wrote the book? Jeff. He wrote the book about tax reform—

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Riley: Birnbaum.

McClure: Yes, Birnbaum. Jeff was covering the Hill when—and of course we've remained friends to this day. But I got to know Jeff because of tax reform. It was those kinds of relationships that helped me. So that's why I think those two jobs are probably the most difficult, because you're really serving two masters. My job was two-fold and I view the job of assistant to the President as two-fold. It's your job, yes, most importantly, to represent the views of the President of the United States. But just as important is if the President is going to be unable to accomplish what he wants to accomplish, and a member or members of Congress communicate back a message which needs to affect the policy so that you can get 51 votes, or so you can get 218 votes, or so you can sustain a veto, or so you can cut off cloture. You need to get that information back and that information helps shape the policy as you go through the process. And that happened quite frequently.

There were other times—this is kind of broad-brush—when I was, how do you say this, maybe losing the policy battle within the White House because there were folks in the White House who had different policy views than I had on a particular issue and their access to the President was better because they could go see him every morning and discuss issues. Let me say this up front, too: I was never denied an opportunity to see the President when I needed to see the President. But I didn't need face-time with George Bush is what I'm saying. I knew the man well enough, and respected him enough, and we were friends enough that I didn't need face-time. When I made the decision that I needed to talk to him, there was nothing that would stop me because I could get to him, and did on several occasions. And likewise, there were times when he talked to me that did not get filtered through someone else, when he just picked up the phone.

There were instances, a couple or three or four instances—and I can't really remember the subject matter, I just remember them happening—where I was losing the policy battle inside the White House and I used members of Congress to change the policy tone in the White House.

On more than one occasion I called up my friend Bob Dole and said, "Bob, I need you to do something." He said, "What Fred?" And I said, "Well, here's the deal. X, Y and Z." And I knew where Dole was on this issue already and I knew he was going to come unglued. I knew that he wasn't going to like what he was going to hear because he and I were looking at the practicality of getting votes, which is what our jobs were. And I said, "So I need you to place a phone call to the President." And he said, "Call you when I'm done." Hang up the phone. Few minutes later, I get a phone call from the President, "Fred, I just got a phone call from Dole." And I said, "Yes, Sir? You did? How is he doing today?" And we went down that little game. And then shortly after I got through talking to the President, then I'd hear from Dole.

So there were occasions when I changed the policy debate when I knew what was going to happen, or at least I perceived what I thought was going to happen. And I used the system and my relationship with members in the House and the Senate to change the policy debate because of the practicality of getting votes.

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Another person I used in that capacity on more than one occasion was a guy named Dan Quayle. I'd known Dan when he was in the Senate because he and Tower were friends. And I knew him as a Senator and then as Tower's young friend in the Armed Services world. But I also knew him because of my time working the Senate for President Reagan. And so Dan and I became very good friends during that time frame. And that was the other person I could see whenever I wanted to see him. And so whenever it got to this frustrating point where either my conservatives were going to really screw up something, or where I needed the President to know that this was going to go off the deep-end—and I was afraid that maybe Sununu or Darman was telling him something different from that—I'd call up the Vice President's office and say, "I need to see him." "Okay, Fred, you can see him."

And so I'd go down to his office or wherever he was, sit down, and say, "Okay Dan, Mr. Vice President. Would you help me on this because here it is and you know what these guys are saying up there. I need some help. Will you please talk to the President?"

Dickinson: This really gets to the heart of what I think is a critical component of your job, and I wanted to push you on this because you talk about—

McClure: Can I push back?

Dickinson: Yes, please. You talk about these two allegiances. And when we talk to people who were familiar with White House staffing patterns, one of the concerns they have about the Congressional relations office is that they're as responsive to the needs of the members of Congress as they are to the President's concerns. There's a sense that it's not clear who they're representing. So to do your job well, you really have to be sensitive to both those issues. And when you say you're tweaking the policy debate in ways to move it somewhere, how do you know it should be moved that way? What's driving you here?

McClure: Well, first of all I agree with your premise wholeheartedly. I don't think the job can be done effectively without realizing that you've got two constituencies. You know who your boss is, but you've got two constituencies and your ability to be effective on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue depends upon your relationship and how responsive you are to those constituencies, whether it's a bridge or a federal judge or all the things that go into the trading process. Because ultimately, you're trying to get a number of votes that accommodates the President's view.

I'm not saying when I was affecting the policy debate that I had any personal views, because I tried not to have any personal views. I don't think it was my job to have a personal view on most issues. My view of serving the President—and I think my view is the correct view, by the way, and there may be those who disagree and I know that there are those who have acted differently—was I had no agenda. My agenda was one-fold and that was to do whatever it was George Bush wanted to accomplish. If asked to express my personal opinion about a public policy issue associated with where we were going in the internal policy debate, before we were running stuff down the road and up the Hill, I'd give it.

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But most of the time, my policy advice was driven by what I thought was a realistic possibility in terms of getting it accomplished in the United States Congress. That was my deal. And I made a personal vow to myself, which was I didn't care what the President's views were. I probably agreed with 95-98% of them anyway. And if I got to that point where there was something that the President was promoting, whether by his own desire or being pushed there by others, that just tore at my moral fiber and being to such an extent that I didn't think I could be effective doing it any more—the whole job—it was time for me to quit.

That's the way I worked for Tower, that's the way I worked for Reagan, that's the way I worked for Lorenzo, and that's the way I now work for myself, or for my clients, if you will. So I think that it is very important for the legislative affairs people in the White House, and frankly it's important at the agencies, too, to realize that they've kind of got two roles and you've just got to know which hat to wear.

As an aside, when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip came to their state dinner visit at the White House, the President was very nice and invited all of the assistants to the President and their spouses. Because normally, just the staff, Chief of Staff, national security advisor ended up going because the room is so danged small. I went to somebody's state dinner—I can't even remember whose it was—during the time that I was there. And he just rotated it around the staff.

But when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip came, he invited all of us to come for the entertainment that's afterwards. So that means you go eat somewhere else, have a pop, a drink while you're there at the reception, then you go down the receiving line, get your pictures taken and all this kind of stuff. I was worried about whether to say "His Royal Highness," "Her Royal Highness," to bow, to curtsey. I was so worried I was thinking, *God, just don't let me do the wrong thing. This would be quite embarrassing.* Was I supposed to call her Queenie? What do I call the Prince? King? Some words. So my wife is in front of me, we're going through this receiving line. There's the President and then the Queen and then Prince Philip and Barbara [Bush]—I think that was the way they were standing. So we're going down the line. My wife's in front of me—she's as scared as I am. The protocol guys are whispering, so we get what they're telling us.

Anyway, I get to Prince Philip and Barbara. Mrs. Bush says, "Prince Philip, I want you to meet Fred McClure and his wife, Harriet. Fred is my husband's liaison with Congress." And I get it right with the Prince and he says, "Ah, good to meet you. Hah! So you must be the ping-pong ball." And I said, "You know, Princey? You're right. That's my job." I thought that was the most apt definition of what my job was.

The other way I often describe the job as assistant for legislative affairs is spear-catcher. It's our responsibility to catch the heat. There were any number of occasions where you took the crap. You protected the President. You protected people around the President and you took the heat. You took it publicly. You took it privately. I remember getting called on the carpet one day by a particular Senator who's a good friend. Actually it was not him calling me on the carpet; one member of his staff decided they wanted to call me on the carpet and he just had to witness it. He is still a member of the Senate, by the way. But I took a few of those. And my staff took more of those than did I.

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There was this other piece of it, too. People would ask, and requests would be associated ultimately with us trying to get something out of them: a vote on a particular issue or their support for a piece of legislation. And we knew how difficult it was going to be. It was a game. Well, not a game, but a strategic exercise where they'd start out by asking my special assistant, and my special assistant would run it up the chain to me, and I'd make sure we were in the right place, and I'd say, "No," and the special assistant would say, "No." Then the member would be upset. So they'd go to the deputy assistant and we'd run it up the chain-pole again.

Now, we might know at the end of the day we're going to give in to this guy, but the deputy would also say, "No." Then they'd get mad and they'd call me and I'd say, "I'm sorry, I just can't do it. Blah, blah, blah. It's just not going to happen." And John and I would already have it worked out and I would say, "Okay, John, when they call you, they've already talked to so-and-so, they've already talked to Nick [Calio]. Now they've talked to me. We've all said no. That's okay. You can say yes, but when you say yes, do X." And he did. Happened all the time.

And that's part of the spear-catching responsibility of the process of getting what we want because members have no shame in walking it straight up the—There were also times when they'd go to John first and he'd send them all the way back down the chain and work it in the opposite direction. It just depended upon what the request was, when we needed them, and what we needed out of them because you don't have much to trade on.

Knott: Did you ever have the sense that there were folks in the White House who thought that maybe you were too quick to cave? That you were not—

Riley: That you're catching friendly fire. Catching the spears from that side—

McClure: Now my colleagues may say differently, but I don't get the sense that internally we had that problem. Because again, remember, I said something early on in this process that I thought was very important in terms of the underpinning of the way the staff operated. All of us had been there at the bottom of the roll down hill roll. And all of us, as a result of being back at the table now as the assistants to the President, had a totally different attitude about what was going on.

And so the way we worked together, I think, impacted that. That wasn't just a lone decision that Fred McClure was making as the legislative affairs guy; it was a Fred McClure decision, but Sununu was involved in it, there were instances when Darman was involved in it, and almost always Porter was involved in it because of his domestic policy role. And if it was on the national security side, hell, Jimmy and I passed up back and forth. It was kind of, "Okay, McClure, it's your turn to say no." "Okay, fine."

So it was part of the daily existence in terms of the routine. I wouldn't describe it as caving and giving in. The caving and the giving in was driven by something that we had all strategically decided we were going to do, as opposed to, "Oh, McClure's given up and he'll never be able to get those votes." Because those other instances where I told you about tweaking public policy were when I and Bob Dole, or [Alan] Simpson, or Bob Michael, or the Vice President, or

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whoever were in the game so I could make sure the President—although he knew how I felt about whether or not we could accomplish something, this just gave him some extra oomph in terms of his knowledge of what was going on in the process.

It was always coordinated back with me. Like I said with the Bob Dole deal, "Hey." "Yes, sir?" Because there was another thing, an old adage that Harlow started and those who, I think, have followed have tried to do: virtually no members of the Congress got through to the President without me knowing about it. Now, there were some who got through. Dole could get through. There were some that could always get to the President, like Sonny Montgomery and his buddies. But most of the time when a member of Congress came through, I got a call from the White House operator and the White House operator would say, "Mr. McClure, so and so wants to talk to the President." And I'd either know what he was talking about or I'd say, "Give me the call." And it almost always worked that way.

Dickinson: When I hear you talking about tweaking policy, it sounds not so much as, "Jeez, you're debating a minimum wage and it would make my job much easier if I can deliver at $4.30 even though Porter wants it at $4.15. I'm going to say we ought to do $4.30 and I'll have Dole call the President up." It's not that so much as at some issues you see resistance that you're not sure is getting through to the President. So this is an indirect way of basically flagging this issue saying, "Mr. President, you've got some—This is real—"

McClure: This nickel makes a difference.

Dickinson: This makes a difference. This—

McClure: That's because Dole and I have been hanging out in a back room somewhere, or we've been on the phone somewhere and we're thinking neither one of us knows a damn thing about the economics associated with it, but we know how many people we're going to lose or not be able to get. Now, it got as intricate as this: these five guys that we need to get $4.30 cannot walk the plank because four of these five guys are up for re-election in New York, in X states next month or next year or a year from now, and their union guys are going to beat them about the head if we don't move it from $4.25 to $4.30.

So now the question is do we move to $4.30 and then lose ten guys who don't want to raise it in the first place and reluctantly are wanting to be at $4.25, or do we force these guys to walk the plank? Remember now, I operated in a situation, unlike the beginning of the Reagan days, and unlike, frankly, the beginning of the presidency now as we sit here in 2001. I had neither house of Congress—neither the House nor the Senate. And it was reminiscent of 1954 when the whole thing was started. So I was put, Matthew, in a different situation in that regard.

And as part of that strategy, it was, "Okay, if we don't make these guys walk the plank now on $4.30, if we're going to do this thing at $4.25, we've already made a deal"—this is me and Dole and Michael—which is, "Well, okay, we'll let this thing get out of the Senate, we know it's going to come out," it's a conference report or whatever. "We know where it's going to be and we know who's going to sustain a veto this time." You will note our illustrious veto-sustaining

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record, of which I am quite proud, during the first three years of the Bush administration. By the way, he didn't lose one until I left.

Riley: It's duly noted for the record.

McClure: It's duly noted on the record and it's Calio's fault. If you notice the way we did that, we actually swapped veto overrides back and forth from house to house. If you look at it on a time deal, the Senate would do one, the House would do one, the Senate would do one, the House would do one. There's a methodology that is associated with which house passes a bill first, but when you get beyond the technical, the Senate may do the minimum wage one, the House may do the one on abortion, the Senate may do the next one on clean air, the House may do civil rights.

And if you look back over that, they went from house to house to house and that was, again, part of it. That didn't have a whole lot to do with the policy debate, but it had a great deal to do with how we allowed members to do what they needed to do, but yet support the President and create the record that they needed. So this guy could get a freebie then on this $4.30. The President's policy could be $4.25, and he could say, "No, I want $4.30," vote against the President, then not have to worry about it again because he wasn't going to have to sustain the veto. The guys who did were in the other House and they didn't care. So that's the policy tweaking. I never really, at any point in time, had any disagreement, frankly, with anything that we did at the White House from a policy perspective, ultimately. Zero. Including civil rights stuff.

That's the way I approached my job. We had two constituencies. My primary job was to serve and protect the President. And if that required, in some instances, sending information from the Capitol back into the White House through whatever methodology I needed to get it done to get it accomplished, I did it. And with not a whole lot of media furor.

Dickinson: So you're saying that your colleagues, because of their experience, understood this is the role you—

McClure: Yes, I think they did. Now, here's the thing, though, that is infectious for every White House, and we had this problem as well. I don't want to create the impression everything was all hunky-dory all the time, because it wasn't.

There were members of our White House staff, as I'm sure there are members of the President's current White House staff as well as his predecessors—There are folks who often think that their personal friend, or their personal relationship, or this one or two guys who they know who are members of Congress—they went to law school with them, they used to hang with them at something else, they worked with them, they went to college with them—It is their belief that that person represents the pulse of the United States Congress. So very often the internal policy debates were, "Well, I talked to my buddy so-and-so and he is the leading authority in the House of Representatives," on this arcane issue of emissions, "and he says it's going to be X, Y, and Z."

Well, the problem is that this person who is being quoted as being the authority only talks to himself and the person who offices across the hall from him. So it was always important for us

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on the legislative side to have more—We were the empirical data guys. Our responsibility was to make sure that we had the numbers that were necessary to do whatever it was the President needed to do. And we had to sometimes lay our cards on the table. And you'd get into a heated debate, "If John Dingell says this, what about the fact that 25 other members of his committee have said they're going to roll his butt on this issue? How are we going to get out of the committee and then let this be the pulse on the floor of what the debate and discussion turns out to be?"

Overall it's a constant give-and-take process, but it is one that required not only the interaction with my colleagues at the White House. I promised my guys who worked for me—and I am going to get back to the selection process—"Guys, the person you're supposed to be most loyal to in this whole proposition is the President of the United States. That's the person we're loyal to, this ain't for us. And as long as you shoot straight with me, because you're my information channel, and you don't let me get my butt in a crack, and you make sure I am fully informed, I'm going to protect you in this whole process until the cows come home and the loyalty thing runs up the way."

And I must say that my guys were extremely loyal to me and I protected them in those instances where I had members of the Congress calling me and telling me what behinds they were or how they'd been treated. And if my guys said, "Fred, that's not the way that happened," I'd take it up with the member right there because I believed my guys were loyal to me and I was loyal to them. Which goes, I think, to why I chose them.

With one exception, everybody I chose on my initial staff was a personal friend of mine. The one exception was a recommendation that I got from the outside and that one exception was a guy named Jack [John W.] Howard. Jack had worked on the floor in—Who was it who was whip? It was one of the guys from Pennsylvania who was a vote counter or whip at one time, and I can't remember who it was. In any event, he had worked for him and I knew he knew a lot of the guys on the floor because he was a floor guy for this House member and he'd been recommended to me by someone else. Otherwise, every other person I chose I had prior personal relationships with and that formed the basis of my team. Jack subsequently, by the way, is back at the White House now as deputy to Calio for the internal deputy slot, and went on to work for Newt and other folks.

Anyway, so I picked them. So I got a guy that was in the telecom business, a guy named Gary Andres whom I stole from SBC [SBC Communications Inc.]. I got Calio to be my deputy over on the House side; I knew he had a wide relationship particularly on the House side, although he had some Senate side, number one because he had a very good relationship with [Dan] Rostenkowski. I knew that taxes and budget stuff was going to be huge. Rosty was then chairman of the committee.

I wanted somebody who actually had the ability to talk to Rostenkowski. I knew there were going to be some challenges because of the budget situation that we were in where Darman, rightfully so, was going to be taking his lead role as OMB director and there were going to be clashes between him and Brady and what was going over at Treasury Department. And there were times when I just needed to find out what the hell Rostenkowski was talking about and I

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had a guy who had the ability to do that when I chose Nick. Plus Nick, coming from I guess—Where did he come from? Was it Manufacturers? I think he was at Manufacturers. Anyway, he had good knowledge of not only the tax side of the Ways and Means committee side in terms of relationships, but he also had Energy and Commerce too. But I didn't need him most directly for that.

Gary Andres, who had been with SBC—it wasn't SBC then, it was Southwestern Bell. Gary had been with Southwestern Bell. I stole him from there and Gary was my Energy and Commerce guy because he had had a lot of relationships with that committee as a result of the role that he had chosen. I forgot who else I got here.

On the Senate side, let me go there for the leadership of it at least, I chose a guy named Boyd [Hollingsworth]. Boyd was a long-time friend, but Boyd also was the floor guy for Alan Simpson on the Senate side, so I knew that he would be known by each of the members of the United States Senate including those on the other side of the aisle because of the role that he played for Simpson. Let's see, where's my list here . . . . because it was a long time ago, guys.

I chose my internal deputy directly because legislative affairs—at least during my day, we participated in the judicial selection process. We had a seat at the table on scheduling, we had a seat at the table when there were either domestic policy or economic policy council meetings or subsets of those groups going on. So I had a seat at the table at everything that was important because not only did I have to get them confirmed, but members of the Senate were beating on us in terms of who they wanted or didn't want.

Scheduling, because it had to do with not only the image of the President, but it had to do with—And then this internal deputy, too, has to perform the other role of the paper flow. A speech is being circulated. Do we make sure that the legislative affairs' view is included in this speech? So he was my sign-off guy internally. Well, the guy I chose for that I stole from OMB, a guy named Gordon Wheeler. And Gordon came over and was my internal deputy at the beginning of the administration.

Young: You keep using the word stole—

McClure: I did steal him. I did steal him. Well.

Young: Maybe you ought to say a word about that.

McClure: Stole? Well, I did. People don't want their offices decimated at the beginning of a—I mean it happens. But Gordon Wheeler I stole. I basically told him, "You don't really want to work at OMB anymore. You want to come over and be a legislative guy full-time," because he'd been the OMB legislative director. I say stole. I'm not sure whether Darman wanted to keep him or not, but he had been there with whoever was after Stockman. Jim Miller. He had been there with Jim. And so I just kind of moved him over across the street. If you look at the concept that you take somebody from Capitol Hill and decimate a Senator's staff because you go get their legislative director—I went and got Brian Waidmann from Bill Armstrong. It was like, "Brian I need you."

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See, what I did was I put together a staff of folks who first and foremost had to be my friends. Beyond being my friends, they had to have a stable of relationships or experiences that collectively gave me a mass of people that allowed me to do my job as effectively as I could on behalf of the President. I put together a mix of private sector folks with public Hill folks. I didn't bring anybody to the team who had been previously at another agency or department. All these guys came from the outside. I resisted very strongly, and successfully, adding somebody to my staff who Lee wanted me to add because I didn't need a Lee Atwater person. It didn't have anything to do with me not liking Lee because I loved the hell out of Lee. It was just one of these things where I didn't think he needed to have anybody hanging out in my shop—that I had the ability to pick the right people to do the job. We had a little fight early on about that and I won that one, too.

So that was the make-up of it. There was some criticism early on, in the paper no doubt, which really hurt me greatly. There was some criticism about the relative—what's the word I'm looking for—young age and inexperience of the legislative affairs staff. This article must have appeared about a month into the administration. It was probably by some of the old gray hairs that I know very well who were not willing to be quoted on the record, but would say a few things about those young whippersnappers over there at the White House, having forgotten that they, too, were once young whippersnappers when they worked there. In fact, it riled me up so much I went back over to the library in the OEOB—a big old smelly place over there—and found old Congressional directories and pulled together the staff of President John F. Kennedy and got their relative ages and experiences—

Young: It wasn't very much.

