



GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH SIGMUND ROGICH

March 8-9, 2001  
Charlottesville, Virginia

**Interviewers**

*University of Virginia*

Russell L. Riley, chair  
Paul Freedman  
Tarek E. Masoud  
James S. Young

*Bush Presidential Library Foundation*

James McCall

Assisting: Jill Mary Abraham, Gar R. Culbert, Beatriz Lee  
Transcription: Martha W. Healy  
Transcript copyedited by: Laura K. Moranchek  
Final edit by: Jane Rafal Wilson

© 2011 The Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia and the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation

Publicly released transcripts of the George H. W. Bush Oral History Project are freely available for non-commercial use according to the Fair Use provisions of the United States Copyright Code and International Copyright Law. Advance written permission is required for reproduction, redistribution, and extensive quotation or excerpting. Permission requests should be made to the Miller Center, P.O. Box 400406, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4406.

To cite an interview, please use the following general format: [name of interviewee] Interview, [date of interview], George H.W. Bush Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.

GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH SIGMUND ROGICH

March 8-9, 2001

**March 8, 2001**

**Riley:** For the record, this is an interview with Sig Rogich with the President George H. W. Bush Oral History Project, “41” as the insiders are calling it. One of the first things that we do usually—everyone has been briefed already about the confidentiality arrangements for the interview—but we want to go ahead and get a record of the names and voices so that the transcriber can pick them up. So for the record, I am Russell Riley with the Miller Center at the University of Virginia.

**Masoud:** I am Tarek Masoud with the Oral History Program at UVA.

**Culbert:** I am Gar Culbert at the same institution.

**Young:** I’m Jim Young, guest today.

**Lee:** I’m Beatriz Lee, the administrator of the program.

**Abraham:** Jill Abraham with the Oral History Program.

**McCall:** James McCall with the Bush Library Foundation.

**Freedman:** Paul Freedman, Department of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia.

**Rogich:** Sig Rogich, your guest.

**Young:** Since you’ll do most of the talking, I hope it will be very clear.

**Riley:** We’re happy to have you here and appreciate it. I know you’re keeping a very busy schedule and so it’s a tremendous advantage for us to be able to talk with you about your experience in this administration. We like to start by letting you know that you are not just speaking to us, but you are creating an historical record here. Predominantly what we are trying to do is get information on the record that might not otherwise be there, so that scholars and future students of this administration will have the best information possible to make its assessments about the era that the President served in and about the nature of this particular Presidency. So, as Jim likes to say in these settings, we’re really speaking to an unborn audience.

The simplest way to get started is to ask you to reflect a little bit about your initial contact, the first time that you came to associate with George Bush.

**Rogich:** Well, it probably began about 1984. Actually, a little before that, in 1980, was my first introduction to Presidential politics in really a more volunteer role. I didn't do anything of significance. I was just a young guy who had a desire to see Ronald Reagan become President. I had worked in college in 1966 for Paul Laxalt when he became Governor and then later our United States Senator. I was editor of the university newspaper at UNR then and in the course of all that I wrote speeches for Paul and ended up working in the summertime for his campaign and creatively worked with the advertising agencies, writing many of the commercials, copy for mailers and those kinds of things. So I later became involved to a very slight degree in the '80 election cycle through Paul Laxalt.

In '84 Senator Laxalt asked me to go back to Washington, D.C., as one of three directors for the "Tuesday Team." There were two other directors based in New York. I was based in Washington, D.C., which turned out to be a plus because I spent more time with the President than many others.

**Riley:** The two New Yorkers were?

**Rogich:** Jim Travis and Wally Kerry. Jim was a partner with Della Femina, Travisano & Associates. Wally had come from a large Madison Avenue advertising agency, one of the more commercial agencies that did work for such clients as Proctor and Gamble. Wally was not a creative director but worked on budgeting and approvals, you know from the campaign procedural standpoint. Jim Travis was the man in charge of our team. Jerry Della Femina, his partner, was a very creative guy who really didn't get involved in the campaign as much, but had written a book that kind of became legendary, entitled, *From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor*. Do you remember the book? He is a very creative, funny guy. You see him on TV from time to time, you know, creating or critiquing commercials.

Our group took the space right above Radio City Music Hall for offices and then we officially became the Tuesday Team. I was based in Washington and regularly I would go to the White House and really kind of worked out of the Roosevelt Room where I would set up the mechanics for filming the commercials with President Reagan. In the course of that, I had a unique opportunity to travel with him, go to different sites to set up the filming, and to work in the Oval Office, using it for various commercials.

Really, the White House was my prop. Historically speaking, there was no better place to film. It is always a little frightening in White House settings because I always say there are no prints on the White House walls. It's all original art and original, priceless furniture. So when you film in the White House or any part of it, you generally empty the room out to avoid damage. We did have circumstances where things were nicked and these were gut-wrenching moments. So to avoid that we just emptied the room out completely.

In the course of that '84 campaign, I met George Bush. I actually had met him in passing before,

but nothing to where he knew me. That probably came a couple of years earlier. I had been back to Washington and invited to events and met him then. I'm not sure if he really knew me. He probably knew who I was, but that was all. I included him in a lot of filming in those days in 1984, in things that we had not seen done before. I made those suggestions to Jim Baker—he was Chief of Staff—and I worked closely with Mike Deaver, in the White House coordination of filming events.

We would have half-hour shows, 20-minute prime time shows, and I would always try to—not always, but for the most part—would try to have a segment there where the Vice President would also speak, an introductory to him. That had not been done previously and I think we developed some semblance of a rapport in those early days as a result of it. If we filmed in the Blue Room or in the library or anyplace there, there were times that you could really take advantage of the setting and craft the message to reflect what you wanted to say. So that was my first real introduction to George Bush.

The campaign went on. I was the executive producer for the film that we did at the convention—we'll get into that later—but after that I went home, after the campaign ended. I didn't want to stay in Washington, really. There was some talk about my coming back as communications director, a job that Pat Buchanan took, and it was down to the two of us. I did not go back to the White House. Buchanan did during that period of time, for a short while. I had a business to run. I owned an advertising agency and close to 100 people who worked for me, so it was difficult for me to do things like that.

In '87, Lee Atwater called, about 1987—maybe it was '86—but I was in and out of Washington from time to time. I would see the Laxalt family or come back on business and Lee was always asking me to keep myself open and available. By that time there was a lot of activity brewing. You know, people stepping up and getting involved in the Presidential campaigns, Bob Dole particularly.

Laxalt was probably much closer to Bob Dole by far than he was to George Bush, because they (Dole and Laxalt) were Senators together. So I had a little bit of push from Senator Laxalt to remain open, to get involved in Bob Dole's campaign and that grew in time, but I told Lee I was pretty committed to George Bush and I thought that I would do what I could to help him. So in '88 I came back as the Director of Advertising. I worked with Roger Ailes, and Roger really had an agency and was running other campaigns. He was based in New York City, so effectively I became the day-to-day director as well. My formal title was director of advertising and that was the beginning of the working relationship with George Bush.

After the '88 campaign I went home and I did not really have any intention to go to the White House. I mean, I thought about it, toyed with it, but I had a business to run and it's expensive to up and leave. People don't realize how much you sacrifice to do something like that. Basically you put everything you have in a blind trust. Years later when I flew with the President to Russia and he asked me how I summed up my first year in the White House. I told him I thought it was a \$15 million misunderstanding. We laughed about that. That was about the gist of it. I accepted the job in the White House—and just after that to give you a funny story and a side note: but I'd been chairman of the Boxing Commission in Nevada for a number of years, more like a hobby

than anything. I was appointed by a Governor and re-appointed by two other Governors to oversee state boxing activities. I always wanted to clean up boxing, that is, put safety rules in. We did a lot of that. We changed it. I'm digressing here, but took the rounds from 15 to 12 and changed things, for the safety factors needed.

So I make a commitment to go to the White House, I find a trustee for my blind trust, and George Foreman suddenly says he is going to come out of retirement. His representative calls and he says, "Sig, we'd like you to take Foreman back into the public sector and we want you to be a co-owner-manager." And I say, "I can't do that, I'm going to the White House." And of course Foreman went on to have a spectacular comeback, made a half a billion dollars and now I think of those financial numbers up in my head. And what I would have earned. And about two days later Andre Agassi's father called. I'd known Andre most of my life, my daughter then coincidentally was a tournament tennis player and a state champion in a couple of states, so Andre knew her and me. Andre's father said, "Andre is going to turn pro and we'd like you to manage his endorsement business." And I said, "I can't do that, I'm going to the White House." So those are the kinds of things that you end up doing. But I don't look back with any regret on that. That's just part of the deal.

**Riley:** At least the coffee here is free.

**Rogich:** That's right. So I got a call one day from the President after the election and he asked me if I would meet him in Chicago and see if I would come back and help him in the White House. I really took that to mean I would help him as an outsider. I thought you could kind of come and go in the White House, you know, help and be there as an advisor. We flew into Chicago and there was a hanging of the Marine sergeant, do you recall?

**McCall:** The colonel?

**Rogich:** Colonel, was it? Yes. So we turned right around and went back to Washington, D.C. I went back with the President on Air Force One. So we didn't get a chance to spend much time in Chicago. I landed in Chicago, got on the plane and went back to Washington with him. He asked me to come to the White House and be an assistant to the President. It's difficult if not impossible to say no to that. So it was a fast track and I did it and that's how it evolved.

**Riley:** You had indicated that when Atwater had called, you were receptive because you were supportive of Bush. Did that support of Bush derive out of your experiences with him in '84 or were there subsequent dealings that you had? I'm just curious because your original entrée into Washington was through Laxalt, and you said Laxalt was more of a Dole person. So I'm wondering, at what point do you see yourself diverging from kind of service to your political mentor?

**Rogich:** I became really committed to Bush early on. Even prior to '84, I liked him. I thought he was a natural person to become President. I liked his style. I thought he had a great deal of character and more than anything else, he was friendly. He had a good sense of humor and he and I became, I think, close friends and we still are to this day. We emailed each other during the recent campaign regularly. My initial impression of him was really what I found to be true today.

He was a man with a lot of substance and I thought the campaign in '92 was one of the real bad campaign efforts in American history of not really letting the world see what they had in this President and how deeply committed he was to this nation and how much integrity he had.

We had a kind of a ruling in the White House—our rule was that the appearance of impropriety is as bad as the act. So we kind of lived in that world. I had stocks and bonds and investments and instead of putting them in blind trusts I just sold them all, just so I didn't have to answer the question. I remembered later thinking, *Well, that was kind of a stupid thing to do. What am I doing that for?* But the funny thing is, I had a lot of stock in Disney. As time went on, we had a big 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Walt Disney and there was a big White House event in Florida and I was in charge of it. When the President announced he was coming there, it made a big difference in the company and it probably had material effect on the stock. I just thought then how far the connection can get, and how glad I was that I had sold my stock.

So I always tell people when they go in the White House, if you can do it, get rid of all stock. It makes life easier. It's cheaper, number one, all things considered, because you don't have to hire trustees and institute special trusts, and no one believes that you're not going to see it somewhere anyway. So it is kind of a graphic example of how things can be carried to the n<sup>th</sup> degree and potentially cause you some embarrassment, or the President.

**Riley:** Can we turn back to the '88 campaign? Were there any questions about the Reagan campaign, about the '84?

**Masoud:** I have one question about working with then-Vice President Bush on these TV spots. I used to work in TV, too. How willing was he a subject to sit there under the lights and do these spots? Was he amenable to that sort of thing? Did he like doing it?

**Rogich:** I don't know anybody who likes doing it. I mean, Ronald Reagan did because he was born with it. I actually found George Bush to be easier to deal with as a Vice President than as a President, I mean in terms of his comfort level. He knew he had to do it and he utilized the time to train himself to be ready to do it in a run for the Presidency, and so he was more willing. I never found him ever to be angry on the set or too grouchy in any of my dealings with him. It is just not the way he would do things. You could tell when I would reluctantly say, "We've got to take that again," or, "It doesn't make you look good," or, "It's my mistake, not yours," which is pretty typical to say, or "We screwed it up. So we're going to have to re-do this whole thing again."

One time with Ronald Reagan—just to digress a bit—we had a shoot in the Oval Office and it was on 35-millimeter film, which was one of the luxuries we had in the '84 campaign, because we filmed nearly everything. After a 25-minute speech to run in prime time we had 5 minutes for Bush carved out at the ending. I was directing the commercial, I think Phil Dusenberry was running the camera, and as I moved to the right, it caused a shadow across the President's head and I could see it from a different angle and I knew we'd screwed it up. It was about 30 seconds to go in the whole thing, and it was perfect up to that point. So I said, "Cut. Mr. President, we have a problem." And he simply said, "Well, okay," and he just did the whole 25 minutes again. That was just a little overwhelming because his time was precious. I think Mike Deaver was a bit

unhappy because he was in charge of the President's schedule. We only had allocated  $x$  amount of minutes for this whole thing and we had to re-do it again. But you have to do those kinds of things because that's what you're paid to do, that's what you're supposed to do, supposed to make them look their best and sound their best.

But Bush was an easy guy behind the camera. He was always compared to Ronald Reagan and Ronald Reagan was an actor and had a natural affinity for the camera and the camera liked him, too. George Bush, there were times when I had enough time with him that he looked spectacular. In fact, some of the commercials we did, when he was President, some of the endorsements and the things we did where I could pre-set up and have him spend time on the set and prepare, were some of the best that I've ever seen him do. That was because you could light it properly, you could cut the script—if it was 30 seconds, you could write it, 22 seconds and he could pause and reflect and do the things that you had to do, and so he came to understand that. I always found him to be gracious and self-effacing and always just an easy guy to be around. The more you see him, the more you love him.

**Riley:** Let me get you to elaborate on a comment that you just made, that you found it sometimes easier to deal with him as Vice President than as President. I may not be repeating that—

**Rogich:** In his early stages—

**Riley:** Elaborate on it.

**Rogich:** He seemed to be more comfortable behind the camera as Vice President because he had more time to prepare himself. So when I think back on it, those were easy days with him. It was my recommendation to include him in some of these 25-minute films and that had not been done previously and so I think he was happy about that.

And there is a big difference between Vice President and President. You really see it if you're in the White House on that minute-to-minute schedule. So when he became President, and he starts at 5:30 in the morning and runs till 8 o'clock at night—and then in the middle of it there's someone like me for interrupted film segments during the day, you get a little annoyed with the guy who's got more of your time than most and that's probably what it was. Not that he was ever bad, I just found that it was easier to make things happen as Veep, less pressure, probably on both sides of the camera.

**Riley:** Did you ever get any sense that the Reagan people had a reluctance to having him this involved in the campaign operations or in the advertising? I ask the question for fairly obvious reasons. Those of us who are standing on the outside sometimes get the sense that there was tension, maybe not manifest as early as '84, but some tension between the Reagan so-called "true believers" and the Bush people. And so I guess I'm wondering whether you picked up any of these vibrations or whether it is just a misimpression on our part.

**Rogich:** No. But I mean, they all came from different camps, number one. You know, first of all, they ran against each other. There were spirited primary efforts in Iowa, New Hampshire and so that's a natural rivalry among—not so much the people involved, the candidates themselves—

but probably more so among the staff levels where you found a little bit of that. But all things being equal, I never saw the type of thing that could be called tension.

I do think that for me to be an outsider and to make recommendations about commingling the commercial content, it had probably not been done before and probably, because I was not really involved in either camp to the degree that others were, I could get away with it more. I don't know if there had ever been commercials before where you had the President do his thing and then have a full segment with nothing but the Vice President, where you cut out of the President's message, go to black and then the announcer says, "Now the Vice President of the United States." Almost two distinct segments. Probably from that standpoint there were some people asking, "Well, we don't do it that way." But nobody fought it. I think people liked it. I think that the Chief of Staff, Mr. Baker, liked it, and I think the Vice President did. For that matter, Ronald Reagan was supportive of it as well.

So I didn't see tension. If it went on, it was just that natural thing that happens between the different staffs in a White House setting.

**Freedman:** You mentioned the convention film in '84 and I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit about that and, in particular, whether it fed into the work that the Tuesday team was doing. Whether it set up the ads that were to come later.

**Rogich:** Well, the ads set up the film, ironically. It gave us the ability to do a sensational film. First of all, the film was made up of the commercials and commercial out-takes. I had known a singer in Nevada named Lee Greenwood and I loved this song that he did. I thought it would be good to use in the film, so I called him and I said, "How about letting me use this piece of music, 'I'm Proud to be an American?'" And he said, "Sure, you can have it."

**Masoud:** So you're responsible for that.

**Rogich:** Yes. But I grew tired of the song. If I heard that song once, I heard it a million times. I've lived in an edit bay with it. So anyway I called Lee Greenwood and he said, "Sure, you can use it." Phil Dusenberry said, "Are you sure you've got the rights to use this?" I said, "The guy that sang it told me we could have it," and so we went ahead and used it. About that time I went back to Washington, D.C., and as we were building the film. I suggested we try to use Ray Charles to sing "America The Beautiful" at the convention and in the film. It cost us a little more money than we ordinarily would have spent, but I thought he was the perfect closing. I talked to [Frank] Fahrenkopf about doing it and he said okay if I would go out and raise the money to do it.

So we used this music from Lee Greenwood and Lew Wasserman called from—what is it?—MCA records. And he said, "What right do you have to use that song?" I said, "Well, the guy who sang it told us we could have it." And he said, "Well, he doesn't own it. He just sings it." I said, "Well, you'll have to tell the President, because we showed the film to Ronald Reagan and he loved it." There was a kind of silence and he said, "You presented it already?" I said, "Oh, sure." We didn't pay any money for that music and it became an anthem for the Republican Party. As I said, if I heard it once, I heard it hundreds of times. I would sit there in that edit bay

late at night working on the film. And I believe it also kind of rejuvenated Lee Greenwood's career.

**Masoud:** Oh, absolutely.

**Rogich:** And Lee was great about it. They still call him "that famous singer." We laughed about it later, that we really rolled MCA records, which is not easy to do. But we utilized the music and copies of it were requested all over the country by organizations everywhere and they would open up the county conventions and the state conventions with this song. Many times I'd be there, and I'd hear it again one more time, and Lee Greenwood would come up and say, "What a great thing we did." I'd see him from time to time and then he came to the White House and sang the song and then he was on the plane and I think he hummed the song.

**Young:** And the forward captain sang along.

**Rogich:** On and on and on. Then we got Ray Charles to sing the closing, as I mentioned earlier. I used that in the film, too. We had a buy-out. I think we paid \$25,000 for that song, which was really not that expensive, all things considered, for nationwide use. What I didn't count on were the Raylettes. So the Raylettes called and said, "Where's our share of the money?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." So I went through this whole protracted thing with the Raylettes. It broke my heart we didn't have any money to give them, because I love Ray Charles and the Raylettes. I kind of grew up in that era of music and I believe *What'd I Say* was the greatest rock-and-roll standard ever, so it was a thrill to work with Ray Charles.

There is a side bar to this story. In that song, "I'm Proud to be an American," in the second stanza, there is a line that says, "From the lakes of Minnesota." Walter Mondale made a request to try to use the music without us knowing it and without him knowing that we were going to use it. It was too late. And so "I'm Proud to be an American" might have become a Walter Mondale piece. Anyway, I'm not sure that that's—

**Masoud:** It wouldn't have been enough to get him elected.

**Rogich:** I don't think so. Eighty-four was more like a coronation than an election, really.

**Riley:** Well, talk a little bit about the differences, then, between '84 and '88.

**Rogich:** Well, '84 was such an unusual time. First of all, it was a love affair with President Reagan and America. He had a great ability to defuse negative press. He had an amazing amount of sincerity in his presentation. I think his credibility was pretty evident in the way people perceived him. And our team would go across the country and do commercials about his Presidency. We didn't use him in many of the commercials. The ones we did were filmed in the Oval Office or another part of the White House.

The only tweak we found was that Americans were concerned about war, if you recall, so we cut a commercial to address that issue. I used to work out of the Roosevelt Room and I told Ken Khachigian one day, I said, "You know, we could build a great commercial out of the Roosevelt

Room, because there is a flag there and it has a streamer for every battle that we've ever had." And he said, "That's a great idea. Let's do it." If you sit in the Roosevelt Room (it kind of became like an unofficial office for me), I would just work out of there when it was available. The senior staff would use it in the morning and I would be hanging out there because the phones were there and tables and stuff and you could sometimes see the President coming out of the Oval Office and walking past if the doors were open.

So we wrote a commercial and President Reagan is speaking and he said, "Just across the hall is the Roosevelt Room, named for two great Presidents, one a Democrat, one a Republican. And in that room is a flag with a battle ribbon for every battle we've ever been in. My fondest hope is to never add another ribbon to that flag." You might recall that commercial. The commercial tested well and we ran it like crazy, took that issue away in the campaign. And it was really quite by accident that we found that language. It was just because I sat in the room and saw the battle ribbon and asked a question and it just sparked a little creativity that Mr. Khachigian used for a good script and that we then put together for a good commercial. Anyway, I lost track of what you asked me.

**Riley:** I was just asking about moving ahead towards '88 and thinking about the general differences that you were seeing.

**Rogich:** Well '84 was so different.

**Masoud:** Was the bear commercial, was that '84, too?

**Rogich:** Eighty-four, yes.

**Masoud:** Was that yours as well?

**Rogich:** No, that was created by Hal Riney. Actually, the rough cut on the commercial, I thought, was better than the final cut, that's how good it was. The rough cut was done with stills and I thought the drama was better. We ended up hiring a trained bear to walk a certain way and we'd film him. I never liked the final cut as well as I did the original rough cut. President Reagan loved the rough cut too. In fact, he wanted to send it to the Hill. He made a comment, "I should take that commercial to lobby for our defense budgets. I want to send it up on the Hill and let them see what we're up against."

It was the first commercial that I ever saw that had so many subtleties to it, and it was so thought-provoking. It sent out a message about war... the most sensitive subject in the most sensitive way, and it was not a commercial for the masses.

**Riley:** It didn't test well, did it?

**Rogich:** No, it was an intellectual commercial. But what it did, it created an enormous amount of free press. If your commercials do that and if they're reviewed positively, then you are one up. We had a lot of commercials like that, even if they're negative spots, or comparative as we all like to say, if you get free press and you make your case in the written press, then you've done

well. That's why you try to get yourself out of the typical mold when it comes to political commercials.

Eighty-eight moved in. There was a contentious primary, as you know. Our guy loses in Iowa. We win it in New Hampshire. Bob Dole has a news conference and he says, "And now George Bush has hired some slick advertising guy from Las Vegas." So much for that relationship. Anyway, we win and I was in South Carolina, which was the next stop right after that, and just prior to Super Tuesday, Barry Goldwater and I were traveling through the state and I was filming his endorsements. I had prepared a commercial with Goldwater and Bush that worked well and we were overwhelming in South Carolina. That set the stage for Super Tuesday and we rolled from there. We had another commercial that ran in Texas, where Dole was pretty popular. It was a short commercial and I wrote the spot, and one night I called [Robert] Teeter with it and it was just a very brief closing commercial. We produced it and put it on the air and we did well down there, too. So that was it. The campaign was in place.

We then started working to put a lot of things in the can in anticipation of the primary victory. You have to do that because you can't go back and recreate the seasons. You can't film the summer commercials in the winter and family spots that you need outdoors, and so forth.

**Riley:** Do you remember when you started shooting some of these?

**Rogich:** Well, we knew what the issues were. We started pretty early, we had a lot of stuff in the can. I had a real complete library. In fact, as we get on in this interview, I'll tell you about the stuff that we cataloged and kept in anticipation of the '92 campaign, which was sadly never used. But we had enough to go on; we had our research in place. We knew it was difficult. [Michael] Dukakis wasn't any slam-dunk to start with, as you recall, and so that was a little bit up in the air. Our research had indicated pretty much where his strengths and weaknesses would be.

Everybody accused us of doing the Willie Horton commercial, which we never did. In fact, to be truthful, I didn't know about the Willie Horton commercial. I knew there was a difference in our furloughing policy. So the press asked me one day what I thought about Willie Horton. And I thought they were talking about the right fielder for the Detroit Tigers. I had to say that in a Senate hearing under oath later, which is what I thought. "How's he in this picture? Willie Horton?" Shows you how stupid you can be. In the middle of all of this, I wasn't paying attention to the name Willie Horton. The issue was pretty clear. The American people didn't want to furlough convicted murderers and so that was an easy commercial to make, any more than they wanted someone to run on a record of being an environmental President when he had serious problems in the Boston Harbor. When you make those kinds of connections the credibility of the candidate wanes, so we just never let up on those.

**Masoud:** I know that you didn't make the Willie Horton commercial, but would you comment on it? How effective a commercial was that? What grade would you give that commercial?

**Rogich:** I never liked the Willie Horton commercial. We produced a commercial with a revolving prison door that I thought worked to cover the same issue. I have to tell you a funny anecdote to that filming. We were in Utah because we wanted an angle that gave us a long prison

shot. We filmed it in black and white for dramatic effect, if you recall, and as we got ready to film it the warden was all excited. He said, “We’ve got everything set up for you for the commercial. And I’ve got 15 of my best prisoners for the commercial.” I said, “We’re not going to use 15 of your best prisoners for the commercial.” He said, “Oh, you’re going to really hurt their feelings.” I said, “That may be, but that’s all we need, a tough-on-crime President and a nationwide story that we’re using convicts to film commercials.” That was a funny moment.

We were very sensitive to the commercial itself because of the disproportionate amount of minorities in prisons. We looked closely at that commercial to analyze it. You’ll see that it is really disproportionate the other way, without minorities. So we ended up using students from BYU [Brigham Young University] that we used as actors and they did the commercial. They’d probably never been in trouble in their lives and they’re in the convict spot.

**Masoud:** So it was an anti-Mormon commercial. *[laughter]*

**Young:** Could you—this is a less interesting subject, but one that I’d like to hear about—and that’s your own relations with Deaver during the Reagan years, in terms of how you managed to work closely together or had independent jobs and tasks, and also then with Lee Atwater in the campaign. Did you just have a charter to go ahead and do things on your own? Was there some kind of central—?

**Rogich:** Pretty much. With Mike Deaver we had a lot of research, we knew what our topics were. How I wanted to film inside the White House was really up to me and our team. I would come to him and say, “Mike, I’d like to use this setting. I want a long walk.” He said, “What do you want to do?” And I said, “I’d like to film something outside in the Rose Garden. I want that long walk with Bush and Reagan.” You may recall the one where they’re walking down the colonnade. We set those scenes up. Or, “I want to pick him up when he lands in the helicopter.” Mike would roll his eyes and say, “You guys never make anything easy.”

But he really never said no to us, he’s a pro. He understood the importance of it. As troublesome as it is to get in and set up and take down and direct the President and take his time out and get him in the frame of mind to film the commercial, the President has duties to do in the morning, so you’re wedged in at eleven to one, let’s say. He’s got to get in a mindset to get into the scripting and presentation and the form and substance of what the commercials say to be credible. So he’s got to stop what he’s doing, do what you’re going to do, and get started again with his job in the afternoon. Time-wise in the Presidency, you’re down to the minute. So if you run over and you have a problem—and this is a mechanical process, after all. Cameras break down, lights go out, the amperage is not where you want it, there are problems. You’re going to film outside and the clouds come over and you have to change the direction of the lighting. It’s like filming a movie in many ways. So you have it a bit tougher. With a movie, that’s all they’re doing.

**Young:** So Deaver would help—

**Rogich:** Deaver was very accommodating.

**Young:** —get the time and the situation right. Was he the one that Ronald Reagan needed to be gotten in the mood for this, the transition? Or did it come easily to him?

**Rogich:** It came easily. He was just a very gracious guy to work with. I never really ever saw him lose his cool, never really saw him get angry. He was a storyteller anyway, so he'd begin the process with a joke or two and lighten things up a little bit and he was just a very easy guy to work with.

We went to the ranch to film those long scenes of him riding horseback and I had to present the convention film to him and his wife. Jim Lake, one of our campaign senior members, and I flew in to Santa Barbara, and they picked us up and we drove up to the ranch and I had to make the presentation to the President just before the convention to get him to sign off on this film for him, and the one we did for Nancy Reagan, too. That was a troubling trip. I kept thinking, *What if they don't like them?* You know, what happens if I have to go change them? I only have two days before it goes on the air. It was an emotional time. We had so many things in that film. We had the historical overview in about 22 minutes. Twenty-two minutes of the President of the United States and his history. And he loved it, didn't change a thing in it. And that made it all worthwhile.

Then the scary part came. I had to show Nancy Reagan the seven-minute film on her life. So the President said, "Well, I'll just let you two sit here," and he left. I sat on the bed in this little ranch house with Nancy Reagan and I played the film for her—just the two of us—and I looked out the window and there was the President, chopping wood or whatever he was doing, knowing full well this was where he loved to be. We talked about Dr. [Loyal] Davis, her father, and other parts of her film, and she didn't change a thing, either. She cried. And later they both misted up together and instead, I knew that the films were pretty good. If you look at the people who later watched them at the convention, they then had the same reaction and so we were successful in what we wanted to accomplish.

Lee Atwater was the guy I would come to with ideas all the time. People in my business have a lot of ideas. I told Larry King one time in an interview on TV that I had 1,000 great ideas for the White House and the President had the good sense to throw out 999 of them. And that's the way it is. You know, you're undaunted, you come back again.

I always thought music was a component that builds commercials well. So in '88, from all the studies that I had—I made a suggestion to Lee. I had worked in campaigns a lot in my life and managed other elections. In that regard I always thought the two-week period between national conventions was critical and no one had really focused on that previously. In that regard, I went to Lee and said, "Listen—" (I think we were down about 15 points, 17 points)—"I think we can really do something remarkable here if we go on the airways with unanswered commercials during the two-week period between conventions and we reflect on what they're going to get with Dukakis. And they shouldn't be candidate specific, so the National Committee can do it."

I had written new lyrics to a song. It was the song, "I Remember You." It's a classical song and I found one of the singers who had done the original version and I got him to agree to sing this new rendition for about \$500, a buy-out, and then I had some recording areas in Nevada that I

had worked with through my advertising agency that I got a good price on. So I had to present this idea by actually singing it, that is kind of singing this song to Lee. Lee had to jiggle his feet all the time, as you probably recall—you dealt with him, didn't you?

**Riley:** No. I've seen footage.

**Rogich:** Always jiggling. He said, "Let's do it. Where we going to get the money to run it?" I said, "Well, we're going to have to raise it." He said, "How much is it going to take?" And I said, "I think about \$5 million." I think we raised about \$5 million.

So [Robert] Mosbacher and I went out and made the presentation and I did this little rendition on this commercial. We'd produced a rough cut and everybody liked it. We just raised the money, created the commercial, and I hired two very creative people to work with me. We produced these in San Francisco and we also did another commercial with a young girl—they were twins actually, seven years old—and we took the time in her life, from the time she was born until that day, and we asked what she'd known in her life. It was a good creative concept. "This little girl and her family have never known the pain of inflation or unemployment. Why would we ever go back to the way things were just seven years ago?" Those two commercials tested extraordinarily well. Everybody seemed to remember it, the music and all, we ran it unannounced and it brought us back to an even position. I think we picked up anywhere from 9 to 13 points depending on which poll you looked at, but we clearly saw great movement.

You know, we just said, "Why would we ever go back to the way things were seven years ago?" And the song said, "I remember you; you're the one." I changed the lyrics to say, "You made me feel so blue, it's true, it's you." Then the voice-over said, "In seven years the Republicans have done this and this. Remember how things were?" Then the voice would sing, "I remember you; you're the one." And it showed all these gas lines and things. "Tell them you remember." It worked. And I think it was one of the better spots that we created. As a generic spot—and theoretically that's what it was because it was not candidate specific—it moved the meter. The *Wall Street Journal* later did a story on it and I think they said we picked up 11 points.

**Young:** Did Lee Atwater or others give you some requests or ideas for things or places or situations they'd like to depict?

**Rogich:** Well, the way it would work when we did the commercials, we knew what the issues were and then we'd come in with the creative storyboards. I had a fellow—I lived in a hotel there, One Washington Circle, during that time—and one night I was watching Dukakis at an event in Indiana in a tank. And I thought, *Why would they ever let him put a helmet on?* Initially I tried to buy the song rights to "Hang On, Snoopy" because he looked like a snoopy dog, but I couldn't get the right clearances to use it. But I had an idea for a commercial and that was the tank commercial.

There was a creative guy with us and I came in the next morning and I had the beginning of a script for this commercial. The tag line on our commercial is, "He says he wants to be your environmental President," for example, "But the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] says that the Boston Harbor is rated among the worst environmental settings—waterways—in the

United States. Why would America ever take that chance?” This one showed him in the tank and he looked ridiculous. You know, just a little guy in a tank and the stature was gone, and so we said, “And now he wants to be your Commander-in-Chief.” Jim Weller worked on the commercial with me and that’s how we got the tank commercial.

