WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM GALSTON

April 22-23, 2004
Charlottesville, Virginia

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TRANSCRIPT

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Riley: The interview today is being conducted under the primary ground rule of strict confidentiality. The only person who is free to talk about anything that goes on in the room today is you. We're pledged to maintain that confidentiality until the ultimate transcript is released with the entire cache of transcripts of the Clinton Project, which will probably be in another four or five years.

A transcript will be prepared of the proceedings and, after a light copyediting, sent to you in two or three months' time. You'll have an opportunity at that point to make any changes in the transcript or to place any stipulations concerning subsequent use. We hope that you'll leave it as intact as possible. We do this primarily to create an atmosphere of candor in the interview so you'll feel comfortable speaking candidly for the historical record.

Our purpose is primarily to create a record that people twenty, thirty, and forty years down the road can come back to and use as a window to this administration. We hope you'll enter into the spirit of the interview with the intention of speaking candidly.

Galston: On whom are the stipulations binding?

Riley: The stipulations are binding on whomever you would want them to bind. The question usually arises as to a stipulation regarding basic use of the transcript. In other words, if you feel more comfortable, for whatever reason, saying, "I'd rather this not become available with the archive for ten years, or until five years after I'm dead," or something like that, we're amenable to abiding by that stipulation. There are occasions when people have placed a stipulation on a particular aspect of the transcript. If there's an area that—for whatever reason—you feel is particularly sensitive, we'd rather you go ahead and get it onto the permanent record. If you don't want it out for a period of time, you can place brackets around it (so to speak), and we'll black it out of the transcript, and it would remain that way for whatever time period you stipulated.

Galston: Let me be perfectly candid about candor at the outset. I cannot imagine any area of policy—you're not talking to Sandy Berger here—so sensitive that I wouldn't want to be absolutely candid about it. If I'm pressed for views of former colleagues—some of whom are

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still friends—and I'm perfectly candid, that's the sort of thing I might want to place some stipulation on.

Riley: That's completely understandable, and it's completely consistent with the way we've designed the process of making stipulations. That's why we provide that opportunity. We'd rather you speak to the record candidly on all of these subjects and hold on to that—or have us hold on to that—than for you to be silent and not make that information available to people twenty or thirty years down the road. If we get to a point during the course of the interview where this becomes an issue, you can go ahead and make a stipulation regarding that then, or you can wait until you review the transcript.

Galston: I think I'll wait until I review the transcript. I just wanted to know what my degrees of freedom are here because I would distinguish quite sharply between something that becomes public in five years and something that becomes public in twenty-five years. There are people who did their best, whose feelings could easily be bruised by a candid judgment of their performance in office.

Riley: Sure.

Galston: It's not clear to me what purpose would be served by that in the year 2009.

Riley: Right. But there would be some long-term historical value in knowing your judgments. My principal charge and mission is to create that long-time, usable, historical archive; therefore, the opportunity is yours and is unlimited. The only thing that I'm not allowed to do is to create an interview archive that is forever off the record. Obviously we can't do something like that.

Galston: And I would have no intention of doing that.

Riley: Okay, very good. Any questions?

Walcott: If I say something stupid, can I redact it?

Riley: Unfortunately not. You don't have an opportunity to redact.

Jones: What an incoherent question.

Walcott: I've been a teacher all my life. That's my specialty.

Riley: We give you license, then, to clean up our questions when you get the transcript.

Galston: Absolutely: the old silk purse-sow's ear transaction.

Riley: The transcriptionist will have a terrible time knowing who we are if we don't identify ourselves and say a few words at the outset.

Jones: Chuck Jones, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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Walcott: Charles Walcott from Virginia Tech.

Riley: How did you get interested in politics and political philosophy?

Galston: Those are two different questions. I've been interested in politics as long as I can remember. I'm told that I got my political start at the age of two, handing out leaflets for Henry Wallace and the Independent Progressive Party in the 1948 campaign. I don't stress this to my New Democrat friends any more than I have to. I'm probably one of the few people my age who knows the name of the 1952 IPP candidate for President. My earliest political memory is lying on the floor of my house in Pasadena, California, listening to [Dwight D.] Eisenhower deliver his "I will go to Korea" speech. By the time 1960 rolled around, my father was—and indeed still is—a scientist. We got a [J. William] Fulbright [scholarship] and traveled around the world. I happened to be in Australia during the 1960 election, including Election Day. I had the wall of my room plastered with the latest Electoral College reports, and I turned night into day to stay up to listen to the returns of the 1960 campaign. Then, of course, I had to turn day into night because it took so long to determine the result.