McClure: It was not very much, that's right. And I'm sitting here thinking, *Well, hell. Why am I upset? This is Kennedy.* It really hurt. I was just hurt. Then I went back and added up all the collective years of legislative experience that my guys had, and collectively we had over 115 or 120 years of legislative experience in the private and public sector, and I started telling people that. Of course, nobody wanted to print it.

Here's what made it look different. If you remember, when Ronald Reagan became President he surrounded himself with a lot of older guys who had been in government before and he mixed those guys with people who had been with him in California. So you get [Ed] Rollins and [Mike] Deaver, but then you add Baker, and then you start getting Friedersdorf and all these other guys who had been there before. And you created an environment where it was a much older White House than what George Bush had around him. Hell, the oldest people around our table were Sununu and Darman. All the rest of us—I was among the younger ones—were in our mid-30s or early 30s.

Young: Well, that's young.

McClure: And that was young. Clinton did worse than that. Clinton really got the young guys because they didn't have a farm team. We were lucky. We had had a farm team out there because of the number of years that Republicans had occupied the White House. But it hurt me. And that

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was early on in the process. But I think I put together a great staff as evidenced by the fact that when I left, Calio returned and worked for the President, and now has been stupid enough to go do it again for the current President, as I told him. [laughter]

Then I had a good succession of deputies. Talking about stealing, I'll give you another example. Gordon left after about a year to go to the private sector because he'd not been out. And I literally stole a guy named Rob Portman from the counsel's office because I'd worked with him on immigration reform early on in the administration and had gotten to know him. Rob came and worked for me for a year and a half, I guess it was, and then moved back to Cincinnati and is now a member of Congress. He replaced [Bill] Gradison when Gradison retired. And he was the only person, by the way, that George Bush campaigned for, other than Paul Coverdell, when he first got out of office. That was a steal. Boyden was pissed at me, "What are you doing stealing my guys?" Then I later stole a guy from Fitzwater who was my third deputy, a guy named Steve Hart. They were steals, but they were good steals because we're all there for the same cause.

Young: Before break, you said something about Nick Calio being—What did you say?

McClure: Stupid enough to go back and do it again.

Young: I think the record should show that you were smiling broadly when you said that.

McClure: I said that publicly. What do you mean? Nick actually asked me that question, which was, "Am I stupid or what, McClure?" And I said, "I've got an answer for you Calio."

Young: We've covered a lot of the ground about how you went about getting organized, the people you selected, the important priorities for handling the two constituents and your chief client, who's the President. Maybe we can move now into some of the issues and actual work as you got into the administration having set up the shop in this way. One of the earliest things that happened, and I don't know what your involvement in it was—Well, I wouldn't say one of the earliest things that happened, but certainly the headline maker in those early days was the Tower nomination, as well as the Tiananmen Square uprising, and a lot of other surprises were happening. Were you at all involved in the Tower confirmation or nomination process?

McClure: Yes.

Young: Would you talk about it?

McClure: First of all, in my role as assistant for legislative affairs, I had responsibility for all of the presidential nominations, whether they were assistant secretaries for some sub-cabinet position or whether it was cabinet secretaries. And of course early on, it was the push to get our cabinet nominees confirmed. There were a couple of things going on at that point. I mentioned earlier that we got the Contra thing through. If I remember correctly, there was also a little supplemental appropriations bill in those early months that was somewhat controversial. And all the other nominations were moving along quite well with the exception of the Tower one, which had managed to generate quite a large amount of discussion.

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There were some other dynamics going on that I have to fit into this as well. Jim Wright was having some problems, too, over in the House of Representatives. Tony Coelho was having problems over in the House of Representatives. And until the Tower nomination was completed, you still had Gingrich on the back-bench, but leading a crowd of agitators, if you will, to try to move the administration and policy in the direction that was a little bit further right than perhaps we had wanted to go. This was coupled with the fact that once John was defeated and Dick was nominated to replace him, this whole fight of who was going to succeed Dick as—

Young: Yes.

McClure: And that had implications down the road that reached a fever pitch, particularly when we were doing round one of the budget agreement. Probably—not probably—the biggest disappointment that I had during my three years as assistant for legislative affairs was to do with the nomination of John Tower who, as I indicated earlier, was my political mentor and hero, and the reason I got into public life. So the personal part of that made that role rather difficult.

There was not a whole lot to do in terms of preparing him for a confirmation hearing process because he knew far more about armed services and the issues associated with the Department of Defense, our military, its role in our whole foreign policy apparatus because of his years of experience. And indeed, it's my view that the reasons his nomination was defeated, ultimately, had to do with a combination of a couple of factors. Number one, there was a knowledge amongst people on Capitol Hill, particularly in the Senate and particularly on the Senate Armed Services committee, who knew that he knew far more about it than any of them did. And there was the whole question as to who was going to occupy the primary role in terms of the armed services policy or the defense policy of the United States and who was going to take that lead.

John had also been a very strong chairman and probably pissed off a few people during his service as Armed Services Committee chairman. And this was an opportunity to make sure that he didn't get to do that anymore, and to stick it to him, if you will, in terms of his ability to get confirmed, and to deny him the confirmation because everybody knew that he wanted to do it. Besides Baker and Tower, I don't know of anybody else who wanted to do the two jobs that they got nominated by the President to do any more than those two individuals. And I think that was the beginning, as well, of "We're going to deny every President at least one of his major choices, whether it goes all the way to a floor fight or not, or whether things get so tough that they have to withdraw"—á la Linda Chavez and what they thought was going to happen with Ashcroft in this round with George W.

From a substantive standpoint, there wasn't a whole lot of preparation, unlike Supreme Court nominees, because John had been on the other side of the table many times before as a confirming member of the United States Senate, and so he knew how to handle it on the other side. Frankly there was a side of me that worried a little bit that John would get into a Bork-like debate: old college professor now in the position to have the lecture podium as opposed to being on the policy-making side as a member of the Senate.

It was the most difficult thing I went through because of the personal attacks that were made on John—that basically because of alcohol, or whatever, he was incapable of serving as the nation's

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top defense guy. Those of us who had been with him in his latter days—I mentioned earlier his second marriage. It was after his second marriage that he very rarely did anything but drink wine, which was not the way it was in those days prior to that. Those were some of the stories that began to surface, rightfully or wrongfully during the confirmation process.

The most difficult thing in that, too, came at a point where John was staying over at the Jefferson Hotel, and I got a phone call one day. This was late in the process—before the vote, but after the committee hearings had terminated and all the crap was going on. And he told me, "Come over and see me in the Jefferson Hotel." I went over and he ran everybody else out of the room and it was just the two of us. He basically turned to me and he said, "Fred," and he had tears in his eyes, "I've about decided I'm going to call the President this afternoon and ask him to withdraw my name as Secretary of Defense because it's taking too much of a toll on him. It's going to affect his ability to be the leader that I'm confident that he can become and is, and I don't need to be this kind of distraction, and I'm tired of this."

Then my eyes started tearing up. It was one of these things where I basically said, "You can't do that. And the reason you can't do that is because that's not the way you taught any of us who've been your students in this process over the years and are now all over government. I wouldn't be here doing what I'm doing now, in this room with you, if it wasn't for the fact that you always gave us this view of hanging in there and sticking with it." We had a long tearful discussion and it just tore me apart to go back to the White House after being up at the hotel and knowing that he might do this. But I finally got him to promise me that he wasn't going to do it. And he refrained from making that telephone call.

The other difficult time during that process, which actually was reported in the media quite widely, and from that day forward circumscribed even more the relationship I had with guys and gals in the media, was the morning that he made the decision to do the pledge, the oath, on—I guess it was on "This Week." I did not know about it. There were very few people who knew about it. John had made that decision on his own and my guess is that there were probably only two other people who knew he was going to do that. I can't remember who was working with him on the nomination side. It wasn't Will, but it was somebody who'd worked with us previously when we all worked for Tower. And he also let Sununu know, if I remember correctly, what he was going to do, but it was not until the last minute and John Sununu can probably give you more detail on that.

I'd gotten up that morning and had gone to church, and had recorded it—I knew it was going to be on. Before watching it, I made the mistake of picking up the telephone and finding that I had a message. If I remember correctly, it was from Andrew Rosenthal of the *New York Times.* I returned his phone call before watching the tape and regretted that I did so because it created this impression—And this is an office reason I regret it, I didn't care about me personally, but the Office of Legislative Affairs. When Andrew asked me the question, Did I have any knowledge of. . . , not only did I not have any knowledge, I was completely dumbfounded because I was shocked that Tower had done this.

Frankly, I would not have recommended that he do it, which is probably one of the reasons that Tower decided he wouldn't ask anybody, he would just kind of do it. I would not have

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recommended such a thing because it wasn't going to be enough to change the stories that were now pervasive out there that he was a drunk and a womanizer.

That series of events and the articles in the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* and wherever else followed after that were disconcerting personally because it bore upon the effectiveness and the involvement level of our office. It's important, as we alluded to earlier, that both the perception and the reality be that at least the guy or gal who was responsible for communicating the President's views to Congress—that number one, you get to talk to the President so you can have views to communicate, and vice versa if they've got something that they want to share going back in the other direction, there needs to be some confidence on their part that somebody back at the White House, hopefully the President, listens to the guy that's got the job to do that two-way communication.

Do I think that that mistake on my part affected the effectiveness of our office? No. Do I think that it ultimately had an impact upon John's nomination? No. One of the things that affected John and Jim Wright at that same point in time in the Congress, but on different sides of the aisle and for different things—I remember there was this question whether or not there was going to be a vote on Jim Wright in terms of his book deal and all that kind of stuff, and whether or not he could remain as Speaker or whatever. They weren't really trying to kick him out of Speaker; there was going to be some confidence vote, if I remember correctly, and I don't think we ever got to it.

And one of the things that showed a changed dynamic in the Congress in terms of its treatment of nominees and the way it kind of felt about its own, meaning Jim Wright—A lot of the guys who used to—I don't want to use the term "good old boys," that's not a good way to describe it. That was at a point in time where I don't believe there was the opportunity to develop as many friendships between members of the legislative branch that were deep and long-standing. That even though you might have known the personal foibles and failures of an individual or their weaknesses, you were able to rise above that because you knew ultimately that they would always rise to the occasion and do the job that they were being called upon to do. The Scoop [Henry M.] Jacksons of the world were gone, the Barry Goldwaters, all those kinds of guys.

And I think, similarly, that was the case over in the House of Representatives with Jim. Jim ran for that Senate seat the same time that John Tower ran for that Senate seat and John Tower won. And so now, twenty-five, or whatever the number is, years later—more than that. But anyway, whatever the number is from 1960 to 1989, there they are in that position where their friends weren't coming to support them. And I think there are a lot of factors that have led to that.

When I look at it philosophically, there's so much 24-hour news going on now that they don't stay here. They have to go home; they have to get back to the people. And so they don't have the opportunity to develop the friendships where they're going to each other's house to eat on the weekend or they're going out for dinner during the week. It's that news cycle that they've got to be a part of and sometimes they've got to combat the news stuff that's going on by going home because all these grass roots groups and all of these special interest groups—I have nothing against either—are doing what they're doing. And to combat that requires a personal touch. Thus

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they spend so much less time here now than they did in the early days, in the ’60s and the ’70s, when I think they developed relationships.

Now there were people, and I’ll have to go back and look at the list again, who stood up for Tower. Bentsen stood up with him, for him, as his Texas colleague; Chris Dodd because of the long thing going back to where—And there were some others who came to John’s rescue. But ultimately, it was not enough and he was denied the opportunity to serve. One of the things we also did differently was in most instances, nominations will die in a committee. And what we finally got to in that situation was a recommendation from the committee to the Senate that they reject the nomination, just a way to get it to the floor as opposed to an outright rejection where somebody would have to do a resolution to discharge it from the committee and use the Senate rules to get it that way. It was a very painful time and my biggest disappointment in my three years of service in that office.

Riley: Were there lasting repercussions between the White House and the Hill as a result of the blood that was on the floor from this particular battle? Were there people who you just found it extremely difficult to deal with from that point forward or that the White House—

McClure: Only because of my personal views about those individuals. [laughter] Personally disgusting to deal with them? Yes. But I couldn’t let that stop me because otherwise we would have been gutted in month three. Now, one of the other things that helped, and this is the good part of that nomination, was, if I remember correctly, that there was a pay raise vote going on in the House at about that same time and we religiously stayed out. I think the President’s view was if they want to vote themselves a raise they can do it. One of those hands-off deals. So there wasn’t much happening in the House because they were all tied up in all of their internal things where Newt’s beating on Wright, on Jim, and Tony’s getting hit. And so they’re still doing all these kind of organizational kinds of things.

All this was happening at the same time as we were doing Tower over in the Senate; Jim Wright only served as Speaker for a short period of time and it all happened about the same time during that first three months. Then, of course, we complicated it again by taking [Richard B.] Cheney and making Cheney the Secretary of Defense nomination. And we had our own little thing going on on the Republican side when Newt and whoever it was he ran against—It wasn’t [Robert] Livingston. He’s dead now. He was from Illinois. Not Illinois. . . .

Riley: He ran against him. Was it [Bob] Michel? Michel’s alive, but—

McClure: No, no. He didn’t run against Michel. He ran to replace Michel. When Cheney left, the number two job was open. Newt ran for the number two job, but he ran against Ed Madigan from Illinois, who ultimately became Ag secretary. And he beat Madigan because Madigan had been chairman or had been ranking member on the Ag committee. And Newt beat Ed in this very tough, close fight and thus became the number two guy.

So all of this was happening in this time frame. In the immediate aftermath of Tower, we got some things through because the Contras thing and a couple of other things that had been controversial previously—we just waltzed through as a result of all these distractions going on.

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One of the lasting impacts of the White House's ability to deal with Congress was going forward, and I think it has held over into subsequent administrations in terms of what choices you make when you try to get members of the body to go back and get confirmation. You've got two ways: you go get a House member who's never served in the Senate, you've got that piece, or you go get a Senator, or a former Senator, and deal with that whole question of whether or not there is any baggage there.

And frankly, I think that there were a lot of people who thought that Ashcroft was going to suffer a fate not dissimilar from John's because in the six years—Maybe it was lucky John Ashcroft had only been there six years and only had a six-year record as opposed to—And John was probably better off, too, because he'd gotten beat and was so gracious with [Mel] Carnahan when that whole thing took place. So some of the things that I used in previous nominations that I employed in the Ashcroft nomination were lessons learned from my prior days in the White House. But there were some people whom I didn't want to spend a whole lot of time around, yes, because it hurt me personally that my mentor got—who was probably the most qualified person in the country at that point of time.

One could make the other argument that he was over-qualified, he knew too much, he was so much a part of the Reagan build-up, would he ever be able to separate himself from the troops? Because he always used to pride himself on having been a chief boatswain's mate, or whatever, from his Navy days. So there were probably those who thought he was too close to the military establishment and the question was, "Who's going to run defense policy?" And their answer was, "By golly, we're going to run it from the Senate Armed Services Committee."

I think that it didn't defeat his nomination, but it was something. That one year that Les Aspin served as Secretary of Defense for President Clinton was similarly situated. That's one of those posts, I think, in government, where there are a lot of other people who think their views ought to be the policy of the United States government. It doesn't happen as easily on the Secretary of State side because it's just so far reaching. But when it's troops, and where troops are going to be, and how much they are going to get paid, and all of those issues: How big is the Navy going to be? Is he going to shut down this production line that's in my state up here? We've got base reduction, realignment, closures, all that crap going at the same time and everybody's got a piece of the defense pie. Is it going to be Lockheed Martin, or is it going to be Northrup Grumman?

So I think that is one that it's easy to take a potshot at. One of the advantages that I think [Donald] Rumsfeld got—even though he caught crap in the early months when he was trying to get things together, although they give him pretty good marks now—was he'd been Secretary of Defense before, even though it was in a different time and era. It's a peculiar position. So you're careful. But remember, I also made a comment earlier about the fact that the institution had changed from when I first worked there in the '70s and then returned to work it in the late '80s: guys could be bitter opponents one day on an issue of policy, but yet, for whatever reason, they are strong collectively on an issue the next day and they go off the floor of the Senate or the House laughing, with arms around each other's shoulder. You don't see that as much any more, and I think that that has changed the dynamic of not only the institution's ability to function, but the way outside institutions, which try to influence what they do, function.

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Riley: I'm going to assume that the White House took a completely hands-off position on the leadership battle—

McClure: Oh, yes. That is a great assumption. One which is, "You ain't saying nada." Yes, that was a completely hands-off involvement in that race. Both publicly and, as far as I know, privately. It was like the pay raise: "That's their business. We've got other fish to fry."

Dickinson: Did you personally see the Gingrich effort against Speaker Wright to be another sign of the collapsing civility?

McClure: Yes, I did. I thought it was. And then Tony just kind of left. Tony was a great guy to work with in the House, too. And something that was different from somebody battling it out back home in a Congressional district, whether it was [Thomas] Foley in that fashion, or the Tip O'Neill thing—

Now, let me be quick to note, notwithstanding the collapsing civility that appeared to be happening up there, a couple of things: one, Gingrich's efforts even then had a substantial impact upon the change that took place in 1994. And prior to that, Newt then was at that point where he sowed a number of seeds, which ultimately culminated in two things taking place: the first time the House had been controlled by Republicans since 1954, and a situation today which is little noted that I think this is the first time in the history of the country that the President has been Republican, the House of Representatives has been Republican, and the Senate of the United States has been Democrat. The Senate's always had this shot since 1954, but I think if you go back and check it, you'll find that that's the case for—which is an interesting test for Republicans in the House of Representatives in this current mode. So.

This is a scenario where I think Newt's actions and what was happening in the House had a lot to do with the 1994 change. And frankly, I think if George Bush 41—George H. W. Bush—had not been defeated in 1992, 1994 would not have taken place.

Dickinson: Early on though, did you detect, I mean in terms of the Bush legislative strategy for instance—I don't know, Jim, if you want to move into the tax pledge. Did you detect that this could be problematic then from the perspective of what the President wanted to get through?

McClure: The civility question, or what? Which question?

Dickinson: Just the Gingrich movement, the organizing of the right flank basically in the Republican Party.

McClure: I detected it was going to be a difficulty when he, as a part of the Republican leadership, was helping orchestrate opposition to the first round of the 1990 budget deal. Because remember, we did two. And we got substantially less in the deal the second go-around than we did the first go-around. Substantially less, we walked further down the plank in terms of the issue, although we were trying to very creatively describe it as revenue enhancement or whatever terms we used during that time frame. We didn't do a very good job.

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My firm belief, though I had absolutely nothing to do with it, is that when the President made the "No new taxes" pledge when he was running for the nomination and ultimately the presidency—because I guess he made it during the Republican convention—was that the "No new taxes" was very narrowly defined as, "We ain't going to increase your income taxes—you, the American people." But you didn't have time to say all of that if you said, "No new taxes." Because you put yourself in a position where any tax that was different from one that had existed before—whether it's on business, whether it's on partnerships, whether it's on services, any of those things. Where the federal government has jurisdiction, you had broken your pledge. And they stuffed it down our throats. We played these games for the early part of it that, tried to act like they weren't something that was a violation of that pledge, and it didn't work.

I've forgotten the cute term we used. It wasn't revenue enhancement. I can't remember what it was.

Young: Tax revenue increase.

McClure: Was it tax revenue increase?

Young: Tax revenue increase.

McClure: I think this was a Darman creation, by the way, if I remember correctly—he was heavily involved in that negotiation with John because John was in there working on the childcare package. We did childcare within that deal. Our first go-around, we had some capital gains tax relief stuff in there. All the good things that we wanted to talk about that we couldn't talk about because when we went back on round two, we didn't have any of a substantial nature any more to make them meaningful.

And we didn't do a very good job, frankly, of getting the President to say the kinds of things he needed to say to get beyond that "No new taxes" pledge. I mean in retrospect, it could have been a Clinton approach, "I'm sorry. I did it. Okay. Things have changed. I didn't mean it. Now, let's go on down the road." We didn't do that. And we did a very poor job of communicating what we did because as a practical matter, I think it was outside the realm of what was contemplated with the "No new taxes" pledge.

Young: I'd like to hear more about the preparation and the politics of the budget deal. Were you out there at Andrews when they—

McClure: No. I sent Calio—

Young: Calio was there.

McClure: Yes. I took the two people who were handling my House Ways and Means and Finance Committee pieces. Nick was doing Ways and Means. I can't remember who was doing the House. I'd have to look up who was doing the Senate side of the equation. But the two of them were out there for all of the negotiations at Andrews. And then of course at the end of the day, they would come back and report to me.

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Young: But the reason for adjourning to Andrews was what? Because there had been a whole series of difficult and somewhat unproductive negotiations?

McClure: If I remember correctly, we called and announced the Summit at the White House after some joint Congressional leadership meeting that included the leadership of the Finance and the Ways and Means Committee. And the whole Andrews thing was designed to get everybody away from Capitol Hill and to get it out of that. This is probably a bad analogy, but it's kind of like having the peace talks at Camp David. It was, "Let's get everybody out of our environment where we normally do it and put everybody on somewhat equal ground and we can hide things." It isn't over in the Finance Committee room or the Ways and Means Committee room where thousands and thousands of people can get in, even though we had leaks and all that kind of stuff during the process. But at least it was a self-contained world that didn't include lobbyists for interest groups or various clients and businesses; it was basically principals.