The funny part of that story is after the campaign—we ran it toward the latter part of the campaign. It was pretty certain that we were going to win this race, according to trackings, and I didn’t want to run the commercial. As much as I loved it and felt like I’d been in good part responsible for it, and with the pride in our work, I called from Seattle (we were doing a final commercial for the closing, a positive spot) to the headquarters and Jim Baker put me on a speaker phone and I said, “I don’t think we need to run this commercial.” And he said, “Well, we’re taking a vote around the table and you lost.” He said, “The vote was six to one, you lose.” And that’s how the commercial got on the air.

They all loved the commercial. It became one of the more memorable spots politically, but I never thought we needed to run it at the end. I thought we should be more positive in our closing. But that was just my thought process. Although that commercial really showed how ridiculous their campaign effort was. In hindsight, I suppose I’m glad we ran it because it was a summation of everything they said they believed in, which was just not believable.

**Young:** So, Jim Baker would sign off on these ideas.

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Young:** With the group.

**Rogich:** We pretty much knew in advance, because they had to basically go along with the concept because so much production was involved. In the Boston Harbor, for example, we filmed in the rain and we were out in the boat in the harbor. We filmed it in 16-millimeter film because we wanted that grainy effect. There was one scene—just to show you how little snippets in commercials can screw them up—in which we used a sign that said, “Warning.” It had a nuclear symbol in it. I set up the shot and left to go to Milwaukee, to edit another commercial we were doing. And I said, “Now we have everything here, just take the footage to New York and edit it there so we can simultaneously put two commercials together.”

And I started thinking, *The only thing I don’t want in that commercial is that one little snippet, because it is not believable.* There’s not nuclear contaminants. What that was for was the nuclear submarines to dock there. So I got the commercial back and wouldn’t you know it, they had that one little scene in that commercial. And I had to pull it and change it and we were criticized for that one snippet. It had run with it in it. I always say that little things bring empires down. Actually [Winston] Churchill said it. It’s true. The same is true with commercials. People remember the one snippet, the one segment of something that’s erroneous. That’s why I have always been a stickler for support for every scene.

None of our commercials were ever pulled off the air per se because of something that was not true. But we always gave an enormous amount of back-up to each scene. Each segment of each

scene had back-up support material to it. In some cases the networks wanted it. I always demanded it. I felt that that always kept us in safe harbor. It was always the way I thought we should do our commercial shootings. Now people might criticize the content, or the approach, or the tone and the tenor of the commercial. They're entitled to do that. That's all subjective stuff. But they could never criticize us for not being truthful with it.

**Freedman:** Speaking of this, could we go back to the revolving door ad, which really is one of the classics of political advertising. Can you tell us a little more about how the decision was made to run that? How you came up with the idea to do it? And also how it fit? What was the time sequence with the Horton stuff? I think it was the National Security PAC [Political Action Committee] that put that up independently, but was that before or after? And what was it like when you got word of that?

**Rogich:** Well, I'm not sure if they did it before or after, to be truthful. It was pretty close to the time they had done something. I never looked at the commercial at the time. I wanted to be able to tell anyone who asked that I had not seen the commercial. I wasn't—

**Freedman:** It ran less than a dozen times, I think.

**Rogich:** But you know, what it did, it ran and somewhat attached itself to ours, and gave it greater magnitude. Because theirs ran and had all this free press behind it. Ours ran and people kind of associated the two and people thought at one point that the revolving prison door was the Willie Horton ad, but it wasn't. In answer to your other question, I don't think the idea itself was any great creative magical moment. I think the way we got the depictions together was pretty good. We built a revolving prison door. We built this prop and filmed it and filmed it with the background of the long, long wall of the prison behind it and did a cutaway of the tower that showed them down below and did some real effective sound effects in there that gave the dramatic effect. It was a simple spot, just a two-scene commercial with some cutaways. But it was the depiction; it told it all. "Michael Dukakis believes that convicted killers should be allowed to go out on weekend furloughs. And now he wants to be your President. America can't take that risk."

**Freedman:** Did people want to pull it after the Horton stuff came out?

**Rogich:** No. If they did, I didn't know about it. But I'll say one thing. When you get into campaigns, you understand there is a perseverance factor and you cannot react to one-day hits or you'll be forever changing spots. You have to persevere. These commercials have to reach certain point levels to be effective and you have different schools of thought. I always thought you needed a minimum of 850 gross rating points up to 1,100 to make the spot work. When you get less than that, you're wasting a lot of money. A lot of campaigns you'll look at—even at the state levels, because the cost of media is so high—it runs 300, 400 points. I never thought that was smart media buying.

**Riley:** How many exposures is that? Do you think in those terms, about how many exposures a viewer has to get in order to—?

**Rogich:** The formulas vary a little bit, but it basically says that the viewership is going to see one of your commercials two and a half times a day, or something like that. Those are the things that are important. Before I got into the business, I was a media buyer, and I learned that component well.

If you recall, there were hardly any network buys in '88, it was all regionalized. I always thought that the waste of money was with the network buy. You get big numbers but the demographics don't reflect what the buy should be, so the demographic efficiency is lost. So I always like to buy regional buys and we did a lot of that. We started it in the Reagan campaign, to a lesser degree, but we did more network buying. Of course, then there were only really four networks. Three and the independent. We didn't have a hundred significant TV channels like you do today so you had to be more sophisticated in your buying strategy. Far greater to make a regional buy and have ten different messages than to buy a network with one message.

It's like the book, *The Nine Nations of North America*—I don't know if you ever read that, that great book about what the world may be some day—but the interests in Oregon are far different than they are in the South. It's the lumber industry up there and it's different in the South. And so forth. So if you can refine your commercial content with a lot of the same creative, but with the message a little different, I think you're far ahead of the game.

**Freedman:** Of course, it's never really gone back at all. If anything, it has gotten more focused, more narrowly targeted.

**Rogich:** Much more. The first thing I really remember doing in '84—to go back again—for the first time, we bought Hispanic advertising. That was the first use of it to the degree that I had witnessed.

**Freedman:** At the market level?

**Rogich:** In the Hispanic communities in various markets in the U.S. Commercials that really focused on Hispanics. We did it in print media and a little electronic. In 1988, I really pushed it heavily and we ran commercials that were in Spanish, for the Hispanic speaking communities.

As an example, there was one commercial we did with the Vice President. I had written a commercial at his residence and his daughter-in-law was in it. She said, "For the first time we have a chance to elect a President who understands the Hispanic community and what we're all about." Then she said, "Don't take my word for it," and the camera opens up and she said, "Ask my father-in-law, George Bush." We had a lot of positive response to that commercial. It was an easy read and it made the point that he was understanding of that issue. That was '88.

**McCall:** Could you address a little bit this notion of prioritizing these messages and where in the campaign some of this is coming from and what the overall strategy might have been? We're getting sort of your perspective on individual pieces, but there are a lot of pieces there put together. Is there someone overseeing this? Are you overseeing it? How is it working?

**Rogich:** Well, that was always a collective effort. We never really wanted more than one issue

ad per week. You'd just step on your own commercials; you'd step on your own messaging. Again, it goes back to the gross rating points and the volume you need to make a spot work.

So we would basically craft our own message-of-the-week. We knew what we wanted to run, depending on what order—some messaging may have been affected by the free media at the time. Maybe the prison ad was that kind of thing, I don't recall for sure what the timelines were. Generally we would run a commercial that was a hard ad, that showed differences between the two candidates. And that would run daily and we would have our candidate on the road, doing the positive things that he wanted to do as President. The other commercial ran independent of that, for a week, ten days. Then we'd start to segue into the next one. Sometimes you'd rotate two commercials in the latter parts as one goes out of rotation and one comes up. It was a strategy that came into play because of the events that the candidate would give focus to.

If he gave a speech to the law enforcement people and he talked about the differences between him and Dukakis, let's say, that's the kind of commercial that would run. So not only would you amplify it with free press, but you'd have the candidate talking about it himself, with groups that he was with. Then you'd have the paid component that would just support his message. So the whole thing had a lot of synergy.

**Freedman:** So you were in a pretty quick turn-around time, then. You're producing these things on a weekly basis.

**Rogich:** Oh yes. There were times we would produce on a 24-hour basis.

**Freedman:** How far up the line does it go for review before a spot goes on the air? Does the candidate actually see every spot before it goes out?

**Rogich:** For the most part. Or he at least he has a storyboard, or at least has a scripting. He knows what we're doing, so he's familiar with it. Generally what we would do is start the Monday list—say, for the sake of argument—start the Monday, have the creative component we wanted, bring the scripts into play, take them to a senior staff meeting, agree to the content with the storyboard component, then go ahead and produce the commercial. That spot was already supported by all of our polling data and how we hoped to roll it out. Then, from there the candidate would be shown what we were doing for approval. In some cases a finished commercial—we'd wait until it was ready—in other cases just to say, "Here's where we're heading." But he knew what the gist of it was and we'd be in production.

It was not unusual for me to go to three sites for filming. And it was not unusual to go to three sites after that for focus groups and testing. You'd no sooner create the commercial than you'd go into a testing booth and the testing could be anywhere from Milwaukee to Knoxville, Tennessee, to whatever markets that are reflective of what we tried to get as the perfect demographic, the media, balance.

**Riley:** I think it might be a good time to give you a break. To give us a break. When we come back, a couple of things to be thinking about. One is maybe some of the other people that you were working with in this process, the people that you were dealing with on a day-to-day basis,

so that we can get that in the record. Then do walk us through the process. Again, people in the future aren't going to know so much about the specifics of how these things were put together so it would be useful just to talk about the nuts and bolts of getting the idea, shooting it, and then, as you say, working for the testing group.

[BREAK]

**Riley:** Obviously you were working with a team of people in doing all of this, and one of the things we're interested in doing is figuring out how the overall operation worked. I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit about the people that you were primarily in contact with on a day-to-day basis. Who were the folks, what were their responsibilities, how did you fit into it? I may be jumping to conclusions. You may have been pretty much your own little entity.

**Rogich:** No. Well, let's back up a little bit. Eighty-four is a little different, but not that much different. The '84 campaign had Ed Rollins running it. And we had Lee Atwater in '84. We had the research side of each campaign and people such as Jim Lake, who really was a facilitating entity and there were probably a couple of others who came from the outside—Stu Spencer from California, who was close to Ronald Reagan, and certainly close to Jim Baker. That was about the gist of it. I'm trying to remember some others. Doug Watts was the advertising director. And the Tuesday team—We were the creative component. In '88 much the same scenario with some different players.

But let's just say for the sake of argument that you had about eight people that made up the senior staff at the campaign level. Inside of that was the research component (the pollsters if you will). In that '84 case it was Dick Wirthlin. To a much lesser degree Bob Teeter in the '84 effort. And that was about it. We had some "as need be" individuals who we hired. I recommended Roger Ailes, for example, for debate preparation. Senator Paul Laxalt agreed because of a problem at the first debate. In that regard—you'd asked for some sidebars—I will tell you an interesting little anecdote. I had set up a debate site in Louisville for the President, and the Mondale people were there and they were very paranoid about us being around. The two podiums were set up and we each looked after our candidate for size and eye content and movement. We flipped a coin to see if we were going to be on the left or the right.

I noticed that when they put the lights on overhead, that there was a big difference as to how it was in the lighting. I stood at Mondale's podium and President Reagan stood at his and we just had a little conversation so he could get a feel of the size. There was only about 10 feet between us. The Mondale people came running up and said, "Get away from that podium. You're not supposed to be around that podium." I said, "All right." When the lights were on overhead I noticed, as I stepped back I could see President Reagan. I noticed large sockets under his eyes and the reason for it was because the lights above bounced off the podium and cast a shadow back up under his eyes. So I went over quietly and I put a blue pad on our podium. After the President left, I went in and had it measured precisely.

So when we came back in, we put our blue down, and the President looked terrific. You may recall Walter Mondale didn't look so good. That's why, the lighting coming off his podium. It was a little thing, but it was a way of getting even for them kicking me offstage. And people all

commented on how tired Mondale looked in that debate. It wasn't that he was more tired; it was that they didn't pay attention to the detail of the lighting.

Anyway, so in '84 we had that component. We'd meet with the pollsters. They were out in the field. We'd get direction about what the focus was. When we knew, we got the creative teams together, etc.

**Riley:** They're doing regular opinion polling? They're running focus groups at this time?

**Rogich:** Yes, opinion polling on a weekly basis, daily basis, twice a week basis, as need be. It's expensive, so you just don't throw the money at it. And then the focus groups come into play. Then they would say, "Well, we need to do this. We all love this commercial. Let's go ahead and produce them. Or make these changes, give us rough cuts, give us what you can so we can make the final determination and test it." And that's what we would do.

We'd go out and produce it or put together a rough cut of it, or in some cases even do focus groups on storyboards, which I never really liked to do because they really don't give you the best information. Those of us in the advertising business don't like focus groups. Advertising people in general aren't really in love with focus groups. We're not in love with pollsters either, for that matter. They seem to tell you that this is what the polls show people are concerned about. And that's a fair assessment, so they think we should stay only with that topic. I always argue that you can't let pollsters run a campaign. But if at the same time you ask people what they're most concerned about and they say, "Crime, jobs, education." I doubt that cancer, for example, would read on that list of five. If we all of a sudden announced a potential cure for cancer with more federal funding, then the number one topic on people's minds would be cancer.

So I always tell people that I think that was one of the great mistakes we made in 1992, and I know I'm getting ahead of myself. The pollsters said that no one cared about foreign policy and yet we had a President with among the greatest records in foreign policy in my lifetime. But we didn't do one commercial on foreign policy, because we let the pollsters call all the shots. We should have owned that issue. We should have reminded people there was peace in the world and the cold war had ended in good part because of a sound foreign policy and because we brought trade deficits back to some sensible range. Or we went to Czechoslovakia, and helped it nurture a new democracy.

That was a marvelous moment in our history. The Wall came down during our Presidency. All those kinds of things that were important. Or the START II treaties [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] were in place or that we had a relationship with [Mikhail] Gorbachev that was extraordinary. And on and on and on. But we didn't do one commercial on the subject. We just lost sight of our greatest strength and in the meantime we fell into the trap of being on the defensive in the campaign. "It's the economy, stupid." And granted it was the economy too, but it was a shortened perception and we were blamed for things that we didn't have to take the blame for. It was just a badly run campaign effort, I think, until Jim Baker came back, and then I think it was too late.

Anyway, we had the G6 team in 1988 and a larger component in 1984.

**Masoud:** Was [Fred] Malek in that?

**Rogich:** No, he wasn't.

**Masoud:** Are you talking about the "gang of six" or whatever it was called?

**Rogich:** Yes, G6, they called it. But Fred was really a convention guy. He really had no experience in running a campaign. I don't mean that in any disparaging way, that's just not what he does. But we ended up having Malek and Teeter running the campaign in 1992.

**Riley:** But the others in '88 you were listing—

**Rogich:** Eighty-eight, I think we had Malek involved in the convention in New Orleans. However, John Keller really put the convention together in New Orleans. He became head of advance for the White House. So that was a large part of the group.

Under those individuals there were several other people. For example, in my office I had about six or eight people who worked for me directly, in addition to the creative teams that we hired around the country, including the film crews or the art directors. I think the campaign manager Lee Atwater probably had a smaller actual staff size; he just didn't need as much help as you'd see in the advertising side. But he had Jim Pinkerton and people like that who were extraordinarily talented. Lee came up with some definitive research that made a difference. I credit Pinkerton and others for providing as much to the campaign as anybody, although they weren't as well known.

**Riley:** You said on a couple of occasions that the creative team knew what the issues were and then you would take those and develop the spots accordingly. Was it people like Pinkerton who were responsible for basically telling you what those issues were? Or was there a more senior group of people who—?

**Rogich:** I think Pinkerton was involved in that process with the pollsters. There are no secrets about what the issues are. You read them in every newspaper in every day. You can refine them and how you get at them is more important. All the polling data supports that mechanism, so you pretty much know where you're headed before you get there.

But I'll give you an example that's contrary to that. In '92, as I told you, we didn't do the things I thought were obvious. In '88 no one would have guessed that prison furlough would have been such a big issue. But we found the issue and showed the difference between philosophies and it made a difference in the campaign. That wasn't on anybody's radar screen at the time we started the campaign. So there is kind of a graphic example of how you look outside the paradigm.

**Freedman:** Did Bush talk at all about the furlough issue or was it all through the revolving door spot?

**Rogich:** He talked about it. He talked about the difference. He gave it in a speech. I think he

talked about—I can’t recall any specific instances, but for the most part, anything we put in our commercials was reflected by the candidate as well in his speech activity. He might not have used the same language we had, but he understood it. If we were talking to the environmental group, it would not be unusual to say, “How can you support someone who says that he’s for a green environmental policy when in fact in his own state the EPA views his policies as among the worst in our history?” It just killed his credibility. That commercial, by the way, ran on the West Coast, too. We tailored it to be used in Washington and in Oregon. We did regional buys up there. We’d just edit in the Washington component, snip it. So that commercial played in many places.

**Freedman:** Is that your favorite spot?

**Rogich:** No.

**Freedman:** What was your favorite?

**Rogich:** I always thought my favorite commercial was the song commercial, “I Remember You.” In terms of really watching things happen, watching a commercial that people loved, instinctively. It was a tough commercial and yet it was softened by the music component and yet people got it. A lot of them go back to the way things were. People just got that too. Let’s remind them of the way things were, gas lines and problems, but do it without being so shrill.

**Masoud:** To go to the Willie Horton thing just one more time. There was that well-publicized remark of Lee Atwater’s, “We’re going to make Willie Horton Dukakis’s running mate,” which he later apologized for. I know you didn’t have anything to do with the Willie Horton ad, but did you think to yourself, *There’s probably some White House involvement, some campaign involvement in this ad? It may be Atwater, it may be—but there’s something going on here. We’re not completely innocent of this thing.*

**Rogich:** Well I knew there was a sensitivity to being involved, from a legal standpoint, in an outside direction. Did they know about it? I think everyone was whispering the name Willie Horton. Do I think it had something to do with the commercial? I don’t think so. Of course, Lee walked to the beat of a different drum, but at the same time he was very smart and knew that we were on to something here, on a roll, and I don’t think he would have jeopardized himself or taken the risk.

Now, did they end up laughing about it? Yes. Did they see it as it moved through its process? Probably. Did they go out and say, “Here’s what we want you to do?” No. By the way, who did put it together?

**Masoud:** A PAC called the National Security Political Action Committee, run by some woman whose name escapes me.

**Rogich:** I know the name. If you had mentioned it I probably could have remembered it.

**Masoud:** I’d have to look it up.

**Rogich:** It doesn't matter. But no, I don't think the campaign did it. One thing about Jim Baker is that he would admonish us to not do something stupid. We were pretty well-versed on what we could do and what we could not do. I was pleased to be able to tell a Senate committee in a confirmation hearing that I did not have anything to do with it. Under oath, and that was the truth.

**Freedman:** But as you say, they get merged. I think they were merged in the public mind because of all the free air time.

**Rogich:** A lot of the black community, the leadership there, thought it was a racist ad. It was unfortunate that it happened to be a black, but the whole ad content, the notion, the idea—and then what he did when he got out that weekend—you know, the story first broke—was it the *Baltimore Sun*? I can't remember. It was one of those newspapers. It so happened that he went out on a weekend in Maryland, if I'm not mistaken, and that's what set this thing in motion.

**Masoud:** And Al Gore was apparently the first to bring it up in a debate.

**Rogich:** That's right, which is really ironic. And we used that a lot too, by the way. And that was the truth. I don't think we had our hands in it. I think we probably knew that something was going on because the guys doing it were so elated and open about it, but we stayed away from it.

**Masoud:** Somebody may have seen it in its different iterations as it was going through the process. That's not totally far-fetched.

**Rogich:** I don't know that. If they did, I don't know about it. I can tell you that with all sincerity.

**Riley:** You had mentioned that during the primary season in '88 you were traveling through South Carolina at one point. Were you with Lee Atwater during that time? Was he in South Carolina?

**Rogich:** He was there on a very limited basis, but what we had secured was Barry Goldwater to endorse us and I know that Bob Dole was anxious to have him as well. So we were cutting the commercials down there and Goldwater was attached to me and we were in the studio doing the commercials. Then the President came in and got up with us and the Vice President and we did a commercial there. I did one with Goldwater and one with Carroll Campbell, the Governor of South Carolina. Lee Atwater was close to Carroll, as you probably know. So those two commercials ran pretty heavily. I remember it was very cold in South Carolina and we were filming commercials and we just steamrolled from a voter standpoint through the state. It was a very effective use of the media.

**Masoud:** So you come to the convention and you said in '84 you had made a kind of bio-pic of Ronald Reagan and of Nancy. Did you do the same thing for George Bush and for Barbara?

**Rogich:** In 1984 we had a lot of footage that we had shot previously and we used it. We even used some of the commercials themselves. In 1988 we did a lot of the same. Tom Messner did

the film itself. He was the producer of the film in '88. I had hired him, Messner/Vateri and Associates from New York. Tom was a sensational talent. Philosophically in step with where we were, which is unusual to find in a creative element, but he was, and so talented. So we did the same type of thing; used much of our commercial spots and outtakes to make the film.

A funny thing happened—I'll go back again—in 1984, we produced a film and we bought a 20-minute segment, or half-hour segment, 25 minutes. We bought it on, I think it was ABC. In the meantime NBC had turned us down and CBS had turned us down. We bought it in prime time, or if not prime time it was fringe time, from 7:30 to 8, but I think it was prime time. We purchased one network and we made the buy conditioned to the fact that they couldn't tell anybody we purchased it. Then we went to NBC and we said, "We purchased a half-hour in prime time and we're going to run this show. You can either give us the time to buy or not, but you won't have it to run." So they gave it to us. Now we had two roadblocks which had never really been done before, of half-hour prime time viewing.

Now we had two tied up, so then we went to CBS and said, "We have NBC and ABC. They're going to run a prime time special on our show," and they gave in. All of a sudden we had road blocked a half-hour of prime time on network television and so the viewership for that show was outrageous. There was a lot of quiet finessing going on when we bought it, a lot of activity related to it, and a lot of confidentiality. We really couldn't let one know what the other was doing, or they wouldn't have done it. Once we had the contracts tied up, they couldn't stop it. So we effectively put together a half-hour political roadblock on that film. That's why everybody saw the film. From that, we built a lot of memorable commercials.

The networks probably didn't like that at the time, so what happened in the campaigns thereafter was that it was never going to be done again. I think in '88 we could only secure one half-hour segment to run the film. It got some exposure when they did a cut-away on the live coverage but nothing to the degree that we had. We had that as well for the convention in '84, but we wanted to run the film in its entirety and we did. That's how high we were on the film. The Bush film was very good as well but we just couldn't get the time to run it.

In '92, you didn't see as much of the film use and I think you're seeing it as kind of a dying component. It went from 22 minutes or whatever it was and then went down to 7 minutes or so in the last one. So you just never quite saw the same thing.

**Masoud:** Is that because of the inability to secure prime time and space for the films or because they're just not that effective?

**Rogich:** I think it is the inability to secure the time. When I was doing the film, *Life* magazine assigned a photographer to us and they did a feature on us doing the film. They ran all kinds of stuff on it in all the magazines, *Time* magazine, *U.S. News*, *Newsweek* would do interviews of us, on us doing the film. If you look back, you'll see there was a lot of press about the film and a lot of ongoing activity about the film. The long shots of us sitting at the convention and debating film activity. Long interviews about what the film's going to be like. It was kind of a dream, we were getting all this [free media]—and we were all sensitive to it and didn't want to tip our hand to what the film would be, but they all were focused on the film. For *Life* to put a team on it was

pretty extraordinary.

**Masoud:** In '88, though, you do the film for Bush. Are you also doing work with Barbara Bush? Are you doing any presentation of her to the public?

**Rogich:** I did a lot of things with her, yes. She had never really been on television much, like Nancy had. You know Nancy grew up in the business. But Barbara had a real natural talent, I found, and it was a talent that wasn't contrived. So you would write for her with language that was effective for her. She would tell it like it was and she came across that way. She probably is the most popular first lady in my lifetime. Maybe Mamie Eisenhower was up there too, but I was too young to remember if she was.

**Masoud:** Jackie Kennedy was pretty popular.

**Rogich:** She was popular for a different reason. Jackie Kennedy was kind of like—you look back on it, and that whole Kennedy-Camelot setting had superstardom written around it. It was more movie-driven, movie-set driven. Barbara Bush was a shoulder to put a head on. She provided strength and character. Not that Jackie Kennedy didn't, but she did in a different kind of way. I thought Barbara was a real rock.

**Riley:** There was a kind of amazing transformation around that period of time. I remember, even those of us who were politically attentive knew absolutely nothing about this woman. The Bush people were coming out and saying, "She really is a secret weapon." You hear that and you think . . . but in a matter of a few weeks, it's true.

**Rogich:** We used her really well. First of all, you couldn't give her something she didn't believe in. She wasn't going to do it and if you forced her to do it, she wouldn't do it well. She'd be kicking and screaming before the camera, so we just didn't try to do it. But she never said "no" and she had a great sense of humor and she would tweak you when you had it coming. All those things came into play. But I thought she was terrific in what she did and to this day she is just the same person.

**Freedman:** So she was in positive spots about Bush—?

**Rogich:** She was seen with him. She did some interviews that were a reflection of what she believed in. Literacy campaigns, for example. She was part of the team.

**Freedman:** Did you have a hand in influencing what she did outside of the ads themselves?

**Rogich:** I'd make requests for her sometimes, knowing that I was going to be in a film situation and wanted her in it. So I would get to her schedulers to make sure she was going to be there, or go and talk to her about what we'd like her to do, or spend time with her and ask if she wouldn't mind doing this or that. She was always very amenable to all that.

**Freedman:** Was she seen as somebody who would be helpful with women voters, or not necessarily?

**Rogich:** I think that she had an ability, from our perspective, to cross the lines. Young, old, rich and poor, black and white. She was very credible, believable, with all those groups. So we utilized her. A first lady is not going to win an election for you. Maybe one could lose it for you in the right setting if they said or did something wrong. But it can make a difference and I think she probably helped us in areas where we wanted and needed help.

**Riley:** This was a President who was famously uncomfortable talking about himself. James knows this better than any of us. He doesn't like using the "I" word, saying, "I," "I do this." Did you encounter difficulties? I'm assuming the film must have had a very heavy biographical component.

**Rogich:** It did, but we didn't use "I" in it. I don't like to use it either. I don't like to use "I." He said his mother taught him never to use the "I" word, he recalled, and I think she had a great effect on him. According to him, she brought out his competitive nature even more than his father did. In talking to him, you sensed that she was the driving force in his life in many ways.

We just didn't write it for that. You don't have to say "I." You can accomplish the same thing without saying it. The commercial can say, "The last four years have shown that with your help we can do this," as opposed to saying, "In the last four years I'm proud to say. . . ." Just the little differences and small nuances in phraseology make the difference and he is more comfortable there.

He was very comfortable and good in question-and-answer response. He was best at those moments. We probably didn't use that as much as we could have.

**Masoud:** Did you use his mother at all in any spots?

**Rogich:** We had a commercial where we had a picture of her, and he made a reference to her. She was pretty frail in those days.

**Riley:** I want to come back to the other question I posed about the biographical component. Was there any sense of being ill-at-ease at exploring that? Particularly his family history, where there was one notable tragedy.

**Rogich:** No. We didn't have any problems with that. He has had a remarkable history. Just look at it. I'm looking through some film and I see a piece of black-and-white footage that is real, that shows him being rescued at sea.

**Riley:** How did you come about that? How was that—?

**Rogich:** Somebody gave it to me. I can't remember who had it. They said, "By the way, the plane crashes. His co-pilot says, 'Should we drop our bombs?' And he said, 'No, they might float and the ships could hit them.'" You got two-foot chop or something. He lands a loaded plane with bombs on it. You know, I could just hear "Victory At Sea." He's in a life raft—he's at sea for what, a couple of days or whatever it is—and as a submarine pops up in the middle of

nowhere and finds him, there happens to be a guy on the submarine with a camera and he films him getting washed out of the sea. Now if this guy wasn't destined to be President, I don't know who was. And he didn't do it once, he did it twice. He was truly an American hero. And the fact of the matter is that he was born in a family that was better than average. But he volunteered to serve. He was the youngest pilot, youngest naval pilot. It shows you a lot about him, what he thought, his character, what he thought was right and wrong.

So here he volunteers as the youngest pilot, he gets shot down, and we have black-and-white footage to prove it and I get to use it in commercials. It was so good that I thought that we had to put disclaimers on it and put, "Actual footage." Because I didn't think people would believe it. I kept thinking we were going to get protests from veterans who were going to say, "That's outrageous, using old war footage," you know. So I had to use disclaimers on it, "Actual footage." I remember calling my associate in Nevada—I did a lot of editing in Nevada because I had familiarity with the studios and the editing bays, plus it gave me a chance to go home on the weekend. I remember saying, "You're not going to believe the footage I've got to use." And I went through this and there was just a kind of a silence because I was on speakerphone with the creative team and they all said, "Now let me get this straight. A guy on the submarine happened to have a camera?"

**Masoud:** We're sort of around the convention time in '88—or at least that's what we seem to be talking about—and obviously the one big thing and big image issue is this guy that you pick out of nowhere to be Vice President, Dan Quayle. Were you involved at all in the decision to choose him? There's a quote from Ailes. Apparently Ailes said that, "This guy looks better than Robert Redford." So the image was important.

**Rogich:** It probably didn't hurt. Roger also ran his campaign for the U.S. Senate. No, the answer is I had nothing to do with it. Certainly wouldn't have been my choice, but I had no choice in it at all. I had nothing to do with the selection of the Vice President other than I was told a little in advance that that was the choice. I knew of him, knew who he was. This was just a good example of someone who in one setting is very good—he was actually a terrific Senator in many ways—and never really moved to a level as Vice President where people gave him all the benefits that he had in the Senate, with foreign relations and things about which he was well versed.

**Masoud:** But the rollout. Did you have anything to do with that?

**Rogich:** I was there for the rollout, in New Orleans, when they came down the river on the—what was the boat? Delta Queen? One of the great old vessels. I almost went on that boat one time for a reunion thing. Anyway, yes, I knew about that.

**Masoud:** You didn't help set it up, though? You weren't involved in this thing?

**Rogich:** I didn't help to set it up but I knew about it. I may have been involved to some degree. The advance teams really put it together, to roll down that river in a classic riverboat.

**Masoud:** But "deer in the headlights" is how Quayle is characterized when the announcement is

made. Would you have done it differently had you been involved in setting up that event?

**Rogich:** Probably not. I don't think—you know, nobody went into the voting booth later and said, "Boy, we hated the way they rolled out his announcement."

**Masoud:** But it could have been better.

**Rogich:** You can always reflect back and say anything could be a little better. Hindsight is easy, but I thought it was fine. They used a setting, the New Orleans setting, to bring him down the river and to introduce him to the crowd. I don't think it mattered much after that. That was just an event and the passage of time went by. He stumbled a little bit himself, initially, and he never quite got off that stumble and that was unfortunate. I'm not sure that they briefed him the best that they could—and this probably happened at such a rapid pace for him that it was a little overwhelming. I hoped in '92 that they would make him Defense Secretary and [Richard] Cheney Vice President. I did spin that story around a little bit.

**Riley:** Was that one of the thousand good ideas and many, many—that's one of the 995?

**Rogich:** Probably. I talked about that a lot.

**Masoud:** Was there any effort to counteract that image? In terms of the advertising after the convention, after the stumble?

**Rogich:** Probably there was. I don't think it was a contrived thing, per se. I think people were focused to some degree in the back of their mind always, that we need to—I don't want to use the words "prop him up"—but we need to get better now and better at introducing our Vice President.

He was really more of an ideologue than I realized. The President was not. He is not an ideologist in that true sense of the word. At least that was my take. He had a staff that represented him, and Billy Kristol was his Chief of Staff, and he certainly has a philosophical bent. Just to the right of the sheriff of Nottingham—but a brilliant guy. Don't get me wrong, he is an extraordinarily bright guy and a good guy, he has a good sense of humor and I'm very fond of him, but they were philosophically that could be viewed as a bit extreme. And the White House reflected some of that. As John Sununu was more philosophical. A real brilliant thinker, but also very conservative.

So the mesh was just probably not as good as it ordinarily would have been. Bush was not an ideologist per se and so he could flow with Ronald Reagan more, as en route to the Presidency. Quayle, I think, really if you look back on those years, there are not too many memorable moments I can recall where the Vice President picked up the banner and moved ahead with the President's message. I don't mean that in any derogatory way, I just mean that I don't look back now and remember anyone saying, "Let's use the Vice President to roll out this issue." But I think they used Bush well in the Reagan White House when they had the opportunity because he had the credibility as a leader, in the United Nations and all the other background that he provided.