My interest in political philosophy developed as an undergraduate at Cornell University in the 1960s. That then dominated my professional preparation and my early career. I had the usual struggles of a young academic, trying to get a start in the early 1970s after the academic boom of the '60s had turned into the academic bust. It took me a year of looking to find a one-year job at the University of Texas, which fortunately turned into something.

Riley: Can I stop you and ask with whom you studied at Cornell?

Galston: I guess the guy who really inspired me at that point was the late lamented Allan Bloom of blessed memory. I studied constitutional law at Cornell with Walter Burns, who's still alive and kicking at the American Enterprise Institute. I studied ancient history with a then-young hotshot, Don Kagan, who's now an *eminento* at Yale University. Don at that point was famous for reenacting the battles between the Greeks and the Persians single-handedly. His imitation of Persian elephants has stuck with me to the present day. He's very good at that.

Riley: Would you care to give us a rendition?

Galston: No, only the rambunctious Don Kagan can do that. I then went to the University of Chicago for graduate work. Then—to quote Macbeth—I was "from the womb untimely ripped." I was a member of the first graduate student class eligible for the draft. I received my draft notice the first day I was legally eligible to receive it, September 1, 1968, two weeks to the day before my wedding day. An interesting few months ensued, as you might imagine. I finally reported for induction on February 13, 1969. We were being marched down the hall to be inducted into the Army when someone came running up to a rather overweight sergeant in charge of our platoon and said, "Sarge, Sarge, a couple of the Marine volunteers flunked the mental test." I figured it was a sort of Catch-22. If you volunteered for the Marines, that meant *ipso facto* you flunked. But apparently there was some daylight between those two events.

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So we straggled to a halt, and the sergeant scratched his stomach and said, "Ah, no problem." He waved his hands in our direction, "Let's just pick a couple of these numbskulls here." I said to myself, *No. I've had a certain amount of bad luck getting to this point, but this is not going to happen to me.* But of course it did. So I ended up drafted into the U.S. Marines. One day you're a graduate student at the University of Chicago, the next day you're in boot camp. That challenged my capacity for transitions, let me tell you.

You're looking at a retired sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps, which created one of the funniest moments—at least in my sort of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" experience—in the Clinton administration. I was invited to the Gridiron Dinner. As you know, one of the rituals of the Gridiron is that as the songs of the different branches of the service are played, you're supposed to stand up and face the President and salute. So there's Mack McLarty on one side of the table, and me on the other. The Marine Corps hymn rings out. Mack stands up, faces the President. I stand up, face the President. He didn't know I'd been in the Marines. Bill Clinton's jaw doesn't drop very often. [laughter]

Jones: I knew you were burly, but I didn't know you were a bruiser**.**

Galston: Oh my. So here's this gray-haired college professor, might weigh 120 after a particularly robust shower. It's one of my favorite memories.

Riley: So you went to Texas after—

Galston: I started my academic career as an assistant professor at the University of Texas.

Riley: You went back to Chicago after you got out?

Galston: Not physically. I finished up my Ph.D. as a kind of correspondence course. My wife was also finishing her Ph.D., but her dissertation advisor had moved from Chicago to Harvard. She followed him, and we decided we were going to try to make it work with a Boston-centered completion to our graduate student life rather than dragging her back to Chicago, although she was a Chicago girl. I made it work. It entailed some costs.

There was some course work I would have done otherwise. There were a lot of great people in Chicago during that period whom I would have studied with more. There was a Constitutional scholar, C. Herman Pritchett, with whom I was able to take only one course. I would have studied a lot more with him and with Herb Storing of lamented memory. There was a China scholar, Tang Tsou. There was the unpredictable Morton Kaplan. There were a lot of great characters and scholars there—Hans Morgenthau. So I did pay an intellectual price.

Riley: Who did you end up writing with?