Now, that doesn't mean people weren't on their phones and all that kind of stuff, but that was the reason. And it was kind of like the peace talks, it kind of gave it some heft. It really was something where we're going to try and go away from here and do a deal rather than doing it up on Capitol Hill, in the Dirksen Building, or in the caucus room or over in the Ways and Means Committee hearing room.

Plus, you could keep people there and it was not as easy to go run off to another subcommittee meeting—be in and out of the room, run back to the office to meet with constituents—because you had to leave to go to Andrews. I don't know that there was anything more political or policy-wise attached to that decision, Jim, than that. If there was, it was beyond me.

Young: Well, it guaranteed a different kind of media attention to what was going on out there: shades of the smoke-filled room, where a deal was being done. There was some of that spin put on it in the press.

McClure: And that was the Camp David analogy I'm trying to make in the sense that it's away, it's very important, it's very special. Now, despite the fact that we took some big hits on that politically—I don't believe, by the way, that that's the reason George Bush lost ultimately in 1992.

I think it probably was a factor that contributed it, but I do not think it was substantial enough to cause his loss in 1992. That said, the other thing about that 1990 budget agreement, the one that we ultimately got in round two with the floors and the ceilings in terms of defense spending and all those kinds of things in the appropriations process, was that it ultimately was a very good thing. In fact, Bill Clinton employed a part of it on a veterans funding thing the first month that he was in office in 1993. So it was a good fiscal restraint on government spending that we had never been able to have before and it was different from the Graham-Rudman kind of deal. So that gave us a little bit more control in the process.

Young: Was this Darman's show?

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McClure: Yes.

Young: Sununu was there also. Were they working closely—

McClure: And then you had Nick Brady.

Young: Can you tell us about that trio at the budget meetings?

McClure: Well, since I wasn't—

Young: You weren't there but you had—

McClure: Any information that I had at that time about the dynamics of what was going on at Andrews would have been purely second-hand in terms of what my guys came back to tell me. And again, going back to the Carol Dinkens stories, I have no substantive notes to refresh my memory in that regard for fear of subpoenas and all that kind of stuff. It was basically a Darman/Sununu-run show, probably more so than Brady's involvement in it because it was a budget deal. The budget deal just happened to have a tax component. And so they were the big dudes in that with some involvement with Roger Porter. But it was primarily Dick and John. Occasionally—God, what's my buddy's name who had been chairman? Boskin. Mike Boskin was involved in them when you start talking about long-term economic stuff because he was economic advisors chairman at that point in time, or actually through our whole deal. They were the players.

Riley: Your guys were in all of the meetings, or were they just out there on the side?

McClure: They were in the meetings.

Riley: How many people, roughly, would have been in the consultation?

Young: I would guess the Congressional people brought some of their staff.

McClure: Yes, the Congressional guys brought their staff.

Riley: So this isn't five—

McClure: And remember, we didn't have a—Oh, this is the other thing, too. I'd forgotten about this. The budget deal was outside the normal Parliamentary processes that go on in the Senate because it was a conglomeration of affected individuals. It was not a meeting of the Finance Committee with the Ways and Means Committee because we had budget guys there because Domenici was involved in it and his Democratic counterpart—I can't remember who he was at that time. And the same thing was happening over on the House side. You had Rosty and [Bill] Archer, and you had Lloyd and Packwood. It was the head dudes. I can't remember whether the appropriators were involved in it or not. I can't remember whether Byrd was in it with [Mark O.] Hatfield or not. I just can't remember.

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Young: He was out there at some point.

McClure: Okay. And then you see it would have made sense for it to be Finance and Ways and Means. And thinking back, the head of the Appropriations committees and people representative of the leadership, i.e. the Speaker, minority leader, majority leader so that you could basically put together a deal which had the blessings of the leadership—And then it was everybody's job to go back and sell it as best they could. And the first time we came back late that night, Newt walked some guys, and we lost. And we had to go back and do another deal. So it was very frustrating.

Young: Getting back to one of the questions that Matt had asked earlier, which is fundamentally the question of how much trouble were you anticipating or could be anticipated from what Gingrich was up to?

McClure: I did not anticipate—we did not anticipate—what was going to happen that night on the floor when we lost in the House the first round.

Young: It was a surprise.

McClure: It was a surprise. It was becoming readily apparent as we got closer and closer to the time for the vote, but it wasn't something we knew about, say, for two days, for example. It was something, if I remember correctly, that we didn't get a feel for. That was one of those votes—and this happens occasionally, or at least occasionally during my three years—where it's one of those high-level deals where we have to depend a great deal upon the leadership to keep accurate votes and we needed member-to-member contact as opposed to White House representative-to-member. So it's like Rostenkowski talking to [Dave] Obey, it's like Archer talking to somebody else. And then that collective whip count, vote count, was stuff that we, in the White House, worked with our Republican leadership staff in sharing. And Republican leadership guys did a lot of the work with the Democratic leadership guys on those things with bipartisan deals.

So let's take the Senate for example. We'd be working very closely with Dole and Simpson, who in turn would be working very closely with [George] Mitchell and whoever the number two guy was, Wendell Ford, at that point in time. That was the way the information was flowing back and forth. Say, for example, Mitchell was on our side and Ford wasn't. But Mitchell knew that we needed [Max] Baucus's vote, but he wasn't able to get there yet and he knew that there was something that we could do from a White House perspective that would help get Baucus's vote. Then Mitchell would communicate that either to me or to Dole. Then Dole would communicate that to me, I'd run it through our shop, the President would call Baucus. Then we'd go back with the information.

So that was one of those where we had the lead, but we really didn't. It was because it was one of those that was an aberration.

Young: Well, I think this is a really important perspective here because given all the things that you have discussed earlier about how you patrolled the beat, your eyes and ears, and worked this and worked that, and had a feel for the pulse and the trends in the House, it looks like this was

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entirely missing in the budget deal. That is, this wasn't evolving from the people who knew the beat and were involved in the beat. Really? It was a high-level deal being put together by—

McClure: It was a high-level deal being put together by principals in an odd rump group. They weren't rump, they were all rightfully there in their own reasons. But it was not something that went through the typical legislative process where you send a piece of legislation up to the Hill, it gets referred to the Finance Committee, the Finance Committee goes through all their hearings and mark-ups; you've got some similar thing going over on the House side through Ways and Means; you ultimately come together, have a conference report, do your two bills, have your conference. It was not that.

Young: It was not that.

McClure: Because ultimately it was a multi-jurisdictional piece of legislation that was plopped down on the floor of both houses. In fact, if I remember correctly, there was even this big question as to which House was going to go first. Which is, "Oh, shit. If we have to veto this, which House ought to go first?" Because we have to figure out which one we're going to deal with. "But it's a revenue bill." "Well, it's really a budget bill." "No it's a revenue bill." So the House went first. And then we got gutted

Young: Which means—

McClure: And then we had to start all over again.

Young: Which means that to the extent that the normal procedure—you said this was an aberration—is able to get early warnings of trouble in this quarter or that quarter, and send those early warnings to the people who should know about it—who are doing the negotiating, who are doing the policy work—that wasn't possible under this circumstance.

McClure: I'm not going to say it wasn't possible. I'm just going to say it didn't happen.

Young: Okay, it didn't happen.

McClure: It didn't happen because of the unique nature of the deal and how the deal came together. There was a tremendous amount of information exchanged and there were roles that we had to play in terms of whether the President was involved or not involved, or other members of the Cabinet were involved in the lobbying process. But that was one of those that fell into the member-to-member kind of a deal and it's very difficult to penetrate that in a situation where you've got something and it's not coming through the normal channels.

We had people sitting in the negotiations who ultimately went out and voted against the package. So it's not—

Riley: That's the problem. You're relying on a degree of discipline, people adhering to what they had indicated in the negotiations—

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McClure: And then they decide, "No, we're not going to do it." It was a total surprise.

Young: But when you have a summit, you expect the people who agree at the summit to go out and support what they've done. That didn't happen here.

McClure: That is true.

Young: It didn't happen. So then the next question is, is it your sense that the defection or the failure to support the deal was something that developed rather suddenly?

McClure: My perception is that it was something that developed rather suddenly.

Young: Okay.

McClure: In terms of a concerted effort to garner up enough votes to have others who would follow to get there, there were signs. Now don't get me wrong. There were signs, but we didn't get it right. It was one of those where Newt and some of those who were of the same persuasion as was he were able to muster enough folks and then—again, this is also one of those—

Young: Did he release—

McClure: Yes, he did. I think. It is my perception that he left. And he was minority whip at that time. But it is my perception that—

Young: He wasn't caught by surprise and had to join the. . . .

McClure: Who? Newt?

Young: Yes.

McClure: No. No. My perception was that Newt was very actively involved in the effort. And again, even despite the fact that it upset me greatly when we lost and the way we had to go back, the other side of the coin was that that was the beginning of what resulted in the '94 change. It was just plain and simple. These were guys who supported him against Madigan. It was just that he'd been the guy doing the bombs on Wright and those other guys, which ultimately may have been good for the institution—may have not. That said, he was in the forefront of it. But he was also in the negotiations.

Young: Yes, that's the—

McClure: Yes. So. And let me tell you, Archer had some problems with what was going on out there. But he was a good soldier, if I remember correctly. But then you got to add another piece to it: there are also those instances in Congress, particularly in the House, where once the ball gets rolling down the hill, all of a sudden it's a lot easier for people who had a view that they were going to help you to get on the other side. I can't remember what the vote defection was that night amongst Republicans, I just don't remember. But do I think that Newt thought he had

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that many people who were going to follow him? No, I don't think he did. I think he had what he thought was enough people to send a message. And what happened is that all these other people said, "I'm going there, too."

Dickinson: The cascade effect.

McClure: That's my view, Matthew. Whatever the number was he got, I don't know. I do not believe that he was religiously trying to get that number. But I think that once the number got large enough and there was enough cover for members to do what they did under whatever arguments they did it for, it was a lot easier to do once there were a lot of other people doing it. That could explain it.

Young: Let me put a theoretical question to you.

McClure: I don't answer theoretical questions—

Young: Being a professor—

McClure: I don't answer theoretical questions. I only deal with the real world. What is this? Come on, Jim.

Young: All right, I'll ask it anyway, regardless of what you call it. A "thought experiment," I'll say. Would you, if this had not been done as an aberration, leaving aside whether that's the only way it could have been done at all—But if this had not been done as an aberration, do you think the result would have been different? You're the Congressional expert.

McClure: If it—

Young: If it had been done through a more normal—

McClure: I don't think we could have done it through a more normal way. You had that "leaving out" phrase in there, which had to—

Young: Leaving out whether it could have been done in any other way—

McClure: Oh, okay. Well, my theoretical is this: had it not been an aberration, we never would have been able to get anything of that magnitude through the Congress of the United States.

Young: Okay. So it took a summit of some sort to—

McClure: But there's something else going on at this point in time. We're moving troops into Kuwait and Saudi Arabia because Saddam [Hussein] has started his aggression from the North in August. This is August of 1990. So we've got a budget deal for 1990, and we've got build-up for the Persian Gulf and operation Desert Storm going on at precisely the same time.

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Young: How did that impact the budget negotiations? Did it distract people in the White House? Did it—What?

McClure: I don't know how to say this, and I'm not sure I can even justify this. No, I don't think it was a distraction at all. I think it was, if anything, a lever; something that the President, or we, could use at the White House to kind of say, "Hey look. We've got some other stuff going on, and we need to get this out of the way. We got to wrap this up, and we can't be hanging out here doing this kind of stuff when we're getting ready to do something over there." I think it was, if anything, helpful to finally get the deal done because there were some spending things we knew we were going to have to do that we needed the flexibility to do, and that was a part of the substance of the budget deal. We needed some flexibility in the budget thing for what we knew we were going to have to spend money for in 1991.

So there were some people who had other views other than Darman and Sununu on how the budget deal came out. People like Cheney.

Young: So there was some urgency to getting this done and out of the way.

McClure: Yes. Getting it done and getting Congress out of town. It was nice to have them gone. They didn't get gone until November, if not a little bit later because when they were in town in one place, they had the capability of attracting much more media attention and we needed to get them out of town.

You got to realize what happened was that after Saddam did his thing in August or started doing his thing in August and we started moving in the direction that the President ultimately decided to go, there was a tremendous amount of pressure from our Republican hawks on the Hill—I shouldn't say hawks, that's probably too strong a word—our Republicans on the Hill, who supported what the President was thinking about doing and what they were encouraging us to do. There were a number of them who wanted us very strongly to make people start walking the plank early in November while they were still in town; and I mean people who were opponents, like Sam Nunn, for example, who had beaten John Tower down two years before.

And that's when this started cropping up again in a different a fashion. And it's like okay, we're going to see how real they are. That included [Al] Gore and Lieberman and all those people who were part of that mix getting ready to do the Persian Gulf thing. I don't remember whether this was a Congressional meeting or a cabinet meeting; it must have been Congressional, but it was a Congressional meeting that didn't have anything to do with the Gulf. And after the Congressional meeting, while everybody was milling, the President was getting ready to go back into the Oval [Office] from the Cabinet Room, he turned to me and said, "Fred, come in. I want to talk to you for a second."

So I followed him back into the Oval Office. And every time we had one of these meetings, particularly when it was a partisan Republican meeting as opposed to a bipartisan meeting, everybody—Just like I said, there's a political side of doing what we were doing. And so he pulls me into the Oval and he says, "Okay, tell me. Do I have enough votes? These guys are beating up on me. I don't want war powers, but do I have enough votes to get a resolution out of the

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Congress to let me do what I think I'm going to have to do?" And I looked at him and I said, "No. We don't have enough public support." I said, "I haven't done the numbers, haven't checked it out, haven't done any kind of survey, haven't had my guys test it. But I don't think you can do it." And I said, "The only way I can possibly imagine you getting something out of Congress at this point"—and this was either late October or late November—

Young: Yes, the timing is important.

McClure: Well, what we got to do is go back and look and see what his schedule was and it can be compared with mine and I can tell you exactly—

Young: The budget deal was out of the way by now—Was it?

McClure: No, the budget deal was the 1990—It was during this time frame. I think it was the fall. I'm pretty sure. I don't know. You guys may have a timetable. I may be wrong on that but—

Dickinson: The breaking of the pledge comes in July. Right? Isn't it? And then the details of the actual budget agreement unfold through the budget process in the fall. So that. . . .

McClure: I think it was October or something like that.

Riley: "Congress passes budget bill October 27."

McClure: Yes, '90? Okay.

Riley: Right.

McClure: Yes, and we're already in the middle of all that other junk at that point in time. And so some time at about that time frame, I'm having this conversation with the President and my comment to him was, "We can't do it on a straight up-and-down vote." Congress hadn't left town yet whenever this conversation took place with the President—

Young: "It" being the Persian Gulf situation.

McClure: Right. Saddam starts—

Young: Because you've got—

McClure: He breaks the pledge in July. Saddam starts moving in August.

Young: Yes.

McClure: We finally get the budget deal done in October, and we do the deal January of 1991.

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Riley: I can clutter your memory a little more. You've also got the Souter confirmation the first week of August, and the third week of August the veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990. So there were a few things going on.

McClure: Yes, there were a few other things going on other than just the budget and Saddam, but those things—I'm trying to set the stage for the Persian Gulf thing because what he was—

Young: Yes. Let's concentrate on that.

McClure: He was asking if we had enough votes and I said, "No. We don't have enough votes. I haven't checked it out. I can go do so, but I don't think you can do it." And my deal to him was the following, "At this point, Mr. President, the best you can do is we can figure out how to—this is the only thing I can come up with—word something in the negative. Veto it. I can sustain a veto, but I don't know that you want to send men and women off to war with 32 votes." Period. "So we've got work to do if you're ready to go to Congress to do something." And needless to say, we went in January. But we got Congress out of town. The President had the platform all to himself. We had the Christmas holidays and—

Dickinson: You got the troop build-up.

McClure: And we got the troop build-up, which we were doing anyway. And then ergo, the great debate. And I'll just throw this in because this may be the end of my Persian Gulf. Remember I mentioned earlier that back during the American agriculture strike, when I was working for Tower, I met this guy named Rick Perry, who is now Governor of the state of Texas? Rick was elected that November to be Ag commissioner; he was the only state-wide Republican in the state. I went home to Texas during the Christmas holidays to swear Rick in as Agriculture commissioner—his first state-wide office. The President had been hanging out at Camp David, the troops were moving, we were getting close to January. I walk back into my office the first day back. I get there early, about an hour before the staff meeting. There was this one envelope on my desk because I'd cleaned it before I left. And it was, "To be opened by," an eyes-only kind of a deal.

And I open it up, and in it is a personally typed memo from Camp David on stationery to me and Sununu and Scowcroft that basically says, "I want a resolution. This is what I want it to be." And he had the first draft, which he had typed on his typewriter that day. And that's when Ginny Lampley and I knew what our marching orders were for the next few days. Ultimately that piece of paper became the beginning of the United Nations thing that we did that was short of a declaration of war, but allowed us to do the UN stuff. And that happened in January.

Dickinson: I was surprised to hear you say that in that October-November time frame you just didn't have the votes, that public support wasn't there, as well.

McClure: We didn't. We could not have gotten support for that resolution in October-November.

Knott: Did you, yourself, have a sense that the President wanted to go anyway?

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McClure: At that moment? When he asked me that question? No. Here was my sense throughout the entire Persian Gulf thing. Mind you, now, that it's not my world. The people who have the inside information on this world are Scowcroft and Cheney, and Sununu I suspect. Boyden probably played a little bit of a role in it because of the legal side of it, but that was the national security apparatus. And unlike those days of Harlow, or Larry O'Brien, I didn't sit in on national security meetings.

Young: Larry didn't either.

McClure: Yes. Now, on the other hand, when the President was off—Where did the ship thing with [Mikhail] Gorbachev. . . .?

Riley: Malta.

Young: Malta.

McClure: When he was in Malta bouncing on the boat and we were doing—I'm trying to think—It wasn't [Manuel] because Noriega was at Christmas time. It wasn't [Pedro] Chamorro.

Knott: The Philippines?

McClure: The Philippines with Aquino. Corazon Aquino. That was one night that I got called back to the White House. And I was in the situation room prosecuting that process with the deputies committee that was led by Quayle, which was a very interesting experience. Dan did a great job. We got Justice up, we got the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], and DoD and we're doing our thing in terms of informing members of Congress. And that was one that I got involved in after the decision was made.

Likewise, I was involved in the Noriega thing because, again, of the whole Congressional notification process, but we never invoked the War Powers Act as most Presidents have tried not to do since the damn things was—because they all believe it to be unconstitutional. So if that's their view, we never invoke it. But we do all these things associated with the War Powers Act that meet the requirements of it, except we just don't go ask Congress to give us a vote.

My view—And I said all that to get to this point, to answer your question, James. I think his view was, "I'm going to do this. I would like to have Congress behind me in this process, but I don't need them to do this because as Commander in Chief, I declare that this is of such a nature that I can do it whether they like it or not. And we'll deal with the consequences afterwards, but I have got to do something. This aggression will not stand," or whatever. "This too," whatever, "will not stand."

I believe very strongly that he was going to do it whether he got the support of Congress or not, but that he made the rational decision that it would be better if he had the support of Congress, which is why he was asking me this question in late fall, "Can I do it?" And I said, "You ain't got the votes." Once we got Congress out of town and the President got the stage to himself, got

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the tanks rolling down, and our guys building up with [Colin] Powell and Cheney and all those guys and Baker, we could do what we did and we were able to pull it off at the end.

Young: Was there ever a point at which the President said "I want a unanimous vote," or words to that effect?

McClure: No.

Young: Okay. There were reports that the President started out early by saying, "I want a unanimous vote." And that sounds like, if he ever said that, it would have been before he consulted you.

McClure: I don't know under what circumstance he would have ever said that, particularly given the fact that having been a member of that institution in the past, he would not have even deigned to think that he could get a unanimous vote on something like that. That is one of the great things about working for him when you're the Congressional guy and he was President. He had so much experience with the institution, not only as a member when he served in the House, but also his eight years of service as Vice President where he was intimately involved in the legislative process as well as the politics of the process.

If I had to waltz in and tell him he did not have the votes on something or he did have the votes on something, number one, he knew that I gave that information to him with as much credibility as I possibly could, knowing that guys and gals make deals on the floor at the last minute. The first rule of Congressional relations is that they all lie. You start with that premise. All of them. And if you start with that premise and make every decision and every recommendation based upon that belief, then you're held in much better stead in going through this process. And that was my realistic approach to doing that job. And I think the President understood that because he had been a member of that institution and had been a student of it for so many years.

If he had waltzed up to me and said, "Fred, I want unanimous consent," I would have said, "You can go find them yourself," because there was no way in hell we were going to be able to do it. But likewise, if I walked up and said, "Mr. President, here's the deal. I think the vote on Clarence Thomas is going to be—I've gone over to the Hill now and I've got 58 to 42. We're going to be all right." I sent him a message like that, which of course he was very pleased about, as he was getting ready to go to a state dinner the night of the Thomas confirmation. And he knew that I had that with as much accuracy as I possibly could given the nature of the institution and that they will change their minds. They will vote differently and do something different from what they tell you they're going to do even if you get it from them straight, even if they've told the President what they're going to do. They will do different things.