**Freedman:** How about the campaign itself? Was there a sense that Quayle was a challenge that you needed to grapple with in terms of the ads and the messages?

**Rogich:** He wasn't in a lot of the commercials. Not any that I recall. But that's not unusual. In the states that we had—the states that were obviously for us—I'm not sure he was the component that got us those votes, but that's where he focused. Philosophically he was not someone you sent into Washington or Oregon or some of those other battleground states, but you shore up areas of support that you had, in Southern states and places like that. Although I think we lost Indiana that year, didn't we? I can't remember if we did or not.

**Riley:** One of the general things that you're having to confront, especially around the time of the convention, is the passing of the baton. This is the time where the Vice President is stepping out to be his own man.

**Rogich:** You mean from Reagan to Bush?

**Riley:** From Reagan to Bush, exactly. I'm wondering, if you could reflect a moment, my assumption is that this is something that as an image person you were also involved in trying to get a handle on.

**Rogich:** It was discussed in great detail, how it should be done. It was done very quickly, as you recall. The President made one appearance and left. He left the convention completely. That's because it was now George Bush's convention and that's the way it should be. So, I think that's not really different than the way it's been in the past. If you look at this last convention, I think the most unusual thing I saw was [William] Clinton hanging around so much in the convention setting when they changed direction. The press didn't know where to focus: on Clinton, the incumbent, or Gore coming in? Therefore, they stepped on each other's stories a lot. There never was a clean break, per se, and yet when the campaign started there was definitely a clean break and the press amplified it even more and that became a story in itself. So they never quite got out of each other's way.

**Riley:** Was there a kind of Reagan farewell biographical film in '88, or is the film I'm thinking about the one that you did in '84?

**Rogich:** There was a reference point in film in '88 to Ronald Reagan, all that they did together. We used the historical perspective on what the administration had provided for America. When I look back on it, I look back on the loss of '92 I always thought, *Well, we've been there for 12 years. Twelve years was a long time.* There was nothing more to write about. The press was bored with George Bush. They wanted something new and they set the tone for that. In today's media world, I think more than ever in our lifetime, victory is fleeting because there is just too much of you—the media—around, to draw comparisons and look for things and dissect them.

In the White House I used to refer to the old tune, "Riding high in April, shot down in May." But later in the White House it was, "Riding high at 8:30, shot down at 8:45." You don't have time to breathe because you're just so much in focus. It was about that time in '88 that the media just

exploded; new channels. CNN was on board (and really getting on board). I remember in '88 we had these guys come to see us to buy advertising on a thing called MTV. And another guy came in and said, "I got a thing called Channel One, the education channel." And as I said, MTV was hot. Lee Atwater and I would have conversations about how we could utilize MTV. He had the vision, I must say, to see it, more than I did at the time, although I recognized that an all-music component network would be pretty interesting.

Things were just changing so quickly. Now today, there are no secrets. I think you just prepare for things on that basis. That's kind of the way I live the political life. There is no way to escape. There are no secrets.

So in '88, to answer your question, we had a nice segue from one administration to the next. It was handled with a sense of camaraderie that they enjoyed together, that they spent more time together, that decision-making was provided by the Vice President as well as the President. We utilized the times they did that specifically and we highlighted some events that they worked together on. So that was the thing. Then Reagan just amplified all that. He made some appearances for George Bush. I don't know what they were exactly. I remember there were some significant events.

**McCall:** I don't remember. I was going to ask whether or not there was any desire to utilize President Reagan more in that campaign? Or were you really focused on this notion of his own man?

**Rogich:** No, we wanted to use him. The two ran as a team for '88, essentially, because Bush had to run on his record, eight years previous. But you also wanted to show that he was his own guy, so it was very delicate in how you achieve that. We used Ronald Reagan for certain events that were helpful to us and that was about it.

**Riley:** Were you at all in the loop on the speechwriting side of things?

**Rogich:** Yes, to some degree.

**Riley:** Tell us a little bit about how that worked. They'd get a draft together and then run it past you for marking up, or—?

**Rogich:** There was a whole group of us—I don't know, maybe ten or twelve people—who saw the speeches. We would look at them, mark them up, make changes and go back for a second revision. It might go for a third, fourth, or seventh revision, and sometimes it would change because the events changed. I would look at it from the standpoint of what might be available there to film. Was it worthwhile going out and putting the teams and the crews to film that component so it could be used later? So I might change a little bit of language so I could get the phraseology within a fifteen-minute snippet that I wanted that would be a capsulization of what the speech was about for my commercial purposes.

And then you take the chance he's going to say it properly from a film standpoint. So I would try to always have that recapped again in speeches, so if he missed it the first time—and he'd also

know if he missed it the first time he'd have another chance. It might not be quite as dramatic, but those are the kinds of things we did to make sure that we could utilize speech content for our own paid commercial purposes.

**McCall:** I was just going to say, sometimes a candidate gives a bonus, some spontaneity, some ad lib remark. Sometimes there's heavy scripting of that, in terms of preparation for debate or something like that, the response phrases, but sometimes there's something he says on the campaign trail. Were there any gems from the fall that just sort of fell into your lap for the '88 campaign that you can think of?

**Rogich:** I can think of some I wish he wouldn't have done. *[laughter]*

**Riley:** We can discuss those. That's fair game, too. Those need to be on the record.

**Rogich:** I don't think he needed to say, "You know we kicked their butt last night," on camera, although you could say the press had a field day with it after the debates. You recall that, in '84.

**Riley:** With *[Geraldine]* Ferraro.

**Rogich:** Yes, Ferraro. I don't remember any things that come to mind. I know that there were some because I know there were times when we'd come in from the road and someone would say, "The President or Vice President was sensational last night and we didn't get it. Maybe we should try to get the footage," because the local stations carried it or the network carried it and getting that was a pain in the neck. In fact, getting the footage for the tank commercial was a pain in the neck, because who would have wanted to film Michael Dukakis in a tank? You wouldn't think about it until you saw it. I saw it that night and getting it was a long, long process.

**Riley:** You had to get it from the local?

**Rogich:** We got a piece from the local and we looped it and we got another piece through ABC archives, but buying it and using it for political purposes and all the stuff that went with it was a hassle. But luckily there were like 35 cameras up there following him so I'm not sure anybody knew really where we got it, including me. But we did get it and there was a short snippet and we had to loop it to make it work for our purposes in the commercial.

**Freedman:** But it ends with a tight close-up.

**Rogich:** It does. But that's part of that same deal, we just blew it up. That's all we did, just stepped it up.

**Masoud:** That's a great ad. Here, basically, he looks like Snoopy in the tank. Looks like a wimp. But you had to confront something like that as well, the whole *Newsweek* "Fighting the Wimp Factor" story. How did you fight the wimp factor?

**Rogich:** First of all, I don't think people bought that. I think that was really an unfair characterization. In fact, I look back on the things that we did in the White House while I was

there, I think one of the worst things we did, we broke the major stories a lot of times for the weekly newsmagazines and they never gave us a fair shake. I told President-elect Bush the same thing. Every time we thought we were doing the right thing, we got burned. Such as that morphed cover in *Time* magazine. As another example where the press had a preconceived notion, I will tell you a short story.

I join the White House and right away, my first assignment in the White House in '89, in early '89. The President's doing an interview with John Apple of the *New York Times* and the story out there was that George Bush was timid, if you recall. Everybody said, "Timid." So I looked up the word "timid," and I said, "Mr. President, I know he's going to ask you about this timid factor. Here's about six ways to characterize it if it comes up. 'Johnny, You call it timid, I call it conservative. You call it timid, I call it prudent. You call it timid, I call it safe.'" So, sure enough, John Apple said, "Well, what about the timid thing? Everyone says you're timid." The President said, "You call it timid, I call it prudent." And that's where "wouldn't be prudent" came to be utilized by the press and comedian Dana Carvey.

**McCall:** The catch phrase.

**Rogich:** Which was a funny phrase. Then Dana Carvey said, "Wouldn't be prudent." I used to send the President over the Carvey clips, just for fun. They were funny. He really captured him, as this new guy does G.W. [George W. Bush]. He's good, very good.

So if you can laugh at yourself then you can get through it all. I think the President could laugh at himself a lot. I joked with him a lot when I was in the White House and I kidded him about the way he dressed all the time. I always gave him a bad time about his conservative attire.

One time we were in South Carolina or Maryland—just kind of rambling—we were in South Carolina and I said, "I've got some good news and bad news." He was giving a speech. And he said, "Give me the good news first." I said, "Your tailor went out of business." [laughter] He said, "What a thing to tell a guy before a speech. If that's the good news, what's the bad news?" I said, "I hear he's going to open another store in a different name." The tailor's name—I can't remember his name now—but he was terrible.

I was always trying to tweak him a little to lighten things up. One time we were going to give an address to declare victory in the war in the Persian Gulf and I was riding over in the limousine with the President. He said, "How do I look?" I said, "You look terrific, except for the tie." He said, "Well, what's wrong with it?" I said, "It just looks terrible." We're just getting ready to go, and he said, "What should I do?" I said, "Here, take mine." I gave him my tie, nice tie, by the way. He wrote me back a note later with a picture: "At that great moment in Congress," he handwrote, "when the world rejoiced at ending the war in the Persian Gulf, in that historical chamber a voice of one could be heard to say, 'Would you look at that tie.'" [laughter]

**Masoud:** There's a letter to you in the current book that he's got out, the book of letters. It specifically talks about one day he was dressed quite well and Barbara said to him, "You look like Sig dresses you."

**Rogich:** He still has that cool sweater. I got him the sweater and said, “We can use it in the commercial.” It was a sweet letter he wrote to me, but he had a knack for doing those things. He was a guy who I think would always try and put things in the right setting, he was moved emotionally by circumstances. I was with him in South Carolina another time—or maybe it was North Carolina—and we were having a graduation ceremony. I was under the tent, it was kind of raining and they were coming out in procession and he was there and had his arms crossed. I think Barbara was with us too, and he had tears in his eyes. I said, “It’s a beautiful ceremony, isn’t it?” And he said, “Yes, and would you look at all those young black kids getting their degrees.” I thought, that’s the thing that we should have let the world know about him and we didn’t. We didn’t do the best job. He was overwhelmed by African-Americans getting their degrees and not by the event. That was a sincere feeling for him. That’s the way he was. That’s the way he is.

**McCall:** You made a reference before to the difficulty obtaining footage for the Snoopy, the tank.

**Rogich:** Roger Ailes, by the way, said, “This Snoopy thing is a stupid idea.” Maybe because he didn’t appreciate the music component. He didn’t understand that “Hang on, Snoopy” would have been a great moment. People would have reflected on one of the great rock-and-roll icons and tied it to Dukakis and you would have had them humming the song and it would have just done even more, but anyway, go ahead.

**McCall:** You also talked about the difficulties and the resentment of the networks to buy the blocks of prime time back in ’84. Did you feel or sense that you had a more adversarial relationship with getting things aired or obtaining footage than perhaps the opposition did? I mean the accusations that the Bush people were usually treated unfairly.

**Rogich:** I think we were treated unfairly in terms of the coverage of the news, nothing more. I’m not sure it went all the way back to the archival side. I think it probably cut pretty evenly. There might have been a little more sensitivity to us because the networks in general were not for us. You know, the bias in the news reporting was pretty incredible.

I’ll give you some of those examples. In the fourth quarter of the election cycle of ’92, after I had come back to run the advertising group, I went to the White House one morning. They were talking about what the fourth quarter was going to show in terms of the GNP [Gross National Product] and somebody said, “Well it’s probably about—our numbers show 3.2.” We all said, “No one is going to believe that. They’re going to think we’re cooking the books.” Little knowing, perhaps, that legally that’s really impossible. I mean you can’t just cook the books, but there are reporters who write that kind of stuff, where they question the numbers.

So we said, “What’s the lowest number we can come out with and be within a credible and accurate framework?” I think Michael Boskin came out and said, “2.8.” So we announced 2.8 and the press said, “Well, they’re cooking the books.” You remember that story ran, those stores that said “Bush’s numbers questioned.” The real number came out at like 5.2 or much higher than ours. So we had to fight that battle forever, an ongoing process and bias.

I think that indicting Cap Weinberger on the Friday before the election is one of the most outrageous events I've ever seen. It stopped us in our tracks. We might have won the election in '92, because we were only three points down at the time. To wait for the Friday before the Tuesday election to indict Cap Weinberger for Iran-Contra is outrageous, but I didn't see anybody screaming. It's just the nature of the way it is. There is a bias.

It's slowly changing, believe it or not. You are finding more content in the media now that has a little better balance to it and that's because competitiveness is good. That's the healthy part of this whole thing. You can't just be cavalier about the way you present things because there are other alternatives to viewing CBS or NBC or the major networks. Prior to that time, we had it handed to us.

**Freedman:** Did you feel the same way in '88? I mean, '92 is more frequently cited as the egregious example, but was '88 bad as well?

**Rogich:** I don't remember '88 being quite so bad. I think what happened is that Dukakis stepped on the issues that the media would have liked to otherwise embrace him for. They had real difficulty on the furlough program, number one. Particularly, I think, since Willie Horton got out, raped a woman and then came back. So that sensitivity of the issue was there. The media had real problems on the environmental side of things because the EPA was referenced in the context of what we used for the commercial itself—I think Jim Pinkerton provided that to us by the way; that specific document from the EPA that cited the Boston Harbor for its inadequacies while Dukakis was Governor.

So we had the issues on our side. Crime for example, commercials that talked about the differences between the two men on the fight against crime. It was about that time when there was a hue and cry in America to build more prisons and put people in jail and all the issues were focused on crime. It ranked number one or two in almost every poll you saw. Today it's like four or five, or even lower in some cases. But we were more credible on the issue than Dukakis, by far, given his record as Governor.

**Freedman:** Given all this and given your characterization of the '88 race, I was hoping we might flip it around just a bit and ask you to put yourself in the position of a Dukakis advisor. I mean, is there anything that he could have done, should have done, might have done differently, that you would have advised him to do differently? Different commercials, different responses that could have made the difference for him? What did he do well, if anything?

**Rogich:** I would say the thing that they never did, they never filmed him properly. They never humanized any component to him. He was stiff. First of all, he is very short. They never gave him stature in the depiction. You know, you'd see him in a crowd of men and it would be like eight 6'3" guys and then him. There's a lot to be said for that. I know that's kind of corny and you think that in the world of substance and politics and policy that that's [not relevant]—but it is.

**Masoud:** Somebody has done a study of this and that the shorter man—except George W. broke this—but the shorter man has never won a modern Presidential election, at least in the age of

television.

**Rogich:** Really, I didn't know that.

**Masoud:** I think Dick Darman told us that.

**Rogich:** I'll have to tell you something. This is just me thinking—when I saw Governor [Thomas] Ridge and George Bush side-by-side, I believed that Ridge should not get the selection to be Vice President because of his height...among other considerations. I'm probably the only one who would think that. But there is something to be said when the stature level is so out of balance in terms of depiction. They'd probably shoot me for saying something like that, but I just made that observation. I watched it one night and thought, *It's going to be difficult. How do you commingle that?*

I love Governor Ridge, don't get me wrong. He's a terrific Governor; he's what I like to see in politics, in government. He's honest, hard working, moderate, but I just didn't think they were compatible from a looks standpoint. That's just my partial take on it. So, I know that if someone at the White House heard me saying that they'd probably think I was crazy, but I believe that there is something to consider.

And, to answer your question, I never thought that they depicted Dukakis properly. I never got the feeling that he looked Presidential. He never sounded Presidential. And he never lightened up. If you ever watched him, I don't remember one instance when they showed him with a hearty laugh. I'm not sure he has one. And that was compounded by the fact that they asked him the question about the—

**Freedman:** Kitty [Dukakis]—

**Rogich:** The death penalty and his wife, Kitty. A very unfair question, no question about it. He probably should have said, "That's the most pathetically ridiculous question I've ever heard. I'm not going to dignify it with an answer. Now, next question." That's the way I would have handled it. And all of a sudden he might have taken what would have been a negative and made a positive out of it, and that might have been a turning point in the campaign.

**Masoud:** Would have ended Bernie Shaw's career and saved us all.

**Rogich:** It might have. But you know what, he ruined Dukakis's chances. I think you've got to come back at the media when they ask ridiculous questions. I think that those who have the ability to strike back in a dignified manner succeed. I think that those who cower, don't.

**Masoud:** I was doing research out at the Bush library—this is an interesting aside for you—and I found some notes that Bernie Shaw had had a visit with the President and sat down and gave him image advice. Told him, "You should have appearances from the Oval Office where you're sitting on the edge of the desk and you should. . . ." I think I pulled those documents. I'll send them to you.

**Rogich:** Coat over the— *[laughter]*

**Riley:** You might have more on Paul's [question], I don't know.

**Rogich:** I was just going to say that there's not really any memorable Dukakis commercials. If you look in the annals of those '88 commercials, you'd probably rate ours as memorable. Not because we did them, just because they worked. I can't remember the commercials they ran. Can you? Can you give me one? That says a lot. You guys are students of it. The fact that you've got to ponder. We can probably sit here and come up with something.

The point I'm trying to make is the message didn't work. There was no reason to vote for Michael Dukakis for President. The fact that he came from the People's Republic of Massachusetts probably didn't help either. So when you've got that going for you and you have no emotional side to these things. . . . I think people want to know about the emotional human side as well.

**Riley:** You touched on Bernie Shaw's question at the debate. Were you involved in debate preparation in '88?

**Rogich:** I was.

**Freedman:** What did you do?

**Riley:** Was that your first experience in doing debate prep?

**Rogich:** I did a little bit in '84. Not to the degree that I told the President what to say or do, but I was around during all of this. I was around and in charge of the technical side of it. In '88, I did a lot more of the debate work itself.

**Riley:** Walk us through that again. People reading this fifty, a hundred years from now, may not have access to information about exactly what—

**Rogich:** It's going to be a sad commentary when they read this stuff. They're going to say, "What's he talking about?"

**Masoud:** "Debates? We don't have debates, we're a dictatorship now."

**Rogich:** I know. Debate prep is anticipating what's going to be asked, measuring reaction to it and so you basically set up a replication of the debate. You have somebody playing the opponent and the candidate answering that opponent. Sometimes it gets over the top. The opponent actor wants to be so tough, and with such vitriol, that they ask questions that somebody has to say, "Wait a minute, time out. He's not going to get that hard. Okay, let's go back and ask it again." And he'll say, "Okay, okay." Because they want to see how they can handle the worst case. But if they were that nasty in actual debate, then it would only work against the candidate so he's not going to do that.

You sit with the crowd of maybe 10 or 15 people who are watching, who have a reason to be there for different purposes. One is the answer to the question is always shortened because you're limited in time. You don't want to start out by saying, "And so then when I was in the third grade . . ." so you shorten things a little bit. That's perhaps how I would be involved, to make sure that we got our answer in the precise time element so I could utilize parts of it for filming. Indeed, I would try to remind him of what we'd use in our commercials, where he spoke specifically on a subject matter and how to amplify it.

Commercials that run over and over provide a strong message and good content and so in debate prep you try to have some parallel there, some continuity. You'd have the domestic advisor there for content on what you can say and how broad you can get on specific subjects, so you're not wrong in what you say from a substantive standpoint. The same is true with foreign policy matters, or economic policy or whatever. In the debate setting, your succinct 60- or 30-second response is the essence of success or failure.

There are also little nuances. You don't expect your candidate to look at his watch, that was unfortunate. But I didn't like the format that we had in the first place. I thought it played against us.

**Riley:** And that format was? Was that in '92?

**Masoud:** Was that the town hall—questions and answers from the audience?

**Rogich:** I thought it was less Presidential than we should have had. I thought putting [H. Ross] Perot in the same setting was ridiculous and demeaning, but that's another whole story. So we never played to the best that we had, George Bush as the incumbent President of the United States.

**Masoud:** How was debate prep different in '88 and '84?

**Rogich:** I don't remember a lot about '84 other than the debate prep after we stumbled in the one. We had the mess-up when he stammered a little bit—and the numbers reflected that too. We did see some dippage. Was it St. Louis?

**Masoud:** I'm not sure.

**Rogich:** One was Louisville. I think we won that one pretty convincingly. The other one was St. Louis, I believe, where we had to go back. The debate prep was pretty similar. You know, it was—

**Masoud:** Do you bring in an audience, for example? What I had heard is that Reagan used to do his debate prep in front of a bunch of staffers. You'd be in a room and he'd try to fill up the room to approximate the experience, whereas you read that Bush didn't quite do that, that he didn't like to have a lot of people around.

**Rogich:** That was the only difference, probably. We had about 25 people with Bush in that room

in the hall over there in the OEOB [Old Executive Office Building]. I remember that was probably different, but I wasn't really that involved with the Reagan debate prep. I remember he had a momentary lapse in one debate, and we had a problem. The second debate was used, in part, to correct that.

**Riley:** Did you videotape these and did the candidate watch the tapes?

**Rogich:** Yes. We taped everything so he could play it back and see himself.

**Riley:** Was Bush a patient or impatient student of himself in these settings?

**Rogich:** I didn't find him to be impatient with much of anything. But I think he's someone always on the run and maybe that comes across as impatient. Anyone that plays 18 holes of golf in an hour and a half is on the run, but that's just part of his personality. In looking back on it, he might have been a little anxious to get the debates over with and move on. But I didn't really find that he was averse to listening to good advice, working to do what he was supposed to do.

**Riley:** And he was a good student and responsive to even cosmetic things.

**Rogich:** He would ask good questions, I remember. He would say, "Wait a minute, are you sure we can say it this way?" Then they'd stop what they were doing and get back into it. Yes, he was good, very good. Always respectful and always open to good suggestions.

**Riley:** I think one of the broad questions that we'll be dealing with throughout the rest of our time is the perception that you were dealing with a candidate that didn't like the idea of image management. That there was a certain kind of authenticity that he felt would be communicated because he knew his own intentions and he felt that as long as you were an honest straightforward individual, that those intentions would be communicated. Whereas the image people understand that even that authenticity sometimes can be mediated in ways that unfavorably depict someone who is a political figure. That's really the purpose of my question about how willing a student he was at this stage, because we get the sense over time that he was somebody who maybe was a little bit impatient with the image managers. Maybe this is an inaccurate assessment, that's why we brought you here to ask you.

**Rogich:** No, I don't think he liked the notion of having handlers around him. I think that the little contrived things probably irked him from time to time, but I never really found him to say no to anything that I asked him to do. If I had a good reason for doing it and I explained it thoroughly and it wasn't hokey, you know, it wasn't over the top, he was amenable. Even when I was in the White House and we were on trips and I would set up movements on visits and events that I thought were good but time-consuming depictions of what we were doing, he was not against it.

He might call me and say, "Why are we doing this? What's the reason for this?" I'd say, "Well, because I think it's significant for this reason," or "because I think this amplifies our message." Or "because we need to get a good shot inside the hall because there were no cameras inside the hall that could pick it up, it was too dark, and this is a way of getting at it," or whatever. But he never said no, certainly that I recall. I kid about it, but the staff levels we had to go through

before we got to him sometimes wanted to say no, but we would go through these events and still find him amenable.

**Masoud:** Did you work very closely with Roger Ailes in all of this?

**Rogich:** I didn't work with him really much at all in the White House. He would come in from time to time.

**Masoud:** I'm speaking of campaigns.

**Rogich:** I didn't work with him on site selection or any of that, and it was rare that he was in the field with us.

**Masoud:** What did he do?

**Rogich:** He was the debate prep guy, and great at it. He was a senior member of the campaign staff and he had a company in New York. He had other business to attend to, so he wasn't there full time. He was a guy who we would take our concepts to and make sure that he signed off on them. We would then take them to the next level, to Jim Baker or Lee or that group in our presentation format. He was the senior member who was part of that process.

**Freedman:** So was he involved in production at all? When it came to creative, when it came to the ads themselves?

**Rogich:** Maybe in some instances. For example, on the commercials we did—all the commercials in '88. Let's just take the better parts of the ones we discussed, the crime commercial, the tank commercial, the Boston Harbor commercial, the revolving prison door commercial. He really was not involved in that production end of that stuff. But he certainly signed off on them.

**Freedman:** Was Greg Stevens on the scene, was he part of that?

**Rogich:** He was one of—

**Freedman:** One of your creative people?

**Rogich:** He worked for Roger directly. He was one of like eight or ten guys we had. We did most of the production work in Milwaukee, at the studios there. We liked the setting, and that's where the firm was that I'd hired, Frankenberry—who later committed suicide, you may recall. Dennis Frankenberry was his name. He had a lot of problems and sadly we lost him. We did the crime commercial in Las Vegas. We did the editing on the Boston Harbor commercials in New York. We did the tank commercial in Washington, D.C., and in New York. Greg Stevens might have been involved in some of that editing but it was primarily Jim Weller who did the commercial. Jim Weller was the guy I used most in the editing. Do you know who he is?

**Freedman:** Just from reading—

**Rogich:** He was a very talented guy who had done a lot of great commercial work, TransAmerica, Joe Isuzu, stuff like that.

**Masoud:** So you would have an idea, say for an ad, for example, and you'd take it to Ailes and Ailes would say, "Yes, go with it," or, "No, don't go with it," kind of thing.

**Rogich:** Primarily. Or he would say, "I don't know about it, we'd better test it," or, "I don't know, let's take it upstairs." We always had an audience when we needed to clear our commercials, sometimes to Lee directly, and he would take it to senior staff level. But the pollsters were involved in our lives then, so there were ongoing support mechanisms to tell us whether we were on the right track or the wrong track.

**Riley:** Do you recall any instances in '88 when the President pulled the plug on something himself? Was he uncomfortable with anything that went up to him?

**Rogich:** I don't recall anything. I'm sure that there might have been commercials we cut that didn't run, but I don't think so. I don't really think we had—you know, we didn't run that many commercials, when you think about it. The cycle is pretty short. In order to make it work—and I'll amplify a little more—just because you raised the question about gross rating points and what they mean. It means that in order for a commercial to work, you need a formula that allows it to run so many times per week and that's measured by what we call "gross rating points."

When you get into a commercial cycle on a campaign, you've got all of October, all of September and let's just say August, for the sake of argument. So you essentially have 12 weeks of running commercials, unless you have a primary process prior to that. Let's say you add another four weeks to that, all things considered, because some of them might run for two weeks in June just to set things in motion, as well as a couple of weeks in July. So you've got, let's say, 16 weeks. Well, the most you're going to run is probably 12 to 14 commercials, maximum. *What* are they going to be? And if you regionalize, *where* are they going to be? How many times are they going to run in a region? So the issues are pretty defined by the timeline.

**Riley:** Was there much internal debate during the general election campaign, during this 12-week period, about the relative weights in the positive and the negative spots? You had mentioned earlier that you cut the Snoopy ad. You liked it but you felt that you shouldn't have run it later on.

**Rogich:** It wasn't that we shouldn't have run it, it was that we didn't *need* to run it. I thought it was more Presidential to close on an upbeat. We did run a positive commercial and we ran it equally in distribution. We used the Snoopy ad and we used a positive closing commercial and the positive spot was, I think, just an above-average spot. We didn't have enough footage to make a great spot. I just didn't like it that much, I wasn't pleased with the music content. We were struggling to put it together right. I think we edited that in Seattle. So there was always debate over commercials. Everybody wants to be in the creative commercial business. John Sununu in the campaign would come by with ten different commercial ideas. Every hour it seemed.

**Masoud:** Were they any good?

**Rogich:** Well, from time to time he'd have a pretty good idea. You've got to just wade through that. G.W. would come through and say, "What are we doing?" George W. would come and say, "When the hell are the commercials coming?" He kind of was a conduit to his father. He'd take the commercials and present them sometimes on our behalf.

Everybody in America has an idea for a spot. In the campaign, if you get an unsolicited written idea, you have to be careful that you don't get into a copyright problem, so we had a form that we would send out. Anything that came into our offices unsolicited we would not look at until we sent a form back and told them to sign off, that they "relinquished all rights," or whatever the legal staff gave us. Well, when you did that, people thought you really loved their idea, so that would cause another wave of correspondence to come through. You never tell them, "Yeah, but." Then they'd call back again and say, "Yes, but you asked us to sign this form." It was just part of the process, it was a mechanical part of the process in a campaign and that you have to adhere to.

**Freedman:** So with all these ideas floating around both from the inside and the outside, are there any general principles, general guidelines for what makes a good [commercial]? All these ideas, what stands out, what grabs you, what makes you say, "Yes, let's make that one."

**Rogich:** First of all, you have a budget. There are a lot of great ideas but they are too expensive.

**Freedman:** The one with the Eiffel Tower in the background?

**Rogich:** We had a lot of marvelous ideas. I had one fellow in the campaign, whom we discussed today, who had this notion about us buying a piece of music that Louis Armstrong had recorded. What is it?

**All:** "What a Wonderful World."

**Rogich:** It sounded good and he had all these depictions. We probably would have spent \$2 million in the production. So you take that good idea with a grain of salt. And another two months of getting clearances to use it.

**Masoud:** So that was Ailes's idea. *[laughter]*

**Rogich:** No, I'm not saying it was. Roger Ailes would like these to the point spots, which work much of the time.

**Riley:** Videotape—

**Rogich:** —Videotape commercials, but he wasn't against film if the budget allowed. Roger has a bigger-than-life persona, as you know if you've talked to him much.

**Riley:** In fact, he won't do this because he's in the news business. He said he doesn't do

anything like this.

**Rogich:** We had a lot of good ideas. You listen to them. Actually, Pinkerton came up with a lot of good ideas, too. But he was a research wonk. He's a brilliant guy. I don't know if you've spent much time with him, but he's a very intelligent man, has a great sense of humor, has a million good ideas and I think was the first guy that I remember using the phrase "new paradigm." I said, "*Really?*" [*laughter*] And he said, "Yes, and here's what we're going to do, see." I haven't seen him a lot lately, but we were really close friends then. I always thought he was very talented. And Mary Matalin was very talented in those days. I knew her from the campaign, and we became good friends. How she manages everything while working in the White House, I'll never understand.

**Masoud:** What do you mean? Because she's not making as much money or because she's not competent—?

**Rogich:** She's very competent. I just wondered why you'd want to go back into that setting. She was never there really like she is now, but they're fortunate to have her. She's very bright, hard working and I'm very fond of her. I talked to her a couple of weeks ago and asked her, "How are you doing?" She has two young kids, you know. And James Carville—

**Masoud:** He's one of the kids, right?

**Rogich:** You're right, they have three kids. Just kidding. Jim is actually a good friend of mine. He and I were on opposite sides in negotiating one of the debates.

**Riley:** Was it at William and Mary?

**Rogich:** Could have been William and Mary. He was on one side and I was on the other when we were going through that process. But anyway, that's another long story. So back to your question of which—

**Freedman:** —makes it good.

**Rogich:** I think the nice thing about the crime commercial, for example, was that we produced the commercial for less than \$5,000, which is pretty cheap. It was a studio spot. But it was fine-tuned and it had three components in it, of differences between the Dukakis and Bush. It took me about 24 hours to mechanically put it together in the studio cut. It tested well and it made our case. Now, could we have done a better spot by filming in the back of a police cruiser and doing a cops video? Absolutely. But that would have cost us \$200,000 and it wouldn't have made any more difference in our depiction of the crime issue. So that's what makes the spot particularly good. The research is there, constantly telling us what to do. We know what the issues are, every poll in America is telling us as well. So ours is just fine tuning that and also putting our candidate's position in place.

**Freedman:** So you're drawing a clear comparison, is that what grabbed you about that spot?

**Rogich:** Yes. The media however likes to say they're all negative commercials, we call them comparative. Just as Pepsi has the Coke test, they slam their opposition every day. Ford tells you they're better than Chevy, and it goes on and on and on. They're comparing. We're just comparing people as opposed to products.

**Freedman:** On that topic, there has been, especially since '88 and '92, there has been a cry in the media and even in academia to some extent, an outcry against attack advertising, negative advertising. You're making the point that well, these are legitimate comparisons. Is there any kind of attack that goes too far? Have we seen anything? Or are you comfortable with—?

**Rogich:** I think the difference is—yes, I think there have been commercials that just don't work. Some are so over-the-top, even though facts are on their side, if the presentation is too in-your-face. But you're just never going to eliminate attack ads.

Just like it's hard to rein in campaign spending. When you look at it closely, the people screaming most for campaign spending reform are the newspapers, perhaps because they don't get any newspaper advertising for campaigns. Seldom does anyone buy political newspaper ads anymore, and conversely, I don't see the networks with editorials every night saying, "We must cut down this spending." Why? Because they're making tons of money. But you see the written editorials saying we need campaign spending reform. I hope it doesn't happen. I certainly hope they don't do it to the degree that [John] McCain wants to do it, because that would be unfair and unconstitutional. But we're getting into new issues here.

**Riley:** I want to pose a question about—and this will kind of serve as a bridge, I think. We've pretty much exhausted the discussion of the '88 campaign—although certainly feel free to come back to it or present questions about it—but you mentioned on several occasions Lee Atwater's name. Of course, he has an important position with respect to the President in the new administration, but is a powerful force that leaves the political scene. I'm wondering if you've given thought to the influence of Atwater's absence from '88 to '92. Do you think that that's one of the important ways of explaining the difference between the two campaigns, especially based on your own experience in '88? Do you have Atwater stories, of the things that he brought to the '88 campaign that were irreplaceable by somebody else, either because of his own unique personal characteristics or because of the fact that he had a history with George Bush that nobody else had?

**Rogich:** Well, I really think that the difference in '88 to '92 was Jim Baker. Baker kept the reins on Atwater and all of us for that matter. He had the closest relationship with George Bush. On the subject of Lee, Lee Atwater was a very talented guy who understood changes in demographics. He was a student of social movement and baby boomers. One of his defining moments, he told me, was seeing the movie *The Big Chill* and realizing that it was a synopsis on the baby boom movement, his first pictorial of baby boomers. I thought that was pretty insightful.

He talked a lot about his favorite books. A couple of them were mine also. Lee Atwater was a guy who would like you to give him a particular recap on a book and if you liked it that much, he'd buy the book. I'm not sure he was a student of Marshall McLuhan, for example, but I think

he could easily have become one. I always enjoyed McLuhan's definitions of the global village, and Lee and I had some good conversations about him.

Back to Jim Baker. I thought that the difference was that he was the credible gentleman companion of the President. He was in '84, he was his eyes and ears in the White House. When they formed that leadership element of Deaver, Baker, and [Edwin] Meese, it later became just Deaver and Baker, and ultimately it became Baker. I think he was there in '88 throughout the whole process. He was in the headquarters just about every day—he was with the Vice President regularly. He was the one who would most often go over our commercials with the President-to-be. He was the credible witness to what was going on at the headquarters.

Lee was the day-to-day campaign mechanic, who understood the process. He could come up with a lot of wild notions too, but Baker would have a way in which to bring us all together to sort things out, whether it was me or Lee Atwater or Roger Ailes or Bob Teeter, whomever, he had a calming influence and an ability to sift through ideas and keep things on track. He had a good way of running meetings and getting us out of the debate and down to finalizing what we had to do.

I'll give you an example Richard Nixon told us one time at a meeting I attended: "Never, ever let your pollster run a campaign." And I never forgot that. It was so true, because pollsters are a reflection of what they already know. They just cannot go outside of the box. I don't mean that in any derogatory way. They are not in the business of new ideas without data and testing to back them up.

So in '92, I thought we did exceptionally well in the debate in St. Louis and I wanted to declare a victory with our commercials. This was Sunday night. So I assembled 50 people in a diner in St. Louis, Missouri, early morning, like 6 o'clock. They were there at 5 o'clock and we filmed them and we produced enough footage to declare victory in the debate, man-on-the-street stuff. The commercial opened up and it was a black screen that said, "At a diner in St. Louis, Missouri, after the debate." It dissolved to the people and it just went through this litany of why they loved Bush and how he won the debate and why Clinton lost. Then we edited the commercial that morning at 10 o'clock. I had arranged for satellite time at noon. So at 2 o'clock we had the commercial ready and we downloaded it to New York. And we'd hired these four or five runners to pick up the commercial and hand deliver a spot to each of the networks. So we were on the air Monday night.

I called the White House and I talked to Jim Baker and he said, "Teeter is here and he doesn't think we should run this commercial." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because he thinks that we're wasting media time because nobody is talking about the debate right now. We still need to stay on the economy and the other." He was reflecting what the poll numbers showed him. Well, the poll numbers aren't going to show any real overnights from the debate, so I had to argue long distance for this commercial. Finally Baker said, "All right, run it." That was kind of a breaking point in the campaign. From there I never really sought approval from Teeter for the commercials. Instead I did with Jim Baker. We ran that commercial and it gave us a big bump.

When I came back to the campaign in September of '92 we were 21 points down. All of a sudden

we were down to 18 and then 11 and then a half a point a day, and up until the Friday before the election, when the indictment came on Weinberger, we were just three points behind. You shift a million votes in this election and Bush wins the Presidency again. We were cutting commercials almost daily. When I came back to the campaign there were only a couple of commercials in the can, which was a horrible thing to see. It's almost as if no one could get out of the other's way. It was like the advertising team used to say, "a black hole." They would do good work, then they'd never hear about it again.

**Masoud:** Why no Gulf War commercial, though? If Teeter is not in the way anymore.

**Rogich:** He was still in it—but the process had changed. On the Gulf War and foreign visits, I'll tell you something we did. We arranged for film crews to film every aspect of our trips without any fanfare. In Moscow, in the Ukraine, in Czechoslovakia, in Turkey, in South America, on our visits to Venezuela, to Uruguay, to Argentina, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Korea, all that footage was assembled, all the pictures of the President actively working with world leaders, and we didn't use any of it. We didn't produce one foreign policy commercial, and that was one of his strengths. We didn't remind the American people that you can't have domestic tranquility without peace outside the borders. The two go hand-in-hand. Why? Because the polls didn't reflect that.

**Masoud:** Once you've got Teeter out of the way?

**Rogich:** But now I'm down to two months. You know our team produced roughly between 35 and 40 commercials in 30 days, pretty remarkable. To tell you how far behind we were, we produced, I bet, 200 radio commercials. We regionalized the country into radio segments that we got so well defined that we would have areas—the South, for example—split into categories, where the issues that are important in southern Georgia are not quite so important in the northern part of the state and so forth. We might have had an opening and a closing but the doughnut in the middle of the commercial reflected what we were trying to talk about of importance of the issue in the region or the city or the community or the demographic, the ADI, the area of dominant influence.

We ran them and our numbers started to show changes. Not only were we going up but the negatives were going up for our opponent, and this thing was a horse race at the end. I'm not sure we would have pulled it out, frankly, but you like to wonder. As I later said to the President, your loss has probably allowed much to happen. I think the loss was really what allowed G.W. to win the Presidency. So things happen for a purpose, although it was a heartbreaking time for me. When you leave a campaign, there's nowhere to hide, because that's all people want to talk about, the things we're talking about here today. What went wrong? How did you lose it?

So those were the things we did not do. The fact that we didn't focus on his accomplishments, not once—and we didn't do that because the poll would not cite accomplishments in foreign policy as a hot topic. Naturally, it was all economy, but we could have made the case. I would say it was probably the most mismanaged campaign for President I've ever witnessed or read about. I've never seen one quite as bad as that campaign. And all things being equal, I think it never really clicked until Baker came back because things were all of a sudden getting done and

he had people around him that were just very talented, Janet Mullins and Margaret Tutwiler, people who could get things done. Mary Matalin and others who just cut through the B.S. and we were on a fast track, and I always respected that.

**Riley:** Anything else on '88? James?

**Masoud:** Well, the one quick question I would ask, you mentioned, obviously Atwater being a difference between '88 and '92—or rather Russell did—and you mentioned Baker was really a difference. Was Sununu a difference too? The fact that he was useful on '88 and you didn't have him around in '92?

**Rogich:** I think Sununu was helpful more on the road than he was for us in the campaign per se. He was an intelligent, engaging guy. I saw a difference in him from the time he was in the campaign, always brilliant with a great sense of humor, to when he became a member of the White House team where he assumed the toughest job in the world, Chief of Staff. If it's not the toughest, it's right up there. So he became a little different than I had remembered him. I think he did see the problems, but he had a problem in rallying the troops.

**Riley:** Ready for lunch break?

**Masoud:** They may not be quite ready yet.

**Rogich:** Let me just close by saying that that was a difference in the '88 to '92 election. A lot of us who were around for all of '88 got into the '92 campaign late. I left and Card left too. I really wanted to be ambassador to Iceland where I was born. I used to go back with my mother a lot and it became available and I asked for the job. I didn't want to be a career diplomat. I was there for roughly six months or so, and I no sooner settled in than they called me back. It was a funny story, but—

**Riley:** Baker made the call?

**Rogich:** I think they called me at my hotel room and he said he wanted me to come back.

I said, "I can't do it. All my stuff is there." He said, "Well, I just hung up with the President and you can tell him no." So the President called shortly, and as the story goes, Baker said, "Well you can call me back. This won't take long," something like that. So the President said, "Sig—" he called from the plane—"I'd like you to help us...to come back." And of course I said, "I serve at your pleasure, Mr. President."

I called Jim Baker back and he said, "Did you tell the President 'no'?" We laughed about it and he said, "Well, we're going to have a meeting at six tonight. We meet every night at 6 o'clock in the White House." So I lived in my hotel for the next three months. I didn't have anything there except what I had packed for what I thought was to be a few days.

**Riley:** So you were in Washington when all this transpired?

**Rogich:** Yes, I had come back for a meeting at the Pentagon. They have a large NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] base in Iceland. That's the reason I was there. We were there on official business and I sensed that Baker knew I was there and took advantage of it. I know Jim Baker so it was difficult to say no to him. I never took a day off after that. We immediately changed the campaign, advertising staff that Monday morning. I let a lot of people go, and we started the new process. To come up with our concepts, we met at the White House every night at six.

**Masoud:** Who would be at these meetings? Would they be with the President? Would the President be at these meetings?

**Rogich:** There were a few times when he would stop by, yes, but he was usually on the road. Usually it was Jim Baker and me and sometimes Darman and Teeter and Mary Matalin and Margaret Tutwiler.

**Masoud:** Was Ross, Dennis Ross?

**Rogich:** Dennis Ross was there a lot. He is a very talented guy, and was close to Baker. Part of the senior team that worked with him. Who else was there? There was also—

**Masoud:** Zoellick, Bob Zoellick.

**Rogich:** Another talented guy.

**Masoud:** Yes, smart guy.

**Rogich:** What's he doing now?

**Masoud:** He's USTR [U.S. Trade Representative].

**Rogich:** That's right.

**Masoud:** So what happens at these meetings?

**Rogich:** We would have had our new polling data and what we were looking for and we would bring in the finished scripts, the commercial ideas and say, "Here's what we have and here's what we need to do and here's when we can be on the air." And in some cases I'd bring in spots that were ready for airing or just the rough cuts to let them see them. We'd go over them, make the tweaks that they wanted. And then show them new scripts we were working on.

**Masoud:** This isn't to flog a dead horse, but the great irony of all of this is that that team that had the 6 o'clock meetings every day to discuss the ads is primarily a foreign policy team. And none of these—that Bob Zoellick, or Margaret Tutwiler didn't say, "Hey, why don't we do a foreign policy ad?"—is pretty remarkable.

**Rogich:** I think it was a mistake. But it was too late. We hadn't defined our campaign. We let

someone else define the campaign and we became reactionaries to it and it was all the economy. We couldn't get off that track or add much new.

**Culbert:** We're talking about letting somebody else frame this debate. I wonder how much the third party—Perot is now a big part of this campaign—how much you had to adjust or had to compensate or how you dealt with that factor in '92.

**Rogich:** We were aware of it. I thought one of the big mistakes we made was giving the convention to Pat Buchanan. We go into a convention, and instead of getting a bump out of it, we lose points. I mean, think back on it. So from Iceland I wrote a memo to the President and said, "I know you're trying to get some kind of communication with Pat Buchanan just to ease this thing up a little bit. Why don't you consider letting him write your speech?" I said, "I think it might give him what he wants—reserve the right to edit—but get the components in there that are important to him within the framework of what you believe in, what you can live with. At least bring him into the fold or let him introduce you." The President said, "That sounds like an interesting idea." He wrote a note and passed it on to Marlin [Fitzwater] and said, "Sig has an idea here. Let's look into it."

Well, it got into the press. There was a story that I had written this memo—so that killed that idea, although I'm not sure how good it was. They called Buchanan and he said, "That's a novel idea, but we're not doing it." So we ended up taking Ronald Reagan out of prime time and instead giving the stage to Pat Buchanan. I never forgave the people that ran the convention for that. It was just bad management.

**Masoud:** Whose decision was it? Who did that convention stuff?

**Freedman:** Who made that call?

**Riley:** Was it Rich Bond?

**Masoud:** Yes, I think it was.

**Rogich:** No, he might have had something to do with it but I think it was [Craig] Fuller. I mean, it's not fair to blame one guy. You can't blame one person for it. But whatever it was, what the hell were they thinking? You take a popular, outgoing President, Ronald Reagan, who is one of the more articulate men in our lifetime and relegate him to a place where no one watches him and you put Pat Buchanan, who still lives in the far right world of Genghis Khan, and you put him in prime time. It was outrageous. It was among the worst things we did and it hurt us. It made our convention look like we were unprincipled. It forced the President to run in part on a platform of extremism and we never quite shook the label and they took advantage of it.

**Masoud:** This was before Baker comes on. The convention.

**Rogich:** Before.

**Masoud:** Yes, okay, that's fine.

**Riley:** But you're following these events closely from Iceland.

**Rogich:** Naturally I'm following everything, glued to the TV.

**Riley:** Let's go ahead and break.

[BREAK]

**Riley:** The White House years. We dealt with the campaign, I guess we've exhausted that subject.

You went back home for a while, right?

**Rogich:** I went home at the end of '88, just for a few months. Friends I had worked with were going into the White House. I didn't really have a notion of coming back to Washington. I know that I'm not a policy person per se. People like me are a little unusual to be in that setting, but I think that I had a relationship with the President and had developed friendships with people and so I had the opportunity to work with many of the same people who ended up running the White House. Almost without exception, those were the same people who ended up there.

I read a book years ago, a novel called *The Plot* by Irving Wallace. In it a man becomes an advisor to the President, and to make a long story short, he never tells anybody, because the President swears him to secrecy. He later goes to the White House to a dinner and his wife is sitting next to the President and the President says, "I know your husband. He's someone we value and think a lot of," and she said, "I didn't even know you knew him, Mr. President." And the President then said, "You've just paid your husband the greatest compliment." I thought, *Boy, that would be a great role, to be a confidential citizen advisor to the President of the United States.*

I think people like me, who are naturalized, sometimes have a greater love and appreciation for this country than a lot of others. We study and appreciate history more, and so perhaps you look at things with a different perspective. As a young boy I was always such a patriot, never an ideologue per se, but I always believed in the things that this nation does. So the chance to go to the White House was a thrill, although it was a financial sacrifice and a time sacrifice and I had my two daughters who were living with me at the time. So although there were a lot of changes that had to be made, it was a great honor.

I went back and worked in the White House and basically found myself traveling with the President and making sure that our advance preparation was a reflection of what the message was. The Points of Light Foundation worked for my office. The advance teams, all of those people that were such a big component of White House activity, were people who came under our direction. Then any kind of filming—audio presentations, Saturday morning addresses, Camp David broadcasts, things of that sort—I was able to participate in or help construct.

**Riley:** What were the circumstances that brought you back? I'm assuming that you were not

offered a position immediately after the campaign? Were there informal conversations about your possibly coming to Washington and you just felt that the timing wasn't right or that wasn't something you were interested in?

**Rogich:** I think I could have come back right away. I don't know in what role necessarily, but it was not really something I planned on doing. I liked being an outsider. In being able to visit, help where I could, and have a relationship with the President and with the people who now were all of a sudden officially in the White House. But I wasn't in a position to do it right then. I needed to go back to my business. So I just kept in close contact, and they kept in close contact with me. That's just how it evolved. And one day they called and asked me to do it.

There was some talk about me going to the RNC [Republican National Committee]. They were interested in me working there. That wasn't something I wanted to do, although the RNC wanted to retain our company to be one of their creative components. So I would have had some input regardless and probably had some working affiliation to the White House. To go back as an assistant was a great opportunity because it provided the highest level of White House involvement.

**Riley:** Do you know anything about the circumstances that led to the timing?

**Rogich:** No. I know they had some changes in the works. I don't know all the details of that. I think they were looking for someone who could creatively do some of the things that they wanted to do.

**Freedman:** I hope we'll get to hear about specific examples of executing the message, translating the message into the image. Hopefully we can talk a bit about that. But I also want to hear about the distinction, if there is one, between that process—executing the message—and maybe the prior process of conceptualizing the message. If you're traveling with the President with an eye toward "how are we going to get camera shots that help us emphasize our message," who came up with that message in the first place? Is that something that you and he were doing together? I would imagine that there would be a larger group of people involved in that part.

**Rogich:** There were. In the White House there are short-term and long-range planning committees. So we know where we're going to go, what events we're going to accept, of the thousands of requests for the President's time. You just wade through things to see if they make sense. I think Edie [Holiday] was there with us, Andy Card, myself, Joe Hagen, and some others. A small group in long-range planning meetings. Those took place at least once a week and sometimes twice a week, depending on the timeliness of requests. We would meet and we would determine what was appropriate to think about doing and what wasn't.

Then we would look at the President's schedule and figure out what types of activities we were going to do when we arrived. All that was predetermined, for the most part. There would be some spontaneous activity. We would stop the motorcades or I would request the motorcade to stop—which was rare—if there was something upcoming. Or someone would call from the ground and say, "You have 2,000 people here with placards that say, 'We Love Bush.' Don't you think we should stop?" I could talk to the limousine and request to speak to the President, to ask

his permission. There was the ability to be creative on the road, but for the most part things were determined in advance. Down to the area, the picture, the place, the movement—all planned out.

**Freedman:** When you say long-term planning, was there decision-making along the lines of, “We want the message this month to be X. We want to focus on issue Y.” Was it that kind of—

**Rogich:** Yes. We knew in advance what the message was. If Congress was voting on an appropriations bill for more money for defense and we were in favor of that and we were debating it, we would probably go to a place like St. Louis and go to a defense provider there. Go to a McDonnell Douglas, for example. So the story would be, “President Bush today appeared at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, Missouri, and urged Americans to write their congressmen about the need for funding.” Then we’d cut away. “The President toured the facility and met with plant workers,” and then there would be a rally in the corner where the plant workers would say, “Mr. President, help us continue to do what we do best. Don’t let the Congress say no.” That’s the oversimplified example.

Or, if the issue was imports and exports and we were focused on the imbalance of trade and there were laws that we wanted to put forth to amplify and bring evenness to that picture, we might go to Michigan and go to the auto workers and talk about what’s going on in Japan with the Lexus versus the American sedans. How we can’t compete because they’re dumping their products and so forth.

**Freedman:** Did that development process involve the kind of research and polling that you described? You mentioned that—

**Rogich:** Yes, it did.

**Rogich:** We consistently had the benefit of the RNC, naturally. They provided ongoing polling data; we knew what the states issues were. We also had the national media. Every state had its own polling data, its own political operation, and so we knew what was going on at all times. It was not difficult with the information we had. And we had our own pollster, Bob Teeter, who was doing a lot of polling for us. He and his associate from Michigan. Fred Steeper?

**Freedman:** Fred Steeper.

**Rogich:** Fred Steeper. And they would come in and they would give a presentation to the senior staff. We’d have the information at hand. We’d talk about right and wrong direction of America, and where we need to be focused. We would let that be a reflection of what we did.

**Freedman:** Was the President interested in that? Did he pay attention to the numbers?

**Rogich:** I don’t think the President was given all of the presentations, but he knew what was going on. Probably that information came more directly from Sununu and Teeter. But yes, he was aware. You know, all Presidents live by numbers, and the best way to get that information is to have ongoing data at your disposal. This is a very sophisticated mechanism (whether it is the Republican or Democratic side). The DNC and the RNC, both have components there that are

very high tech. Then the states have their own data. So we were not in the dark about issues, although in looking at the campaign in '92, you'd think at times we were.

**Freedman:** We'll get to that.

**Masoud:** Did we ever talk about the fellow who proceeded you in that job? Steve Studdert?

**Rogich:** He had a different role than I did. I think he was in charge of the advance teams primarily, and I'm not sure if he dealt directly with the President. He was a carry-over in part from the previous administration, if I recall. I don't know all of his duties but I know they were a little different than mine, primarily because I don't think he had the same background in media that I had. They gave me what he had in addition to a role with media presentation.

**Masoud:** During the campaign, when you were cutting ads and you were arranging these appearances, you're obviously trying to present the President as having XYZ qualities, as having this image. What image were you trying to present while you were in the White House? What did you want people to think about this man?

**Rogich:** Well, I was always focused on his integrity, character, but I also liked people to see his fun-loving, caring, humanistic side. I liked him acting spontaneously. I probably tried to contrive for some of those things too much at times. But you can't just wheel a 38-car motorcade to a stop and say, "Wow, let's do this or that." But there were times we missed a lot of good shots just because of the mechanics of getting it done.

But I always liked the President in a setting where you could see him laughing or being real...of the emotional moment. I didn't really have to contrive for that, it was just getting it. Because when you stop a motorcade no one is going to see it—the press crew is in the back. You have to stop and wait for them to get up front. And if you stop, and there's a fabulous moment there, not only do you miss the picture, but you upset the whole press corps because they didn't get the picture. So you have to work on the mechanics of that situation to make sure it works.

**McCall:** What was your interaction with the press corps in this period?

**Rogich:** I tried to be an advocate. I always thought I got along with them pretty well. I never lied to them. I was always pretty straight with them. I knew that they would make us or break us, all things considered, so I didn't try to be cute. I socialized with them to some degree and had friendships that developed because of that. I think they viewed me as an honest broker who had a job to do. If I couldn't talk about something, I'd just say, "I can't get into it."

**Masoud:** Who would deal with you the most? Who was calling you all the time?

**Rogich:** Oh, Brit Hume, Maureen Dowd, John Apple, Andy—

**Masoud:** So you dealt with pretty much all of them.

**Rogich:** Almost all of them. I dealt with them and they would call me for—But we would go to

lunch or dinner on occasion. When we were on the road together, at the end of the day when they put their pens down and you take your hat off and you go out and drink beer and laugh a bit. You just have a good time. It's late at night and those are the things you do from time to time.

**Masoud:** Because my impression of this President was that this President really didn't like his team talking to the press a lot. He loved to hunt leaks, that kind of thing.

**Rogich:** I don't think it's necessarily this President. I think anybody wonders who is saying what. I had a better relationship with some members of the press than others, so naturally there was always some suspicion. But I was not a leaker. Not only did I view it as harmful to the President, I always had this philosophy that even in a campaign, when you have great information, if you're ahead, don't let the opposition know anything or they'll change tactics. If you're behind him, obviously you don't want to put information out because you're out there raising money. So I've always had a closer-to-the-vest attitude than most. But I think people knew who the leakers were.

**Masoud:** Right.

**Rogich:** The phraseology somehow finds its way into print.

**Freedman:** Can you talk a bit at this point about what the structure looked like? I mean where was [David] Demarest at this point, versus Fitzwater, versus you?

**Rogich:** Among other things, Demarest was the person whose responsibility was to oversee the speechwriters. We all had input on speeches. I'd get remarks or speeches every day for comments. A lot of our remarks involved some protocol negotiating which involved our office, such things as formal or informal toasts, opening and closing statements, etc.

**Freedman:** So these are protocol questions?

**Rogich:** Yes, in many cases. And in addition to remarks, we'd become involved in the technical aspects of the visit. How long is the walk? Where is the press going to be situated? Will there be a stop during that walk where they answer questions from the press? So in the middle of all that you have Demarest's shop, for example, that coordinates the written components that reflect all the things you're going to say or do, and we'd all have a look at that.

There's never really anything poorly written, but my more memorable moments were Ken Khachigian and Dick Darman fighting over remarks. One was a speechwriter and one wasn't, but the one who wasn't, wanted to be. *[laughter]* Everybody wants to be a speechwriter and see their language in place and everybody does get a little bite at that apple. So that was his function, primarily.

If I had remarks that I needed the President to do in a public service announcement—and we'd do a lot of those from the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] to the Cancer Society—I would make a request of Demarest's office. I would say, "I've agreed to do a public service announcement on NCAA basketball, and here's an idea I want to incorporate." And he

would prepare it for me, I'd see it and edit it up and send it around for the approval process, and we'd cut the spot.

Marlin was someone who really didn't want to get involved in our lives as it relates. He had enough to do. But he didn't want us too involved in his either. He was not a turf-driven guy, and I never found him anything but easy to work with. His job was to make sure that the press component was handled properly. And I think he did a great job at that. Overall I think he was a great press secretary, very believable. Now, getting into how you break the news and giving too much access to news magazines—I think that was one of the mistakes we did in the '92 campaign.

**Masoud:** Giving access to the news magazines?

**Rogich:** I think we shied away from those who were adverse to us to a greater degree than we should have. I think we could have nurtured those a little more. Republicans seem to have this notion that the *New York Times* is just never going to be on their side. But the *New York Times* is the bible of the industry. It sets the standard. So I think we shied away from that a little more than we should.

**Masoud:** So some more courting of the press should have been done.

**Rogich:** Perhaps. We are creatures of habit and you kind of deal with a lot of the same press people, but that's just my opinion. There's a probably lot of good reasons that things happened and certain judgments were made because of information that I don't know about.

**Masoud:** Who would make those judgments?

**Rogich:** I think it was a collective effort. I think the Chief of Staff, the press secretary, the President ultimately. But I just never could get out of my craw how badly treated we were by the weekly magazines. They never ever gave the President a fair shake. *Newsweek*, *U.S. News*, *Time* magazine were very tough on the President, and I thought unfairly. So I think that for him to receive the nomination and then to have the cover "Fighting the Wimp Factor" as the first cover out, was way over the top. I thought that morphed piece that *Time* did, when they had an exclusive interview, was just indicative of their bias.

To my way of thinking, the safest harbor is to utilize the wire service, AP [Associated Press] to break significant news. I would have used it more. I used it in campaigns that I ran because by and large they're the pick-up for everybody. They're the least political in their tone and tenor and the story just so happens to run in a few thousand newspapers.

**Masoud:** And TV people use it to write their scripts.

**Rogich:** Indeed they do. So I always thought that if I was going to break a great story, I would break it with the wires. I would break it with AP, in a one-on-one interview. You're more apt to get a fair shake in the dissemination of the news. But I'm not the news guy, however I always thought that would be a better way to get the story out.

**Riley:** Do you recall your first impressions of the White House when you first came back in? Obviously you had some mental image of what it would look like based on your earlier experience there during the Reagan administration. Do you remember coming in and thinking, in any kind of comparative way, Boy, this is much better than I remembered it or much better than I expected it? Or conversely thinking, Boy, something is out of line here or this person is not who I expected him to be or is clearly misplaced in this position? Do you have any—?

**Rogich:** The only thing I really remember is that there was no place to hide. My office was in the West Wing and Hillary [Clinton] ended up taking that office in the White House. So I shared some unusual company. There is really no place to hide in the White House. It is a small facility when you think about it (that epicenter of the universe) is very small. So from that standpoint I was a little overwhelmed. I used to kid and say, “I go to work in the dark and come home in the dark.” You’re up in the morning at 5 o’clock, you leave the house at 6:15 or 6:30. I had my first staff meeting at 7. The senior staff meeting at 7:30, a breakfast meeting at 8 o’clock, an office meeting at 9 o’clock. By 9:30 you’re into five full meetings and then in the meantime they just happened to bomb Iran or something and we all react. I mean, it’s just that kind of thing. So that was overwhelming for me. But I loved the pace and I just felt privileged to be part of it all.

There is one meeting after another going on in the White House. Eventually they all collectively come together with their conclusions, other than those involving national security issues and things that we didn’t deal with. But even the NSC [National Security Council] had a component in everything that my office had to work with. We had to make sure that we did the proper thing and we were fortunate that we had people like Brent Scowcroft there, who was probably one of the best guys that you’ll ever meet in life. Just an honest broker and easy-going. Someone you kind of grow to love and look out for instinctively. You just care about their success as much as your own, as corny as that sounds. You want them to do well, always—not that they’re not. But you want to make sure to be there if you have anything to say about it they do, because they’re needed and they make the difference. So from that standpoint, and to be part of any historical moment was a little overwhelming for me. Then the setting, just to be in that place and to walk around and look at it was something I’ll cherish.

One of the first things I did was go into the library, the Presidential library, and looked at the books that the Presidents had read. I like to read a lot. To see John F. Kennedy’s Ian Fleming books and to reflect on the fact that that was what got me to start reading those books when I was in college—because I heard the President was—was a warm feeling. And I remember for the first time seeing so much of the artwork in my textbook, [Gilbert] Stuart’s *Washington* and [Frederic] Remingtons and things that you see growing up. It all kind of comes back to you, that this is the original. So I kiddingly tell everybody, “There are no prints on the White House walls.” It’s all real.

Then to be in the Roosevelt room and to see history in front of you, to see the first American Nobel Prize winner. I collect Teddy Roosevelt memorabilia—and Churchill, too. And I love history, and I collect it. To be part of it, in a very small way, to see it developing around me, in a greater way, was a privilege. I always viewed my job as a privilege.

**Riley:** So there was nothing in the way, though, of—

**Rogich:** Oh, I thought that they were creatures of habit. For example, I never liked the set-ups for the shots on the East Lawn, you know, when they would do things a certain way time after time. I changed that and I had to go through hell to change it. You know, flipping the shot around, changing things all around. I could never figure out why they would have all the state visits and the events out there by the living quarters with those two colonnades behind them. With those two columns, you couldn't really see anything. So I flipped the whole staging around and put the Washington Monument as a backdrop. I thought, *Why in the world would we not show that beautiful long shot in the background?* Boy that was tough duty. The people who run the White House said, "We can't do that."

**Riley:** The people being the permanent?

**Rogich:** Yes, mostly the permanent. Some that were not so permanent said, "Boy, that's going to cause a lot of havoc. You're going to have to put staging on the lawn as opposed to the concrete." And I'd say, "Well, so what?" It is a bureaucracy in and of itself. There is a lot of tradition there and a lot of old habits that are hard to break.

I probably had a reputation as a guy who was a little off the charts sometimes. I know that, but I think people respected the fact that even misguided, I had good motives. So they probably had to rein me in a little bit from time to time, but I always thought that pictures such as these are one-shot opportunities—if you've got the head of state flying all the way over here from wherever he's coming from, he may never come again. You should have a picture that is memorable. I always kind of looked at things that way, so that the picture, the event withstood the test of time. I used to look for unusual types of things like that. We'd have Rose Garden events and we would look for a different way to do it, but I know I made people crazy sometimes.

**Masoud:** So if there was a Rose Garden event, you would be choreographing it.

**Rogich:** We would choreograph it, yes.

**Masoud:** I cut you off, you were saying something—

**Rogich:** I was just going to say one time we had King Hussein coming in to a visit to Kennebunkport and I had changed the whole layout to allow the camera to pick them up from the time they landed as opposed to having them walk to the staged area, which didn't look significant. I think I drove Marlin crazy, he went ballistic because of the last minute change, and when I think back, he was right—it was too risk-driven with only a few of us up there and on hand. And we should have stayed with the traditional shot.

**McCall:** This is August of '90, the Desert Storm visit?

**Rogich:** Yes. I think it is '90.

**McCall:** It blends.

**Riley:** This is very common. The sequence thing. This is part of the reason we put a timeline in here, to help all of us remember.

**Rogich:** It's amazing that at times I can't remember events at places I've been. But how could I forget all the events we did in Turkey, for example. How many times does anyone get to go to Turkey in a lifetime? But there is so much going on in the middle of it all that you can't remember the details—not that you forget the event, but you can't remember what the hotel was in Turkey. You just get things all jumbled, and I'm embarrassed to tell you that sometimes.

**Masoud:** Do you recall the Rose Garden—I don't know if it was a ceremony—but the rolling out of the 1990 budget agreement with [Newt] Gingrich staying behind and not getting in the shot?

**Rogich:** Yes, I do.

**Masoud:** Do you have any stories about that? Did you see Gingrich staying behind and say, “Oh my God, the guy is backing out”?

**Rogich:** I assume you're referring to the budget talks at Andrews? People just made more of that than was the case. I thought to go out to Andrews and sequester oneself and get results set the stage for the economic explosion. A tax increase and a cap on spending is probably significant for our economic success, and the tax increase component probably cost the President the second term.

**Masoud:** But in other words, my question was, that Rose Garden thing wasn't a disaster. It wasn't, “Oh my God. . . .”

**Rogich:** It was an inside baseball disaster. You know, some columnist might have been writing something about it, but no.

**Masoud:** Did you have any disasters?

**Rogich:** I don't really think we did, that I can recall. I mean, I look back on it and I used to tell our staff, “You're only as good as the next event, and no one remembers what the old one was.” We went to Czechoslovakia, we had an event in Wenceslas Square that was extraordinary. The press gave us credit for 125,000 people, but I would say we probably had more like 600,000 people because it went out of the square, around the corner, and some people said we had even a million people. But let's say it was close to half a million people, all things being equal. We put the event together so precisely in terms of detail that we knew just when they would ring the bells for freedom. I suggested to the President that we give them a bell of freedom, a symbol of democracy there, and we did, a replica of the Liberty Bell and we brought it back to give to the Czechoslovakian people.