Dickinson: Let me ask something a little different along those lines. Based on the materials in the archives, the President is mulling over this notion of getting some kind of commitment out of the Congress. Late Summer, early Fall, he starts thinking about this; let's say some time in that period. Are you getting asked to take the pulse periodically to know when to strike to get that, or—

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McClure: The first time that there was ever any question of a pulse was when he asked me that question that I told you. I'd just have to go back and look at my calendar and compare it with his calendar because the meeting that we had was a Congressional meeting. I remember that, so that means Congress was still in town, they hadn't adjourned yet. But it is toward the end of their time in town. I don't know when they adjourned—

Dickinson: But is it—I'm just wondering if there's a continual process where you're thinking, *When is the time to strike?* And also the follow-up question to that, which may influence your answer, is marshaling the assets of the government, in terms of putting the pressure or the screws on the wavering members—

McClure: When he asked me the question the first time, it was a pure gut-reaction that was not based upon anything that—I had not sat down and done numbers. What I started to do after that conversation, and not in an official way, but in an unofficial way, was to start tallying up what people were saying publicly. I looked at what they were saying on the floor, watching the numbers, what I'd heard them say in private in meetings, what advice they were giving the President as they were all serving as Secretaries of Defense and State. All of those things.

Remember, I left town. I went home for the holidays, came back January 4th, or whatever day it was I came back. I get this note from the President and then I really start counting votes. And when we really kicked it in was at that point which was, "Okay, the President's decided what he's going to do. We kind of know what it's going to look like. Now we got something that we can go count votes on." Because if you'd been asking the question in November, or for that matter in January, if it was a straight war powers kind of a deal, the vote might have been totally different. Not totally different, but statistically different from the ultimate vote that we got on the Persian Gulf thing because of the way it was worded.

We had negotiations on the wording that allowed people the cover that they needed. Poor Ginny Lampley on the legislative side of the NSC [National Security Council] and the legislative side of the State Department and the Defense Department. In between Bill Gribbin, who was doing the Defense Department stuff, there was Ginny who was doing the NSC stuff, me doing the White House stuff, and Janet Mullins doing the stuff for Baker. There was this constant give-and-take in terms of what the language was. And likewise, the deputies—[Robert] Gates and [Lawrence] Eagleburger and those guys, their counterparts—were all very heavily involved in this whole build-up because you've got not only the movement taking place, but you've got us trying to find votes. And you've got to have the right kind of words so that we'll get just enough people to get our 51 votes or our 218. It turned out we got more, but there our objective was just to get a majority. If we got a majority, we're fine.

Young: How did you—

McClure: Anything beyond that was gravy.

Young: How did you divide up or work—whatever the case may be—with Ginny Lampley and Gribbin and Mullins? Did you have a—

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McClure: This was one of those that we did a little differently, although not substantially different. You need to know a little bit about the way my office functioned generally to help answer that question. Every morning I had a staff meeting of all of my legislative people. We did it the flip way when I worked for Reagan, and I said, "I ain't doing that any more." When I worked for Reagan, we had a White House legislative affairs staff meeting before the senior staff meeting.

When I went to work at the White House, I flipped it. We had the White House senior staff meeting at 7:30, and then I had my staff meeting after the White House staff meeting and the way I handled it was that, "Guys, if you all got something to tell me, call me the night before that I need to know," and I had a little report that they'd give me if stuff was going on. Likewise, at the end of every week, I got a report from all the assistant secretaries of legislative affairs in terms of what you expected next week, that kind of a deal. I got them together occasionally, but not frequently.

My legislative staff meeting consisted of my staff, both sides. It consisted of the three people doing legislative affairs for the National Security Council and three people doing legislative affairs for OMB. The OMB guys and the NSC guys met with me every morning when I had my staff meeting of all of my legislative folks. So the communications channels and involvement within NSC and even OMB—when Darman would tell me about anything—was always there because they were extra arms and legs when we needed to go count votes. There were times when, for instance, I didn't use my guys on the Armed Services or the Intelligence Committee to get an accurate vote count; I sent Ginny Lampley because Ginny had the relationships directly with the members because of the world that she operated in and what she did for Scowcroft.

Young: Did she pair up with Janet Mullins in State most of the time?

McClure: I'm sorry?

Young: Did she pair up with Janet Mullins, or—

McClure: No. We didn't pair up with anybody. The NSC works for the President. Now, technically so does the State Department and technically so does the Defense Department—

Young: That's why I'm asking about where Janet Mullins fitted in.

McClure: Janet was the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs for the State Department so she was carrying State Department water to the Hill based upon directives she was given by Baker.

Young: Okay.

McClure: But I would also call up Janet and say, "Janet, I need you to go get X because we haven't been able to get an answer out of so-and-so." Or Janet would call me and say, "Fred, Baker just called me from the Hill. He had this conversation with so-and-so and so-and-so and he needs you to get the President to do X. He needs you to get somebody else to—" We had a very

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collaborative relationship. That goes back to the initial promise that the President made to me, which was, "Mr. President, I need to have veto power over everybody that becomes an assistant secretary for legislative affairs because mind you, those guys work for you, too, and I'll try to keep a handle on them." So it was never competitive; it was always collaborative.

Riley: Is it fair to say that if you had two constituencies, they had three?

McClure: Russell, I've thought about that before. Yes. And some have more constituents. Some of them have that third one more than others.

Young: Yes.

McClure: It was during this time frame, by the way, back in the summer when Jack Kemp basically offered to resign because there were statements that he was a sympathizer of this movement that Newt and others, who were more on the right end of our conservative spectrum, were involved in. And he actually said at one meeting, "Mr. President, I'll just resign." And I wanted to say, "Please" [laughter]. But the President didn't accept it. And I thought, *Well, don't, don't. It would make my life so much easier.* Anyway. Jack kids me about that to this day, "Yeah, boy, I was a pain in your behind, wasn't I?" And I say, "Yes."

So yes, that's where you've got three constituents, because she had a Baker constituency, she had a presidential constituency, and she had her Congress piece as well. There the constituencies get to be a little bit different though. They don't have as much push-back from the body at large. In the agencies and departments, most of the push-back comes from their committees of either authorizing or appropriating jurisdiction.

You've got staff members who have been on the Hill *beaucoup* years, either on the authorizing side or on the appropriating side, who oftentimes know more about the inner workings of the department than do the people who have been selected to go run it. They have relationships with people who are in the bureaucracy at those departments where information gets thrown back and forth, and you think, *How in the hell did they find out about that?* Well, it's because they've got these relationships that run very deep and it's part of our government.

That's the fear at the beginning of an administration where you don't have the luxury we had, which is just to follow our guys, some of whom were Bush's guys, who were in these positions. We, the transition, had to pick people this time to hang and say, "Everybody else, y'all just leave and we're going to send people over there to run various agencies and be a watch-dog until we can get enough people confirmed." That's why it's just so horrible during that kind of a change because all sorts of stuff gets snuck through.

But there, their constituency, their push-back, is not necessarily the Congress as a whole. Their push-back is basically those guys and gals who serve on committees of jurisdiction, which they think of in an oversight capacity. Now, do the foreign relations guys and the armed services guys, or whatever the names of those committees are these days, play both to the State and to the Defense thing? Yes. It's kind of like the guys on the armed services committee think they ought to make foreign policy, and the guys on the foreign policy committee think that they're the ones

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who ought to be making foreign policy. And because they're so intertwined—So there were instances when relationships were different.

There were times, for example, that I got Baker to lobby stuff that didn't have a damn thing to do with foreign relations, but it was because he was a member of a committee or knew a person that I needed a vote from on an issue. Let's say it's AMTRAK. I knew I needed this guy's vote for some reason and the reason I went to Baker was because Baker knew the guy well because they either had a deal, they needed to do a deal, or just had a relationship because the guy is on the Foreign Relations Committee. I did that all the time.

Young: Okay. Between the time that you gave the President your gut reaction on the Gulf that he didn't have the votes, and the time the actual resolution came about, what went on? Could you describe how that got turned around? The reason I'm asking is—

McClure: I took two weeks off at Christmas. [laughter]

Young: Well, there goes my question, I guess. But I'm not giving up.

McClure: That was a start. I'll answer it in the best way I can because I didn't have a whole lot to do with it.

Young: Okay, well that's—How it got done is the question and to what extent it followed the normal way that you would go about massaging the people in Congress to get the right votes—the telephone call list and the whole bit. Was this an aberration? Was this a deviation? Was this normal politics, or was it different?

McClure: How many options did you give me?

Dickinson: Those are too many, Jim.

Young: Well, I can think of some more.

McClure: There were a lot of things going on. Here's what it's not like, which is more the norm, and that will help me describe this. More the norm consists of the President running around the country giving speeches at places that highlight whatever the issue is we've chosen for the President to highlight. More the norm includes bringing in outside groups, who would normally support the President on a particular issue, and giving them briefings. And then these outside groups are going out, and doing their thing, and talking to their constituents, who are beginning to put pressure on members of Congress and are sharing their vote counts with us. It's pretty nice. The trade associations are great about doing that, particularly when you're on the same side that they were on. Media interviews, all those kinds of things, those public events are designed to garner public opinion, which, in turn, hopefully promotes people to act, to do something when they got done.

It's kind of like running a political campaign. In a political campaign, once you get people to give money, what you ultimately want them to do is to go vote. In a campaign like this, it's to

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pick up the phone and call or write their Congressman or all of the third party kind of advocacy stuff. This was different from that in the fact that some of it was happening on its own, but with the dispersion, and I'll have to go back and look at the record. I don't know how many public appearances the President gave and how many times he used speeches to throw in, but there were always little bits and pieces that would always focus on this. That's one of the down-sides; you don't focus on the things you really want to talk about because you're spending all your time throwing in these little pieces about all these other issues, when in reality you ought to just focus on one issue for a week or two days or three events.

That was going on. But it was not going on, to my memory, in as substantial a proportion as we were trying to do, say, when we were trying to build up support for Clean Air, or when we were trying to build up support for ADA, or when we were trying to get people to support the President's position on civil rights legislation. It was different in that sense, and remember it was on the heels of all that other stuff—the budget thing. Fortunately, one of the things we had going for us was that Saddam was moving troops. I mean that did a lot, and you kept seeing it on television, and then we were moving troops. And it's kind of like, "Maybe we'd better support the President."

I think we were very successful in articulating why we were there. The President also was articulating, "Yes, we're going to go in there. We're going to do these things and we're going to get out." That part of it, I think, helped in terms of getting to where we wanted to be. There was some lobbying going on, but that lobbying was only in the sense of Baker and Cheney and Powell and those guys having some direct contacts so we could get the right language that could get us through this process.

Young: So it wasn't an intensive full-court-press lobbying effort with the public.

McClure: No, it—Well. . . .

Young: Well, it didn't have the public side—

McClure: It didn't have as much of the public side. There was a quiet diplomacy going on, on the member to principal side. We were having little meetings down in the White House. We were calling people back into town who had been out of town. We were having these discussions. But the biggest part of the public piece, other than the President making speeches and stuff and what the media was doing, was tanks rolling, and people getting shipped out from Lejeune and Fort Hood and San Diego. People knew what was going on—

Young: Trains leaving the station.

McClure: Yes. It was just a question of whether or not they were going to agree. And I think it just built up to that point, which we helped articulate. But it wasn't like Clean Air.

Young: Okay. Was the Vice President, Dan Quayle, an important person in the run-up to the Persian Gulf?

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McClure: Yes, I think he was. I can't think of anything to discount his importance in that regard. My suspicion is that he was engaged in conversations with members on the Hill. He was engaged in all the national security meeting stuff because as a part of the council, he participated in that. I probably asked him to do some stuff on the vote and the record would have to reflect that. But I don't remember doing anything in that window between November and January. And if Dan was on the road, I'm sure he was pumping the cause because he was an extremely loyal Vice President to President Bush. So.

Dickinson: You had mentioned earlier, I think it was in regards to the budget deal, that you have to accept lying as part of the—

McClure: I said they all lie to anything. You have to go from there.

Dickinson: In a case where somebody had given you their word that they would go with you and then it turns around in a very short period of time that they go the opposite way, would you follow up? My assumption is you would not follow up on something like that; you would not pick up the phone and say, "Why did you tell me—" Or am I wrong about that?

McClure: Had I picked up the phone in a situation like that, I'm afraid of what I would have said. So therefore I probably did not pick up the phone. I don't remember a time that I did. That is not to say, however, that there were not instances when people did not pick up the phone personally and call me before they cast their votes to say, "Fred, I know I told you so-and-so and so-and-so a week ago or yesterday or six weeks ago. I can't do it any more, and I just wanted to make sure you knew." So.

At the risk of sounding egotistical, which this is not intended to be—and I think it was evidenced by some of the things that were said as I was leaving my job—I had a very good relationship with members of Congress as a general rule, on both sides of the aisle. And I think that one of the things that caused me to have those types of relationships was that number one, I did not promise something that I could not deliver, ever. And secondly, I shot straight with them all the time and so I think I was able to keep my integrity intact, which is probably the strongest pillar in any foundation associated with being in that job. Because if there is a belief on the other side, those whom you're trying to lobby, that you're trying to pull their leg or you're lying to them or you're not going to get backed—If you can maintain your integrity in that job, then I think you can have a great deal more success than trying to play games, political or otherwise.

In the rare instances that happened, they called me and told me before and I didn't ever call any of them. And you got to realize there's another piece to this. In the vote-counting process—Let's say we're trying to get 51 votes on an issue in the Senate. I didn't personally talk to all 51 of those people. It was just virtually impossible for that to happen. But I collected information based upon what my guys did in their conversations. There were some votes where we'd start out and there'd be 20 people for whom it looked like it was a waste of time even to go talk to them because we knew what their votes were going to be because this was the 50th time they've dealt with this issue. So then we started looking at our 80.

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And we would often start with our batch of Republicans and hand those off to the whip's office and deal with the whip's office and Dole's office, or Simpson and Dole. Or we'd pick ten or five or fifteen of them just based upon prior experience, whether we knew they might be wobbly because of the nature of the issue.

Like I was mentioning earlier, if it was some labor issue, we had to go figure out where Hines was going to be or we had to figure out where Bob Stafford was going to be. Some of these guys from up in the Northeast were still Republicans, but they had a different constituency. So dependent upon what the nature of the vote was—Okay, so now I've collected this number. Did Bob Stafford lie to me when he told Boyd Hollingsworth that he was going to vote "Yes," and he voted "Yes" ultimately? Well, I'm kind of believing what Boyd is telling me because Boyd had the conversation with Stafford; I didn't. In those instances where I did have direct conversations, which happened quite frequently, you always leave room for—

Remember how I told you how our guys hang out outside the doors of whatever committee—Appropriations or Ways and Means—over on the House side, right by those big steps? It's much more difficult in the House because there are too many ways to escape. You can't escape that many ways in the Senate because there are only two ways in, in the Senate. But in the House there are all sorts of ways. That's why you need five people to cover it; you need to have people at every door.

Stafford could have been coming off the floor, voting on the Rudman, anybody, somebody—just take any of them—may be coming off of the floor voting on some obscure amendment to an appropriations bill because they can't get unanimous consent on it, or they want to be able to make a statement one way or another publicly when it's done. And Boyd walks up to X Senator and wants to talk to him about the MX [missile experimental] missile. There's always a chance that there's confusion going on because it might just be a question of, "Senator, the President needs your vote on so-and-so." And he says, "Yes, yes, yes." And off they go. Was that a yes or was that a no?

And that's the arcane art, if you will, and science of trying to get to the number that you need because it is totally a numbers game. You've got the policy decided; it's a numbers game. Let's figure out how we can get enough people—which is why the Persian Gulf resolution went through all of the machinations that it went through, the massaging that it went through to ultimately become one that would get enough votes. It ain't like voting for a nominee. It's not like trying to get fast track on NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], which I did. You've just got to get all these pieces together to make it work.

Dickinson: Just a quick question. Conversely, were there instances in which you enacted retribution, let's say, maybe in a more subtle way, but which—

McClure: Such a strong—

Knott: He withdrew the Kennedy box, or the right arm—

Young: Carrots and sticks.

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Knott: Yes. Or instances of the sticks?

Young: It's the stick-side of the question.

McClure: What was your question? What was that, Matthew?

Dickinson: Well, I would imagine on these principles—like the Persian Gulf, obviously you can't do that. But I'm assuming that's a higher order of debate. People are voting their conscience, but there must be—

McClure: Boy, you are—How long you been studying in that institution? "Voting their conscience," yes.

Young: Rephrase again.

McClure: Yes, there were some times. I know there were. I'm just trying to think about what they might be that I could possibly talk about. If you're going to exact some allegiance, retribution, whatever the word is, for some act—The problem is that unlike when you're looking for a vote—you can start talking about issues that don't have anything to do with that vote that help get this person to the place where they need to be so that they will do the right thing—it is much more difficult to do the flip-side. And the flip-side becomes, "We're going to make sure you have to vote on this amendment because we know this is going to hurt you back home." You can't do it that way, so that doesn't work. The question is, do you deny them things that they truly want, whether it's judges, signing off on an amendment? And generally it's after the fact—

Dickinson: A presidential visit.

McClure: Or a presidential visit, a fundraiser appearance. There are all these pieces that you can use on the back side, but the problem is that it's now after the fact and they're saying, "I want the President to come." And my response would have to be, "No, you voted against him on so and so and so and so and there is no way in hell he is going to darken the doors of your state again." Well, the problem is you have to ask these guys for something two days later. So when you start trying to exact some retribution or discipline in the process, it's hard to connect the two.

It works most favorably when you connect it in those situations where they're asking for stuff that doesn't have a damn thing to do with the vote and at that moment, it matters. I'm asking for the vote and they're telling me no and then they turn around in the next breath and want something and it's, "Well, I'll have to get back to you on that, dude, until you tell me how you're going to vote on this." That's when they start saying that they'll go public on you and say that somebody tried to blackmail them—how harshly they've been treated because they didn't get to come to the Rose Garden because the lady from Vermont was the teacher of the year.

Just to throw out a hypothetical—There are some little things. But it doesn't do you much good to do the hardball piece on the back side unless you get your deal right then at that moment. Because if you don't do it at that moment, you've got to turn around and be asking them for

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something else two days down the road. If you'd just done something on their leg, they'll remember it because it's still smelly. So it's hard to do.

Dickinson: In the case of the vote on the—

McClure: Although there were people who threatened it in our administration, who happened to be at the top upper echelons of our staff—

Young: So low.

Dickinson: I don't know if we either go down that road right now or—

McClure: Jamie got it. He heard me.

McCall: With the Gulf War vote, Alan Simpson and others afterward have come out and said there was a lot of unpleasantness around some of the lobbying on that, and we've been portraying that as somehow separate from other efforts, other vote-getting efforts. Was it so isolated or was there some *quid pro quo* going on for that vote as well, and are there any cases that you want to put on the record of—

McClure: James, I don't remember that unpleasantness. Now Alan may, but I don't know what he's talking about. I can't remember anything that was associated with lobbying that came from something that was officially sanctioned by us on the administration side. Now, conceivably there might have been some groups on the outside that did some unpleasant things or made some threats because of the way their Senators—or people who had traditionally been on their side on all issues—

McCall: I mean some posturing. Afterward, people like Nunn came out and regretted how they'd handled that vote. But Simpson recalls things with Gore and others in terms of trying to strike deals for their votes.

McClure: I read something, I think, on that last night. I think I read something on Gore. I don't remember. Sorry, I can't help you on that one. Can you give an indication of who was—

McCall: He spoke specifically. I've heard him on a couple of occasions speak specifically of Gore demanding that he's going to have a certain time on the floor.

McClure: Oh, those things happen. Oh, yes. That happened. It didn't have anything to do with us.

Young: In exchange for a vote.

McCall: No, no nothing to do with you. I'm just saying do you remember instances where you—

McClure: I've read and heard stories to that effect. Here's the other piece of the pie: when you think about that particular element, the majority controls the floor. It's the whole reason that we

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had a hard time promoting our agenda in the fashion that we wanted to promote it, because we didn't decide when the stuff came to the floor. It was one of the great things about the Reagan days, early on again, which was the Republican Senate. With the House being Democratic, the House Republicans could force stuff on the floor, at least to get stuff talked about, which is the flip-side now, which is why a tax bill came so fast through the House of Representatives. They forced it. Same thing piece of energy legislation. It may not go anywhere in the Senate, but they were trying to push his legislation.

We didn't have that luxury during the Bush administration, with the exception of the ability to deal with things like vetoes in the aftermath. But in terms of the vote giving and taking and the prime time for Gore and others during that time frame, that's, again, like the budget deal when you get to the member-to-member talking, deal-making kind of stuff. But even if I, or Baker or Cheney for that matter, had the ability to determine when Gore spoke on the floor—They may have said something to those guys, for instance, or went through Dole or went through Simpson saying that we can get Gore's vote if he can have X numbers of hours between the hours of four and six, but that's their institution. I just want his vote. I'm happy he got to that place and if it required that, then I'm sorry the institution had to respond to it.