Then they all took these little flags, American flags and Czech flags and they had a group singing “We Shall Overcome.” They were singing it for different reasons than we did here in the U.S.

but they were a terrific group, good harmony, good folk music playing up there. The President spontaneously asked me if I thought he should get up there. I said yes. So he got up there and they swayed and sang together and this crowd went crazy. Secret Service wasn't thrilled about it, but it was spontaneous, no one expected it. It was just a great, great moment.

We were flying back after that trip and I kept thinking that we just had this great trip, great visit, almost a million people are seeing this, pictures all over the world, all representing the things that we believe in most.

**Masoud:** But this wasn't the event where he threw the notes in the air? It was some Eastern European event that he had notes and there is a photo of it. He tosses the notes and he speaks coherently—well, incoherently, but spontaneously.

**McCall:** Where was that?

**Masoud:** I think it was Hungary.

**Rogich:** I can't remember.

**Masoud:** So he had this great love of reaching out to people and it's just surprising that that is not what came across.

**McCall:** It's said that he did well working a crowd, so to speak, on the campaign trail, that's where he was his best, sort of spontaneity. Were you able to take advantage of that overseas more?

**Rogich:** I did. I took advantage of it everywhere we went. I always had him move away from the Secret Service contingent as much as I could, into the crowd. I would call out to him when he was walking away from a potentially great moment. I'd go get him and bring him back, because he loved it, number one. Instead of running to the motorcade, and lose a couple of minutes, we'd urge him to shake those hands and be seen at his best. Whenever we could do it, I tried to do it. Really nobody disagreed with that. It was just a matter of being focused, not forgetting the opportunities that were at hand.

**McCall:** Now you were involved with the advance work for these things, because you had to go in and set up.

**Rogich:** I worked most of the foreign events. I relied on the advance staffs to put together the local events unless it was something like the earthquake in San Francisco, something of real significance. For the most part I had a great staff and they did the work well. On foreign trips when there was more than just advance work, there was a protocol negotiation if you will—not as a substantive part of policy matter, but on the formal movements of the trip—what settings we would use and how to handle things that were delicate, that we were dealing with foreign nations. Then I would go and work through the details.

**McCall:** You were involved in Malta. Could you talk a little about that?

**Rogich:** I'll have to use the rest room, because you could almost write a book about Malta.

[BREAK]

**McCall:** Let me backtrack here, to your story about King Hussein, because I interrupted you slightly.

**Rogich:** Oh, I just was trying to change the setting and it was sensitive, we had some of the leading generals coming in to meet him and I changed the format. Marlin didn't know about it and went a little crazy, about the only time he really got mad at me, I think. I didn't argue with him, I just let him do it the way he wanted to do it, but I never thought the picture was as good as we could have had it. That probably is a good example of working on the run, not getting together. There were times when all of us would get a little frayed. I guess that's the nature of the job, but I think we all had a good camaraderie.

My greatest fear in the White House was that I would inadvertently do something to embarrass the President and I was very cautious. I turned down a lot of press interviews, a lot of profiles because I just didn't think it was the place for me to be. When I first came there, everybody wanted to do a lot of those so-called sexy stories about a Las Vegas ad guy and all, but I always said no for the most part. Got in the press by accident at times. But the *New York Times* wanted to do a cover story on me in their weekend magazine. I wouldn't do it.

**Freedman:** With you as the—

**Rogich:** I thought, *That's all I need*. They sent a photographer out to Las Vegas and took pictures of me and my family.

**Freedman:** This is when you were up at Kennebunkport?

**Rogich:** No, it was when I was first hired.

**McCall:** You spent a good chunk of that early crisis period in Kennebunkport with the President, in early August 1990.

**Rogich:** I spent almost every August up there with him in all the years I was at the White House.

**Riley:** Is that right?

**Rogich:** Yes, I was there, we had a group of about a half a dozen of us who would go up and be on call to help the President, a mini-staff if you will. I didn't have much to do, frankly. I was there as needed.

**Riley:** Who were the other folks that were up there?

**Rogich:** Marlin was there. If he wasn't there, there was always a press component. Andy [Card]

was there. Bob Gates was there a lot and then he would come in and out with Scowcroft from time to time.

**McCall:** Relieving each other.

**Rogich:** That was kind of the way it was. The President had his briefings in the morning and it was really more working vacation time for him and we'd be there in case we were needed. It was a good time because it gave us opportunity to socialize, to go to dinner at night, play golf during the day. It was our month off, but always on call.

**Riley:** Socializing with the press or with each other, within the White House?

**Rogich:** With each other. And there was always a press contingent there, as you probably know, that followed him everywhere. They'd come in and out and he would do a lot of his feature stories then. It was kind of a reflective time and people like [David] Frost and Barbara Walters would be there. It was that period of time when you provide an informal interview in a relaxed setting.

**Riley:** He was more comfortable there than he was in Washington? Was he more likely—?

**Rogich:** It was a less hectic experience as opposed to doing it in the White House. To set up a significant interview in the White House is a pain for everyone. You have lighting components, sound needs, and security clearances. Just a lot to it. When I would bring production crews through, there was a lot of work to getting them cleared. If the film shoot was at 10, I'd have them get there at 6. You know, security has to go through the trunks and go through the cameras and go through the credentialing and all of that, but I'd have to be there to make sure there were no problems. I didn't have to be, but you want to be, just so you don't have something go wrong with the President waiting.

**McCall:** There was an image problem that summer with the perception that while troops are being deployed to the Gulf, the President is off playing golf. Were you sensitive to that? Was there something that was going on in response to that?

**Rogich:** Yes, I was sensitive to it. I raised the question with Sununu. It was unfortunate because the President did not play a lot of golf. If it was that one moment he did that, the press played up. It was almost as if the world would have expected him to sit in the house and brood, worry, and not live a life. Nevertheless, the practicality of it is, that criticism comes with the job. So there was that moment when the press corps photographed him playing golf in juxtaposition to the Gulf War and that was about the only time I saw it. He stopped after that. We took a little unfair hit because of it, but nevertheless, that was it. I remember calling and expressing my opinion to the Chief of Staff about that issue. Anyway, we got through it, all things considered, but in the meantime it wasn't a good picture.

**Freedman:** Was that the worst in terms of image or unfortunate juxtaposition? Were there other incidents where you thought, Gee, I wish he hadn't been there or hadn't done that? Either during that crisis or elsewhere?

**Rogich:** I never really saw him in any situation where I thought he ever embarrassed us or him. I think he got over the top a little bit when he called Gore an “ozone head” or something like that during the campaign. But I know in reflecting, he probably wished he hadn’t said that too, but that was just the spirit of the moment and it got the best of him. But that was the human side of him, too. I never found him to be anything but genuine in my dealing with him. Could he have loosened up a little bit at times? Maybe. But none of us are going to undo 60 years of life. However, I can say that the more I was around him, the more I felt an affinity toward him and the closer I got to him. The more personally I became involved in the process, the more I took it personally when the criticism was there, and the harder I would work to try to eliminate the problem or stem any criticism.

**McCall:** One of the other celebrated Kennebunkport visits was when [François] Mitterand was there earlier in ’90—maybe it was ’89 when he was there. Were you involved at all with that?

**Rogich:** You might remind me a little bit.

**McCall:** It was the President’s idea to bring him up to Kennebunkport, much to the chagrin of everybody else involved, to bring the French President there. There was a lot of scurrying around just to get the thing prepared, but were you also scurrying around trying to think of some opportunities and what not?

**Rogich:** I remember his staff always worked with a wink and a nod. Mitterand was the master of late-entrance splendor, if you will. That is, coming in late and always liking to be the last one in to make the entrance and, I think, deliberately so. I would talk to his staff and I’d say, “Here’s the timeline.” No one knew what the real timeline was, because we all anticipated Mitterand would be late. So if it was 12:30 we’d say it was 12, but they somehow always found out. *[laughter]* So we played that little game. I remember bits and pieces of that. It was just one of those things that you had to deal with, with Mitterand. Not only there but I saw them at the NATO summits and the G7 [Group of Seven] summits and even at his own place, he was late. When they went to—what was the island—?

**McCall:** St. Martin.

**Rogich:** Yes, St. Martin, his own French summer home and as the host, he was late. He was just late for everything. It was his grand entrance that was more important to him than anything. So that just became part of our deal. We always put our timelines together knowing that he would be 15 or 20 minutes late just to make the point.

**McCall:** I guess with Kennebunkport, it was celebrated later as a great moment in personal diplomacy and there were a lot of photo-op moments that were associated with that. I don’t know how much of it was choreographed. I also know the other problem was to the other extreme, at the bicentennial celebrations in ’89, in France. That must have been another nightmare entirely.

**Rogich:** Yes, but you know, all the pictures turned out well. The rest is so inconsequential that it’s not worth going into it other than to say that there was always a component there of his being

last in the receiving line. We had the same thing in Houston with Mr. Mitterand, you know during the G7 summit, walking through Rice University in that long setting, the last one in line was...Mr. Mitterand. Actually I saw more of Joseph Reed in that picture than I did of anybody. I kept scooting him out of the picture. He didn't mean to do it, but he was in every frame. Do you know Joseph?

**Freedman:** I know who he is, sure.

**Rogich:** He's a very good guy, he's a lot of fun to be with. There's a lot of great stories that relate to the chief of protocol.

**Freedman:** Like what?

**Rogich:** Oh, just in general I would say that Joseph did not go out of his way to memorize all the names. Instead he'd say, "Mr. President, the Prime Minister." [*laughter*] Then later we'd kid him about it. Or, "Mr. Prime Minister, the President." But who could possibly remember all those names with all the proper diplomatic titles? For Joseph, it was the safest harbor.

**Freedman:** Was he with you in Kennebunkport in the summers?

**Rogich:** Joseph? On some occasions I recall he was there, but for the most part not. If there was a protocol component that necessitated we do things a certain way and he had to deal with senior members of a staff of a foreign entity that had an emphasis on protocol—and some do—he'd be there. It's almost like a diplomatic corps, or a policy corps. Protocol is so important to certain governments in other countries when compared to ours. So he would be there for that kind of thing. France always comes to mind. The Asian community is very protocol-driven. There is a real sense of formality and tradition and that is important. So we would be sensitive to it.

**McCall:** Before we took the break you were going to go into Malta a little bit.

**Riley:** The only thing I was going to suggest, because we'd ask about some of the things you might want to talk about, you touched on the timeline. It might be useful if we could start with the first couple of items that you mentioned, since Malta fits third in that list. Before we get on that, maybe you can address the visit to the California earthquake site. You mentioned that briefly earlier. I guess that was the first major—

**Rogich:** It was really the first major thing that I was involved in. I flew out early. I had my staff meet me there. We walked through the areas we thought the President should visit. It was a shocking thing to see because we were so close to it. I mean we were allowed to go where no one else was allowed to go. The tragedy and the smell of death was still around us and some of those bodies had not been recovered.

Then we had to take care of the three mayors of Alameda, Oakland, and San Francisco, because it affected all of them...that is the protocol of who rides with whom and how do you handle that. All I can remember is Willie Brown, who also wanted to be there, saying, "Sig, which helicopter is the President riding in?" I said, "That one." He said, "That's the one I'm going in." And that's

the one he went in. Oh, I love Willie, but he has a flair if you know him and an ability to get right to the chase. Then we took the tour and went over the sections of the bridge that had collapsed and then we walked down into those areas most affected and it was a very sad and memorable time.

**Freedman:** What is the image or message that you at this point are trying to put forward? What's your objective during this visit?

**Rogich:** Well, the objective is to let the world know that the President cares about the tragedy of the earthquake and that we're on hand to help. That we have our people on the ground to help and we are doing what we're supposed to be doing. Now some criticized him initially for not being there quick enough, as you might recall, but it was not a substantive and fair criticism and I think once he was there it made the difference. And Americans focused most on helping those in need.

**Freedman:** How long was it? What was the date of the actual?

**Rogich:** It was '89, I think October.

**Freedman:** I was just wondering how long the lag time was. I think only a few days.

**Rogich:** It was only a couple of days, but he got through it. He walked the sites, he met with the mayors, we sent our disaster teams out early. We acted accordingly and I think we accomplished what we hoped to accomplish. The fact of the matter is, the President did care. He was saddened and concerned.

**Freedman:** So what were some of the images? What were some of the successful portrayals?

**Rogich:** Walking through the affected sites themselves, meetings with the respective mayors, seeing and talking to victims of the tragedy, being on the ground. I think that it was a good trip.

**Riley:** Did you bring your own people along to record this at this time, or were you just relying on the press?

**Rogich:** No, we didn't have anybody else out there. We had our own White House photographers. We had some memorable pictures and sometimes, if there is one extraordinary shot we'll release it to all members of the press, from the White House corps. But the press had their own wire service cameras and local crews. There must have been 200 press people there following everything we did. It was a mob scene.

**McCall:** How big was your staff at this point? When you came in June did you inherit a certain amount of staff to deal with these?

**Rogich:** Actual working staff that were directly responsible to me numbered four people plus myself. Then I had, in addition to that, the chief of advance and probably another working staff of ten. This represented our advance team, not counting volunteers. Later we had the Points of

Light initiative team and that probably represented another eight. Then I had the mechanical component that I could farm out for filming, the set-up and what have you. But I would say actual staff, probably 15, maybe, that directly answered to our office.

**McCall:** Because you mentioned earlier at one point you were trying to get footage of all of his trips abroad. You said it was kept in the can and never saw the light of day for footage. That's an extraordinary amount of resource in there.

**Rogich:** Yes, I believe it is. It was paid for by the RNC. They paid for and they hired the team. I just provided them with filming areas and put it together. When we could, with only White House staff, I would do that as well. We took advantage of it wherever we could.

**McCall:** It also sounds a little bit like your role in the White House was more the executive producer. While you were doing the campaign work, you were much more the editing room, going out to sites, so on and so forth, but in the White House it's a little more managerial.

**Rogich:** Well, I did co-manage the daily advertising staff in '88 for the most part. And Roger expected me to manage them. I hired the creative teams. So I did manage those people. But your depiction probably is not entirely accurate because I was out in the field doing much of the filming.

**Riley:** Do you remember who deputed you to go to California? Was that a decision that you could make on your own or was there somebody who said, "I want you to get out there and. . . ."

**Rogich:** I don't remember. Probably Sununu, but I could make that decision. I pretty much could go—

**Riley:** —Wherever you wanted to go.

**Rogich:** Wherever I needed to go.

**Riley:** I just wondered, is it commonplace for someone in your position to handle a kind of disaster trip like this?

**Rogich:** I think so. In this instance I went out early. The day before I met with the President, then went out the day before, put the timeline together, sent it back to the White House, got concurrence on everything I wanted to do and then waited for the President to get there.

**Riley:** So this is more purely advance work from your perspective than it is creating a record of this. That's what I'm getting at, because there seems to be a little bit of dissidence with having a disaster setting and putting an image person on the ground.

**Rogich:** A little of both probably. I think our job was to react to events in the world as they relate to the President, and this was certainly one of them. So that function in this instance was probably more advance-driven. But at the same time this was a test of our policy and ability to act at FEMA and for us to make our statement.

**Riley:** I'm trying to remember—I don't recall seeing anything else. Were there other circumstances like this later? Hurricanes?

**Rogich:** I don't recall other disaster areas.

**Riley:** Exactly.

**Rogich:** It was part of our office function also to walk through upcoming events. Usually I'd send someone out, then we'd meet, take it down to Sununu, get the approvals on it and then we'd put things in motion. It was a pretty quick process. But when there are crowds or backdrops or graphic components involved, you need a little lead time on it.

**Riley:** I want to go through some of these other things and ask you about them but I thought I might first ask you if there is anything that stands out—in the opposite of the question we asked earlier—is there something that stands out in your mind as a particular success? Something that you really felt this was good work at getting a particular image, a particular message out? What was your biggest triumph in the White House?

**Rogich:** I don't know how to answer that. The biggest triumph, I guess, is being able to do a lot of what I did, and not putting myself in the limelight to do it. We quietly built a small sound-stage upstairs, without any press activity. A full studio and it is still being used today, in an old office of the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] building. With tracking, lighting in it, stage sets, and built it quietly over six months so that we could film our public service commercials and there was never a press story about it.

**Freedman:** That's amazing.

**Rogich:** I guess that's the most fun thing I ever did. *[laughter]* I paid for it out of my existing budget. I'm not sure what it was now, but it was substantial, and all because we were having problems in the White House setting up and taking down cameras. Bill Clinton used it and it's still used today. So I look back laughingly that we could build a movie studio—which would have been a big story, the White House is spending all this money to bring Hollywood into the White House. But we built it and that's where the President did 90% of his filming.

**Freedman:** So let me ask you a different question, or the same question a different way. What about a shot? Is there a particular shot? I mean, we talked about some of them that stand out. Are there others from your time? Where you said, "You know, I had that perfect. That one will go down—"

**Rogich:** I don't know if one is better than the other. I don't know, I'd have to think about it.

**Riley:** You don't have one on your wall someplace that you—

**Rogich:** I have dozens of pictures of the President and many are historical. Taking the President to a dugout at a major league baseball game was as much fun as anything.

**Freedman:** What was the game?

**Rogich:** I think it was the opening of the Baltimore Orioles' new stadium. Another was the all-star game in Toronto with Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams, the President, and baseball commissioner Fay Vincent. One shot with children—which was an afterthought—really turned out to be one of the better shots we had in a campaign setting. Filmed with a 35 millimeter camera held high and shot down off a ladder. It was an extraordinary shot. The President on the back porch in that suit, it became the photo that we used forever.

The Malta trip gave us some great shots with Mikhail Gorbachev. But the events leading up to Malta were exciting. We met with the Soviets and went to Marseilles, France, to view our naval ships on display and select one for our meeting and having the Soviets with us. Getting White House approval to fly with the Soviets on our plane, a 707, and former Air Force One to Sevastopol and Saranople, Russia, and view the Soviet ship and make sure it met our needs. It was actually a newer and somewhat nicer ship than ours.

And that night having dinner on the ship and toasting with the Soviets to the event to come. I remember later at the senior staff meeting saying to Sununu, "You know, we're told there's a chance we can have a weather problem in November." And Sununu said, "I don't want to hear that come out of here." We laughed about it later. It was probably the worst 100-year storm they've had in history. I think that event site really came at the suggestion of the President's brother, who had been there and said, "This would be a great site for a summit." Something to that effect.

**McCall:** Jonathan did.

**Rogich:** Yes, Jonathan. In the final analysis because of the treacherous waters we couldn't meet on either of our ships, so we ended up meeting on the Gorky, a Russian cruise ship.

By the way, that whole episode, from the drive through Russia and to a sign that said, "Yalta," with an arrow, and we all thought, *That's the Yalta*. Here we are, in this isolated area driving into places that were once top secret. Which was a reflection that things were changing, because prior to that you could never have been there without escorts ahead and behind you. We had some escorts, but upon reflection it was our firsthand look at the ending of the cold war.

The trips to Australia, Japan and Korea and to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] were some of the better pictures with the President and the troops up there in the DMZ. Overall there were so many depictions of him I ended up going to 35 countries with him, and 49 states and 200 towns and cities, and logged a lot of miles on Air Force One.

Domestically we did a campaign in California to fight drugs—"cartoon characters against drugs," or something like that, and Hollywood was there. We had more good press on it than you can believe, which just shows you the strength of Hollywood and what can happen there.

**McCall:** I want to go backtrack a little bit to Malta again. Were you involved after everything

went out the window?

**Rogich:** Yes. We quickly made the decision to use the cruise ship. We selected the staterooms for the toasts, put together the seating arrangements, making sure the President and Mr. Gorbachev could really communicate. It was a very hectic time.

**McCall:** At a certain point when it actually happened, they had trouble getting the President back and forth between ships, between the Belknap where he was staying and Gorky. There was one problem also there where Marlin Fitzwater was in one area, Roman Popadiuk was in the other area, they were sending stuff back and forth and having to ad lib it on the shore. There was a certain fear that the Soviets were going to upstage the Americans. Did you deal with any of the counteraction to that?

**Rogich:** I remember that but I don't think it ever was a real problem. There was no way to really upstage anybody there. There was concern at one point when they thought Gorbachev was going to visit his troop ship in the storm. Our President insisted on going out, and if you recall, the swell there was 10 feet. So he had to wait until our deck on the transport was even with the deck of the Belknap and jump from one to the other. You know, one mishap and it could have been disaster. I think Gorbachev did try to go out to the Soviet ship one time, didn't he?

**McCall:** To the Slava?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**McCall:** He got seasick so I think he tried not to go out there, but I don't know if he ever made it out to the Slava.

**Rogich:** Our President insisted on going to see the ship, and talk to the men. I know that the drama of the visit itself just out-staged any of the preliminary staging by us. It turned out to be a much better event on the Gorky than it ever would have been on the Slava and the Belknap.

To go back and forth to our respective ships would have caused more movement, and wasted time. But that was part of the old spy-versus-spy mentality...we'll be on our ship this amount of time, and your ship that amount of time. There was a lot of negotiation that went into that. Where do we start the event? Who's first to speak? Who's second? Where do we have dinner? Where do we have lunch? Are they formal? Informal? All of that mechanical process that goes into those kinds of things. But I always thought that it really turned out to be a plus for us. We were at one site, and couldn't leave. They had lunch there, they had the meetings there, they got more accomplished there because they were confined.

**McCall:** Did you end up developing some close ties with your Russian, your Soviet counterparts, that you developed over the course of the administration?

**Rogich:** I did.

**Freedman:** Was there a Soviet you? Was there somebody who essentially played the same role

for Gorbachev?

**Rogich:** They had a chief of security that I invited to a hockey game in Washington, D.C., and they came to visit us and came to the White House and we met. And I took them to a National Hockey League game. The President was pleased about that. We took them out that night to dinner and drinks and then went to the hockey game, or vice versa.

**Riley:** Or simultaneously.

**Rogich:** We became friendly. We exchanged small gifts. This was the first of its kind, if you really think about it. All the little things that we saw, and it started with that first meeting with the Soviets. For us to fly Soviets on a former Air Force One was something. To take them across the sea from Malta after we picked the site in the harbor setting—and that was another big negotiation. Just where we were going to have each ship dock, because there is a problem with low tides near the harbor, and you have to be careful.

Back to the travel plans from Malta, I called and asked, “Why can’t they just go with us?” And our people said, “I don’t know. We just have never done it.” Brent Scowcroft approved it, asked the President if it was okay, and he said yes. So I took them on our plane. There was nothing secret on the plane, but nevertheless there was a psychology to it. So we flew from there to—where did we go, to Marseilles? I can’t remember the sequence.

**McCall:** I think you ended up in Brussels. Because you had a NATO—you made an emergency stop.

**Freedman:** Was there a lot of press about that? Their presence on the—?

**Rogich:** No, we kept it very quiet and purposely so. We didn’t want any press on it. We only had the Secret Service with us, it was a small contingent really, of those who put this trip together. And then we flew to Rome.

**McCall:** I think the Rome trip was on the way down, because that’s when the President goes to the Anzio battlefield and all that sort of thing.

**Rogich:** We had to go before that, to get the fleet moving. So we went to Rome prior, on our trip. We went to Malta, Rome, Marseilles. I can’t remember in what sequence, but after we selected the Belknap, in France. We had them motor to the south of Rome, and prepare the ship for use and then we flew to Rome later. It’s a kind of a blurry thing now, all that travel—but that was an interesting time to be in the heart of the Soviet Union.

**Freedman:** Do you want to talk more about Malta? I don’t want to skip ahead.

**Rogich:** Were you there at Malta?

**Freedman:** No, I just feel like I was there.

**Rogich:** You sound like you were there.

**Riley:** The only thing that we skipped in the timeline was the One Thousand Points of Light initiative, which you mentioned earlier also. So we can go back and pick up that, how you initially become involved in that, what that involved.

**Rogich:** Gregg Petersmeyer ran it, and we knew for it to work, we needed to make sure it wasn't politicized in any way. I think the only recommendation I ever made was Harold Reynolds to be considered as a Point of Light. He's the baseball player from Seattle. He's a terrific guy, now the (ESPN) commentator, who worked with kids a great deal..

To roll it out in a way that provided ongoing marketing appeal we named a Point of Light every day. As a result we received hundreds of names of people from throughout America. I called a country western singer I knew—Randy Travis—and suggested that we write a country western song called "Point of Light." Randy wrote the song with some songwriters that came in. I worked on some lyrics with them and we did the music and it became the number two country western song in the country, called "Point of Light," which kind of told the story.

**Freedman:** Did you get a songwriting credit for that?

**Rogich:** I think maybe I did from them, but not officially.

**Freedman:** Wow, there may be residuals coming your way. *[laughter]*

**Rogich:** Darn. Can't accept any residuals or outside income in the White House.

**Freedman:** So you did a song and that helped publicize—

**Rogich:** It helped publicize it. Then it kind of grew from there.

**Freedman:** Why Randy Travis, why country? Is it because you like that? Because the President liked country music? Was there something behind it?

**Rogich:** He was kind of a cross-over, his music was. I thought it wasn't "hard country" in the twangy sense of the word. So he agreed to do it.

**Riley:** And you couldn't get the Raylettes because they were still angry at you. *[laughter]*

**Rogich:** Exactly. No love left there any more. So Petersmeyer really ran the Points of Light and it came under the direction of our office.

**Freedman:** Who conceived of it? Where did it come from, originally?

**Rogich:** It came from a speech.

**Masoud:** Peggy Noonan's words, aren't they?

**Rogich:** Yes, Peggy in a speech wrote: “I see a thousand points of light.” There is some history as to where she got that, too. I think from Shakespeare. I can’t remember it all now, but I remember reading it later. From that, we started the Points of Light Foundation and that kind of led to the volunteerism activity that Colin Powell directed.

**Masoud:** Wasn’t there something called VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America] in ACTION [now Corporation for National Service]? Jane Kenny, I think, was the woman—

**Rogich:** Petersmeyer stayed on with one of these and somebody else got involved in another one—our job was to make sure that the Points of Light didn’t have any problems and that its funding base was there. We started branching out, and I think it evolved into something pretty nice.

**Riley:** Was this something that the President took a personal interest in?

**Rogich:** He did. It represented volunteerism and that. I served on the Board of Regents for the University of Nevada for a short while—one of nine regents who guide the state university system. When I came back in 1992 I got them to approve volunteerism activity as part of our curriculum. We did something in Nevada, I’m proud to say, that came as a result of the Points of Light.

**McCall:** Did you also handle all the public service announcements, that kind of stuff? Was that under your jurisdiction, so to speak?

**Rogich:** Oh, yes.

**McCall:** Because that’s a whole—it comes across as a very different sort of enterprise.

**Rogich:** I produced all of them with the President and in many cases we actually wrote the commercials. I always tried to get the largest amount of production budgets so we had real good technical quality and production value.

For example, we did commercials that ran in prime time with the President during the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] tournament. And because the NCAA let me do what I wanted to do, we used a small practice gym at Georgetown University to film. The spots ran every night in prime time during March Madness and I thought those were worthy of the time we put into producing them. I know there was a lot of grouching by the Democrats because we were getting so much exposure, so we knew the spots were good.

**Riley:** But you were doing this from ’89 onward? This is something that you started?

**Rogich:** It started in ’89. All of those kinds of things allowed us to utilize the President in positive settings, plus it gave our office an opportunity to work more closely with the President.

**Freedman:** Next, on to Saddam [Hussein]?

**Riley:** I'm actually going to go down the timeline and hit each of these to see if you have any comments. Did we exhaust Malta? You said when you exited that you could write a book on it.

**Rogich:** Well, I covered the better part of it.

**McCall:** What sticks out? What, for you, is emblematic or symptomatic of the complications around Malta? Is there a story that you recall?

**Rogich:** It was just that everything we planned to the n<sup>th</sup> degree was so significant at the time. But the weather changed it all. To have those two great ships brought in from around the world, to have one motor from Rome to Malta and from the Soviets side as well, and to set up all of the movement inside the ships—where they are going to eat breakfast, where we are going to have the photo shoots, where the press was going to move with them on the ships. On the back deck, an outside event on the deck, a covered lunch on the deck, great photo opportunities with American and Soviet flags side-by-side on the aft of the deck. To see all of that, none of that being used, and yet make a very memorable visit out of all of this, it was pretty extraordinary.

We accomplished everything. It was the most significant meeting of its time, you know, think back on it. I did gain from it some type of familiarity with Gorbachev, where he knew me and we had a chance to talk and he was very cordial—not that I could speak Russian, but through his interpreter. I enjoyed it. I was pleasantly surprised with his sense of humor. He kidded me a lot about the event because he knew all the details just like our President did, of what we had planned to do. I can recall him saying, “What went wrong?” something to that effect and we laughed about that for a long time. You know, nothing other than a hurricane could stop it.

**McCall:** And that becomes an ongoing relationship at other events throughout the administration.

**Rogich:** To a degree it did. I think he trusted our office and what we did and knew that I dealt closely with the President on matters like that. So I spent some time with him, before he went out of power. He came to the United States on his visit and I was with him a lot. I was fortunate enough to fly on his Air Force One, by the way, the “Aeroflot One.”

**McCall:** How did it compare to our Air Force One?

**Rogich:** There was not much comparison. I can tell you that—

**Riley:** It was like sandpaper—

**Rogich:** You know the Soviets really tried to copy us about those kinds of things but just couldn't quite put it all together. They didn't have the equipment, the resources, but they knew that our President had an Air Force One and they should have one and that's the way they'd be viewed in the world. But how do you compete with our Air Force One? I mean, we spent eight years building it and the cost—it went ten times over budget. And we have two of them, by the way, just in case you didn't know, Mr. Gorbachev. So where are you going to get your second

unit?

But I thought that their ship was more impressive than ours. The interior, the size, the scope, planning. We have a lot of old ships and theirs were relatively bigger and nicer and somewhat newer than the one we finally picked.

**McCall:** I think the Soviets contributed a cruiser; we contributed a destroyer, so. . . .

**Rogich:** That's right, apples to oranges. Nevertheless, theirs was much more dramatic. They did that purposely. They wanted to make a statement. It's funny, I look back on that moment—and here we drive up into this winding forest, past Yalta and into Sebastopol, and it's the forest, and the clouds are overhanging and we meet with them. It's cold and crisp and after it's all done the captain of the ship says, "Well, okay, we have everything together and let's drink." So we sit down in this room and there's a table about this size, maybe a little bigger, and the room is not much smaller than this room. It was a big room. We sat there. We all got pie-eyed on this bad vodka and I kept thinking—because I only had a couple of people with me—*What if I say the wrong thing here?*

**McCall:** Like about that tunnel under the embassy? *[laughter]*

**Rogich:** It crossed my mind and I kept trying to—we were a little drunk and laughing and you're trying to build a camaraderie, but I was afraid I was going to say the wrong thing and I'm going to read about it in some secret print-up. "What about the Walker guys? The Walker spy scandal, sir?" or something stupid you're going to say. Anyway, it didn't turn out that way. It was a trip that was disastrous because of the weather and it turned out to be as substantive as most things we ever had.

**McCall:** This question may sound a little trivial. During this period, Gorbachev asked President Bush whether he could borrow John Sununu to work on the efficiency of his own office. Sununu went over, but not much came of it. Was there any talk about how we could improve the Soviet image with someone of your caliber?

**Rogich:** I talked to their people a lot about things that they could be doing and I had a lot of them ask me about a lot of process. I thought it was very funny, Sununu going over to act as a diplomat. It was an oxymoron. I say that with all reverence and love.

**Masoud:** There is a story about how the President said, "John, are you going to tell them how to run a dictatorship or a democracy? Because you can argue both sides."

**Rogich:** He was a great chief executive when he was Governor and I think that that was part of the problem, in fairness. He tried to be the chief executive in the White House when really the President is, ultimately. So there were two avenues and places in which to go. Although John was actually a terrific Chief of Staff. His skills with some of the people he dealt with were probably less than they were accustomed to because he was so dynamic and so used to making things happen overnight that some people couldn't deal with that.

I was with him on that flight when he resigned and it was a very tough moment. And I had my moments with him too, but I was a little different, in the sense I didn't need to be working in the White House. I was more independent than most because I came from a different sector. I wasn't part of the political structure, growing up being part of Washington per se. So maybe I had a little more latitude than the average person might have enjoyed. As a result, I was never really afraid to tell people what I thought. But I always tried to keep myself out of the news. That was the constant thing I was concerned about because I never forgot that Deaver photo, either, on the front page of *Time* magazine afterward. As much as I respected Mike Deaver, as smart and capable as he is, it was just a very tough moment for him that he never entirely overcame.

**Masoud:** While I was away, did you cover at all the issue of how much access you had to the President? How often? You'd see him every day?

**Rogich:** Yes, I saw him almost every day. Did I have access to go in and hang out in the office? No. But if I needed to see him, I never was denied that opportunity.

**Masoud:** Did you go to the morning meetings? The 7 a.m. meeting or whatever it was?

**Rogich:** I had a meeting with senior staff every morning. I think Sununu met with the President about seven and maybe Brent Scowcroft did and they would come in and we'd have a senior staff meeting every morning. I think there were 12 or 13 assistants to the President and I'm not sure how many special assistants or how many deputy assistants but we had at the morning staff meeting daily.

**Masoud:** I didn't know if you had covered that already.

**Riley:** Your comments about Sununu, though, do open up a line of inquiry that I'd like to follow a little bit, because it takes us away from some of the event-driven stuff to inquire about your perceptions into the internal functioning of the White House itself. You said that even you had had some encounters with Sununu. Were you detecting a kind of build-up of frustration internally with him over time?

**Rogich:** No, no. I don't think it was that. He was just a guy who struck a little fear in people's hearts. It was tough to work around that in some cases, so there was a tendency to grouse, as you would with any strong chief executive. And that's what he was.

First of all, he's brilliant. He's a technocrat in some sense of the word. And yet he's a pragmatist, too. I went home one time to Nevada—(and I'm against the Yucca [Mountain] dump site out there for nuclear waste, since the beginning of the whole process.) I remember coming in on the senior staff meeting and Sununu—the whole table is sitting there. That's a high powered group of people, you know, your peers and they're smart and Sununu said, "I read in the press out there, and Secretary [James] Watkins has complained, Sig, because you're against the dump site in Nevada." I said, "Absolutely, I'm against it. I've been against it for 20 years." He said, "Well you can't be going out there contrary to policy and it looks like that is where we're going to put the dump site." I said, "Well we're going to do everything we can to stop it."

I watched him steam a little bit. Then he said, “Well, Watkins called and he wants to talk to you.” I said, “I’ll be happy to talk to him.” He said, “Where do you think it ought to go if it’s not going to go in Nevada?” I said, “I think it ought to go in the granite state,” meaning New Hampshire. There was just kind of a hushed quiet. I said, “I think granite can hold the stuff a lot better than the sand.” But that’s the kind of relationship I had with him, and actually I think he respected it and we always got along well. I always tried to look out for him. I was sorry to see him go in many ways, and yet I knew that there was a time probably that he had to go. He knew that better than anybody, too.

**Masoud:** Since a lot of the impact of Sununu’s problems—travel problems—were sort of image-related and sort of the image of this administration, was that something you were asked about by say, Fitzwater, or other people who were trying to manage this crisis? Sort of, “What do you think, should the guy stay or go?”

**Rogich:** I was asked by a lot of people—

**Masoud:** Including the President?

**Rogich:** Well, I was asked by a lot of people about the Chief of Staff. In the normal circumstance, none of this would have been newsworthy. Heightened with leaks in the White House and people spinning out the Sununu factor—the trip in the car driving to New York normally would have been a non-story. The fact of the matter is, it was cheaper to go that way than it would have been to take the resources he had to go that way. He got a bum rap there. But little things bring empires down, again, and that became a little thing that led to a lot of his problems and they were very unfair.

John is a guy who can be very enjoyable, in the right setting. He has a great sense of humor, he’s quick. He can also be very tough, without realizing he’s as tough as he is. I think that’s part of the problem. In that setting, you’re talking about men and women who have access and who have good track records and they’re there for a purpose. And you need to at least make sure that in their areas of expertise that you are sensitive to them.

**Riley:** Let me follow that up, then.

**Rogich:** Sometimes it appeared as if he just didn’t have time for people.

**Riley:** He leaves and you’re there when Sam Skinner comes in, is that correct? You were still there at that time?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Riley:** Do you have reflections on the Skinner period, on the differences between the two? First, as it relates to your own work, is there a different kind of working relationship with Skinner than there was from Sununu? Secondly, do you have observations about how that affected not just your own shop, but the operations of other shops in the White House at the time?

**Rogich:** Well, part of the problem was to bring a new Chief of Staff in at that particular time was a difficult time for everybody. Particularly difficult because it's not a job that you hit the ground walking. You really need to hit the ground running. To learn the intricacies of the White House with that short window of opportunity is very difficult, in my opinion. So I don't think Sam ever really could get in and get started. He had to learn who the players were, develop his own staff and that took time. So there was meeting, upon meeting, upon meeting.

One thing about Sununu, he was very decisive. Maybe he was abrupt because that's part of his style, but he was very good at making things happen. His was a matter of style strictly speaking, in terms of interaction with people, in my opinion. It had nothing to do with his talent. I think it had to do with his ability to communicate with people. Sam Skinner had to learn the process. A very affable guy, different style entirely, but put in a very difficult spot of being able to be successful, in a short time frame. By the time he learned the process, we were into the throes of the campaign cycle and having our own problems.

**Riley:** Is he somebody you had known from your disaster work? We've heard he's known as the "Master of Disaster" from sort of going out and managing things, I don't know whether in his—

**Rogich:** Well, that's not the title I'd want as Chief of Staff. "Master of Disaster." That explains a lot.

**Riley:** Before he became Chief of Staff.

**Rogich:** He might have campaigned in '92—

**Masoud:** I wish I had said that. What about Dorrance Smith, by the way, as somebody who comes in before—?

**Rogich:** Who?

**Masoud:** Dorrance Smith. Wasn't he part of the press and image-making shop? How did he fit into the picture? I know this is going back to before Sununu leaves.

**Rogich:** Dorrance came from—this is about the time we're all leaving, just about in that same segue. Dorrance came in from the network, if I recall—

**Masoud:** ABC.

**Rogich:** ABC, was it? We probably duplicated each other in some ways and probably stepped into each other's turfs and others, to be truthful. But I found Dorrance to be a pro, understood the mechanics of the business. I don't think he was a creative guy in that sense of the word, yet I thought technically he was very good. You know, understands what makes it work and what doesn't. I was impressed with that.

**Masoud:** Who made the decision to bring in this extra image manager?

**Rogich:** Well, they brought him in and Sherry Rollins came in—

**Masoud:** But this was before Sununu leaves I think, isn't it?

**Rogich:** Dorrance came in, really, I think he came in because he was recommended by one of the Bush boys. I can't remember, maybe Marvin—

**Masoud:** So it was just, "Find a place for this guy."

**Rogich:** I'm not sure that that's fair to say either. I don't know how it worked exactly, but he was there, and he did some traveling with us but not as much as our office did. It was kind of a transformational change, in that last year in the White House.

**Masoud:** I'm just wondering whether it sort of—was it a clue that this administration really was concerned about its image well before people said it should be concerned?

**Rogich:** I don't know if it was its image per se. I think this administration was going through a change. You get a change in Chief of Staff. Clearly perception was there that we didn't have as much sympathy or empathy for the economy as we should. It was always a catch-22. When you'd go to a senior staff meeting and those who were involved in that area would say that the President could not mention the "R" word. You know, Presidents don't mention "recession" because that can trigger recession, so how do you get at it? How do you get at the issue?

Then the notion was that because we were not being perceived as an administration that cares about domestic policy, that we're all focused on foreign events, that we had to run away from any foreign activity whatsoever, and we did. So we took our strength, forgot about it and worked overtime to focus on domestic policy, to create a greater perception that we were sensitive to the economic issues at hand.

**Freedman:** When does this begin, what you're describing? Did this begin towards the end of '91 or the beginning of '92?

**Rogich:** I think really about the beginning of '92. I left in March, I think. I know there was a change, but it's somewhere in that time frame. I could have stayed there through '92 and segued into the campaign and got involved from that standpoint, but I think Teeter clearly had his own campaign team in mind and I wasn't comfortable with a lot of it and the direction it was headed. The ambassadorship became available kind of by accident. It happened to be what I wanted to do, so I asked the President for it and he gave it to me.

**Masoud:** Could you elaborate a bit more on what caused discomfort when you saw the Teeter campaign team?

**Riley:** Rather than getting too far ahead on '92, because we have several items that we'd like to get you on the record about, and then we can get back to this campaign mode later if we have time this afternoon or tomorrow morning. I want to pose one other question about relationships within the various units in the White House and then maybe go back to the other items on the

timeline that we haven't gotten to, to see if you have anything that you want to get on the record in relation to that.

We started out by asking about the relationship with Sununu. We talked a little bit about your relationship with the speech-making apparatus. But I wonder about the policy shop and whether you had much interaction with Roger Porter's operation or Jim Pinkerton in your day-to-day work? Were you bouncing ideas off them in terms of trying to create opportunities for the President to do events related to policy activities that they were developing, especially on the domestic side? A lot of what we see here is obviously foreign policy related.

**Rogich:** I would talk to Pinkerton as much as anyone in the White House. He and I would meet after work sometimes for dinner. We would talk about where we were heading. We all shared the frustration, naturally, because we knew we were being hammered in certain areas. The new roll-outs, the new initiatives, were somewhat limited because they were kind of late in many cases and newer issues at hand had to be dealt with.

Porter's office was next door to mine in the White House upstairs—there was Boyden Gray's office in the corner, and then my office, and then Roger Porter's office. Porter is a guy that would sleep at the White House, literally. Would go to sleep in the White House. The White House is loaded with rats, as you probably know. Can't get rid of them. I don't mean figuratively.

**Masoud:** I don't think anybody would have known that. It's good to get on the record. The West Wing is rat infested?

**Freedman:** At night, they come out?

**Rogich:** Well, I can remember a couple of instances where I'd come in, in the dark in the morning, flip the light on, and I could hear the rat running in my office underneath the railing, across the carpet. You can't get them out, they are resilient little creatures. When they tore down the Blair House and rebuilt it, the rats had to have someplace to go, so they grabbed their passes and ran into the White House. There are a lot of rats there. I don't think it's as bad as it used to be. Millie used to go catch a rat now and then. There were some in the pool.

**Freedman:** Is that in Millie's book?

**Rogich:** I think it's in [Andrew] Mayer's book somewhere. I think the President said somewhere that Millie or Ranger had grabbed a rat. I don't mean that it's rat *infested*. It's not a pied piper thing.

**Freedman:** Just the occasional rat.

**Rogich:** Just the occasional rat. But one rat is too many for me.

**Riley:** So anyway, Roger Porter sleeping in the rat infested—

**Rogich:** I could think that we would have conversations, yes, about where we're headed, what we're doing. Roger had a lot of ideas about where we might roll things out, how we might do it. So it was not unusual for us to converse on a regular basis. Did I come up with initiatives or ideas? Probably from time to time, but really the drive for domestic policy was pretty well set, where we were headed. We had educational components, drug components, literacy components.

At that particular time, when we felt that when things were fast-tracking, it was pretty difficult to roll out a new initiative when you're into the election cycle. You lose a little credibility trying to roll out a brand-new program. People naturally say, "Well, what about all those years prior?" On the other hand, we had good domestic policy. We were so much victims of our own success from the foreign affairs standpoint that they overwhelmed the domestic side of what we had to offer. There was a natural comfort level for the President because he was so adept at doing what he does, at putting good foreign policy together, and it was the close of the Cold War and it freed up tons of money and it freed up ingenuity and all the things that will help solve the domestic problems in the end.

So we did that. I think the most amazing thing we did was the ADA policy. The Americans with Disabilities Act. We put together that event on the White House lawn and I think that was a significant picture. I think the fact that we were successful in that—but who's going to vote against it, when you really think about it? Although some were fearful of it because of what it might do to the cost of the workplace. All in all it had to be done at the time because there was nothing that had been done previous to that. So I think that that was one of the more significant factors in the Presidency. Did we get much credit for it? Not really.

We had a real focus on fitness and health care and we had people like Arnold Schwarzenegger and others. We had those fitness events on the White House lawn. We put all those together. But I don't think it resonated well because people were focused only on the economy. We went to Japan, which was really a foreign and yet a domestic trip, and we talked about trade imbalances. We took with us the leaders of the automobile industry and we visited the sites. We went through and pointed out that they could do things for so much less because of these reasons. We tried to make some changes there and it never resonated.

So yes, we talked about those things all the time. Did we draft the policy statements? No. Did we come up with ways in which to improve the presentation? Probably. Did they accept those? Yes. We always worked pretty well together, all of us.

**Riley:** The impression that I get from your description, though, is that you actually felt more comfortable with Pinkerton than you did Roger in terms of your interactions?

**Rogich:** Well, Pinkerton was a guy that I'd known longer. No, I think Roger is a wonderful guy. If I gave that impression, I didn't mean to.

**Riley:** No, no I—

**Rogich:** I probably had a greater affinity toward Pinkerton because I knew him for so long. I knew him in the early campaigns when he first started there, and spent a lot of time with him and

he and I became buddies. He goes beyond policy. He's a movie buff, a music buff and he just likes things in general. Very bright. Roger was an academic. Came from Harvard—

**Severall:** Not that's there anything wrong with that.

**Masoud:** There's a lot wrong with being from Harvard. *[laughter]*

**Rogich:** You have to warm up to those academics. No, I didn't have so much dealing with him. We had friends in common from Utah—I think he's LDS [Church of Latter-Day Saints], if I'm not mistaken—and I had a lot of friends in the Utah area. I had an office there, my company did, so we had some common friends. But no, this was not one over the other, just that I had a longer relationship with Jim.

**Masoud:** Following up on your relations with other policy makers and policy shops, what about Darman? Did you deal with Dick Darman at all?

**Rogich:** Actually, I got to know Darman in '84. He was kind of the “keeper of the committee” for Baker, he worked with him, he and Margaret [Tutwiler]. That was my first encounter with him. Darman and I got along pretty well. Is he the kind of guy you'd go out and pal around with? No, it's just not the nature of the way he is. Any guy who cuts his own hair, you've got be wary of. *[laughter]* But I respected his intellect. He was just an unusual guy, what can I say.

**Masoud:** You said that you and Pinkerton shared frustrations. One of Pinkerton's big frustrations was Darman—

**Rogich:** Did he tell you that?

**Masoud:** No, he didn't tell us that. I read that.

**Rogich:** Well, Dick Darman is so brilliant that he likes to be involved in all aspects of everything. He's a guy who will inject himself into things that you're doing—with good intentions. Some can take it and work around it or with it or accept it, and others can't. Ken Khachigian couldn't, and it's no secret that they talked openly about how they felt. I'm not sure how Pinkerton handled it or not, but I got along well with Darman, actually. I thought that he was complimentary about the job we did and supportive whenever we needed it. Never really had the same concern with him, but I didn't have to sit there in that office and debate over a word. I didn't want to be bothered with that.

**Riley:** You mentioned your conversations with the policy people about some of these domestic things that were going on and the ADA rollout, for example. There are two other things that come to mind, one of which is the education summit here in Charlottesville. Were you involved in that? Did you come down here for that?

**Rogich:** I did. Actually, that was my first meeting with Bill Clinton. He spent the morning in my office at the White House and we worked together on coordinating the format for the summit. I did come down for that and we set up the pictorial and rolled it out with all the graphics. That

was one of the first things I did.

I thought it was actually a good story. We had a good amount of press on it. It's funny, it was just a little ahead of its time in some respects because it's a greater crisis today than it was then. There was never a definitive follow-up to implementation. The political side of the policy rollout got in the way of the practical needs.

**Riley:** How so?

**Rogich:** Some of the things we called for then, they're calling for now. Yet the implementation, you would think it would have been done. What is it, ten years ago or so. You would have thought we would have put those things into play by now. It takes a crisis to make it come to be, it seems. And so I thought we were a little ahead of our time. He wanted to be the education President, that was the cornerstone of his administration. That's what he ran on and he talked about it. He had plans and ideas and talked about them and rolled it out and called for a summit and brought together the Governors in this nation.

**Riley:** Were you at all involved in the decision to hold the summit? Was that something that the image people, or the events people, would have had some input on? Or was this something that was presented to you as—?

**Rogich:** It was pretty early for me and they had already announced it. He said during the campaign that if he was President he was going to have an education summit.

**Riley:** Right.

**Rogich:** Where we were going to have it was another matter.

**Riley:** Were you involved in that advance work or was that something that was—?

**Rogich:** To some degree, yes. And I remember that Bill Clinton came to my office and spent time in the office with me. It's where I first met him.

**Freedman:** What did you think?

**Rogich:** I thought he was a great national candidate and said so from the outset. I always thought he was the strongest candidate they could run, without any question. Later, because of the lack of candidates, I thought he would be the nominee.

**Freedman:** That early on, you thought?

**Rogich:** I thought he potentially could be the nominee for President, yes. Someday, not 1992. I said so to a lot of my friends. Did I think he was going to get the nomination in '92? Not really. But did I think that he would be a player? Absolutely. You could see that dynamic in him.

**Riley:** This time, establish a record.

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Riley:** Again, from an image perspective, did you get out of Charlottesville what you wanted? Did you feel like that was a success?

**Rogich:** Well, you know press coverage was pretty good, if you think back on it. We got everything we wanted. But the fact of the matter is, we never had a—we had the report card, remember, and all that kind of stuff, but we did not get credit for it much after that. It seems to me that we never had a kicking and screaming match about making some of those reforms happen.

You can debate trickle-down economics, but the fact of the matter is Reagan wanted it, said he was going to get it, and got it. I mean, for all practical purposes he went to war within his own White House nitpicking on what works and what doesn't work, and yet got it. So when people look at a revived economy, they give him a lot of credit for it. And they probably give Bush credit for 35 months of that whole rollout in this era of prosperity. The same problems we outlined then in education: accountability, the factors relating to teachers and educators, administrators, textbooks, reading. All the things we went into great detail on was really a remarkably good plan, and Roger Porter basically was the author of a lot of that material that is now facing this administration.

**Riley:** So there was something lost internally after—

**Rogich:** I don't know what it was. I think maybe the world's needs got in the way. Listen, we also had the political capital at the time to do it. This President had more political capital than anybody and he didn't offer solutions to any of the three major problems in America: health care, social security and education. Not closure on any one of the most pressing needs in America because in his case, his own domestic problems, personal problems, got in the way. So he never got on track.

When you have political capital, you have to use it and I think what Bush is doing here now, if successful in his endeavor on the tax cut—and I think he will be—it sets the tone and tenor for success down the line. You've got to get out of the box early and you've got to let victory build upon victory, otherwise people just remember the losses.

**Riley:** One other follow-up on the domestic front. The President had said in the campaign that he wanted to be the education President. He also wanted to be the environmental President. Do you recall specific image-related initiatives that you developed to fulfill that promise?

**Rogich:** Well, we took him to all kinds of environmental settings to emphasize the point. In the Grand Canyon, into Wyoming, all those settings. We heard debates on the model for global warming, and everybody agreed something was truly going on. Funny, one day in the White House, I said, "John—" Sununu was a scientist— "You know there are 12 models out there, and some people are questioning whether there is really global warming or not. Well, I just want to tell you today in March in Washington, D.C., it's 75 degrees and it's snowing in Las Vegas.

What's wrong with this picture?" We all laughed about it, but it was true.

But I thought the President did some good things environmentally. You know, the health and clean air standards, things that were more technical by nature and got lost. They didn't have the emotionalism that you'd expect to see. I think *every* President is the environmental President, when it's all said and done. I mean, what are you going to be, the non-environmental President?

**Riley:** The polluting President.

**Rogich:** So, I think he cares deeply about the environment. He's an outdoorsman and has been one all of his life.

**Freedman:** Was there criticism—am I misremembering—because he didn't go to Alaska after the [Exxon] Valdez spill?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Freedman:** What was that decision like? Was that controversial? Were people saying he should go?

**Rogich:** I can't remember, to be honest with you. I just know there was some criticism of us for not being there to see it first hand.

**Riley:** It was very early. It may have been before you came in.

**Rogich:** It was very early. I think it was just about—

**Freedman:** It was March.

**Rogich:** Just about the time I came in. The disastrous sight of the Valdez came into play as this thing developed. Then it was probably too late to go. I don't think anyone had an idea, in the early stages, of how graphic this would be.

**Riley:** The next thing on my timeline that we haven't dealt with is the Gulf War.

**Freedman:** You don't want to make a brief stop in Panama?

**Rogich:** I didn't have a lot to do with Panama. I was concerned, though, because the press had tried to portray the President during the Gulf War in a happy setting while offering a juxtaposition of what was happening to the men and women who were fighting.

**Masoud:** I actually have a specific question relating to that. There was a briefing, a press briefing that the President gave and some of the networks made a decision to do exactly what you said. Split the screen and show the bodies or something like that, show some unpleasant pictures.

**Rogich:** You know what, it was a really a cheap shot. I think Marlin criticized them for it, publicly. They took the President in a press setting and they had related questions and then there was a funny moment when someone laughed—

**Masoud:** And he laughed—

**Rogich:** And it showed him laughing next to the pictures of the dead, or those injured, the tragedy of what was going on. So we needed some rules and guidelines. I think that my big concern was that we have rules about splitting the screen, about taking him in a setting that had nothing to do with the other, and I think we achieved that.

**Masoud:** There was a—

**Rogich:** I was upset that they did it, and said so. I never expected them to do it, but they stopped doing it, perhaps out of shame.

**Masoud:** In fact, at the Bush Library I found some correspondence about that. One of the people who was most upset about that was Peter Jennings, who on the air said that the President is unaware of these pictures, he doesn't know that these pictures are being aired. So he was sensitive to that.

**Rogich:** I remember that too. He was just a totally—

**Masoud:** It probably wasn't his decision. It was probably some guy like me who made the decision.

**Rogich:** Well, it was a cheap shot. It wasn't professional and it was unnecessary. I don't think it hurt the President ultimately. It might have hurt the networks a little. It built the case that they were biased and that it showed him in a press setting where somebody says something funny to him and he responds with a picture next to him of the dead, and he doesn't know it.

**Freedman:** What about during the days when [Manuel] Noriega is in the Vatican compound? What's going on in the White House? Is there anything for you in particular to do?

**Rogich:** No, not really. It moved quickly and there was not a lot we had to do. If you recall, the President didn't say a lot. The Noriega situation took care of itself pretty quickly.

**Masoud:** Was your responsibility, at this time or at any other time, did it involve press appearances for other members of the White House staff? For example, if Scowcroft has to go appear on the *NewsHour*, are you involved in that somehow? Deciding what shows we're going to appear on on Sunday?

**Rogich:** No, not really, but there were times when cabinet members would play a part in our overall messaging. I would work with them on behalf of the White House—where they were going to fit in with the President, what was going to be their role specifically as it related to the event. So it was not unusual for cabinet members to call me from time to time and find out where

we were, should they be there, that kind of thing. But we did not coordinate specific press appearances.

To have Jack Kemp in a HUD [Housing and Urban Development] setting would be something that we would encourage him to do. On a side note, I was always encouraging him to change the name of HUD. I thought it was a terrible name. It is just associated with scandal and the people it helps the most—or that it is supposed to help the most—those who need affordable housing don't really identify with the word "urban." I thought we should get rid of it. In fact, I recommended it again for this administration. They should give a breath of fresh air to HUD.

**Masoud:** What did you want to call HUD? Did you have any—?

**Rogich:** I don't have any specific idea, but I do know that the logo looks like it should be on the side of the Kaiser's helmet. It's got that dark blue and that dark heavy borderline with that house – it's just depressing. Call it the Department of Living, I don't know, call it something other than HUD. And as I said, it has been associated with scandal.

**Masoud:** So at a time like Panama, for example, did you arrange press interviews with the President? Press appearances, like the one-on-one interview with Jennings or anything?

**Rogich:** No I didn't. That would be Marlin's job.

**Masoud:** Okay, so you wouldn't do any of that.

**Rogich:** I might get involved to the degree that we would work with the press to select a setting where it was going to take place and Marlin would call me and ask me what I thought about things relating to the interview, but it was not my responsibility.

**Masoud:** Got you.

**Rogich:** Or I would write a note and say, "I know we're going to do an interview with so and so. I think it's really important that we don't do it with such-and-such around us." And Marlin would say, "That's a good point. I'll make sure we don't," or he'd tell me not to worry about it. But that was Marlin's field.

**Riley:** Now on to the Gulf War.

**Masoud:** Good idea.

**Riley:** When Jill created the briefing book, she says, "Rogich instrumental in producing Bush's Gulf War image for domestic and foreign audiences." Is that too strong an assessment? Or is that in fact what you—

**Rogich:** Well, I think it's pretty strong to say I was responsible for it.

**Riley:** Instrumental.

**Rogich:** Yes. I would be there early in the morning. We'd go to the situation room in time to be briefed, I'd be there in the press office. The President—a lot of it took place in the Oval Office, a lot of it took place downstairs. I visited the Gulf site early on and met with [Norman] Schwartzkopf and we toured the sites, went through and set up the things for the visit. I thought we were precise in putting this event together for what we wanted to do. So from that standpoint I was involved. The imagery and the stuff that came back home and around the world as a result of that was pretty striking.

**Masoud:** Did you go to Saudi Arabia?

**Rogich:** I did.

**Masoud:** Did you work with the Saudis? What was that like?

**Rogich:** I worked with the Saudis. The Kuwaitis. The President later asked me to go back with him to Kuwait after he left office, when he was a guest of the Kuwaiti government. It was a weird beginning. We took off, just a small group of us, and as we were flying away, a section of the wing flew off. We had to divert and go back to Houston. I said, "You know, this plane could go down and the President killed, and the story will read in the last paragraph 'also on board. . . .'" So we finally got a new plane sent over, a 747. The Kuwaitis were mortified, as you can imagine, but the trip was memorable.

**Masoud:** Sure.

**Rogich:** You could actually see through the wing where it attached to the fuselage, you could see the ground through the wing. We had to gingerly go back to Houston. So we get over there, and no one knows there is an assassination plan afoot. I think about that from time to time.

Then we have a ceremony where they give medals to those who were the heroes of the Gulf War. They give me a medal too, which is somewhat embarrassing because I have no business receiving a medal at all. But they thought that I helped disseminate the news and that was enough to be recognized. I was just honored to be there. [Nicholas] Brady was there, Jim Baker was there, just a few of us the President had asked to go with him. Then they call my name and I was embarrassed and the President was the one who received my medal from the Emir and then put it over my neck. The medals themselves are stunning, as you can imagine. Later on I used to have a BYOM party, "Bring Your Own Medal" party at my house, and I was the only one who could wear his.

You know what? We went to the Persian Gulf. We visited all the sites. We made sure the President visited the troops. We hit the ground and never stopped. I had arranged for the visit and Schwartzkopf was with me when we put the thing together and I called the White House from there and got things approved rapidly as we went along. It was more significant than anybody realized because it went off so well. When the effort was so successful, it just worked, it made all the difference. After the fact—I think Nixon said it best, it was the most successful war effort in the last 100 years in American history.

**Riley:** Were you also—at an earlier stage on this end—spending a fair amount of time trying to do what you could to manage perceptions domestically about what’s happening?

**Rogich:** Yes, we all were. It was the topic of the day, at Kennebunkport, Camp David, anywhere we gathered. There was always a briefing. I give Marlin a lot of credit for all of that. He managed it extraordinarily well. I just was a role-player when they needed me.

**Riley:** In a situation like this, what’s the relationship between the White House communications operation and what’s going on out in the theater? You have General Schwartzkopf doing his briefings, that carries a tremendous weight, I think, with public opinion domestically. Are you monitoring this, are you—?

**Rogich:** Well, I don’t think there were any surprises. I think before the briefings, the State Department knew what was going to be said. The President certainly knew and the Joint Chiefs knew. So I don’t think there was a surprise there. I think there was need for the rest of the world to be informed.

**Riley:** And there are communications back in that direction about things to stay away from or—?

**Rogich:** I don’t know that.

**Freedman:** What about press policy? Did the White House have anything to say about how the military was handling the press or what kind of policy they were having in terms of pool reporting, et cetera?

**Rogich:** I think that Marlin had direct communication—they had their own press pool, if you recall, and I think that Marlin worked pretty closely with them. I don’t think that they scripted it, but communication was pretty constant between the two entities. I think they did a great job. The President was tireless. You know, there at 5 o’clock in the morning, and sometimes going to bed about twenty hours later. Everything went exactly as we had planned and it was historical from not only the standpoint of the obvious but also beyond that because of what the President accomplished during the visits and the stops along the way, with foreign leadership.

**McCall:** During the time of trying to win the congressional vote—I’m not sure how to term that vote, come January—was there any effort to do any kind of media work on the vote?

**Rogich:** There was a lot of lobbying going on. I even lobbied myself. In fact, two Nevada Senators were Democrats and I have a close relationship with Harry Reid and he was a swing vote in one fight. One vote, two votes in the final analysis and those were Nevada votes.

**Masoud:** They had agreed to vote together, I think was—

**Rogich:** Yes, they did.

**Masoud:** Whatever they would vote.

**Rogich:** I spent a lot of time with Harry Reid on this issue and I always helped where it was beneficial to Nevada interests. You know, things that were crucial for our state, and if the White House could help. So from that standpoint, it was not so media-driven, but personal lobbying in that early stage.

**Masoud:** I read somewhere that there was a Nevada publisher of one of the big papers who was instrumental in getting them to vote that way as well, because of publishing some editorial, and that the White House had been—was that you? Were you the one who had . . . ? Do you know what I'm talking about?

**Rogich:** Yes, I do.

**Masoud:** Well, it's an important story to get on the record.

**Rogich:** It wasn't a publisher. It was an editor on the paper, [Donal] Michael O'Callaghan, a former Governor. He was a Marine hero, lost his leg in Korea. A good friend. He was strongly in favor of what we were doing and we were able to encourage him to be vocal about it. So it probably helped to a large degree.

**Freedman:** Another component of the very early stages was the Kuwaiti government's hiring of Hill & Knowlton to put together a campaign. I wonder if you can shed any light?

[Discussion about names]

**Rogich:** You know what, I never could understand all that, to be honest with you. Did you see much aftermath of the campaign?

**Freedman:** I recall reading a bit about it. They were apparently providing information, in particular, with these images, they were helping to provide information about what had happened.

**Masoud:** Stories about the kids being tossed—

**Freedman:** Tossed from the incubators, et cetera. These are some of the accounts that came out afterwards, that some of this had been—not fabricated necessarily, but there were allegations.

**Rogich:** I forget what they did and didn't do because the press was on top of this thing so much.

**Masoud:** I think they also lobbied the press. From my days at the *NewsHour* they used to tell me that they used to get a lot of calls—I thought it was Ruder Finn—but from one of these agencies, telling them, "Look, you should do a story on this and we've got these guests for you and go ahead."

**Rogich:** The war effort itself drives the PR [public relations] component, when you really think about it. The other side never screamed about the fact that they had a PR machine in place. The

other side being those who were against the war effort.

**Masoud:** Not the Iraqi side.

**Rogich:** Maybe that was deliberate, but I thought they missed an opportunity. But can you imagine, ten or fifteen years ago, acceptance of a paid a PR component to tell their side of a war effort? How would that have set back then?

**Masoud:** Now it's standard operating procedure.

**Rogich:** Now it's standard.

**Freedman:** So you didn't know anything about it? You weren't involved in any of that?

**Rogich:** I knew some of the people involved, but no, I wasn't involved in it. I take it back, we knew that some stories needed amplification. I think we all saw along the way that there were moments when we could heighten awareness of Iraqi atrocities.

**Masoud:** So this was not unhelpful to you, the fact that the Kuwaitis were doing this.

**Rogich:** I think it was helpful. Any time you can amplify our position more, I think that's helpful.

**McCall:** Let me ask you another question about image-making with respect to the effort. Because you were working for the President, but there were these other big figures whose images were being burnished to the point of magnificence. I wonder if there was ever a sense, a concern, that Bush was being overshadowed by Schwarzkopf or Powell.

**Rogich:** Never. We thought it was a real complement to the administration. I never heard that, ever. Schwarzkopf became a kind of folk hero in that process, in part because of who he was and how he was and his name was memorable. And Powell was a hero anyway, I think, even prior to that and many realized he was one of the stars. But I never heard any concern whatsoever.

**McCall:** In the fall there was a problem with the President getting across the message of why we were doing what we were doing, in terms of the justification. This plays into the atrocities, in Nuremberg, the President starts—it seems to me it was a problem that different departments were trying—for instance, Baker went out, was trying to get a message across. It wasn't that there was a conflict, it just wasn't a consistent message. Do you remember being consulted about any of this?

**Rogich:** Not consulted. One argument was that it was a battle for oil, big oil interests. I think that went away. The other was because of the ability to help our allies in the region, and the Israeli component was mentioned and we discussed those kinds of things. But when it's all said and done, the message became pretty definitive on all fronts. Atrocities, the brute mentality they had over there, the economic impact it would have to not only us but the rest of the world. That was

kind of where we stayed.

**Masoud:** Were you at Aspen when all of this first starts unraveling? When the President is there with [Margaret] Thatcher? Were you there?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Masoud:** Did you have a role in arranging how the President was going to speak to this invasion?

**Rogich:** No, not really. Other than I was there and it was hastily prepared. I think she said something. What did she say? Didn't she make a comment after she left, or . . .? I can't remember.