I would have absolutely no—The White House, or government on the executive branch side, would have no control over it because although he could have told somebody and we could have communicated that, it's up to Mitchell and Dole to decide whether or not it's going to happen.

Riley: You mentioned a while back the greater difficulties in getting access to House members because of accessibility. You were joking, but I wonder if you couldn't comment just a little bit more for the record about the differences in how you have to approach the House and the Senate, and if there are any material differences other than just size.

McClure: Depends on whether they're chairmen or not. That's one issue. Remember, I experienced both because of my time in the—I was not lobbying the House when I worked for Reagan, but I knew what was going on because my colleagues right across the hall were doing it. So you got that element of the equation. The House is a different institution from the Senate, first of all. The House becomes more difficult to lobby, I think, because you've got the sheer numbers and the volume. On every vote did we touch all 435 members of the House? Hell, no. We wouldn't have had time to do that, even on major stuff like MX.

Again, it was the technique I alluded to earlier in the Senate discussion. Here's this block that we know that we can start with, these 30 guys are going to be okay. We will check them over the course of it, we will be coordinating with the whip's office to make sure they're doing that. But we've got to now put our emphasis on these 35 here because we're trying to work our way up to 217, and we know we have to go talk to guys on the Democratic side because we've got this gap between the number of House members. Then we generally start with our conservative Democrats—the Ralph Halls, the Sam Halls, and those guys who were from Texas—and work our way through the South. And then we would go on to Billy [Wilbert Tauzin], before Billy decided he was going to do the right thing. It was almost the same thing over and over again, unless there was some peculiar reason because of the part of the country that they were from.

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Now, the other piece is that you've got the Rules Committee in the House. So you get to play that game: How many votes are there going to be? Are you going to get a chance to vote on your amendment straight up? Which question are you really asking about? Are you asking about a rule? Are we going to try to defeat it on a rule? Are we going to let the rule get by and then we're going to have this substitute? And do you get to cast your vote for the constituents back home that's on the substitute, and then you're going to lose, and then you're going to turn around and vote against it, and then we're going to turn around and veto it, and you're going to get a chance to come back and do it again?

So the House is structured differently. And the way legislation moves through that part of the meat grinder is totally different from what we're doing on the Senate side where you don't have any rules, but you've got all these unanimous consent things you've got to get to and then you run the risk of this whole filibuster thing. Never do you have to worry about that in the House. So it's a different game—not a game—challenge that you have because of the sheer volume.

The other thing about the House is that—Well, it happens in the Senate too, but not as great. There are a lot of members of the House of Representatives who serve their time over there in relative obscurity. And every now and then you say, "Let's go call on one of these dudes who's never been called on before by the White House," and you get all sorts of blessings that flow from those kinds of things.

Or occasionally you say, "Hey, why don't we get the President to call Congressman X. He's a freshman, just got here from so-and-so. He's going to be okay on this vote, but we're going to need him six weeks from now on this other vote, so why don't we get the President to call him." We find out that so-and-so is going to be firmly in our corner and we get the President to call—use a little capital. And he tells X member, whom he's never talked directly to before in this kind of way, how happy he is that he's going to be able to support him on this issue and he looks forward to working with him in the future on some other mutual issues, even though you know you're going to have disagreements. And you kind of go through all that crap. It's wonderful. And they get a big kick out of it and they issue a press release and the President gets kudos out in western Oregon. It's great. But that's part of the whole process.

Dickinson: Is there an approach to conserving that capital—the President's calls?

McClure: Yes. Number one, there is a strong, strong bias against using the President unless you have to—at least that has been the philosophy of Republican administrations. Because we, from what I have learned about the history of the Office of Congressional Affairs, don't run it substantially different from our previous Republican administrations. And indeed, I'm told the Carter White House was run kind of the way we did it. Believe it or not, there's this huge fraternity of people who used to serve in legislative affairs; we actually get together frequently on both sides of the political aisle because having been in those shoes, we have this empathy for those who follow.

I have the second longest tenure of serving as Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs in the history of the office. I'm surpassed only by Frank Moore, who did it for four years for Carter, because I did a little over three years and most of the time it is about a year and a half stint. Now,

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Max [Friedersdorf] came back and did it twice, but as a practical matter, continuously, I have the second highest record. I can understand why people quit earlier, too. But you always have to make a huge judgment call as to whether or not you want to use the President's capital in making a telephone call.

There's another piece, too, that you have to work into the equation, which is how many times do you want the President to make a phone call, and he keeps getting a no. You have to balance whether or not there truly is a chance that you can change this member's mind or that by getting a phone call from the President you can change his mind, or is it just one of these things where you give the President nine names, you're kind of down to these are your nine guys on the fence, and every single one—By the time he gets to about the sixth, he's thinking, *Why in the hell am I doing this? These guys are going to tell me no.* And you have to remember, the President has feelings, too, and frankly he doesn't like making phone calls and getting those kinds of responses. He got enough of that when he was Vice President, and now it's, *Why am I having to do this now? I'm President.*

So you do have to conserve the President's capital. A lot of times we did it in meetings. He said, "Okay, let's just get 30 minutes of time and get these guys in a room." And you put together a group of guys who are going to totally support the President and are just gung-ho cheerleaders and get a few guys who are in there wavering, and make them start putting pressure on each other there in front of the President. Get a couple of Cabinet members or right guys there on a particular issue and you create a dynamic, a group-think kind of a deal that herds them along. And then you have people already set up from in that group to go out and drag them before the microphone and do a statement that was very positive; plant a few questions with the media to make sure that the guys on the media side of the microphones ask the right questions and ergo, these guys get called. Not an unusual occurrence at all in that process.

Or I'd call some of my media guys on the Hill and get them to scare up these guys. "Go ask so-and-so this question." And they would because there was always something in it for the media guys. It's not that they did what I asked them to do, but it was, *Oh, I may be getting a lead on something here, this is pretty cool.* They'd go do it and I would have already told them where we're headed, and so it would kind of work that way. That's all the President's got. Now there are those who would accuse the President of squandering his popularity—particularly at the end of the Persian Gulf War when his approval rating was 70 or 80, whatever the percentage was he ultimately got to—and that he should have been able to use that for other purposes, to ride it on to the election in November; sustain it from '91 all the way until '92, through '92. And I had some votes that took place after the Persian Gulf War because I was there until February of '92.

Maybe I'm being defensive by making this comment, but I don't think so. I think it's difficult to take the popularity associated with prosecuting a war, if you will, like we did and then turn around and use that and say, "Now you've got to vote for my nominee to be Supreme Court Justice because I'm a stud." Or, "You've got to come support me on Clean Air," on some issue having to do with the coal mines of West Virginia or somewhere along the Ohio Valley over by Youngstown or whatever. Yes, they might have been strong as horseradish with you in terms of beating on [James] Traficant and wanting Traficant to support you in the Persian Gulf War, but all of a sudden, "Now, we're talking about my pocketbook, not beating up this old bad guy who

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is taking over all the oil supplies and doing all sorts of other things that we don't want to talk about. Yes, we loved you, Mr. President, and that's great, but now we're talking about whether or not you're going to shut down these steel mills and that's a different thing."

Add that to the fact that even though the President had a good victory coming into the White House, it wasn't one of those perceived to be an exciting campaign. It was a slam-dunk, kick-butt kind of a thing. It wasn't like the waltz that, for example, Reagan had in 1984. And 1980 wasn't that much of a waltz.

It's one of the challenges that this current President is going to have to put up with because of the way in which he became President. He's gotten this boost and this could last for a long time. But unless you can make a tie between, which I think we did a little bit on the budget deal—but this current President, unless he can make a tie that "I'm right on the budget kinds of things, and there's a reason now to go into Social Security because I now have this popularity and we've got to be able to protect our troops and supply them," and all those things. That's one way that you can make that work. I don't know that it works the other way around and I did not find it to be particularly helpful in things that took place after the Persian Gulf.

We had this aura and it was great. And we'd won, and our boys and gals came home, and we didn't lose too many lives, and it was done quickly. But now it's back to whether or not we're going to have this Hyde amendment on the Labor/HHS bill. I don't believe those are as easily translatable as some would say, therefore we were accused of squandering that popularity.

[BREAK]

McClure: One of the things about having joint session speeches, the legislative affairs person gets to help figure out who's sitting in the First Lady's box. In fact, at the first speech that George Bush gave when he was President, there was a guy sitting in that box named Bill Clinton. Because Clinton had been engaged with whoever the Republican guy was on the other side—Caroll Campbell, I think—as Governors on education. If you remember, the President pushed the education thing and so we had Clinton and Campbell as two Governors in the box because they were up front.

The other thing, too, is that—at least I successfully got away with it during the time that I was there—the legislative guy always sat next to the First Lady. I didn't get that close to her, but I was always on the same row. The whole deal was when the members of Congress looked up, they saw the President's legislative guy up there sitting next to the First Lady, knowing that he had something to do with the relationship with the family. Just little subtle things that historically have been passed down from the legislative affairs office, from President to President, that just happens.

Young: Do you have a story about how you convinced a skeptical member, if there were any, of the House or the Senate that you did have the President's ear and you did have a charter?

McClure: No, I don't have any. I don't have any special remembrances like that. Fortunately, I enjoyed a time where they knew that I had the President's ear. They knew that others had the

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President's ear as well. But a lot of times if there was anything it was—you were able to produce. If you told them up front that you couldn't or didn't think you could or whatever, then it was a different thing. And that ranged everywhere from, "Fred, I'm determined. I want my guy to be the new Federal Judge for the Southern District of New York, so I've got to be on that airplane." And there were those I said, "No, you ain't gonna be on the airplane." And they said, "Well, I'll call the President." And I said, "Good, because he's going to tell you the same thing." I do remember that in particular. That member shall remain unnamed, but we had a yelling match. But I'd known him a long time so I could get away with it.

Most of the time it was just making sure that we—I had a deal once—This is one I remember in particular. There was a debate going on—Both [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan and Alfonse D'Amato were members of the Senate at the same time and they swapped who got the federal judge nominations, even during the time frame when the political parties were different. And one of them would take the lead depending on which one it was and they would ultimately come to an agreement on whoever it was they were going to nominate. Therefore the delegation remained intact, although we always looked to the Republican for the lead. But there was this whole question—this is just one of the little things—of who gets to announce it first and at what time.

Part of my staff's responsibility on nominees, particularly for judges and stuff, was to make sure that the Republican got forewarning about who the nominee was going to be so he could put out a press release and call radio stations before the other guy got the warning. So the Democrat was at least 30 minutes to an hour behind. Then the President finally confirmed it and they put out a press release through the press office. There were those who were sometimes more difficult to deal with on those issues than were others. Of course, when you had two Republicans, there was even more hell; you had to make both telephone calls at the same time and hope like hell you talked to the right person so they would get the information.

There was a judge in New York. And Alfonse was one of those who was sometimes difficult because Alfonse was one of those guys who did a good job of taking care of his folks back home. He served as a Senator like he used to as a ward guy there in New York—at least my perception of it. There are others who do that well, too—politics as a local thing like O'Neill used to talk about.

Riley: Senator Pothole.

McClure: Yes, that, too. He paved a lot of those dudes over. Anyway, this particular guy had been controversial and we had finally gotten a sign-off on him; we were going to go with him. I had my guys make the telephone call. Well, what ultimately happened was that the person who was supposed to fulfill that responsibility—turn the spigot on in terms of what Alfonse was going to be doing in the state as a result of this—failed to do it. So I had my guys note the call and at what time, who they talked to, the whole nine yards. And somehow Moynihan got it and got it out first. But I knew we had done the right thing.

Alfonse called and he chewed me—I mean he used every word that he uses frequently over and over again as a New Yorker in so many fashions: verb, noun, adjective. I couldn't even talk by the time I got through listening to him. And finally, when he shut up I said, "Alfonse, shut up.

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Listen to me. We did call your office." And he said, "No, you didn't. Grrrrrrr. Wait a minute. Let me check on my staff," and he hangs up his phone. Before he hangs up, I say, "I can tell you we called so-and-so at this point, at this point, at this point, at this point." He starts yelling at his staff as he's hanging up the phone. About thirty minutes later he called me back and he said, "Freddie, I'm sorry. My guys blank, blank, blanked up," and he just started yelling at them, "I'm telling you all. . . . " He's a great guy to deal with.

But those were moments when you know you did the right thing. And you get some personal gratification out of it when the guys with whom you had enough of a relationship, would call you back and say, "Fred, I'm sorry." I also did that on occasion, going in the other direction, which is all the care and feeding of the body, and also doing the job, and catching spears, and throwing the hand grenades.

Young: Okay. Can you tell us about Richard Darman and his portfolio and the way you saw his role in the Bush—

McClure: Dick had a very prominent role in the policy aspect. As OMB director, he commanded a large portion of the President's domestic policy because we were having budget problems. That comes into this equation as well. He and John developed a relationship—and I don't know if I mean this negatively or positively—where they fed on each other. And they developed this symbiotic relationship, which helped Dick become as strong as he did in terms of policy formulation—in some instances a one- or two-person shop, meaning him and John. Bill [Diefenderfer], whose last name I can't remember, who used to work on the Finance committee for Packwood, I think, but who was a deputy director during that time frame, had a big role. But it was primarily Dick and John.

One of the complaints that I'd remembered from the time that I served in the Reagan administration was that we didn't give members of the Senate, particularly our friends, enough lead time to know where the administration was going to end up on an issue. Dick early on established—which I thought was a very good thing, by the way—these levels of veto threat which at its height was, "If you enact X, the President will veto." Now the only thing that was higher than that was if the President put out a statement or wrote a letter to somebody and signed it, "I'm going to veto this if you send it here."

Then we stepped it down in gradation below that. And what we also tried to do was to get those statements of administration policy, or SAPs as they were called, concocted in the right fashion such that we could deal with it at a committee level as opposed to always waiting until the floor. But you would have guys who had voted one way in a committee on an issue and then the White House would pull the rug out from under them—not anything in particular. But we'd shift gears, and they were already out front, and we'd need them to do something different as the parliamentary exercise unfolded. But then, the President—I can't remember the correct terminology we used, but it's probably something to the effect of, "We don't like what you're doing." And then the next step was the President's senior advisors would recommend that he veto it, and the next step was the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of so-and-so would recommend that he veto. And then ultimately it was, "He will veto."

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So we established this gradation, which Dick came up with. If they used it previously, I didn't know about it, but we used it in such a fashion that it allowed us to send the kind of signals that we needed during the development of legislation at the committee level such that we would set the stage for what our voting would be like when we—Because you could always back away until you got to the real big one. For example, "Oh, well, maybe the Secretary of the Treasury recommended veto and the President said, 'No.'" So you had a way to back away from that process. That's the way, other than numbers itself—and this is something I don't know a whole lot about. But the whole process of all the appeals in the budget when the budget's coming up through the process—

You had that role that Dick played in that capacity. Diefenderfer. That's his name. Bill Diefenderfer. But Dick was a very prominent player in policy development from the role of OMB director, outside of the issues associated with budget issues because we put out a SAP on everything—on almost everything, on almost every vote—which is so people could say, "Where's the President on this issue?" Dick might send out a thing that said, "Well, he doesn't like this, this, and this, but maybe this is okay," and that kind of deal. So he gave us our negotiating room.

Now, how Dick interacted with Roger Porter, or interacted with a particular Secretary on the issue of how they got to that point in the SAP, was out of my—It was, "Where are we on this? Tell me where we are so we can figure out what we're going to do." My office was involved in it only as the first stopping-off place after the policy decision had been made so that we would know what message we were supposed to communicate to Capitol Hill.

There were times where we engaged in discussions, if not warfare, with OMB or Cabinet agencies because we knew what we were hearing on Capitol Hill. And we would say, "We cannot send a veto message on this, guys. We've got to send something else or we've got to either elevate it or lower it in terms of the intensity with which we make the statement because we're going to have to swallow it later." Or we would say, "The votes aren't looking good on this and we may have to tweak it a little bit, so let's not get too far out on the limb."

Ours was a policy mechanical part in the sense that we were in the loop when everything was coming through because that's what my deputy back at the office did all the time. We had other guys yelling at us on Capitol Hill saying, "We've got to know where the administration is." And sometimes we would draft the first version of the SAP. It would still have to go through this OMB process, which ultimately came on OMB stationary.

Young: Darman spent a fair amount of time on Capitol Hill himself, didn't he?

McClure: He did. Darman spent a lot of time on Capitol Hill. Number one, as a Cabinet member, he had a testifying responsibility that he was often called upon to do. But the other reason he spent a lot of time was because of negotiating on the budget—the variations on the budget deal. He always was heavily involved in that, personally, on the Hill.

Young: Did this give you a problem?

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McClure: It was sometimes a problem if I didn't know what he was doing. And there were times when he went up there that I did not know what he was doing. But because of my relationship with members of Congress, they'd call me and tell me, "Darman's been up here and this is what he did." I said, "Okay, that's all I needed to know." And Dick would call me sometimes, too, or Dick's legislative people would call me and tell me what was going on. Most of the time, if it was something that was extraordinary, I'd get a call from a member, but I got that from all the members of the Cabinet, too.

Now, they—meaning the members—were playing me, but it was information that I needed to know. Because most of the time you got the call when it was something they didn't like, "You wouldn't believe what Darman said. Is this really where you guys are?" And I would say, "Oh, Darman's been up there? Thank you very much." So that happened. He was a big player on the Hill, and so was John. Now, 99% of the time I knew what John was doing. There may have been a couple of instances that I did not. But I think that both of their styles on the Hill contributed to the difficulties they had later on in their service to the President.

Dickinson: How was that? What was it about their style?

McClure: Let's see. John, for example, has an extremely high IQ—he's in Mensa and all that stuff. John is a very smart guy—smart engineer who prides himself on also being a great practitioner of the art of politics. But John also could sometimes be abrasive and basically tell members how dumb they were, and there are reported incidents of that. And toward the end, particularly when John was having his personal problems, there weren't a whole lot of people saying, "You can't let John go. You've got to keep him," which is when George W. came into town—around about Thanksgiving—and had a little visit.

Young: Did you have to do damage control?

McClure: Yes, I sometimes did have to do damage control.

Young: And how would Sununu take this?

McClure: Take my doing damage control?

Young: Yes.

McClure: Well, he didn't necessarily know I was doing damage control. I mean, "Hey, John. Guess what? I went up and cleaned up all the pieces that you just broke all over the place," the response I would have gotten from him would be, "Well, God damn it. Go do it again."

Young: Not, "Stay out of it"?

McClure: No. I never had that problem with John because there was no way he could keep me out of it. Again, it was the same kind of deal because of the job. I believe that if the person who is in that job, as Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, has done his or her job in an

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appropriate fashion, that part of the constituency will come to you when it's necessary; whether they were calling to bitch at me about something that John said, or whether they were calling to tell me John made this commitment to me, or whether they were calling to say, "Don't you ever, ever let him darken my door again," I'd know.

Young: You referred a moment ago to a distinct relationship between the Chief of Staff and the OMB director—between Darman and—

McClure: Why?

Young: Yes.

McClure: I think they both fed off of each other and I also think they complemented each other. Here's what's happening—

Young: Particularly, they're the same.

McClure: I can't give you anything in particular, but I can give you a few statements that exemplify what I'm trying to say and why the relationship developed.
Darman is a smart guy. John is a smart guy. Darman knew a hell of a lot more about government and the budgeting process than did John. Darman knew a hell of a lot more about how the White House operated, having been there during the Baker days when he was Baker's deputy and Baker was doing his thing. And then Dick also had prior government experience elsewhere—Labor or wherever the hell he was. I can't remember. And so Dick had something that John needed, which was smarts about the government and the budget process, and he could teach John. And then John had something that Dick needed, which was, "This gets me the kind of access that I need to the President to be able to do this policy in the direction that I want it to go as I am manager and director of the budget." So they just worked.

It was significantly different, I think, from, say, the Jim Miller relationship with Don Regan. Or the David Stockman relationship with Jim Baker, Deaver, and [Ed] Meese. So they kind of paired up and that's how it just evolved into that. There's nothing else to say about it other than it just happened. Each had something that the other one needed and could use. We'd have senior staff meeting and Dick sat at one end of the table and John sat at the other.

Young: And neither suffered fools lightly.

McClure: That is an accurate statement. Or at least that's the way they portrayed themselves to be.

Young: Because. . . .

Riley: Let the record reflect that the respondent is smiling as he says that—broadly.

Young: Well, I saw that. I phrased it to produce—But John Sununu's abrasiveness became a subject of reporting at some point. There were plenty of complaints, whatever they were worth,

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and the impression was that he didn't know how to deal with us, that he's abrasive, he says the wrong things, he didn't have a Congressional style. That people from the Hill—I presume they were from the Hill—talking to the press—

McClure: There were also statements by members of the President's Cabinet to that same effect.

Young: Many. And there's been some testimony about that as well in these oral history interviews. Darman's abrasiveness, if it was there, didn't ever get that much press, but there is plenty of testimony about that among other people who served on the White House staff and he was pretty rough in some of the ways he came on.

McClure: And your question is, is that true?

Young: No. Did you ever experience it? That's the first question.

McClure: Oh, yes. Either I saw it or I experienced it. I must say that the credence that I gave to it was so little that I don't remember any incident in particular that sticks out in my mind. It's kind of like, "Oh, shit. It's Darman." It's kind of my style, Jim.