**McCall :** Are you thinking about, "This is no time to go—?"

**Masoud:** The "no time to go wobbly" thing?

**McCall:** That's later. That's later. That day was, "We need to go to the United Nations" kind of stuff.

**Rogich:** My role was really in making sure that we didn't miss anything because of lack of activity. That the President's depictions were captured at all moments on our trips. It occurred that way at Camp David, it occurred that way whenever he was on the road. He didn't leave the White House for the most part, didn't make a lot of trips during that period of time, so it was pretty easy to manage and we were briefed every morning.

**Masoud:** Was it hard crafting the message? There was a sense that this was a President who was so out front on the rest of his staff on what he wanted to do here and what he was determined to do. Was it hard being a message crafter, kind of running, trying to catch up with this guy?

**Rogich:** I never found that to be the case, no. He would come in to senior staff meetings sometimes in the morning, unannounced. Walk in, say hello, and kind of give us a little briefing, then move on. I'd wonder if he wasn't just directing the staff on where we were and where we were going.

**Masoud:** How about the whole thing about "this aggression will not stand," when nobody else had really thought that far ahead, kind of thing.

**Rogich:** Well, I'm probably not the best one to answer that question, but I didn't find that anyone got caught up in that. That was kind of obvious in my opinion, Tarek. I thought that we had a terrific team from all points of view. The NSC was on top of everything, from everything that I could see. The press corps was very happy with the way the rollout came. The President himself was on top of things and I thought our depictions of him in the settings were the way they should be. Everybody was on the same page.

**McCall:** What about things such as he goes to Raytheon, the Patriot missile plant, and the flight path, all those sorts of things, ongoing. Is there a, “Let’s hit these things”? Because it sort of culminates when he goes to Cherry Hill and down to Fort Stuart in February, right in the middle of the air war, which is a very moving moment for him, and the images that come out of that are quite amazing.

**Rogich:** We picked sites for the obvious reasons, to amplify the story. They all turned out pretty well for him. I think he invited a couple of those guys back.

**McCall:** Those two fighter pilots.

**Rogich:** The two fighter pilots. He invited them back to the White House. The flag factory visit was another. Events that were designed to amplify the message. And what better way to do it than that? Those two pilots were pretty extraordinary. They had their families with them and the things they said and did was everything you’d hope it would do. They were as emotional as the President was at one point.

Wherever we went, it was pretty standard to invite the Congressmen, the Senator or the Governor of a respective state to participate. Just like it was standard operating procedure never to go to California for the most part without calling President Reagan. And in most every instance the President always had a sense of protocol and just common courtesy. If we were to go to Georgia, for example, he would often notify Jimmy Carter and let him know we were coming. The President had a real sensitivity to such matters and the best testament to that is really what Jimmy Carter said himself, that he was probably treated by George Bush as well as anyone ever treated him since his Presidency.

**McCall:** Was there something where a Governor didn’t show up to something or a Senator didn’t show up to something?

**Rogich:** Something tells me that there was something like that.

**McCall:** In Georgia or North Carolina.

**Riley:** You know when this happened you thought to yourself, I’ll never forget this moment. I can’t believe what’s going on.

**Rogich:** I always used to say, “You can’t hide in the White House and you can’t hide from the things you do on behalf of the White House,” but we didn’t have many mistakes. I mean, if you look back on it. We were lucky. There were no monumental moments when there were problems, where somebody criticized the event or said we screwed up.

**Masoud:** Was the baseball pitch, was that during the first Presidency?

**Rogich:** Which one?

**Masoud:** The one where he really looked awful and didn’t make the—that was pretty awful.

**Rogich:** That was an inside baseball deal, no pun intended. I'm getting kind of burned out today.

**Riley:** I understand that, totally.

**Rogich:** Don't you guys get burned out on this too, a little bit?

**Riley:** Absolutely not. We're fine going another three or four hours.

**Rogich:** You are?

**Riley:** No, I'm—

**McCall:** One other thing. There was a lot of anticipation that there were going to be high casualties. Was there any anticipation about how that might be handled in terms of, you know—not spinning, that's the wrong word for it—but in terms of handling the kind of pressure that was going to be put on the White House to draw back from the commitment?

**Freedman:** What did you think it was going to be when the ground war started?

**Rogich:** I don't think anybody put numbers on it. Well, actually, Colin Powell did. I think he gave a briefing of what he thought things could be based upon their knowledge, which is far beyond what I would be capable of talking about. But I never heard anybody say that we're going to withdraw or cut back based upon the atrocities of the war itself. We were at war. We have to fulfill our commitment and our mission. The President was pretty definitive about saying, "This is our mission. This is what we're supposed to do. This is what we're going to do." I know there was talk about it and I know that the casualty estimates that we first received from Colin Powell were predicated on whatever means they have to do those kinds of things that I'm not privy to, that I don't know about.

**Riley:** Were you beginning to think at this time at all, though, about staying two or three steps ahead, how am I going to deal with—

**Rogich:** Well, I actually always thought about what would happen at that moment and how do we handle it? Yes, sure you do, you think about that. Later, I did all the time, actually. But what could you have done? We responded properly I don't really know what we would have done other than receive them, in the proper setting.

**McCall:** Of course this is also the first fully televised war and that must have also made things a little bit different in your office in that you had the constant images coming out of it.

**Rogich:** Constant. The TVs were on in my office all the time. We would have meetings and get updates several times a day. We were really all pretty much in sync on this thing. The one thing it did do, it paralyzed the White House. There was very little domestic policy initiatives. We tried to do business. It's like debate preparation. It paralyzes the White House. You start preparing in May or June for the debate—and nothing else seems to matter. You have to prepare

for it, rehearse for it, think about it constantly. That's why I always hated the debates, from the negotiations for the debate, to getting ready for it, to the rehearsals, and then the aftermath. It's a life unto itself.

**Riley:** I actually think this is a good place to stop. If you have any other observations that come to you about the Gulf War we can start there, but this is kind of a turning point. You're at what, 91 percent or something like that immediately thereafter, and tomorrow will give us ample opportunity to explore with you how you go from 91 percent to the ultimate end. And get your thoughts on that.

[BREAK]

### March 9, 2001

**Riley:** Three general things on the agenda that we didn't get to that we need to talk about in the next couple of hours or that we talked about kind of tangentially, at least, and we need more direct conversations about. One of these is something that you touched on last night, which was the kind of "mechanics of advance" and all of the labor that goes into that, and the great effort related to advance work. The second general thing is a more elaborate discussion of '92. You obviously have some very strong opinions about what happened and what went wrong in '92 that we touched on here and there, but I think it would be good for us to spend some significant time talking about that and getting you to comment on that.

The other thing is that you obviously have been in a very good position to tell us about George Bush the man. You've spent a lot of time with him on these plane trips back and forth, at Kennebunkport. Those are the kinds of things that future students will not be able to find in the written record nearly as much as they would from having first-hand accounts of it. So we very much would like to hear your impressions of him as an individual. My sense is that maybe we could take these three in the order that I presented them, but if you have preferences, then feel free to take any of these in the way that you want to and we can come back to the others.

**Rogich:** Well, I guess I would just cover a little bit of the mechanical side of how the White House works when the President travels. It would probably be interesting for those who don't realize what a production it is. You have the White House communications systems, they call it "WHCA," and basically it means that wherever the President travels, there is an ability to communicate by telephone directly, on a secure line or non-secure line as needed.

In that regard, let's assume that we're traveling to Los Angeles for two days. Then the White House communications team would go in advance of that trip, go into the hotel, wire all the rooms for the senior staff, put an antenna on top of the hotel, and build a phone system so that when we land and go to the hotel, we are able to communicate instantly with our own private phone system. And that happens all over the world, whether it is Russia or other places. Tarek, you probably know it from your TV days, that the networks also have a similar type of activity, but not quite to the degree that we have it.

In addition to that, when we travel to the larger urban centers, instead of shutting down the city with a motorcade, which you have to do on those freeways, there is a plane that flies in advance of us and it has helicopters in it. There are three helicopters to the Presidential package and they fly in rotation for security purposes. So that element is there. We might land at the airport in Los Angeles, for example—or choose not to take LAX because of the traffic, so we might take the airport closest to it. I can't remember which one it is now.

**Culbert:** Burbank?

**Rogich:** No, not Burbank.

**Culbert:** Orange County?

**Rogich:** Another one there, but I'll think of it in a minute. We would land, get into a motorcade, drive a mile, leave the motorcade, and get into the helicopters and fly to the location, so we don't shut down the freeway system. That type of process is repeated mechanically in many, many cases where it makes sense to do it. When people realize what the process involves in terms of moving the President of the United States around this country and around the world, and the security factors involved, and the number of people involved in preparation of something like that, it's a little overwhelming. So that's just a sidebar that people might enjoy hearing about.

The fact that we can go to, let's say, Rome and have our own telephone system that calls directly to the United States without any real problem is pretty impressive. They install it in every site that we travel to. In addition to that, the President actually has his own communication system with him at all times, carried by his personal aide, which provides him with the ability to talk on a secure line.

Although I will tell you one time we were in Los Angeles and Brent Scowcroft was talking about—I think it was during the Persian Gulf war. It was a secure line, he was talking to Dick Cheney, and in the middle of the conversation I heard him say, "Who is this?" It was the hotel operator into the secure line. So, we all laughed. He said, "Who is this?" and then he said to me, "How do you think the operator got on this line?" I said, "I have no idea," but we all thought it was pretty funny. They're talking in "cryptogrammic" if you will, and the operator joins in. So, the best laid plans of mice and men, as they say. Anyway, I thought it was kind of funny how we had an interference factor on a secure conversation during a heightened time in the White House with an operator at a hotel in Los Angeles.

**Masoud:** If it's any consolation, it could have been a spy and they just lied to you.

**Rogich:** It could have been. I always live in the world of "there are no secrets" anyway, but all kidding aside, that was just funny for us when we listened to Brent in the lobby. If you know him, you know him to be such a fabulous man. Anyway, that's just a small part of the mechanical side of the White House and how it works. Everything is measured, everything is precise and there are no real deviances in the timelines. We move through the process, down to the minute.

**Riley:** What percentage of the people involved in this are permanent fixtures?

**Rogich:** The White House communications comes under, I think, the Naval Department, if I'm not mistaken—and a lot of those people are permanent. There may be some career people who move in and out of those but it's a permanently staffed position. Their job is to put a communications system in place and to record everything they can at all times, day and night. So there are many times when we would rather not have that and a lot of times they'll come in like construction workers and take down a hotel. So you kind of have to watch things closely.

If you have been to these sites, you'll see wires running down hallways, into rooms. In senior staff rooms, you'll see three telephones: the house phone that they have in the room, another one phone which is a direct communication for you, and next to that you'll see a secure line, so that all of us are available to talk on a secure basis if need be. Not that we need to use that kind of line much. I don't think I used it more than a half a dozen times, really. But it's there if you need it, and that's the process.

**Freedman:** I have a question about the motorcade that you described. You get off the plane, get into the car, go a mile and fly the rest of the way.

**Rogich:** Sometimes, yes. Sometimes get out of the car, drive four blocks, get into the helicopters and take off.

**Freedman:** So is the purpose of the motorcade just so that there are pictures of the motorcade? Or is there another logic to it?

**Rogich:** No, not at all. I mean, how are you going to get in there? You got the same amount of people. You land the plane, you have to get to the helicopters. In some cases you might find the helicopter on the tarmac where you land, but even then, it's too far to walk and it's not secure. So you get off the plane and into the motorcade, drive to the end of the tarmac, get out, and get into the helicopters.

**McCall:** They have to take the limo wherever they go, so there's a cargo plane.

**Rogich:** Yes. It's also secured by the Secret Service. So you'd have a process in the motorcade that is set up with a lead security van, two limousines, one in front of the President. Then you have the President, a vehicle behind him, and you have another four-wheel drive vehicle behind that, and then you have a little van that I rode in with Marlin. That kind of controls the movement in terms of stopping and starting, or doing the things we want to do that might be a little spontaneous. Then behind us you have other staff people, and then beyond that you have the press. So it's not unusual, but I think you see an average motorcade of approximately 30 vehicles.

**Riley:** Do you recall encountering any anger among local populations for coming in and being—this kind of disruptive business?

**Rogich:** No, I don't think we had that. But in that regard there were times when we would leave

the Presidential motorcade for personal reasons and get on a commercial airliner. And I can recall that the airlines always like to say, “I’m sorry we’re late today but the President is landing.” They would blame the President for everything. So I would sometimes correct the stewardess and say, “No, that’s not the reason.” You don’t want to upset people in their own travels, and I knew the President was very sensitive to it. So we’d look for reasons not to allow that to happen.

**Freedman:** While we’re on the subject of the White House and the inner workings, I was wondering about—and this may take us a little far afield and we may want to come back to it a little bit later—I was wondering about fundamental disagreement and dissent. You were there during a time when there were some big-ticket issues and events, including the Gulf War, which we discussed yesterday. I was just curious as to whether there were any fundamental disagreements that you witnessed or had to negotiate over that issue or other issues within the White House.

**Rogich:** I know that there were differences between people. You’re not going to put a group like that together without having individual thoughts and strong opinions on things. But I didn’t really find that at the end of the day that we didn’t come to a consensus. And if you look back, you didn’t really hear stories about how people were falling on swords over an issue because one side couldn’t come together with another.

There was a lot of debate about the budget. You know, meeting out at the base, ensconced in those buildings with Senator Mitchell on the Democratic side, and others on our side. Sununu was there and the budget director, Dick Darman, was there too. There was debate about whether we could survive politically after breaking the “no new taxes” pledge. I mean, as an outsider, not involved in the debate process on the economic side of the budget question, I had reservations about it, just from a pure political standpoint. I thought it took a lot of fortitude for the President to agree to do it. Essentially it was the beginning of the new economy. It really took off. Anytime you can cap spending and increase taxes, you have a formula for explosive growth and success.

[Daniel] Rostenkowski summed it up best when he said, “The real unsung hero of the economic boom was George Bush.” He said raising taxes and breaking the pledge cost him the Presidency. That comes from the former head of Ways and Means on the Democratic side of the aisle. I think there is a lot of truth to it. Did we sit in a senior staff meeting and debate those things? We talked about them. They weren’t debates so much as they were trying to build consensus. I don’t think you found us ever in moments of discord or screaming. I don’t ever recall anything like that.

I know there was a lot of passion with people who worked in the White House. They’re there because they are academics in many cases. And they’re dealing, for example, with domestic affairs and so forth, and they are very creative. There is always a battle to maintain one’s turf. You know people don’t like to give up their space and don’t like others getting involved in it, that’s a natural condition. The White House is not unlike a lot of the corporate structures you see today in America. It’s just a little more on people’s minds. Little things become big things in the White House, and one little leak can be magnified when instead things are really not out of whack.

**Riley:** You touched on this yesterday. Was there discussion about whether the idea of actually having an event like a budget summit was a good idea from a public relations standpoint?

**Rogich:** Yes, there was talk about it. I think we rolled it out properly. There was so much build up to it. The Congress was shut down, essentially, waiting for the new budget. I think anything less than the way we did it would have been an unusual thing to do, just to say we made a deal. It needed language from the other side as well. It needed face-saving on both sides. It was contrary to philosophical thoughts going in on both sides. It probably hurt us more than it did the other side. The notion that to be fiscally responsible you're all of a sudden going to cap spending is a lot easier to sell than suddenly raising taxes.

**Riley:** I guess one of the questions that those of us from the outside would have would be the President's state of mind during and immediately after these budget negotiations. Did you get the sense from your close workings with him that he really considered this a victory? Did he personally feel like he had been backed into a position where he basically had to act as he did and therefore had . . .? I guess I'm just wondering what his governing emotions were at this time.

**Rogich:** I never saw him lose his demeanor, if that's what you're talking about. I think he knew it was a tough decision and he knew that there were some consequences behind it. But, you know, one thing about the President, he always understood that he was the President and that it's not an easy job. You're there to make tough decisions. I never, ever, saw him exasperated or throw up his hands or stomp out or get testy. I just never saw that happen with him. He always remained calm and I think all of us admired that. In the storms that brew within a White House and the debate and the process that goes on, the President was always the calming influence on everyone.

So I think that's why people really loved him so much. There was such a great reverence for what he stood for. I think that's why people took the loss in '92 so hard. You couldn't possibly work any harder than he did. It would be practically impossible to put in any more time and effort into the job than he did. I couldn't keep the pace. I imagine I could have, but I was younger than he was. But to get up at five in the morning, be there at six, seven, and meet until six and go home, shower, clean up and go to an event that evening, every night practically, was incredible. He was everything you'd expect to see of a CEO of the highest ranking corporation of the world.

**Freedman:** At the time of the budget agreement then, when you're talking about the consequences that people were aware of, there must have been discussion of the electoral consequences. Were people talking in the language of, "This could cost us re-election?"

**Rogich:** No. We just knew it was an issue. It was an obvious issue for those of us who were involved in that kind of process, understanding the politics of it all. We knew that. We can blame it on Peggy Noonan, for "read my lips." Just kidding.

**Riley:** Can we go back to that for a second? You were around when the decision was made on the speech at the convention?

**Rogich:** I was there.

**Riley:** Were you in the loop on the circulation—?

**Rogich:** The language? I was there when she—I worked with her a little bit. She is a wordsmith, you know, a terrific writer and loves her words. I thought it was actually good rhetoric at the time. So I can't second guess what she did, what he said, or what we all came to closure on. Hindsight is pretty easy in this business. But it was so defined that it gave an amplification and a news clip that could be used against us. So we paid the price for it.

**Freedman:** So you don't recall anybody at the time of the speech saying,—?

**Rogich:** No. I don't think anybody said, "Hey, this is going to cost us the election."

**Freedman:** No, at the time of the speech itself, saying, "Maybe this is too much. Maybe this is too strong?"

**Rogich:** No. I mean, if you were to watch that speech again, and watch the footage of it, there was wild enthusiasm for his presentation. Probably it was one of the better speeches he ever gave. The lines to punch were there. All of the ingredients were in place for what they hoped to achieve at the time.

**Riley:** That was the problem, it was so memorable. It was a fabulous line. It was one of the most memorable lines ever in a convention speech.

**Freedman:** In your opinion—and Russell, this may be the transition that you want to make, if you don't want to, you can go onto something else—but I'm wondering if you see that as having, in a meaningful sense, cost him the election.

**Rogich:** I think without that. . . . If you look at the numbers, he lost by what, 4 percent. That's not a big number for where he was. I think without that issue, all things considered, I would say that it probably would have made the difference with our core voter group, our base. There might have been something else that got in the way, but we didn't hold our own party vote. And if you look back at the numbers, one big reason was because of that issue, which the opposition pounded us on. I think it's reasonable to assume that we would have brought those people back and they would have stayed in the fold without that issue. So, you could draw that conclusion. There were other issues in the campaign, but I think that was certainly one of the prime defining issues.

**Riley:** Actually, in doing that, we moved a little bit back in the timeline because the budget agreement occurs before the Gulf War. Then you have the President coming out of the Gulf War, an enormous victory, with an approval rating somewhere better than 90 percent. So, in a fairly short period of time that appears to inoculate the President from any damage that might have occurred to his reputation because of the tax pledge. We talked a little bit about the Gulf War and its aftermath yesterday, but now might be the time to pick up there and ask you about your perceptions of what was going on in the White House after this was over. Was there a sense that

the numbers were artificially high and were going to come down? Was there a sense that this created an enormous pot of political capital for the President that he could draw on in service of some domestic ends? Can you march us through what was—?

**Rogich:** Victory is fleeting. After the victory you move to the next step. How many here can really remember who won the World Series last year? You have to stop and think about it, where it used to be an automatic.

**Masoud:** I don't have to, but go ahead.

**Rogich:** You're probably a Yankee fan. There is so much media day after day, hour after hour, that you can't keep track of things, so victory is somewhat fleeting. Then there was some uncertainty about why we didn't get Saddam Hussein out, so we had to answer that as well.

I don't know enough about that other than what Colin Powell said, which I think he articulated well. We did what we had to do, and we could not go into Iraq without killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. And that would probably unravel the coalition. Then if you did win, you'd have to occupy Iraq, and that would cause horrible problems in the region. Or if you did go in and take him out and left, there would be no one there to guard that nation and Iran would move in. So I listened to him, and not being an expert in any area like that but understanding his logic, it made good sense.

But that debate went on and people couldn't quite understand it. Then no one knew for sure if we would even get the right guy, Saddam Hussein had look-alikes through Iraq. But having said that, the victory was evident and the window of approval probably was short-lived.

So, when the economy had its toughest time, shortly thereafter, it was easy to refocus back on the tax issue and forget about the past. In politics, it's "What have you done for me lately?" You know, ironically, there used to be a time when bringing pork back to your state was a big plus. Now it's somewhat negative. The commercials that I recall were ones that said, "He brought more money back for education than any Senator. He brought more money for roads and highways," etc. Now you say that and people accuse you of not being frugal. Pork becomes an issue against you in many ways, which is kind of ironic because the whole Senate is a seniority-based system, and he or she with seniority can do the best for their state. And now it's a little dicey.

Things changed a lot during that period of time. The President's success one day was forgotten. I do think the 91 percent number was an unrealistic number. You know, my goodness, 91 percent, who ever gets 91 percent? Nobody in the history of the world ever gets 91 percent on anything. So probably he had a strong approval rating, it was probably in the '80s—I think that's reasonable—and the economy became the overriding issue. It was a steady drum beat, and then that and the tax factor, the two had a connector in terms of how it was played in the media.

**Masoud:** If you've read the Herbert Parmet biography of President Bush, he has a quote in there from a fellow named Rich Bond. Rich Bond says that there was a conscious decision on Sununu's part and in the White House more generally after Desert Storm to kind of shut down

domestic policy-making. That you didn't need any sort of grand domestic policy because you could run on Desert Storm. So, A, I want to get you to react to that, and B, isn't it your job to make sure that victory is not fleeting, and that you're constantly reminding the public of this great victory? So why wasn't that done?

**Rogich:** First of all, I don't agree with Rich Bond. There was no conscious effort to shut down domestic policy. If you think of it, on the face of it, how could you make a conscious effort to shut down domestic policy? That was not an accurate statement. Could you regain the momentum domestically after what happened in Desert Storm? Yes, but it probably it took a while to get that engine rolling again, and then we were into the campaign cycle. I think it's our fault, frankly. We did not do the best job for the President and I really blame myself and a lot of others for not doing the best that they could do to re-elect that President. A lot of it had to do with how the campaign ran, and who ran it. I don't think you can go out and trumpet your successes or pat yourself on the back for your war efforts.

I think if you look at the '88 domestic program that was rolled out, that was significant. It took the business sector, the Chambers of Commerce around this country to come together. It took Congress to move in a direction where it was passed into law. It was complicated and has an enormous impact economically on the business sector. They handled it well. And I don't think it goes into effect until this year. It was a significant piece of legislation.

We saw programs—the use of ethanol, for example—we talked about oil exploration, farm subsidies, etc. And a lot of things were bottled up because you know we didn't have control of Congress at the time. To say that we made a conscious effort to shut down domestic policy is kind of ridiculous.

**Riley:** Let me ask you, by way of moving us a little closer to election day—there's been a lot of discussion about the timing of the re-election effort and the President's shifting his attention in the direction of looking at the re-election effort. Do you recall any of the early efforts to actually start organizing for the '92 campaign? When this might have happened, who was involved? Were you involved from the inside in trying to get things shifted from . . .? Obviously a President is going to continue governing through the last day in office, but at some point a team has to be set up for the purposes of that re-election effort. Do you have any recollections about that? Was there frustration inside among some of the political people about the pace at which the re-election effort was developing?

**Rogich:** I don't know if there was frustration about the pace of planning other than I think there was concern about the process, that is, who was going to run the campaign. How we were going to put together a media component, a creative element. There was some talk about the replication of Ronald Reagan's Tuesday team. As it turned out, our pollsters ended up going to New York to meet with potential creative people.

**Riley:** Polling, being—?

**Rogich:** I think Teeter primarily was really moved into a position where he became campaign manager, a role that he wanted to have. And a role that he really, in looking back, should not

have had. But he might be the first to tell you that. I don't know. He knows I feel that way. He is a friend of mine, but I think that the campaign just kind of moved into its cycle and some of the people that we hired in New York were not prepared for what a Presidential campaign would bring.

We had some tremendously creative people in New York who had never worked on campaigns before. To create the greatest campaign ad in the world for BMW with no extreme deadline is one thing, but to have your copy and your creative source unsuitable—and so let's try again by tomorrow—is quite another, and so we had problems. We never brought forth a message. We had more research—World War II didn't have a game plan like our research, a lot of which, by the way, was never used. We researched ourselves right out of the obvious. We never talked about foreign affairs ever, or the success the President provided. So we set aside the hallmark of his administration.

We just never got at the substance or the core of his character and what he was able to do in the eyes of the world. That would have set the tone for a lot of things. Because the two go hand-in-hand. I think world affairs and the local economy go hand-in-hand if presented properly. Then we had Pat Buchanan with an isolationist view of government, which is contrary to everything I believe in or the President believes in, and so we were fighting that battle. Then there was the demagoguery that was associated with that, the fact that we weren't dealing hard enough on the Japanese and others on import and export imbalances.

The long and short of all of that was that we put together a campaign team that was not the best in running campaigns. That's how I viewed it. The very notion that I could come back—and I've said this before—and find two commercials in the can for the President of the United States speaks volumes about the inability to get things done. The other thing is the production component. The people we hired are used to having production budgets that run 30 percent of the buy. So if the buy is a million dollars, you're going to spend \$300,000 producing the commercial. Well, that doesn't work in a Presidential campaign. It's probably more like 5 percent. We did commercials in '88 that were \$10,000 for a media buy that was \$2 or 3 million. It's just a different ball game.

Then I think they missed out on some of the people they should have had. I think they missed Roger Ailes because he had a firebrand way of doing things. I think they missed—

**Riley:** Ailes was tied up doing commercial stuff and wouldn't come back, or—?

**Rogich:** Ailes had his own business. So, I think they missed that. This became an exclusive group and didn't include a lot of other people in decision-making. They had a lot of very good people, don't get me wrong, the Mary Matalins and Margaret Tutwilers of the world and others were pros, but I think they were also frustrated. So it was one of those things, coupled with the fact you had a Chief of Staff who was not knowledgeable about campaign advertising, and so the two ingredients together caused a problem.

**Freedman:** Was there anybody at the time trying to argue for playing up the foreign policy successes? Was anybody making that case?

**Rogich:** I think a few of us did, yes. I'm not saying that that should have been the crux of the campaign, I just think that would have been a great beginning to the campaign. There's a reason why there is peace in the world and here's the reason why. You could have made that case. You know, "For the first time we have relationships with A, B, and C, and look what we've done in terms of eliminating the arms race," and so forth.

**Freedman:** Or even just a shot with troops.

**Rogich:** Whatever.

**Riley:** I mean, you have this entire range of compelling videos—

**Rogich:** None of which were used.

**Riley:** Not just what you were shooting, but just these Earth-changing developments that still send chills down your spine when you see them 10 or 15 years later, that you could have drawn on.

**Rogich:** We snatched defeat from the jaws of victory in the campaign.

**Riley:** You mentioned Jim Baker's name earlier. We went through your sense about what the White House was like when Sam Skinner was Chief of Staff. I get the sense, then, that there is a kind of loss of momentum occurring, I guess, in '91. Skinner came in—

**Rogich:** Skinner came in '91.

**Riley:** I'm not sure of the date, there should be a timeline on it.

**Rogich:** I think he came later than that. I think it was the latter part of '91 or early part of '92.

**Masoud:** October, I want to say?

**Abraham:** It was late '91.

**Rogich:** October, November?

**Masoud:** Yes, something like that.

**Freedman:** That's when Andy switched over. It would be the end of '91.

**Riley:** In any event, were there ever discussions to your knowledge of trying to get Jim Baker to come back, or was the sense that he was where he really wanted to be?

**Rogich:** At the particular time I don't know that there was. I think he would have made a difference if he would have come earlier. I look back at it all now, and as I told the President,

that loss in '92 set the stage for what happened here in the recent Presidential election. If he wins in '92 and serves another four years, I think it's very doubtful that you would have two sons be Governor of two of the larger states in America. That's the twisted irony to all this. You almost look back and say, "So now we have G.W. as President and that probably would have not happened."

**Freedman:** Why? Could you play that out a little bit?

**Rogich:** I just think the American people would never have had George Bush the President for eight years and while he was President also have his two sons be Governors of two of the largest states in America. And right after he's finished, one son is going to run for President. The American people would just not sit for that longevity. So I think it would have been difficult to assume—and even if the two boys got elected Governor, I think it would be safe to assume it would be difficult, after the father leaves, that there would be a four-year interlude of somebody and then Governor Bush would run again for President? That would be tough to make happen.

**Masoud:** Coming back very quickly to the Chief of Staff. To your knowledge was there any talk of anybody other than Baker coming in to take the Chief of Staff job?

**Rogich:** At the time that he came in?

**Masoud:** At the time that Sununu left. I know Baker is everybody's first choice, but was Skinner necessarily the second choice? Or was there somebody else?

**Rogich:** I think Teeter really was the catalyst to Skinner.

**Masoud:** So there wasn't any other name that you knew of that was floating.

**Rogich:** There might have been other names, but I don't recall.

**Riley:** You left in early '92, is that correct?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Riley:** Was your departure in any way driven by a sense of frustration about the way that the campaign was moving? Did you feel like you weren't being as fully integrated into these efforts as you might have? Did that make you available to leave at really a crucial time when you might not otherwise have done so?

**Rogich:** I think I left knowing that there was a desire to have their own campaign team in place. I understood that. I would have never gone into the campaign not being able to control those things that I thought I should be in control of. Andy Card was leaving too, which I thought was not something that was good for the White House, because I thought he was an exceptionally good guy, understood the President, and had no other agenda but the President's.

So I'm leaving, he's leaving, a couple of others are leaving. And this ambassadorship, even

though it's a little small country where I was born, became available. So the timing was one of those things. It was available and I asked for it and the President offered me several opportunities. He said he did know I wanted to be a diplomat. As I think I told you, he said there were a lot of things available. I really didn't want to be a diplomat per se, but the notion of going back to my homeland as Ambassador for my country was just exciting to me. And it was a nice transition out. It made it easy. Anybody coming in is going to want to have their own team, whether it be Sam Skinner or someone else, and I respect that. So I didn't have a problem with it.

**Riley:** Part of the conventional wisdom about the '92 campaign is again that the President didn't look eagerly towards actually conducting his re-election effort. Did you have conversations with him about this, or did you get the sense that he had a notion about the re-election that he did want to push back that election cycle? Delay it as far as he possibly could before getting back into it?

**Rogich:** Well, I don't think anyone wrings his hands with glee and says, "Boy, the election is starting again, let's get going here. I can't wait to get out there and start campaigning in 300 cities day and night." So maybe that was evident. But I don't think he ever shied from it.

I think there was a misconception that he was not of an energy level. I think he was tired then. He had a little bit of ill health, if you recall. The rigors of the job were at hand. Did he get into gear to the level of energy at the beginning that he did at the end? Probably not. It was just one of those campaigns that got off a little late and never really got into gear from his standpoint until the last 60 or 90 days.

Then coupled with the fact that there was no theme there to support his efforts—the media didn't support it—and if you look back on it, I don't know if anybody here can remember what the themes were in the '92 campaign of George Bush for President.

**Freedman:** What was it? What was the message?

**Rogich:** They had several. I can't remember some of them. "Strong tested leadership," or something like that.

**Masoud:** Character. There was a lot of negative content regarding Clinton's character. A lot of that.

**Rogich:** Yes. Well, the campaign became a test of character and honesty and integrity. It was just ahead of its time.

**Freedman:** What do you think was done well? What stands out in your mind in terms of message, in terms of planning, in terms of events, or even particular ads that were produced?

**Rogich:** Well, there's not a lot of memorable stuff. I think a couple of the early ads that they ran prior to the time I came back were pretty good. There was one in particular that I remember. There was one that had a computer-type of feel that I was not impressed with, that over-ran. It was confusing. I can't remember what it was called, but I know I wasn't impressed with it.

Tough to create ads by committee. That is, take one guy's creative thought and his first six lines of the ad and then someone else's next two lines and then put it all together. It just frustrated the creative teams. Some quit. We had some people there that were very capable that left the campaign. We had one of the better advertising men and a friend of mine put in a position he'd never been in before. I'm not so sure that we weren't just enamored by having the big advertising names, and didn't focus on the fact that it's difficult for them to function in the working parameters the campaign demanded. It was difficult.

**Riley:** Were you staying in touch with the President when you were in Iceland on political matters as well as diplomatic?

**Rogich:** I tried to stay in touch with him, yes, from time to time. When I came to town I'd write him a note or call.

**Riley:** Anything in particular stand out in your conversations then? Did you feel like things were going well? Was there a sense of frustration on his part that—?

**Rogich:** I didn't see a sense of frustration. You know, he's not one to voice that kind of thing. I didn't gather from him that he was frustrated. In all honesty, I don't think he thought he would lose the election. You know, it's a big thing for the American people to make a change. It's tough for an average person to change accountants. Or doctors, let alone President. You have to really go through a lot when you change, and we become creatures of habit in part.