Young: It doesn't throw you, you mean.

Dickinson: It didn't affect the way you carried out your job.

McClure: It didn't bother me one bit.

Dickinson: What about other people in the White House, like Porter's domestic shop? Did he feel like Darman would step beyond just budgetary issues and—

McClure: Oh, I'm sure he did. And don't get me wrong. I didn't say that Dick didn't get over into my territory and crowd it, because he did. He did so more than John did. Most of the time when John did it, I'd asked John to do it or John and I had talked about him doing it. There was indeed far more coordination between what John was doing, having to do with members of Congress and "my territory," and me than there was John going off on his own. Even though that's not to say John did not go off on his own. He did. But most of the time we planned it.

Remember I had mentioned earlier in this discussion about how we had this kind of rolling "no." Then ultimately we'd get up to the top and John's deal was to say "yes," but we got something for it. That happened on many occasions. But no, I knew what my job and responsibility were. I knew how John and Dick were and I thought that there were other ways to get people to do what you wanted them to do rather than being intimidating in that process. And I refused to be intimated. So I didn't go back and cry when I was beat up on by Dick in some meeting; whether he was wrong or right was totally immaterial to me.

Young: I really wasn't asking a question about personalities, but it goes to the question of—A White House that has two strong figures, who are not ostensibly fighting with each other, but who'd worked out an arrangement, strikes me as kind of unusual. Two dominant figures. This is

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not quite like the troika of early Reagan years, and it's not quite like the concept that Don Regan had of "I'm in charge" and everybody else has to work within that hierarchy. So to what extent this was a function of the personalities, to what extent it was a style that the President was comfortable with—

McClure: The President didn't see that.

Young: I see.

Dickinson: He wasn't aware of it?

McClure: Well, I didn't say he wasn't aware of it. I won't go that far. The President was a very aware individual. The President has a tendency to go outside normal channels of communication just because he's President. And it's just the way he is. He had no boundaries. The President was probably aware—I know he was aware of a whole lot of stuff that was going on that people would think that he would not necessarily know. He had this tendency to remember the little bitty things and come back and remind you that you had not responded to the little bitty thing that he had asked you to go check on. Kind of like his tickler was working constantly. He was quite good at that. But again, I go back to the whole concept that you had two people in the roles that they were in where they each needed the other one. So they found an accommodation to make that work.

The OMB director is in a different position anyway, given the sense that he is a confirmed member of the President's Cabinet, as opposed to a member of the senior staff, none of whom are confirmed in the offices that they hold. So I think John and Dick reached this agreement that even though the President may have had some independent relationships with members of his Cabinet, they were going to drive policy from the White House, using the purse as a mechanism for doing it. And they made work the whole process of you've got to get your budgets confirmed, you've got to get pieces of legislation through here, that we've got to say it's either good or it's bad. There was a whole different dynamic, for example, between Scowcroft and Sununu; in terms of national security policy, even though John may have had some view, he didn't even hold a candle to Scowcroft because he had this personal relationship with the President.

So you've got domestic stuff with Dick and John where they go in as equals and they've planned their deal. And then you've got national security and John, where John—at least my perception of it—just listened. Because under the arrangement that we had, or the President had, Scowcroft could walk in the Oval Office anytime he wanted to. And that's totally different. And Brent Scowcroft is about as abrasive as a silk scarf.

Dickinson: You say the President was aware of it. Do you think from his perspective that type of dynamic between Darman and Sununu served his purposes? And again, I'm thinking specifically of the budget agreement in 1990, but more generally, if you look back.

McClure: I think it was a bigger role in the budget deal than probably anything else. And for me to *ex post facto* say it served him well, starts with the premise that I believe ultimately that we

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did the right thing. And I think we probably did, looking back. It just took a little bit longer to kick in than we thought and we had this little war in the middle of it that took a little extra money.

I don't know whether it was their style that served his purpose well. It was really more of an issue of whether or not substantively they were moving us in the direction that we ought to go because they were his direct advisors. They were probably sometimes at odds with Roger, probably at odds with Mike Boskin on some economic things. And I'm sure there were some times where maybe some information didn't get to the President that maybe should have gotten to the President because Dick and John were the doorkeepers on this whole budget deal, which shaped our economic policy. Then there was this whole Nick Brady thing in terms of how much he was playing and wasn't playing, and there's some public dispute about that.

So did it serve him well? I don't know whether their style necessarily served him well, but the fact that he had people who were totally focused on what they were doing—assuming that that policy was correct, then yes, I guess it did serve him well. If I'm grasping what you're asking.

Dickinson: You're saying retrospectively it was probably the right policy to pursue, and you've mentioned earlier that Clinton pursued it. Yet some might claim politically, at least in the short run, it was a costly policy to run. And you yourself talk about, in your relations with Congress, that nobody could have anticipated this cascading effect—the whole Gingrich thing. Yet I'm wondering whether, because Darman and Sununu were holding things so close to their vests—And in a way, this is an anomaly in that this is one of these policy areas which is not pre-vetted. You said yourself that it didn't go through the normal process. Can you make the argument that had there been a different dynamic that the political costs of this budget deal might have been avoided somehow? Again, you're absolutely right, this is all retrospective—

McClure: There were two costs with the budget deal in the end. That's why I can think the budget deal is much better now than it was then because of what happened ultimately in the last quarter of '92, and how it's been viewed since then, and all that good stuff. There were two things in the budget deal that I thought were—there were several things, I guess, but the two things that probably had the most impact upon the presidency was the tax thing, which I admit we didn't sell very well after we made the decision to break it because we did—Actually what we did was we didn't define the tax thing appropriately before we started doing—We didn't take the rhetoric from the nomination speech and deal with it before we went down this path where we knew—We didn't set the stage appropriately, and we damn sure didn't sell it worth a damn after it was over. So that was number one.

The other negative thing associated with it was the President's own party being led by his new minority whip walking away from it, and that whole cascading thing that ultimately happened. Those were, I think, the two most negative things associated with that piece of legislation and how we went about getting it and doing it.

Were there other things that I wish we could have included in there? Yes. We wanted a better child care deal, but we didn't get to talk about much that we did on child care because we had to wrap it in the budget deal. But that was the only vehicle we could put it on to do anything with,

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so we went down this road with tax credits. That was one of the ones that John was very heavily involved in. We could have done better on capital gains because we were strong believers, at that point in time, that we needed a reduction in capital gains tax. And we did not get the deal that we were trying to do as a result of having to go back for round two in the budget deal and to stitch together the votes that were necessary.

There were other things, probably, in there that I would describe as bad only in the sense that we didn't get what we wanted. But I guess in the final analysis, in retrospect, it was nice to have two guys who were just totally, unalterably focused on it. Now, whether or not from a policy standpoint it was the right thing to do at the time and the President was getting the right kind of information in terms of where that policy debate discussion and piece of legislation ultimately landed, I just don't know. But he was somewhat sheltered.

Dickinson: Somewhat sheltered?

McClure: Yes, somewhat sheltered in the sense that his source of information every morning was Dick and John, or John without Dick. But most of the time it was Dick and John, as I think the records will reflect. Sometimes Roger was in there, sometimes Roger wasn't. I think Roger can give you a better feel because he probably was in more of a negative position than was I in the whole discussion of what was going on around there.

Young: You said a moment ago that this wasn't well-prepped in terms of the political fall-out or the political preparation—that it was not connected, I believe, as you put it. They didn't connect the political work with the speech, the pledge. And then after it was done, we didn't do—

McClure: Well, I don't describe that as political work. I really describe that as communications work that has a political impact, meaning we didn't define what "No new taxes" meant before we started down this path that ultimately resulted in revenue. We didn't tell them, plain and simple, "We ain't going to increase your income tax rates. We may have to do some other things, but 'No new taxes' means your rates ain't going up and your bill is not going to look any different come April 15th than it did before." And then when the process was over, we didn't tell them that we didn't do that. Remember, we got to this whole discussion of the bubble and the 33 to the 36. It got very technical, and it was just really confusing, and it was the same old arguments that opponents use all the time, which is they're just taking care of their rich buddies. So it's the same argument we use over and again every time we use that.

Young: So for the people who are going to be studying this budget deal and the spending controls that went with it, that had a good effect, but it didn't help the President much. It helped his successor. How do you explain this? How should people understand this communications failure? Was it because there was no thinking that this would have a major impact?

McClure: No, we knew it was going to have a major impact. We just didn't do it. Jim, I don't know—

Young: Whose job was it?

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McClure: Well, it's a combination of where we have the President and who he was speaking to. The blame can go around to a whole lot of us.

Young: I'm not looking for blame—

McClure: No, but what I'm saying is that there's not one person whose job it is to define the tax thing. It's a collective group of all of us who share the blame in it because we had the responsibility. The guys in speechwriting, for example, could have been clamoring for weeks to go define that, but if they didn't know what was happening in the policy side of the room, they didn't have anything to put into the mix. If Marlin didn't know what was going on, it was pretty difficult for him to set the tone and answer questions in a fashion that helped define what we were doing because people didn't know.

I guess ultimately, if you want to put the blame somewhere, or if you wanted to add it somewhere, I guess it was Sununu's and Darman's bailiwick to say, "Start the presses," or "Go start talking about this when you're writing speeches, when you guys are in the scheduling meetings." I was in that group, you know. "We've got to put him in scenarios where he can talk about X, talk about Y because we need to get the upper hand." I don't know that when you look back upon this reflectively you can say, "Well, if this particular part of the White House operation had been doing its job appropriately we would not have suffered what we suffered as a result." And I don't think that there's a place that you can do that, unless you say, "As Chief of Staff, John, you should have made sure that somebody was working our way through this process."

Now, John may very well have believed—and you'd have to ask him—that it was going to be no big deal and we would be able to sell it, which very well could have been—

Young: We try to ask everybody about what they saw, and I think most people will agree with you that it's a communications failure. It's not a question of pointing the finger of blame at this person or that person, but it looks like the problem might be—What future students have to look at is that this seems to have been a very closely-held negotiation within the White House and that made it more difficult to do the preparation and the roll-out of the deal afterwards. So that it's a question of the normal process as a consultation or notification of the people right out of the loop. So this was one of the things that didn't happen.

McClure: I don't know that it would have necessarily happened on any other issue. For example, let's take the flip-side. What makes that any different from taking something from the President's speech at the convention having to do with Americans with Disabilities and wrapping that around something that we actually instigated, that we started, that we sent up to Capitol Hill—or what he did with Clean Air that we started and we put together and we sent up to Capitol Hill, where we had the opportunity to do those kinds of things. The budget process works whether we want it to or not. It's a part of the yearly annual ritual that those guys go through on Capitol Hill. And so it got to this point where it kind of came to a standstill, and we had to start all over again.

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Now, we'd been sending messages, but the messages weren't a tax message because there wasn't a revenue piece of this. And we ultimately shut down the government. Everybody made a big deal when the government shut down a few months ago, back there in the Clinton years. And Clinton blamed it on Newt and all the guys on the Hill. Well, hell. We shut down the government and had essential personnel because we didn't sign some stuff. It was the first year, if I remember correctly. I may be wrong. But that was no big deal. The question was, *God, am I essential or not? This is going to be an interesting day.* But it was, again, one of those stand-offs when we were trying to force a deal.

I'd like to try to make some generalizations, other than to make my statement that I think we blew it on the communications side. On the other hand, I'm not sure that there's one particular place where I can identify a breakdown because it was, again, one of those aberrations. And it's an aberration that's driven and controlled by people other than the White House. It's not like we were going to create a budget deal, and send it up there, and say, "All right you guys, either sign it, vote for it, or vote against it." No, it was a negotiated thing with the leadership of Congress, even outside their ranks of the normal process. Ergo: we got it. And there are not many pieces of legislation that Congress enacts that way because people are so jealous of their jurisdiction, as well they should be to keep the institution functioning.

So I can't find anything in particular, other than a strong admission that we blew it. There was an anticipation that there was going to be some revenue that was going to result in what could be defined as an increase in taxes, which might be a violation of the President's plan, until late in the process. And I'm not sure we could have inoculated it quick enough anyway.

Riley: Can I ask you about your working relationship with George Mitchell?

McClure: Yes. I had a good relationship—or have a good relationship—with George. I did not spend as much time with him, needless to say, as I did with Bob. And contrary to popular belief, George Mitchell had the ability to be just about as partisan as Dick Gephardt does. He just kind of does it in a smoother—under his "I used to be a federal judge" moniker. And he got away with it. He was quite difficult to deal with as he led his party's opposition to the President, but I got along with him fine. My relationship was good, but, like I said, I dealt more with our guys than I dealt with him. But he is an extremely partisan individual and he just came across as having this New England, "I used to be a judge, I can't be a bad guy" kind of deal, which has been transferred into one of his successors, who's now the majority leader of the Senate, who was under his tutelage.

Dickinson: How about Tom Foley?

McClure: Foley and I had a relationship that sprang—how do I describe this—actually from my having been involved in agriculture when I first came to Washington working for Tower, because he'd been on the Ag Committee. So I got into the flow with him and as I grew older in my process, I got to know him better. And I got to know him, I guess, most of all when he was coming down to do legislative meetings when we were doing that "white towel duty" that I was describing to you earlier. Because if things were running late or the guys got there earlier, part of your job was to sit there and figure out something to talk about.

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Tom and I have actually done a panel on Bush Congressional relations since that time—a couple of years ago up at Hofstra. And we had a good relationship. I didn't know him as well as I knew Jim Wright. I knew Jim Wright because he was a Texan. But then Jim was only short-lived.

Riley: Something that we need to come back to is the other two confirmations.

McClure: Okay. Which one was most difficult? Well, what do you want to know? I can tell you which one was more difficult.

Young: We want to know what you know.

McClure: I didn't quit working, but for the period of time associated with those nominations because of the importance of them to the President of the United States—not unlike what I did with Scalia, except I was not assistant to the President at that time—I went to every single visit that both of those individuals did with members of the United States Senate. Both of them. We did them exactly the same way.

I spent a number of days with them and others who were helping with the nomination, preparing them for their appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I reverted to my old trial lawyer days and got the chance to yell nasty questions at people who were ultimately going to be members of the Supreme Court, but I also helped them focus their responses in such a fashion that didn't get them in hot water. I knew they had to do more than Scalia had done, but not to be as professorial as Bork had been. And I didn't have Bork.

They were two totally different individuals in the sense of not only their backgrounds, but how they got to where they were. Both of them, fortunately, had Senate sponsors, which helped immensely. One had a record and one didn't. Souter had a very prolific writing record from his days as not only Attorney General, but his days as a member of the Court of Appeals and the high court in New Hampshire. David was highly vouched for by not only [Warren] Rudman, but also John Sununu.

Riley: That's where the name came from? Sununu?

McClure: I think the name came as a result of John and Rudman because David was from New Hampshire. So it was one of those things. Now, don't get me wrong. That's not to say that there was not other input into that decision-making process that Boyden Gray and others got involved in. Boyden had a responsibility for it because he was the President's lawyer. Who was our AG [Attorney General] then? Was Dick the AG? I can't remember whether [Dick] Thornburgh was AG or whether we had changed.

Young: [Bill] Barr?

McClure: No, Bill was like the last year. Bill was OLC [Office of Legal Counsel], legal counsel, but he was not AG until the end because we kept Thornburgh for a period of time. Was

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Thornburgh immediately followed by Barr? Maybe Dick stayed—whenever Dick went off to run for the Senate or whatever.

????: [inaudible]

McClure: Harris. Was it Harris Wofford he ran against? That was the first time health care became an issue in a political campaign for the federal government. In any event. So Dick had a role in it, but as a practical matter it was John and Boyden and all this kind of stuff, which is the way we did all of the big judges. We had input from members, and there was this list that the general counsel or the counsellor to the President keeps and you kind of go back to it. In fact, [Clarence] Thomas's name was thrown out on the first go-round when David was eventually picked.

In neither of those circumstances did I have any involvement in it until such time as we were on the verge of making the announcement. In that case, I got a phone call, "Fred, this is what we're about to do, it's going to happen at X. Get ready." And my next thing was just make sure they talk to me as soon as they make what little statement they're going to make, saying how proud they are that the President has chosen them to serve in this capacity and we look forward to confirmation. Because then they're mine. And that's the way it worked. Notice they never made any other statements to the press after that, which is one of those rules. We started this process of courtesy calls, which I engaged in, and I went to every single one of them with them.

Other than the paper work filling-out and stuff, as we got closer and closer to the time of the hearing, we spent time preparing them—"wood-shedding" them, if you will—for their two respective nominations. The biggest issue on David's side was that nobody knew him. He was an older guy who was unmarried and had lived this cabin-like life and existence. So they tried to paint him as some weird hermit that lived out there in the woods and was kind of off his rocker, but he loved his mother. [laughter] And that was the whole thing. Photographers were going to his house when he wasn't there and taking pictures through his windows.

I'll never forget. He called me up one day and he says, "Fred, I left so quickly to come down to do this deal that I don't have the slightest idea what people can see through the window into my house and what magazines and books are there." Then he says, "Oh, I know one in particular though," because he was reading it at the time or had read at the time and he knew it was on top of his desk—because he's a prolific reader. What is it—*Drawing With the Left Side of the Brain* or something like that. He's saying, "They're going to think I'm weird." [laughter] And I'm saying, "You're just creative, David, just creative. We can get through that one." Every time I see that book now, it brings back laughter.

And I think, too, there was one other. I think he had bought a somewhat pornographic magazine at a book store and he couldn't remember whether it was on the top of his desk or not, and he's saying, "Oh, my God." And I said, "Which book was it? It may be good on this side as opposed to on the other."

So David's preparation for his confirmation was probably more difficult because he has an uncanny intellectual capacity at recall. It's almost as though he remembers everything he has

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ever read and he can almost quote it back to you verbatim. I remember one day I was getting ready to go on a river trip or something. And I went up to the Hill, and we started talking about how much we liked water, and I talked about how much I loved sleeping out under the stars next to a rippling stream and how soothing it was. And all of a sudden, he brings up some opening paragraph of the 15th chapter of some book that he had read and quotes about the soothing nature of rocks and rippling water. I said, "David, you're unbelievable."

If you go back and look at the transcript of his hearings, there was also one day where he was engaged in this intellectual discussion with members of the Senate and was going down and quoting footnotes in a dissent where there were more dissents than one in some case that he had read that they were discussing. The majority opinion is the only thing you care about, but there were like four dissents in some Supreme Court decision and he was talking about some footnote within some dissent of several in a major case. I don't know when he read it last.

David's a very smart guy and my biggest concern about his confirmation, other than the personal side and how they were trying to portray him, was to keep him from getting into an intellectual discussion that he shouldn't be getting into with members of the Senate. That was a big challenge with him, but he was smart enough to listen to us and so it worked out well in that regard. What else can I say about him?

Riley: Was he good in the one-on-one visits with the members?

McClure: Oh, yes, he was great. He's got a great sense of humor. It's dry and what I perceive to be the wit and charm of people from the Northeast, or New England in particular, that I've spent time with. He's very quick. Not quite as quick as Sununu—No, I didn't just say that. He's very quick with his wit and they were very comfortable meetings. David knew more about the law and the questions that he was being asked by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee than the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee who were questioning him. Therefore I wasn't worried about that. The question was: Would he handle it in such a fashion? But David was also smart enough to know where they were going and he knew the areas where we couldn't go because of where it would ultimately lead him. Therefore David was easy to work with in that regard.

Riley: He knew those areas because you had schooled him in those areas or because he had a native sense about—

McClure: We had schooled him, but he had a native sense about the political sensitivity of—He'd been on the court long enough to know what the hot issues were: where are you going to go on privacy, when are they leading you down the privacy path, which ultimately gets you to *Roe v. Wade*, but where do you stop off in between with—There's some case in between, the name of which is escaping me right now. There was *Roe* and then some case after that which I can't remember. Then you get into privacy and frankly as a practical matter—It hadn't happened at the time that David was there, but if you reel forward to when Ashcroft did his deal, who cares whether or not *Roe* is reversed now? Because the Court has changed all this stuff in between and *Roe* is really basically no law any more. But it was a hue and cry for groups.

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Both individuals, although based on a different set of circumstances, faced the same opposition from outside groups as I faced last January with Ashcroft. You had the People for the American Way; you had folks on the abortion rights movement; you had the Ralph Neas and those guys; and you had the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] or African-American or black-based quarter, like civil rights organizations. Because always the deal was, "This guy's going to be the guy who is going to turn around affirmative action and this guy's going to be the dissenting vote. If he ain't, he's getting close to being the vote who's going to take away the right to privacy, or take away the right to an abortion." That's it. Nothing else. They didn't care about anything—

Yes, we could talk about capital punishment. Yes, we could talk about fourth amendment, we could talk about second amendment and gun rights and all that kind of stuff. It was only where they were on civil rights and affirmative action. That's it. That's the end of the discussion.

That is exactly what happened with Clarence Thomas, except we added another element to it, which was the whole Anita Hill, sexual harassment. But it was still the same thing, "Oh, this guy's even black and he's going to take away affirmative action so we can't put him on the Court. On top of that he has statements that says he is opposed to affirmative action." He hadn't been writing, though, because he hadn't been on the Court of Appeals long enough to have established a record. So all of his pedigree, if you will, in terms of record had come from his short service either at Education—Education? Yes, I think it was Education or at EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission], which was his biggest role before going on to the Court of Appeals. And that time was so short he hadn't written a whole lot.

You've got a situation with Clarence where one, he doesn't have a whole lot of writings. And two, he hadn't really been immersed in the intricacies of the law. And you're in a situation where you've really got to work with him on that because he hadn't spent a whole lot of time studying how the Court has dealt with *Baker v. Carr* or *Marbury v. Madison* or all those dudes because that has not been his life. He's been in a political world. So we had probably more what I would describe as educating and refreshing about constitutional law principles and in taking those constitutional law principles and surrounding them with the political discussions of the day.

He had a good awareness of the political discussions of the day, but how you connected those with constitutional law issues that the Court could potentially be in a position to decide was where we had to spend a lot of time with Clarence. But we had the same groups asking the same questions. By the way, you can take those questions and roll them forward to this past January and it's the same groups and the same questions. Same guys ask the questions on the Judiciary Committee—no huge change.

The other challenge that we had with Clarence was that he was the person chosen by the President when Thurgood Marshall died, so it was like black guy for black guy. That's not the way we did it. I do not believe that's why we did it in that fashion. That's what happened. But that's the way it was interpreted by those who would oppose the nomination. Opponents didn't know who Clarence Thomas was and so it was, "He's no Thurgood Marshall." It's kind of like, "I knew Jack Kennedy—" the Lloyd Bentsen line with Quayle "—and you're no Jack Kennedy." So you had that going on. And I thought, and to this day I believe this, that the President made an

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error when he announced at the press conference up at Kennebunkport that he had chosen Clarence to be his nominee for the Supreme Court vacancy, when he described him as the best man for the job.

I thought that put a standard in terms of a comparison with Clarence that was unfair to Clarence and that frankly kind of hindered our efforts a little bit down the road. I would have described him differently, which was basically, "He's my choice. I don't care whether you think he's the best one or not. He's mine. I'm the President and I get to do this, therefore this is the guy who it's going to be." That's the way I would have approached it language-wise, and he didn't. That was the first thing we had to deal with, which was, "How can he be the best man for the job? He's been on the EEOC, he did—" So we had to go down that path. Fortunately, Jack Danforth was there to be a great proponent in that effort, and Jack's presence helped immensely in that little tirade.

Much of it is public record in round two of Clarence, which was after the revelation and the subsequent round of hearings of the statement that Anita Hill had drafted. That kind of started it all over again, but took it to a different level, not unlike that which we experienced later with other members. And that's where I was making the reference earlier to this personalization thing, which has probably gone off the deep-end a little bit. That event turned it into, if you will, a public trial. It was a he said/she said, his word against hers kind of deal, and there wasn't much that you could go beyond that. And it was basically turned into a trial, as opposed to what I believe should be a thorough airing of the person's views as far as they're going to let you have them in the advise and consent process.

Knott: Was Clarence Thomas open to your suggestions? Were there occasions when he differed with you and decided he was going to fight back in a certain—

McClure: Clarence made the decision personally to do the famous speech where he talked about the high-tech lynching. He did that because I think he just finally got pissed, and I couldn't hold him back anymore, and he decided he was going to tell them what he thought. And that wasn't scripted.

That was him just finally—Clarence is a very religious guy and I think he reached the point where, in our conversations then and afterwards, he kind of shifted it to somebody else's hands and responsibility—somebody much higher than either one of us—in terms of whether or not—And it was kind of, "Now that I have the chance, I need to say this. And I need to say this because it's the right thing to do and if I don't do what I believe is the right thing to do now when they are attacking my character—which is an unfounded attack on my character—then I'm not living up to those things that I believe in. And if that costs me being on the Supreme Court, which I didn't ask for in the first place, then okay."

And he just let them have it. It was powerful, too. Let me tell you, it was powerful. I couldn't have written that. That's not something you could practice. It's not like an opening statement. It's not something that you could talk about. It's not an answer where you do all these nuances and miss these words, and yes, you can say this word, but if you say that word it leads you down that path. And make sure you say this word because that will make that Senator feel good, but at

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the same time it won't piss off this Senator on the other side who has a very different opinion about this issue than do you as well as a person down the dives. It came from his heart.

It's not unlike the closing that I got Ashcroft to do here at the end of his testimony back in January, which is, "This ain't the guy that they're painting you out to be and this will be your last opportunity to—" And I told him what I thought he ought to think about. Knowing him as a politician that he had been for the last 24 years, he could cut it. And he did. I thought it was grossly unfair. The groups have not abated in the nine years that I've been away from this city, but you know what the path is going to be every time.

So there were two different types of challenges between the two. Clarence was more difficult because, number one, of the get-up-to-speed curve on the law and, "Yes, you know the politics, but we got to figure out how you make sure that you meet the standard that the President has set for you as you answer the questions that these guys are going to ask you." At the same time, David's was, "Okay David, you know all this, but we've got to talk to you about the political side. We kind of got to keep you from going too far here because you'll end up there." And then you add that whole Anita Hill thing on top of the deal.

[BREAK]

McClure: I don't know what else I can say about those two nominations. Are there specific questions that you have? It's been hashed over so many times. We had a great group of people who helped from the outside: [Kenneth] Duberstein—Ken was an immense help in that process as was one of his partners, Mike Berman, who also helped us on a couple of those nominations. From a technical standpoint, beyond that part of the prep process, Mike Luttig, who is now Appeals Court judge—a good old boy from Texas and a long-time friend of mine—helped substantially on the legal preparation side. And we had other help from people at the Department of Justice because it was part of their deal—

Young: Was it Boyden who arranged for the vet, the background check and reviewed those documents?

McClure: Are we going down the FBI path now? The FBI document path?

Young: Yes.

McClure: We had a policy at the White House that the only—I shouldn't say the only. I've got to describe this very carefully. It was my understanding that the policy of the White House was that the only person who saw FBI records was Boyden Gray, in his capacity as general counsel, and an associate counsel, or the deputy, may have opportunity to do it depending on how many people we had coming down the pike. Lee Lieberman, for example, was a person who was our main contact on Clarence. I can't remember whether John was still there as deputy or not, but John really didn't get into that flow. It was generally Boyden and Lee. I have never in my life laid eyes on an FBI data file or executive summary or anything close to it, including the Tower deal. I have no intentions of doing so.

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But if there was ever an opportunity—And when we, for instance, needed to send the FBI back out to do another check, or something, on someone as the allegations arose—and I'm getting Tower confused with Clarence—it worked the same way each time. If it was something we needed to work on, I'd call up Boyden and say, "Boyden, this is what the allegation is. Can you get the FBI to go do X?" And then he'd get in touch with the FBI. The FBI would go do X. They'd bring the report back. Boyden would call me back and say, "Fred, there ain't nothing there," or "Fred, there is something there, but they're still working on it. We'll get it resolved. We'll figure out what it is." Boyden was the complete contact with the Justice Department and the FBI.

The desire is to keep the Justice Department in an insulated role. The only time I ever had any direct contact with the Justice Department or any of its wings or entities was in those situations where we were doing some legislative thing, like gun control, or something to that effect, which was a public policy question—not anything in their investigative or in their prosecutorial roles. And having been at Justice, I had a great appreciation for the need to separate that. Oh, I said the only thing—The only other area was in the process of the selection of U.S. attorneys, U.S. marshals, and federal judges, because we had a collective decision-making group that consisted of the presidential personnel, political affairs, White House, legislative affairs, the Justice Department, and Boyden's office. And we collectively made decisions and then we, in turn, made a recommendation to the President for him to act. So no. I haven't seen any. I ain't seen one yet.

Young: Okay.

McClure: Now, I was also, and this has been reported, too, the first one to get in the White House apparatus—Well, not the first one. That's not totally accurate. I was in San Francisco giving a speech and my deputy then, Steve Hart, whom I had stolen from Marlin Fitzwater, had been summoned to the Hill by the Democrat and Republican staff directors of the Judiciary Committee because this piece of paper had appeared and it was, "You go figure out what to do with it."

And so Steve came back to the White House, called me, and got in touch with me. We talked in code since I was on the cell phone, or car phone, and he told me the substance of it. I gave him instructions as to what to do with it and had him lock it in my desk drawer at the White House. And when I got back at midnight, I went in and read it in its entirety and had a response that was not significantly different from, "Oh, shit." And we took it from there. It was a very tight circle. I said, "You go tell Boyden and Lee. You go tell Sununu and that's it." I don't think I sent him anywhere else because I didn't want the press guys to know. That way they wouldn't have anything to deny, and that's the process we went through.

And then later, it took about a week before it surfaced, a woman whose name I cannot remember, who was one of the assistant press secretaries and working with us on our team that we had assembled for the Thomas nomination—she later went on to ABC. I can't remember her name. I can't believe I'm having that problem. Anyway, she was at some function here in town where a lot of press guys were and was confronted by the woman at NPR—Nina Totenberg—and the guy who was from *Newsday* or—I can't remember which of the publications. But they had heard that

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there existed such a document. And needless to say, the only reason they heard was the people who caused Anita to write that document told them that that document existed. It had been a week and nothing had happened about it, and why hadn't anybody written about it? Or someone within the Judiciary Committee staff or its members told Nina and what's his name—I can't remember—about the existence of this document. It had been a week and it was still in that very tight circle of people I just named.

And all of a sudden, I get this phone call from this individual who was working in Marlin's shop and she calls to tell me, "Fred, do you know anything about this?" My response was, "Yes." And she said, "Why haven't you told me?" I said, "It's because I didn't want to have this conversation that I'm having now, plain and simple."

That was the start of it in terms of walking down the path of it being a significant part of that process. Ironically, after the fact, when the FBI was investigating the leak—I'm now back in Texas and I'm being talked to by an FBI agent who doesn't quite know how this place operates. Basically he's starting out accusing me of being the individual who potentially leaked this information.

And I'm figuring out where his questioning is going and finally I stop him and say, "Do you know what my job was at the White House?" This guy says, "Well, you worked in legislative affairs." I say, "No, I'm going to take it further than that. I had responsibility as assistant for legislative affairs**.** My job was to get the President's nominees confirmed. Right?" And he says, "Oh." And I say, "Why in the hell would I want to leak something that is damning on the candidate? So go talk to somebody else. Leave me out of this." But in any event, that was the flow of events on that and it started the round all over again.

Ironically it was the week that—That was a horrible week because I had Clarence's vote on Monday, I guess it was, maybe Tuesday. We had the third override attempt on the civil rights legislation on a Wednesday, and Bob Gates' controversial hearing in the Senate Intelligence Committee was on Friday. And it was that week that I decided it was time to leave the White House, and subsequently began a process that culminated in my departure in February. It was too much. I couldn't take it any more.

Young: Well, there are a number of other questions, but our time is running out.

McClure: Go on, unless you guys got to leave. I've got a little bit more time.

Young: Good, good.

McClure: Or I'll come back and talk later. Yes. Who? I'm sorry. I'm listening.

Riley: My question was whether you made a second round of Hill visits after all of this stuff breaks loose. Are you, at that point—

McClure: I don't think so. I don't remember us making another round of Hill visits. We stepped up the outside, public stuff—

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Riley: "We" being?

McClure: The White House. I mean public liaison, the guys in the communication shop, groups that were saying what a great guy Clarence was. Stuff to oppose the rhetoric out there that was creating this impression that he was sexually harassing those people who worked for him.

Riley: Those folks were involved from the earliest stages—

McClure: Yes.

Riley: You said that there were—Those shops all had representatives in on the team—

McClure: Yes, that is accurate.

Riley: Did the principals at this point step in where they might not have been involved before? I'm just trying to get a picture of what it looks like to shift into overdrive, if you will, in a situation where it looks like this could crash and burn.

McClure: There was this whole question of when do we send the President out? Does he go out and say something and confirm that he loves Clarence? We had things like that that were happening. Or do we take this opportunity when the President is having this speech? Or does Marlin say something? But you see, the thing about it is that we weren't significantly below principal involvement in the first place. What we talked about at the senior staff table every morning, when I did my dog and pony show in the middle of Clarence Thomas, was, "Here's where we are, guys. We're going to do this today and I don't know what we're going to do next. This is where the vote looks like it's going to be. And we've got this meeting at three o'clock this afternoon. Let's go do X, Y, and Z."

So at the principal level, we had this daily thing—I think Quayle mentions in his book coming into my office for a strategy session and bringing his lunch in a paper bag. But we had daily things like that going on where the communication guys, the lawyers, the press guys were all a part of my team for the internal stuff. And occasionally, we'd get Duberstein and others over to help out.

Riley: Was there ever serious consideration given to abandoning the nomination?

McClure: No. Not to my knowledge.

Riley: Were you approached by friendly sources on the Hill who said you really need to seriously consider—

McClure: I don't remember being—Our guys were kind of bucking up. It was like, "We ain't going to let them do this to Clarence. This is pretty poor. We know where this is coming from."

Riley: Okay.

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McClure: So as a result, it moved in that direction. Just a minute, I'm just trying to figure out who this is.

Knott: She's a reporter?

McClure: No, she's one of mine. She was us.

Knott: You said she went on to—

McClure: She went on to work for ABC. And I can't remember what her name is, and it's really bothering me. Go ahead. I can do two things at once—not very well. Next.

Knott: This Thomas experience. Did it lead you to think, *I can't take this anymore*? Is that—

McClure: It wasn't Clarence so much. It was a combination of all of those things coming together at the same time. It was time to go. Not only was it Clarence, but it was my friend Bob Gates and at the same time it was another round on civil rights. I'll digress on that for just a bit. We haven't talked about that and there are some interesting little stories or vignettes that I happen to remember about that.

The problem with the civil rights legislation—or the challenge of the civil rights legislation—is that we got somewhat boxed in because it was named civil rights legislation. It really wasn't. What it really was, was this arcane "Who was going to have the burden of proof in cases that arose under Title VII, or IX?" And the issue became who was going to have the burden of proof and what standard of proof they had to reach—preponderance, or whatever—to get relief. And whether the bad guys had to go first versus the good guys had to go first. And it got turned into this civil rights legislation, as it was denominated. We spent a lot of time dealing with the issue from that perspective, which is what made it difficult.

I remember one day, the Congressional black caucus came down and wanted to present a petition to the President, which implored him not to veto whatever version was coming through. They come, park, and get dumped off by the northwest gate of the White House. And the guys in the Congressional black caucus, like, "Oh, God. They're going to come to demand the President visit with them. Oh, this is going to be bad." They actually called my office and said, "We want to see you, McClure." I thought, *Awwww!* From my office I could look out and see the front gate, so I walked up the driveway—and needless to say all the cameras were flashing and stuff—and I walked outside the gate. And my buddies who were in the Secret Service were looking at me like, "McClure, do you know what you're doing? These guys are going to kill you or something."

So I go out, greet the members of the caucus, get presented with this petition. Somebody says something to me and I said, "Thank y'all very much. I'll make sure the President gets it." And I go back into the White House and I'm done. That must have been on a Thursday, or—It must have been a Friday because the President went to Camp David that weekend. And I got a phone call very early that morning from him. I can't remember exactly when this was. Whenever it

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was, it was a day that the Dallas Cowboys were playing the Washington Redskins because I was going to go to the game that day, if I remember the timing correctly on the sequence. And the President awakens me at home.

As an aside here, whenever the President travels, the Army does his telephone communications, a group called White House Signal. And these little sergeants—Well, they ain't so little. They're older guys than me in some instances. But enlisted men make these phone calls and it's great because you get this phone call, and you're at home, and they would say, "Mr. McClure, would you take a call from the President?" I always wanted to say, "No," and never had the guts to do it because I don't know what the guy would do on the other end: "What'd you say?" "No, I don't want to talk to that—"

So in any event, the President called and he was really concerned. We talked about a lot of stuff, but primarily he finally got down to the question of, "Did you see the paper this morning?" And I said, "No Sir, I'm not up yet. I haven't gone out to see it." He said, "Well, we probably need to talk, but I'm just going to go ahead and tell you that I hope that this is not putting you in a very difficult position because of what we're doing on the civil rights legislation." Because he'd gotten his *Washington Post* already up at Camp David and saw me above the fold receiving this petition from the members of the Congressional black caucus. And he cared deeply enough about me personally that he called to inquire about my emotional well-being as a result of what I was doing on his behalf.

There's also an excerpt in his most recent book, the letters book, of a letter that he hand-wrote to me in the middle of that whole process. It relates how he hoped he was doing the right thing and how grateful he was that people like me and Lou Sullivan and Connie Newman and other high-profile, high-ranking blacks in his administration were continuing to support him. And he hoped that there was not a level of discomfort about the positions that he had taken. There was another time when he called me in. It was another one of those he called me in after some meeting that didn't have a damn thing to do with why we were in the Cabinet room. He called me into the office and said just point blank, "Fred, am I doing the right thing?" Boyden was leading that civil rights deal and it's because again of this whole—it was a Supreme Court decision we were trying to turn around or something. I can't remember the detail.

Knott: Ward's Cove decision?

McClure: Yes, it was Ward's Cove. And so it was driving that. But the President's sensitivity to that and to the roles where he had placed us shows a side of him and his decision-making process and his care about the people that worked for him that I don't think is readily seen by a whole lot of folks. So I'll use this opportunity to get it on the record in another fashion.

The civil rights thing was difficult because basically the Democratic leadership in the Senate and the House, including George Mitchell and others, were setting us up for the 1992 elections, plain and simple—I mean for the 1992 round. And it was his being soft on civil rights. So that was the thrust on civil rights. There's really not much more to that except we had to do it three times. It was over and over and over again. And every time, it was an opportunity for our opponents to

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define George Bush in a fashion going into 1992 which catered to a particular part of the populace in terms of the electoral voting process.

I was doing a CNN [Cable News Network] thing the other day on *Inside Politics* and the question was defining moments in a presidency. I think it takes a long time after the people have served as President for you to define what's a defining moment. And a defining moment can be just as good as it can be bad. For example, I think a defining moment in the Clinton presidency was not so much the impeachment at the end of the process, but it was all those things that took place leading up to the impeachment.

Was the breaking of the "No new taxes" pledge, in terms of George Bush's presidency, a defining moment? No, I don't think so. I think it may have contributed to what ultimately happened in the election in 1992, but I don't think it was a defining moment. I think in retrospect, the defining moment for him, at least from policy standpoint, was the whole Persian Gulf thing. That's what his presidency, I think—Now, despite the fact that I think we kept the economy from going into a much deeper recession as a result of the budget thing, on which we busted our tails and lost the impetus—It didn't get there fast enough, but it did some things in that it helped define how government watches its spending and appropriates its dollars. Those are good things. However, it will never be considered a defining moment, I think, for the President. He will always be defined by the way he successfully prosecuted the war.

It takes time to go back, and you guys are historians and political scientists and so you have an appreciation—When you look at stuff removed in time, if you've got the right information from which to make a decision—And it's pretty hard when you're on the inside to be very objective, at that time or even afterwards for that matter—even as far removed as I am—to have an objective view of how good you did or how good you didn't do. It's hard to grade your own paper. Others will have to do it for you.

But that was a difficult time and the President was particularly pained by those decisions that he had to make in terms of the Civil Rights Act. I know that for a fact. And he didn't think he was doing anything wrong, don't get me wrong. It was because of how he was being portrayed because he was not affixing his signature or was vetoing something that had Civil Rights Act associated with it. And he had been, for example, active with civil rights groups going back to when he was in college and that just wasn't a part of his psyche.

Knott: So the context of his question, when he called you in, was just your sense of his orientation towards civil rights in general? Or the specific Civil Rights Act and should he veto that particular bill at that time?

McClure: When he called me in, it was really a question of, "Am I doing the right thing?" It was really—

Knott: He had decided to veto.

McClure: What I can't remember is whether or not we were between one and two or two and three. I can't remember exactly when that was. But in retrospect, given the question he asked me,

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it wasn't one of these things where it was, "Okay, today we're going to tell these guys we're going to veto this tomorrow and we're going to do it tomorrow." It really goes back to that old Darman thing that I was talking about earlier in terms of degrees of letting members of Congress and the Senate, the guys who are going to have to walk the plank, know what they're going to be called upon to do. So they knew it was out there.

The Congressional black caucus wouldn't have come up had they not known we were positioned—because we had done like we did on Clean Air, like, "We've got to get these three things or these five things," I can't remember what the numbers were on either one of those. And if we didn't get those things, the President's going to have to veto it and these are the principles by which we will judge this piece of legislation. So that's where that came around.

Riley: There was a signing statement, right, that went with the final version of the civil rights bill?

McClure: There generally—That he finally signed?

Riley: Yes. I recall there being some stir over how this was characterized, but I can't—

McClure: Yes, I can't remember. There was a stir over the signing statement. The signing statement, like every other signing statement, was one of those that went through the whole rigmarole and we got a shot at as well—

Riley: But it's not something you typically generated.

McClure: No signing statements were generally generated—Judy Smith. That's her name. I knew I'd find it eventually.

Young: So glad.

Riley: I feel much better.

McClure: Judy, Judy, Judy. Judy would kill me.