Our turnouts, our models were poor, but the bottom line is, without Ross Perot, we win the election. Everyone talks about what [Ralph] Nader did to Clinton. Well, you can multiply that by two to what Perot did to us. You take him away and we win. Take Buchanan out of the mix and we win. So it comes full circle, and that's kind of what happened here in this election cycle as well. There are so many ironies to all of that. That in itself is a book.

**Masoud:** Were there Perot-specific ads that you did? Or were your ads mainly focused on either touting the President or attacking Clinton?

**Rogich:** I didn't do Perot-specific ads. We did tough ads against Bill Clinton, as you know. I think that driving his negatives to high levels brought this race closer. It is one of the reasons that I always thought Gore would have real difficulty in getting elected President. He went into the race for President with a negative level, a low of about 39 and a high of 45. In practical politics today, it's almost impossible to win with those numbers. So with the robust economy that we had, it's amazing that he lost, and yet at the same time I always thought that he would have difficulty winning just because of his negatives.

**Masoud:** Why no Perot-specific ads, though? You just underestimated the threat?

**Rogich:** No. What percentage of the vote did he get?

**Masoud:** Nineteen.

**Rogich:** Nineteen percent. I don't think anyone thought that then and we had to focus on the fact that we were running against the guy at the top. I think. In hindsight, maybe there should have been ads. A couple of them were talked about. I think there was a lot of talk about "throwing your vote away," and that happened at the local political level, but I don't recall Perot-specific ads that ran nationwide.

**Freedman:** Did the Democrats do a better job of targeting with their buys?

**Rogich:** I don't think they did as well then as they did in this last election cycle. I mean, for George W. Bush to lose areas in the inner cities of Detroit and Philadelphia by those numbers was just overwhelming. I think that it also shows you the strength of organized labor and the unregulated budget they have, and what they can achieve. That's why I think this campaign reform spending bill stinks. Unless they include—

**Freedman:** Paycheck?

**Rogich:** Paycheck perhaps. Or, further than that, I think the notion of making election day a paid holiday should be viewed as an in-kind contribution. In Detroit, for example, election day is a holiday, where all the workers are brought to the halls for a big fun food and drink rally and without technically telling them who to vote for but making it mandatory that you're there, is outrageous. For Bush to lose Philadelphia, what was it, 85 to 15 or something? Some number like that? I mean, the numbers were pretty enormous. There may never be a Republican to carry Pennsylvania or Michigan again with those kinds of numbers in Detroit and Philadelphia.

I'll bet you that a lot of organized labor will not be in favor of this campaign reform bill. They'll have trouble living with it as well. So I fully expect some parts of this bill to unravel.

**McCall:** Did you have a sense of the battle fatigue among other members of the senior staff of the White House going into this '92 election cycle? The President notwithstanding, but others.

**Rogich:** As I look back, I had a sense of sadness of the people who really loved George Bush. I think Marlin Fitzwater, Dave Demarest, Andy Card, Brent Scowcroft and others who really cared about the President shared a sense of frustration that we weren't getting our message out.

Then we were troubled with the timing of the change with the Chief of Staff and with a campaign effort that was running almost autonomous of any of us in the White House. I think we frankly made a mistake in the leadership of the campaign. We lacked someone like Baker and I think we lacked someone like Roger Ailes. And perhaps to a much lesser degree, someone like me. So those are the factors that I think played into the frustrations that we shared.

**Masoud:** You've mentioned a couple of times how the mistakes that we brought up were really "inside Washington baseball" and nobody paid attention to them because they were so inside. Was the campaign itself? I mean, you looked at Gore's campaign for example, and there was this conscious effort to run it out of Tennessee and to make it an American campaign and not a Washington campaign. Was there anything similar on the Bush campaign?

**Rogich:** First of all, the Gore effort wanted to run away from Clinton at the time. That probably had a lot to do with the strategy. But it didn't work. You're part of a ticket for eight years, it's pretty tough to run away from it. We simply had people who lobbied for the position of campaign managers. And Sam Skinner supported Bob Teeter because Bob was one of those pushing for him to become Chief of Staff. And the Chief of Staff has a lot to say about who is going to run the campaign.

**Masoud:** But the headquarters were in Washington, for example.

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Masoud:** What do you say to this idea that's been floated about this, that really this was kind of how the campaign was out of touch with the American people? That the issues the campaign was speaking to were really sort of inside Washington baseball issues. Anything to that?

**Rogich:** I don't agree with that. We knew what the American people were thinking. We just never put together a good message. We just did not do the best job of selling the campaign, reminding the American people of who we were and what we were all about.

**Freedman:** Did you have that sense at the time or is that something that in retrospect has become more clear?

**Rogich:** I had it at the time. You know, when you take away the hallmark of the Presidency and you never talk about it, what does that leave? A weakened Presidency. I just think we made a fundamental mistake there. But listen, there were factors that called for us to be thinking differently, I respect that. The poll numbers didn't reflect some of those positive foreign policy accomplishments, and yet we can create poll numbers. That's what we always forget. We announce something dramatic, heighten the people's awareness of it, and that can become compelling. That's why you can't have pollsters running campaigns.

**Riley:** You were in a really unique position, having been such a long-time part of the administration and the Bush apparatus, and then to have been in Iceland. You were pulled out of this in a diplomatic posting, in a kind of isolated way. Then you come back, although you've been following this. Can you kind of march us through what it was like to walk in the office on that first day back? What were your initial impressions of what it was you discovered? You mentioned the fact that you discovered there were only two commercials in the can. Were there other things that you were thinking, other things that become evident because you're really catching this—?

**Rogich:** Well, I knew that the marketing side of the campaign was in disarray. I knew that we didn't have the right people in place. I made a lot of changes that first day, cut the staff back dramatically. We were over-staffed and I eliminated a lot of the creative people. And in the process, I weeded through, I don't know, hundreds of creative ideas that were never used or discarded.

I had the first meeting that Sunday night at six o'clock in the White House and I had another one

Monday night when I came back. The first day back, I just came and told Jim Baker what I had done. Told him I got rid of this, I changed that, I did this and here's where we're headed. I was still working closely with Teeter in those days. When I came back I had just two conditions, that the only people I would answer to would be Jim Baker and the President. And they both agreed to that.

I knew I couldn't work through a layer of bureaucracy with a little more than two months to go. I know I probably hurt some feelings in the first two to three days there because I did make a lot of changes. But after a while we were cooking pretty good. We had some very good people, we had a lot of good material that had not been utilized. We fine-tuned it and we put together a radio campaign that really quietly did a lot for us. We put hundreds of commercials together in regions and television also started in earnest. Some of them really had potential to turn some numbers, and they did.

**Freedman:** Which ones?

**Rogich:** Oh gosh, we did so many ads. The black and white ad, called the "Night of the Living Dead" (which was a great movie, by the way.)

**Masoud:** The gray dots ad, was that another?

**Rogich:** Yes, that was good. A lot of those ads got us moving. I think their team acknowledged that. I talked to James Carville later and they said that their numbers were changing, but there was still a long way to go. When I first came back, depending on what number you looked at, we were down by as much as 21 or something in that area, anywhere from 21 to 18 percent down, which is unheard of in a Presidential campaign. Maybe [Lyndon] Johnson and Goldwater. So we had a long way to go.

**Riley:** Do you recall any extended conversations that you had with either the President or Jim Baker about your assessment of the state of affairs? Conversely, any recollections you can tell us about in terms of their state of mind or their thinking about where things were headed at this juncture, with six to eight weeks left to go in the campaign?

**Rogich:** Nothing other than what I just told you. They knew that we had a tough race. They knew that things had to be done. One thing about Jim Baker is that we would meet at night, we would get at things. He would listen to everyone and we would come to closure and execute. I brought in lots of commercials that we didn't use but we made decisions not to eliminate them or we tweaked them a little bit, but we made decisions. We'd go out of there, put them together, ready to go on the air.

**Riley:** Any of these harder-hitting negatives in your area? Did you prepare more that were—?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Riley:** Can you tell us a little about some of these?

**Rogich:** Well, it doesn't serve any purpose to talk about the ones that didn't run. When a tough commercial doesn't run—the ones that did run were tough enough.

**Freedman:** How tough is tough?

**Rogich:** I think you have to be factual. So, it means not having to pull your commercial and withstanding the test of the media. The media and the stations themselves dissect your commercials and they want to go frame by frame and so we prepare supportive back-up, frame by frame, to verify facts.

**McCall:** I don't know if it was innovated during the Bush administration, but there was an effort to do satellite tours, I think they were called, where the President would be beamed to several different small markets at the same time, live. Was any effort made to do this during the campaign itself? Or was this something that was just done for local media access during the regular administration?

**Rogich:** I don't recall, Jim. I think we did some, but I was not really on the road with the President. Mitch Daniels was out there a lot with him and I know we did a lot of town hall things and put together some two-minute commercials, and I think they worked well. The President was very good in that setting. I think those made some differences in the campaign.

We'd do things like cut a commercial and film it and put it in Cincinnati only, knowing that the opposition would see it and react to it. So we'd do a commercial, they would start to build a response to the commercial and I'd know the commercial was never going to run again except that one afternoon in Cincinnati.

**Freedman:** This is tying up opposition resources.

**Rogich:** Yes, I guess.

**Riley:** Excellent.

**Rogich:** I mean, they did the same thing. So it's reminiscent of spy versus spy.

**Freedman:** This is '92. Did you have access to satellite tracking data at this point?

**Rogich:** Yes. We knew everything that was running. From gross rating points to the message, we knew what the commercials and scripts were.

**Freedman:** So that's something you hadn't had in '88, is that right?

**Rogich:** We had pretty good access to what was going on, just not as good as in '92.

**Freedman:** You want to say more about how you would get that idea?

**Rogich:** When you send for approval from the networks, ultimately somebody is going to give

you an indication of what's ahead.

**Freedman:** So that was the route.

**Rogich:** And you know, we monitor buying and availabilities, and there's equal time. There's a science to this business, but it's not rocket science. Then you hire media buying firms and they're doing an enormous amount of business with the networks, in addition to us. So they have their own sources of information.

**Freedman:** So the media buys in '92 were done—that was an outside firm that did the buying? It wasn't somebody within the campaign?

**Rogich:** We negotiated—I negotiated the one in '88 and we paid something like three to four percent commission. We had firms buying for us in '92 but a lot of that was put in place before I got there.

**Freedman :** Can we go back to Russell's question just for a moment, and ask if there was ever a commercial or even message that you wanted to go with that either Jim Baker or the President said, "No, that's too much. That's too negative, that's too hard-hitting."

**Rogich:** Not really. We knew what the issues were and we just stayed with them. Maybe they didn't like the creative approach, and we'd come to a compromise on some type of technique, but for the most part "no." Outside of the regional buys, we only had eight solid weeks of media and you don't have a lot of time to be fooling around with creative think tanks. We had to move quickly.

**Freedman:** I wanted to ask a little bit more about the President's state of mind, because I got the impression yesterday that really he was fairly optimistic until the very end. Is that accurate? Is that a fair—?

**Rogich:** I think that's pretty accurate.

**Freedman:** And what about Jim Baker? Did he have the same optimism or did you get the sense that he was more nervous, concerned?

**Rogich:** I thought that he was happy with the way things were moving on a daily basis. We knew our numbers were moving, our tracking was good in trying to assess electoral votes. There were some states in doubt and that played a role as to where our media buys went—Ohio, Illinois, for example, were eliminated pretty quickly.

**Riley:** Were you involved in the debate prep?

**Rogich:** Yes.

**Riley:** Significant differences between '92 and '88 in terms of the preparatory process?

**Rogich:** No, I don't think so. I thought the President was well-prepared for the debate. The debates helped and hurt us. I thought St. Louis, in particular, really helped us. We did a good job there. The one we didn't look good in was the town hall concept. If you recall, the negotiation about the debate was the format. One was a stand up, one was a sit down, one was a town hall format. I didn't work on that part of it.

In hindsight—and that's always easy—I'm not sure I would have been too adamant against the town hall concept. I thought the President could have performed better. But putting Perot in that setting ruined the concept. It was like having a little gnat buzzing around and it took away from the stature of the Presidency. All of a sudden it brought Perot to a level that was Presidential, and it just took away from us.

**Riley:** Tarek has asked some questions about ads directed specifically at Perot that you've already answered, but I do wonder if the presence of Perot in the race didn't enormously complicate your job because you're fighting, in effect, a two-front war rather than a one-front war. Or is it the case that you just decided pretty much to completely ignore that factor and direct everything you were doing to—?

**Rogich:** Well, we had a message that appealed to our base, which also was eroding because of Perot. We were losing our base. Those votes weren't Clinton votes, those were our votes basically. Then we had to go after Clinton and it was complicated. We had only so many media dollars and yet we had to combat an active, ongoing organization—not in 50 states, but close to it—by Perot on the ground. He was the first of the third party candidates that could really make a difference in a modern Presidential election.

**Riley:** I think the timing, too—without digressing too much—it seemed to be that at every stage where the Bush campaign was beginning to get some traction, Perot does something else. I don't have a very specific recollection of this, but it seems to me that at about the time of the Republican convention, is that when Perot decides he's going to jump back in the race? That's at the point, as you said in relation to '88, when the campaign really managed to take off. There is this crucial interval, as you said before, between the two conventions that the Bush campaign wasn't able to take full advantage of in '92 because Perot is playing footsie with the press.

**Rogich:** It was tough because the Democrats realized what we had done previously between the conventions and took advantage of it. That was a factor.

**Riley:** The bus tour.

**Rogich:** Right. So they took advantage of that period of time in between, just like we had done in 1988. I don't think anyone did it like we did previously and they knew that. Not only that, but you also had the Buchanan component in there, attacking us. And a reluctant suitor at the very end. It was just an unusual time, if you think about it. An incumbent President with those numbers to lose to someone who had so many issues against him.

**Freedman:** Was there more that you could have done on that question? When you think about it, and having seen what actually played out? Is there something, is there an ad that could have been

made, is there a line of attack against Clinton that either was considered or might have been? Do you have any regrets about not doing more against him?

**Rogich:** I have to tell you the truth. I look back and wonder about it and I don't think so, because we're so immune to one big issue after another. I'm not sure the American people cared about Bill Clinton's character. I don't think they cared much about the fact that the guy was not the most honest guy to be elected President. We made that point in those commercials. We talked about his track record in Arkansas. But as I said, we're so immune to those kinds of things now that I'm not sure it mattered.

In the past, you had what could be considered minor issues today like taking [Thomas] Eagleton off the ticket because he had been treated by a psychiatrist, and today we elect a Vice President who has a heart condition. What's worse? I don't know. But the point is, the American people don't really care about that kind of thing now. They don't have time to focus on it before the next big story breaks. I think in campaigns you're going to find that there are no rules as to how far out things will get. And I think you're going to find a lesser stable of candidates out there who are willing to go through that process.

Any time that the *National Enquirer* can break the three leading stories in the country in the last six months or so, it tells you something. When the *New York Times* has got to give reference to the *National Enquirer*, that's a sad day and yet they're doing it. So the rules are just changing.

**Masoud:** When you see Bill Clinton in the '92 campaign going out and doing media appearances like the MTV appearance, where he blithely answers questions about his undergarments, are you thinking to yourself when you see that, *God, we've got to get our candidate to do that sort of thing?*

**Rogich:** You know, it crossed my mind to do the MTV thing. We did not do any of that. The MTV appearance—

**Masoud:** Did President Bush do MTV?

**Rogich:** No, we did Larry King, and I think we were late in going to Larry King. The notion of using talk show hosts and entertainment venues like that in Presidential campaigns had never been accepted before. I give them credit for doing it, taking advantage of it. I'm not sure it works for us then as well as it does for Bill Clinton. He's younger, more appealing to a youthful audience. I'm not sure that that was the best venue for our candidate at the time, but that was new water, uncharted for the most part. Other than the traditional *Today* show and *Meet the Press* and so forth. It had not been done before.

**Masoud:** Did you organize that Larry King? Did you have a role in that Larry King appearance that President Bush finally did do?

**Rogich:** Only to the degree that I knew about it and thought it was a good idea. In hindsight, I wish he would have done it sooner.

**Masoud:** Was that the appearance in which [George] Stephanopoulos called in?

**Rogich:** Yes, I believe so. I think we did two, didn't we?

**Masoud:** I'm not certain.

**Rogich:** I can't remember.

**Masoud:** What interested me about that and I always thought—

**Rogich:** I thought that was a cheap shot.

**Masoud:** Well, it was a cheap shot. But having worked in TV, I was a TV booker, and if you were going to bring any cabinet official or any government official on, their staff would tell you, "Listen, if you pull any funny stuff, you're going to pay." It just seems to me that you could have avoided that. Was somebody asleep at the wheel?

**Rogich:** Well, we didn't have control over that portion of it. So that could mean we were asleep. But the notion that CNN would allow Stephanopoulos to call in and accept that call is unprofessional at best. So, essentially, they set the President up. He's on the show, he's doing the interview, and the campaign manager from the opposition calls in and asks him pointed questions.

**Riley:** I think this is the last weekend? Is this after the Weinberger indictment?

**Rogich:** Yes, I think it was.

**Riley:** And I think that was what the basis of the question was. I've read Stephanopoulos's account of this and obviously he got taken to the woodshed a little bit within the Clinton campaign for doing this. Ultimately, not too badly, because it worked to their advantage.

**Rogich:** You know, after he leaves the White House, he leaves disliked by both sides. I don't think the Democrats and Bill Clinton had any love for him. We certainly didn't forget.

**Masoud:** But the detail-oriented approach that you talked about with Reagan, to the extent that if you saw the light shining on Reagan from the podium that cast him unflatteringly you'd put down some cloth, was there anything like that for Bush? Did President Bush get that kind of care at the debates, with his press appearances, that sort of thing?

**Rogich:** I thought he did. I thought the people who were there nurtured him, cared for him, and wanted things to be the best. The notion, though, that there is a screening process when you call in to Larry King, and yet a Clinton campaign official is allowed to debate with the President, is indicative, in part, of the campaign as a whole.

**Freedman:** What happened in your camp after you went off the air, in that situation? Was the President the kind of person to get angry, to yell, to scream?

**Rogich:** No, but he was not happy that he had to sit there and get into a debate with a campaign official, contrary to everything that we were led to believe the show was going to be. But then it was too late, what are you going to do? That's the last weekend before the election.

**Riley:** Other questions about the campaign? We're running a little bit short on time and I'd like to come back to the final category of questions, which is about your perceptions of George Bush as an individual. The kinds of things that we're quite unlikely to be able to pick up in any of the documentary record because they're based on your personal observations of his working style, his temperament. We get bits and pieces of this through the course of your commentary all along.

We've asked you on several occasions was he aggravated or agitated about something, and invariably I think you've come back and said no, that he wasn't. He had a very even temperament on that. But can you reflect a little bit for us? What are some of the things about Bush that aren't out in the record? What are some things about his temperament and his working style that are important for students in the future to understand about this person to get full appreciation for his Presidency and for his place in history, from your perspective? You spent time with him on airplanes, you spent all this time with him in Kennebunkport, when he was supposedly down, and I suspect you have had as many heart-to-heart conversations with him as anybody we've had the opportunity to talk with around this table.

**Rogich:** First of all, if you look at how the American people view him today, there is a real love affair with him and Barbara, in that senior statesman way. If you look at the respect and relationships he has with foreign leaders, from Helmut Kohl to John Major and others he dealt with, and the fact that those relationships are still in place today, it says so much about George Bush. I spent an evening out with John Major and George Bush not long ago and the banter and the humor was evident. The camaraderie and the friendship was evident.

I think that's probably the best part of George Bush. The most significant thing I always found about him was that he had a great affinity for people's feelings. I never, ever, saw him dress anyone down, from an advance person who might have made a flub-up and he knew it to a senior staffer who screwed up. He might roll his eyes a little bit, but he was very conscious of the fact that there is a human side to everybody and it's fragile. I think that was the most impressive thing I always saw, his care about other people and their feelings.

I thought he had a great sincere and emotional side that overwhelmed him sometimes. At times, when he talked about his family or his buddies, or about something he'd seen or heard, from music to art to a movie or whatever. It was portrayed when he was with the troops and the families of those we lost. When he met with the troops in the Persian Gulf, you would see the feeling of pride and fear for their safety and that caring about what his role was as commander-in-chief.

I always found him to be sincere. I never found him to be catty. I did find him to be very funny. It was not unusual for him to call me from time to time in my office in the White House and rattle off a quick joke and then say, "I've got to go," and hang up. On the run, the President on the run. A lot of them were a little off-color. But I always thought that was a great thing. To

think I was enjoying the humor of the President of the United States while he's on the run.

**Freedman:** Any stand out in your mind? Care to retell?

**Rogich:** A lot of them stand out in my mind, but they're not jokes to share.

**Freedman:** History?

**Rogich:** Historical humor. When I first got there, I used to send him Dana Carvey tapes. He wasn't watching *Saturday Night Live* in those days and I said, "You need to watch this. You'll get a kick out of it. I've been laughing at your expense all weekend." And I would do a little bit of Carvey when I was with him.

**Riley:** For the record, there was a hand motion.

**Rogich:** Yes, a hand motion and, "Wouldn't be prudent." There were some funny things there.

I just found a side to him that was genuine. I don't know how else to put it. American hero, became President. A loyal Vice President? I think he has had a sense of loyalty throughout his life. A lot of us stayed in touch with him after the White House. I don't know how many but I talked to him frequently, enjoyed his friendship, loved to play golf with him, and have as much fun on the golf course as not. I don't know what else to say except that I think the mistake we made is that we never really showed that side of him.

He wrote a letter to me in that book, which kind of sums up the funny part and the sincere part of him. I can't help but think that if that book had been published about a year before the election, it would have made a difference. People would have known the real George Bush. I look back and think that people like me did not really do the best job of selling the President, so that's something that a lot of us have to think about. There's no other way to characterize it.

**Masoud:** The point you make about his sense of humor, you see that in the book of letters. He has this really almost kooky sense of humor. I don't think anybody back then would have thought that this man would have this really kind of self-deprecating and almost quirky sense of humor. It might have endeared him a great deal to the public.

**Rogich:** You know, they're going to dedicate a school to me when I get home next week, a middle school, with my name. They sent an invitation to the President. I didn't know they did that, but they did. He wrote a letter on my behalf and it was just so like him. I wrote him a note, an email, and thanked him for it and told him he overwhelmed me sometimes. He wrote back an email and said, "Siglet," which is what he calls me, "That was easy. It was like a 12-inch putt, a gimme. Although you never gave me any of those." That was indicative of him. Another time he wrote me an email and he said, "I'm sitting here in bed watching TV away from everyone with Barb and my knees are up and I have sobs of joy from my wonderful son." That was at the time that G.W. was declared victorious.

**Freedman:** I hope he has a laptop. [laughter]

**Riley:** This is such a fascinating portrait. Again, the sense of the public image is of a man who is uncomfortable with this kind of emotional side, there is a kind of distance there. You're telling us that that's an incorrect image.

**Rogich:** Well, you know what, he's a guy always on the go. I think sometimes you can mistake being on the go and waiting to get to the end of something so you can move on to the next, as being uneasy. It's not that. Men and women who are thinking all the time and ready to move are a little fidgety, a little anxious, restless. I don't think that's uncomfortableness. I just think if you would have looked at the President's schedule on a daily basis and look at this thing, with 30 items on it, down to three-minute intervals in some cases, you think, *My goodness*. So you can understand how you'd be worrying about the next, and checking it off and doing it.

We all lived by the same schedules when we were with him, keeping him on the move. Then guys like me would disrupt the schedule and say, "Hey, can you stop here and do a picture in front of the Boar's Head Inn where we're staying, because we've got the founding father of Virginia outside and he's going to be jogging by any moment," and that would throw the schedule off. Then we would have to fast-track to make it up.

**Riley:** But some of this, I guess, is also generational, I would think. Here is a man who is not—

**Rogich:** That's a good point.

**Riley:** —terribly comfortable with public intimacy, and yet the degree of private intimacy among his confidants is extraordinary.

**Rogich:** I think that is really a good point you make, and also the sense of propriety that comes with that generation. It's indicative of the way he dresses and the formality of it. I took more grief on my clothing in the White House. . . . One of the great moments in the White House was when Marlin Fitzwater decided he was going to get pleats in his pants. He came up to my office and said, "Sig, I have to ask you a question. I've never had any pleats before in my pants." I said, "What's the question?" He said, "Well, in checking it out, I found out there's all different kinds of pleats. You can get two pleats or three pleats or even four pleats. You can get reverse pleats, which is British, or could get the . . ." you know. I said, "This is a great conversation, Marlin. Stick with the two pleats." He said, "Are you sure?" Then another guy, I think Ed Rogers, came up one day and said, "I'm going to get a double-breasted suit, maybe."

**Riley:** So you were actually giving sartorial advice to everyone in the White House?

**Rogich:** Oh, we just had this ongoing, laughing joke. I was always taking a little razzing because I came from a different part of the world. And there were times I bought some clothing items for the President. Sweaters, a jacket, ties and things. And he used them, much to his chagrin. He loved to get them.

**Riley:** The Missus didn't give you any trouble for intruding on it—

**Rogich:** No, she just kidded about it. Oh, she did one time, she gave me trouble. She said, “You sent him this tie and *I hate it.*” I remember her saying that, “*I hate it.*” One thing about Barbara, you know where you are with her. But she’s wonderful. They’re a great complement too as a team, and that banter that they had between them is something we didn’t share with the American people, but that they would have enjoyed. So I look back, I just think we failed to share the special personality of the President with the American people. I think that’s my great regret and that’s probably in part my fault. I had the ability to do that.

**Freedman:** But was there concern that the whole “wimp factor” issue from ’88 was going to rear its head if you showed this side of him?

**Rogich:** No, I never thought that. The wimp factor was a one day, one week, story from one magazine. I mean, how do you call him a wimp? You’re going to be called a wimp? That’s such a push, a stretch. He’s been called a lot of things politically, but wimp is not one of them. And no one bought it.

**Masoud:** Was George W. around a lot in the ’92 campaign? Did you work with him at all?

**Rogich:** Yes, I saw him quite a bit.

**Masoud:** What was he doing?

**Rogich:** He would come by and see how the ads were, what we were doing. I saw him more in ’88. But he knew what we were doing. He would be in a lot of meetings. I think he was pretty happy with the commercials, the way they were coming out.

**Freedman:** Why was he there? To report back? Or did he have input?

**Rogich:** He was working in the campaign, trying to help his father.

**Masoud:** Jeb, too?

**Rogich:** I saw Jeb from time to time, not as much as G.W. They were all around. Marvin was there, Neil was there and Doro was there. We did a lot of filming at Camp David, Kennebunk, and at the White House. We were in touch with the family all the time, and so it was not unusual to see them in the campaign headquarters.

**Riley:** We glossed over this very briefly, and maybe there’s no answer to this, but you talked about the town hall style debate. You mentioned yesterday that this is the one where the American public sees him looking at his watch. Is what we saw reality or is there something else to that? I never believe what I see on TV, exactly. Was he just looking at his watch to see—*let’s get this going*—or was something else going on?

**Rogich:** I think it was just a nervous, natural instinct for him to do. Probably because he was used to a schedule that kept him on a fast pace. I think unconsciously you look at a watch. I mean a lot of us have wanted to and we pretend like we’re not. Like right now. You know what I

mean. *[laughter]* I think there's that. Unfortunately, it looked like he was bored with the whole thing and the media focused on it, and the commentators played on it and the columnists had a lot of fun with it. That, coupled with the fact that we were in a tough situation, didn't help the cause. It was unfortunate, certainly unfair. But I think in hindsight, he wished he hadn't looked at his watch.

**Culbert:** To some extent you said that you sort of regretted that you didn't sell this more personal side of the President during the '92 campaign. But a lot of what I've read or seen, he wouldn't have been comfortable with selling that sort of image. Did you pick up on that? Do you feel that would have been a problem for you had you tried to take that approach?

**Rogich:** I think when I came back to the campaign, it was kind of too late to get into the emotional side of the President, to get into the personality side of things. I think at that point we were driven by hard issues and pragmatic political decisions. One of them, to make this thing work, was to focus also on the comparisons between George Bush and Bill Clinton and so we didn't have that luxury. I'm not sure he would have been uncomfortable, but it would have been my job, and others like me, to find the level of comfort to make it work. There were times when we found it and we never took advantage of it as much, perhaps, as we should have insisted upon.

**Masoud:** Did Reagan come out at all and campaign for you in '92?

**Rogich:** Yes, but it was not an active—

**Masoud:** Did you try? By then, his reputation had been pretty much as burnished as it is now. Did you try to trot this icon of "Morning in America" out?

**Rogich:** Well, it cut both ways, you know. People wondering if we were only an extension of Ronald Reagan. Yes, he did help us as much as he could. To my knowledge, he never said no to anything. He came to the convention. His speech was terrific. But in our wisdom we put him in fringe time and put Pat Buchanan in prime time. That was part of a negotiated, if you want to call it that, convention settlement. Which was pretty outrageous when you think back on it, that people managing the campaign made such a concession.

**Freedman:** I'm curious about something prior to the campaign, late in '91. We touched on a number of big ticket events. One thing that we haven't talked about that certainly brought in a lot of attention late in '91 in the fall was the Clarence Thomas nomination and the hearings. Certainly that was a huge media event on that side of things, but I was wondering whether you had any role or responsibility for managing any of that? Or whether you had some insight into what was going on from Bush's perspective?

**Rogich:** We all kind of had a bit of a role. I think he was assigned specifically to—

**Masoud:** [Kenneth] Duberstein?

**Rogich:** Duberstein had something to do with it.

**Masoud:** Yes, I think he was heading up the—

**Rogich:** He headed it up. There was a conscious effort to provide as much positive press as we could, but I couldn't say I had much to do with it. I met him a few times. We talked about how he might present himself a few times. That was about it. We did the same thing with [David] Souter when he came in. So, it was kind of a rollout, it's counting heads and counting votes.

**Riley:** We're running short on time and I want to pose one additional question. This is to ask you a bit about the post-Presidential George Bush, the library. Did you attend the dedication of the library?

**Rogich:** I did, yes.

**Riley:** Obviously, you told us the story about how happy he is about his son, but what else can you tell us about the post-Presidential Bush?

**Rogich:** Well he's frenzied. His schedule is overwhelming. It is something to behold. I traveled with him a few times. He had me travel with him to China; we had dinner with Jiang Zemin. I traveled with him to Rumania, where he addressed the parliament. I traveled with him to Kuwait, where they honored him. We met in different places to play golf like Pine Valley, Maine, or Texas.

He's giving speeches around the world and to conventions and he's in great demand. Always on a fast pace. It's almost like he's still President in some ways, without as big a staff around him. I know all the Secret Service agents who travel with him and I think they all are amazed at his energy level, but I think that's what keeps him going. We have a lot of fun playing golf together, have a lot of fun going to dinner together. And we have a lot of fun reminiscing and emailing, talking, and telling jokes.

**Riley:** He is still a very active correspondent?

**Rogich:** He's an active correspondent. If I communicate with him he gets right back, which is just part of his thing. But I find that his zest for life hasn't changed a bit. He is well-read, and we share books from time to time. He is active as he can be. He's a project guy. He's just the kind of guy you enjoy being around.

**Riley:** Well, we appreciate hearing about that side and we hope that if you're communicating about projects in the future, that you'll put in a good word for what we're trying to do here in Charlottesville. Jim, is there anything that you—?

**Young:** No, no, I wouldn't intrude.

**Masoud:** I actually had a question, to go back to a little bit before the post-Presidency, which is post-election. We tend to kind of think once you lose the election, the term is over, but there is still three months. How does your job change, now that you're not running for re-election? How

does it change in sort of the way you're presenting the President now?

**Rogich:** Well, I didn't go back to the White House.

**Masoud:** Right, so you didn't go back after the loss. You did not go back.

**Rogich:** I was around with him through that, the crepe-hanging period, but I was probably as down as anybody. So I just packed up, got organized and went home. I had left all my stuff in Iceland. My car and clothes. I had to go back over and formally say good-bye and make arrangements to have everything shipped over here. I just had to get on with life. I certainly did not want to hang around the White House.

**Riley:** Anything else? Well, we're very grateful for your time.

**Rogich:** A lot of it is probably redundant, but maybe it will be helpful.

**Riley:** It was extremely helpful, all the way around. These kinds of reminiscences are precisely what we need in order to supplement the paper record. Most of what we get is not the kind of thing we can get otherwise and you're a piece of a puzzle. If we don't have this piece, then the rest of the puzzle doesn't make sense. But we also have to get the other pieces, so we don't look from any single respondent for everything.

**Rogich:** I understand. I hope this is helpful. I enjoyed being with you guys and I admire what you do.

**Young:** Thank you very much.