Riley: Well, you'll have the opportunity to edit her name into this—

McClure: No, generally we didn't generate signing statements. Signing or veto statements, frankly, were generated—Let me just get this right. Most of the time they were generated by OMB, but generally with the ultimate blessings of the last stop, which was the counsel's office. Because there's an argument that can be made that it's part of the legislative history ultimately and, "Yes, we're kind of signing this, but we don't like this part down here," which is how we once got into the rescission business and all that kind of stuff. Not just "we," but administrations in the past, in terms of how they dealt with—and makes the argument for line item veto. And you go through all of those old arguments.

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My memory, though, is that on the civil rights legislation, it started in the counsel's office. Now it may have had input from Justice, I'm sure. OLC was involved in it—Barr and those guys.

Riley: Do you recall any instances where you asked for modifications in signing statements or veto messages because you felt the Hill would react unfavorably or more favorably to—

McClure: Russ, I can't remember because if we did—I'm pretty sure we did. I don't remember it being major enough, though, to—And that would have happened at, for example, the level of—We would know something because of conversations we had had and we would communicate that. The guy who would have the responsibility for communicating and working that into the system would be, in those latter days, Rob Portman or Steve Hart, who were my internal deputies. And it was in the normal flow of the Staff Secretary circulation process.

Riley: This is perfect because it would help researchers reading this later to know where to go.

McClure: Yes, assuming that all the archival papers are as they should be. Where they are housed ultimately, there should be, for example, whether it's on speeches or whether it's on signing statements or other matters like that, drafts that floated back and forth. And ultimately the Staff Secretary was the guy—or gal—who has a responsibility for not only getting stuff to the President so he can sign it so things can happen, but the circulation process.

Some of those Staff Secretaries have been more involved than others in terms of policy and in terms of protection of the presidency. But the bottom line is that that's where it is. So if you go look at all of those, you will see input from the legislative shop, sometimes the political shop. And that's whether it's a speech that was originated by the communication shop, or whether it was a signing statement or veto statement that was initiated by either the counsel's office or by OMB.

Young: Looking back, do you think Bush had a successful relationship with Congress, however you want to define that?

McClure: Yes. Yes, I think he did. We managed to accomplish a number of things, both domestically and on the foreign policy front, that required the cooperation of Congress. Yes, he had to use one of the few powers granted to the presidency, the power of veto, to get to where we wanted to go and that will sometimes distort the record.

As historians look at the legislative ground beef process or sausage-making process, I think it's important that they walk legislation through and add to it whether or not there was this threat of a veto going, because we used it rather effectively. Then you look at a vote and the vote looks like it may be a loss for the President, but it's 34 votes for and 66 votes against it. And I got 34, which means I can sustain a veto. Then the thing comes back through, the offending piece of legislation has been mysteriously removed from the document, and it's passed 90 to 10. "Oh, my God. What happened?" Well, we were able to shape legislation by using the President's veto power which is, thank God, what the founding fathers gave to a President. But in a situation where we didn't have control over either body, it was a tool that we used frequently, and successfully I might add.

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There are other votes where we had these test votes, again a 34-66 kind of a deal, and after having this test vote, we knew what we needed to do. It may not be a veto threat, but we could then go back and say, "Hey, did you see this vote the other day? Well, maybe you ought to change this." Did we have as warm and fuzzy a relationship with Congress as was perhaps implied in the President's inaugural address when he reached out his hand, or whatever terminology we used in that address? No. And I don't think any President in modern times has been able to, no matter how much he asks for it. Basically things were nice for that first two or three months, but we had the Tower thing going on, we had the Jim Wright thing. There was lots of fuzziness going on, but it was good. And then we started down this other path.

I think, upon reflection, he had a successful relationship with Congress. One of the things he brought to the table was he couldn't play like he was an outsider, like Ronald Reagan was able to—he wasn't playing like it, but Ronald Reagan said he was. Bush was not an outsider. He'd been in town most of his life. The other thing is he was the last of the World War II generation to be President of the United States, which I think made him especially useful given the stuff that went on during the four years that he served as President. Because you got to realize the Berlin Wall fell during all of this, there was a whole lot of stuff going on in China with the Chinese students. By the way, that was where e-mail and chat rooms gave us a lot of information about what was going on amongst the dissidents and those who were not the dissidents in terms of actions and lobbying in the United States Congress.

The whole democracy thing that was going on was a really challenging—the reunification of Germany. All this stuff was going on while we still did the war, and I can't think of a better positioned guy who had had the experience that he had to be able to go through those things. I think he got a bum rap on his attention to domestic policy-related items. I think we had a number of successes. No, it wasn't the thing that he got up every morning and just started thinking about. But then on the other hand, he didn't run on those things. And the things that he did run on were things that we successfully prosecuted early on: Clean Air, the whole ADA thing—which was a huge thing in our front-end of the process—and some other domestic policy initiatives.

Young: Those were very complicated and quite major accomplishments. There were some people in my profession who profess the view that when you have a divided Congress you have deadlock and stalemate and nothing gets done. That certainly didn't prove to be the case in the Bush Administration. There wasn't a stalemate.

McClure: No, I know. I don't think it was a stalemate.

Young: It wasn't a war. And I think as time passes and people begin to examine the domestic side and the Congressional connection side of the presidency, there will be a substantial recognition.

McClure: Yes, I think so. It was overshadowed by what happened at the end. But there were all these other things going on in between which played to the President's strengths, whether it was Tiananmen Square, the whole nine yards. There were things that played to his strengths where it was hard for anybody to second-guess what he was saying or doing because he'd been doing this

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crap all these years and he knew these guys—and gals—well who were in positions of power at that time.

Young: What about the failure of re-election? You weren't around at that time.

McClure: I was not. I'm going to throw in one other thing I forgot about. This is just one to throw in for the record book purposes. When we had to do Most Favored Nation trading status for China on the heels of the Tiananmen Square and human rights stuff, one of the coolest things we got involved in was we actually got President [Richard] Nixon and President Ford to help lobby for us on that.

I wrote President Nixon this great note after, thanking him for what he'd done. President Ford remembered who I was, but with Nixon I said, "You don't know who I am, but I have this job that I do that so-and-so did for you." And I got this wonderful note back from Nixon talking about how wonderful it was to kind of be back in the flow of things because we got him to make some great phone calls that helped in the lobbying process. So that was kind of one of those things where the power of the presidency and the power—Nixon can't be questioned on China, or couldn't be questioned on China very authoritatively, just like Bush could not be because he was there—because Nixon put him there.

So it was kind of a fun mix to get those guys to be a part of our lobbying process. In other words I had no shame. I'd go ask anybody to lobby a Senator. We're going to make our process, didn't care who you were, "Come on." Now, I made that digression. What was I talking about before that?

Young: You were giving some general comments on relations with Congress.

McClure: No, no, you'd asked me the question about the post-election—

Young: You had said earlier that you didn't think the budget—the breaking the pledge caused the defeat, and you might have some observations on—

McClure: Why we lost?

Young: Yes, why? What are your observations on that?

McClure: The economy was a major factor. The campaign was not very well run. It was run by a group of individuals as opposed to one person with responsibility, which I don't think is a way to run a railroad. Not that any of those guys weren't individually, perhaps, capable of doing it; it's just that we had this troika going on and it's just no way to run a show. Somebody's got to have responsibility, and make decisions, and take the heat, and make the trains run on time. So I think that was part of it. I think, too, that it was a point where the country was then ready to make the next generation of leadership leap, to get away from the World War II guys. Not that they were bad, just that it's time for us to pass the mantle.

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I have never discussed this matter with him, but I have this view that one of the reasons George Bush chose Dan Quayle to be his vice presidential nominee was not so much to placate the conservatives, but he was kind of looking at him and saying, "We got to change this generational leadership stuff and Dan's a young guy, up-and-comer. He's got some good credentials, he's loved by conservatives, brings some other stuff to the table. Not much bad stuff you can say about him: Indiana, good Midwest guy. We've got to get to some guys who are younger." And I think that's what the President was doing in terms of reaching out to Dan Quayle. Ironically, his boy actually got there first, but that's still another thing. I guess you couldn't ask your boy to be your vice presidential nominee.

Ergo the election of Clinton and Gore because it was a generational shift. It was kind of, "Now, us guys in our 40s and 50s, it's time for us to take up the mantle rather than you guys in your mid-60s and 70s." And that's what we did.

Riley: You mentioned the troika not being a good way to go, and you mentioned Lee Atwater's name several times, not terribly favorably—

McClure: No, no, no. Wait a minute. I've got to clear that up. Not terribly favorably?

Riley: Well, only in the sense of knocking heads with Lee over who's going to get in your shop.

McClure: Oh, we did. We did. But look, Lee—No, no, no. I have very strong, favorable comments about Lee, so I want to make sure I clear up how I did that.

Lee and I had a couple of run-ins early on. I think there may have been, in a couple of those instances, people acting on Lee's behalf, but without Lee's direction, which people had a tendency to do over in his shop; they just invoked his name. And so that was happening. I think there were some things going on that Lee was not aware of, but there were also some times when Lee and I had a direct confrontation early on in the process. And when it was once established where both of us were and what our responsibilities were, we worked. That was it. We were great friends. I used Lee and the RNC as often as I could to help us on stuff that we needed—where we needed to get support for folks whether it was a nominee or whether or not it was an issue. So I didn't mean to not speak favorably of Lee, to get back to my reaction there.

I had run-ins with a whole lot of folks during the time as everybody was trying to carve their turf or protect their turf so that they could do their jobs. Once we resolved that, we went on and did our jobs. So anyway.

Now, let me move on to where I think you were heading. I think had Lee been around it probably would have been different. I think Lee would have had some—what's the word I'm looking for—leadership and direction of the campaign that would have been beneficial to the President. Do I believe that it would have been sufficient to keep the President from not being re-elected? The answer to that question is no. I think it just wasn't going to happen. Now, again, I think the President's defeat greatly contributed to what happened in 1994 and so there are a lot of people who ought to be happy as a result of his defeat and ergo his son becoming President now. Sorry, Russ, I didn't mean to—

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Riley: No, no, no. I want—

McClure: I wanted to clear the record up because I want to make sure it was considered in the proper light.

Riley: It is. I put words in your mouth, which I shouldn't have done.

Young: It was on the question of having an RNC person, a campaign person, sitting on your staff—

McClure: Yes, a campaign person sitting on the staff. Well, let me tell you. Lee did what he should have done, which is to try and dust the whole place with his folks. And it's just that he started dusting in my place and I said, "No."

Young: We don't need cleaning.

McClure: It works both ways. It depends on where your political person is. There are allegations that the current political guy inside the White House has got his people dusted all over the government. He probably does. But that's a part of this whole give-and-take and governing process that needs that. So I think it was a combination of factors that led to the campaign.

The President's kind of one of those guys, too, who I think basically wanted to stand before the American electorate and say, "I think I've been a good steward. I may not be a big politician, but I think politics is a stewardship thing and I think I've done okay and I think you ought to grade my paper," as opposed to, "I'm fighting for this office." And I didn't see that level of intensity that existed. Indeed, I remember one time during his presidency—another one of these when he called me into the room—it was before he announced that he was going to run for re-election. He was pushing it further and further away, and there was all this discussion about whether he really was or not, and whether he was going to dump Quayle or not and if he did dump Quayle who was it going to be, and all the comparisons to [Nelson] Rockefeller and Ford and all that crud.

And he called me into the office, a beautiful spring day. He'd made the decision already to put the library at Texas A & M University, my alma mater, and it was a great day. Something was bothering him—I can't remember. I don't even know whether he told me what was bothering him, but he kind of walks over to the window and he looks out the window—we're on the south lawn—and he says, "Fred, it's just a beautiful day." I said, "Yes, it is Mr. President." He says, "Come on, you can go with me. We ought to just pick up and go on Air Force One and just go to College Station." I say, "Go to College Station?" And he says, "Yes. Because you know I like it down there and I know you like it down there." And I say, "Yes, Mr. President." And he says, "Just—Don't have to worry about this anymore. Just kind of quit." And I'm thinking, *Oh, shit.* We won't say what that word was.

He really scared me. He scared me because the nature of the conversation was one of these where I really, really felt like he was on the verge of deciding that he was not going to run for re-

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election. And the thrust of the conversation was, "We won't have to worry about this anymore. We can just kind of go to College Station and kick back." And I'm thinking, *No.*

From afar, because I wasn't here. I left in February after the State of the Union and did not return until December, I guess. Well, maybe I came back once in between, but I didn't see the fire and excitement that even was present back in 1988, '89.

Riley: Do you think maybe some of the same factors that caused you to feel like you'd had enough were also weighing heavily on him? The nature of politics was a lot different than it was when he came out from Texas in the '60s.

McClure: That's true. And it may have been. I hadn't really thought about it, Russell, in that perspective, but it could have been. It could have been weighing on him. I don't think it was the weight of the decision-making because he was prepared to make the decisions. He has no problem making a decision. He wants information so as to make a decision, but once he makes a decision, he expects it to take place. And I think that when he finally got into the chair, it wasn't the weight, but it was one of these things associated with, "Is this worth doing again?" So I don't know.

Dickinson: It went beyond just the campaign. My sense is he didn't enjoy campaigning the way some Presidents have, but it went to just getting into the gutter with domestic politics and stuff like that as well, perhaps?

McClure: I think that gets to be an issue when—Depending on how you want to define "getting in the gutter with domestic politics." He didn't mind the give-and-take associated with that. He preferred to do the foreign stuff a little bit more, yes, that's true. But he would go do the other things that we asked him to do in that regard. I don't remember in any specific nature him ever being so reluctant that he failed to do what we asked him to do. But I think once he became President it was, "Okay, it's time for me to be the steward of government. I need to govern, and I need to lead, and this ain't personal, but this is moving us down the direction that I think we ought to go. And so here we go. And Congress, you may be a distraction, but I know I have to deal with you because I used to be one of you." That's my take on that.

Young: Do you have any parting thoughts?

McClure: It's a good project you guys are doing. You studied fairly well for it. I've seen better prepared groups [laughter], like your first year political science students. But as a general rule, not bad. I'm trying to think if there's anything else that I want to cover.

We kind of glossed over the minimum wage thing when we were talking about that $4.25, $4.30 example, but that was a huge issue on the domestic side early on. Where's that veto list? A number of those veto things provided an interesting flow of events.

Dickinson: That was your first veto, right?

McClure: Was that the first one?

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Dickinson? Minimum wage?

McClure: It may have been. Oh, something else that goes unnoticed, too: we did the whole savings and loan bail-out thing during that process which was FRA [Foreign Relations Authorization] or FSLIC [Federal Savings and Loan Corporation] or whatever the hell it was—the first go round of that. End of FSX [Fighter Support Experimental], thrift bail-out, and all these appropriations.

Oh, this is important to know. I meant to go back to this. Remember, I'd been in the airline business and worked for Lorenzo at Texas Air Corporation. One of the early on fights was whether or not the President was going to sign this piece of legislation, which was a strike resolution basically tying the hands of Texas Air Corporation having to do with Eastern Airlines. In fact, I'm a subject of a book as a result of that little folderol. And I can't even remember who did this, whether it was—God, this is a woman reporter. I think it was Leslie Stahl.

Leslie calls me up. Remember, Sam Skinner is then Secretary of Transportation, and I have recused myself from all matters having to do with Texas Air in particular. I could deal with other general airline issue stuff, but from Texas Air stuff I had recused myself. So it was funny. Skinner would run into me in the hall and see me and he'd be over there for some airline related meeting, and he'd say, "Freddy, I can't talk to you." He'd turn around and go the other direction saying, "Don't even get close to me."

Anyway, on a particular day, the President was getting ready to decide what to do on this resolution. And again, my staff had sat in on all the meetings for me. Now, there's a process, at least, that we had in place in our shop: every piece of legislation written by a member of Congress to the President came—Well, first of all, back up. There's a correspondence shop at the White House. But anything that came from a member of Congress did not go to the correspondence office over in the Old Executive Office Building, but instead came to my office in the East Wing, where my correspondence office was. Then my guys decided what we were going to do, what the dispensation was with this letter, whether it would rise to the level of the President writing him back, whether it arose to the level of us saying, "We're sending it to a cabinet agency," whatever. Most of the time they got some form letter from me. But it was then bucking the thing over to some other agency to deal with.

There were some incoming letters from members of Congress about the Eastern Airlines thing. And my guys were great in the sense that they did not send out anything whatsoever that had my name on it. Some of my staff signed it, if anybody signed it, on the Eastern Airlines thing. Reel forward. There's this question as to whether or not I am involved in any discussions. So Leslie calls me up in the office and she asks, "Fred, have you had anything to do with any of this stuff because you used to work for Lorenzo?" And I said, "Yes, I did. I used to work for Frank. No, Leslie, I haven't done anything whatsoever that's had anything to do with this issue." And Leslie said, "Okay, fine."

The President later on has a press availability, about 30 minutes later, and he goes into the White House press room. And Leslie raises her hand and asks, "Mr. President, does Fred McClure have

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anything to do—" And the President has to defend me in a press conference in terms of whether or not I was doing anything associated with Eastern Airlines and I thought, *This is really cool.* Then he comes up and calls me and gives me a hard time.

But what ultimately happened was that when the legislation took place and it was all no longer an issue anymore, there were letters that had not been answered by my legislative shop that now were being answered and they didn't think about not putting my name on it. And off go all of these letters with my name on it back to Capitol Hill saying, "Oh, I thought you wanted to know. You wrote me about this. This is what happened. The President vetoed it, blah, blah, blah." And it's signed Frederick D. McClure, which is great. I get these phone calls, "I thought you didn't have anything to do with—" "Well, I didn't." It's the process. It's one of those weird things over which you have absolutely no control, but can be a significant pain in the butt as you're trying to go through this process.

Textiles, parental medical leave, there's some stuff here I don't even remember any more. Indian Preference Act. If somebody can tell me what that means it'll be really great. And then I left before we did fetal tissue research. So as a practical matter, like I said, we kind of rode them back and forth from one House to the other so that the guys wouldn't have to walk the plank as often as they did.

I don't know what else to say other than in closing it was probably, upon reflection—There's a side of me, at one point in time, that wished that every day I went home and spoke into a tape recorder about the events of the day, whether it was a funny that Sununu—I don't know. One morning we were having a staff meeting and I was reading a newspaper waiting on him to come in and we had lost some vote, which we knew we were going to lose. And John comes in and sits down at the head of the table and says, "God, what are you doing, McClure? After last night's vote you're reading the want ads?" And I say, "Thanks, John. Really appreciate that." Or that moment toward the end of John's tenure when the President called me in and wanted to have a serious discussion about how effective John was and how he was being viewed on Capitol Hill, which is kind of tough.

But all in all, it was a three-year-and-one-half month experience that I would not exchange for anything in the world. They were some difficult times. I think we had some great successes on the policy front and I think, under the circumstances, we did all right in terms of our relationship with Congress. It's always a challenge for any President. And it has a lot to do with the personalities of the President, the personalities of the body that you're trying to have relationships with—i.e. the United States Congress—where you've got a third of the Senate and all of the House up for re-election every two years, the instantaneous nature of communications.

We're now in this 24-hour news cycle and if you think back, we didn't even have *Nightline* until the hostage crisis began back in the late '70s with Carter. And now it's a staple part, to say nothing of all of the things that have happened in terms of other networks and cable and all this kind of stuff. And now the internet, which I said we used a little bit during the Chinese students thing because we found out what tactics and arguments they were using as a result of them having discussions. And that was early on in the infant usage of the internet for grass-roots marketing and motivation of people. So when you put all those factors together, any President

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going forward is going to have, I think, more of a challenge because everybody got access to that kind of stuff.

And there will probably be some next generation that we don't even fathom, as we sit here today, that will change the way a President deals with the Congress, whether or not it's his ability to go over their head and go to the people and get the people to go and do things for him, or whether or not it's personal persuasion because of a long-term relationship, not unlike what LBJ [Lyndon B. Johnson] used to do. And as we go forward, I think that things will change. One thing won't change, though, as we go forward and that's the fact that as long as we continue to have the form of government we have, we're going to have 535 people on one side of the equation versus one person on the other side of the equation that has to make this work. And as long as people are a part of the process, there's a way to get through it and to be productive in a sensible way.

I've enjoyed my time in public service—loved it. Can't afford to do it again, but loved it. And I particularly enjoyed working for—I can say three Presidents, but it was the guy who I worked for at the end who has been, and is, my dear friend as a result of that experience with him and his family. And I thank you guys for being a part of the process of helping us define for those who will follow us and look back over history what that guy contributed when he served as President of the United States, other than being the father of the dude who did it eight years later. So thank y'all so much.

Young: Well, we're in your debt and so will history be. We've learned a lot today.

McClure: And there's nothing that I said today that I wouldn't be perfectly happy with others knowing about, ever.

Young: Well, you'll still be the first to see the transcript. I thought I heard you say, at one point, that, "I'm not here."

McClure: I wasn't going to tell you anything that I didn't—I treated you guys like I treated the media when I dealt with them, which was: Don't ever say anything to those guys, no matter how good your relationship. Never say anything that you wouldn't mind seeing on the front page of the paper the next day. If you do that you're doing good.

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