Galston: An eclectic group: Joseph Cropsey, Richard Flathman, the [Ludwig] Wittgenstein scholar who later went to Johns Hopkins and fell into bed with a den of [Friedrich] Nietzscheans. Morton Kaplan was on my dissertation committee, showed up late. He had to be dragged away from the pool hall where he spent most of his time when he wasn't cavorting with his jazz singer

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wife. It was a pretty wild crew. I wrote a political theory dissertation on [Emmanuel] Kant's historical essays, and after a year of looking, got a one-year job at the University of Texas, which I decided to try to do my best to parlay into something more. That's what happened.

Then I was seduced back into politics, not by hope, but by despair. It was late 1979, early 1980. I could not imagine supporting Ronald Reagan for President, although some of my neo-conservative friends—Paul Wolfowitz and everybody around him—were in the process of breaking with the Democratic Party at that point. On the other hand, it didn't seem to me conceivable that Jimmy Carter would do a significantly better job in his second term than he had in his first. I had been a pretty enthusiastic Carter participant at the county and state levels in Texas in 1976, and, like a lot of other people, had been somewhere between disappointed and heartbroken.

So I had a choice between sitting it out and trying to develop another option. I got on a train to Washington and, knowing no one in the John Anderson campaign, went down there unbidden, knocked on the door, and volunteered my services. I started out doing policy work for him and ended up by the fall as his speechwriter. That was my first venture into Presidential politics.

Jones: When was that?

Galston: Spring of 1980, right after the academic year.

Jones: So it's still in the primaries? Or was it settled by then?

Galston: It was settled by then. His independent candidacy was already under way.

Jones: Any influence of Texas on your political views while you were there? You were there for a while.

Galston: Well, my views of Texas changed in various ways. For example, one of the first things that I learned about Texas politics when I went there was that the legislature met only once every two years for a maximum of a hundred days. That seemed to me to be a benighted restriction at first. But after my early experience with the Texas state legislature, I understood the wisdom of the Constitution. There's a saying in Texas, "No man's wife or property is safe as long as the legislature is in session." All too true. Austin was a pretty wild place at that point. The notion that there should be any sort of restraint on the relationship between lobbyists and legislators was just not in the air in 1973.

Jones: In looking at your background, I can account for every bit of time except for '82. You left Austin in '82? Where did you go between there and when you were director of the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt Center [for American Policy Studies]?

Galston: I was [Walter] Fritz Mondale's issues director in his Presidential campaign for two and a half years, from June of 1982 until November of 1984.

Walcott: How did you make that connection with Mondale?

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Galston: Oddly, it was through the Anderson campaign. Some people who had been in the Anderson campaign ended up involved in the Mondale campaign. That was part of it. Another part of it was I had submitted an over-the-transom draft op-ed to the *New York Times* on the subject of the federal budget deficit, and to my astonishment they took it and published it. Apparently it came to Mondale's attention at about the time he was thinking about ginning up his Presidential campaign and thinking about what his economic orientation would be. So that was another connection.

A third piece of it may have been that the Mondale campaign was entirely dominated by life-long insiders. I don't know this directly, but I'm connecting the dots from bits and pieces I heard years after the fact. They thought it might not look too great if the campaign were entirely staffed with people who'd grown up with Fritz Mondale in some Minnesota small town. So having one or two outsiders—people not from Minnesota, not involved in the Carter campaign—might create a somewhat fresher appearance, if not reality.

It also turned out that because of my service in the Anderson campaign I was somewhat better attuned to some of the newer currents in American politics. For example, I was asked to write a policy/political strategy memo as almost my first order of business in the summer of 1982. One of the things I said when I finished the memo was, "This guy Gary Hart is an asterisk now, but I recognize his general approach from the Anderson campaign, and you should be aware of the fact that there's more of a constituency out there for this brand of politics than most Democrats imagine."

Walcott: Was Gary Hart's kind at that time more or less your brand of politics?

Galston: My brand of politics was inchoate at that point, I think it's fair to say. I hadn't really thought it through all that carefully. It was at that point in the history of the American economy when the debate between the old economy and the new economy was still a robust debate, and it wasn't by any means clear which way things were going, what the balance would turn out to be ten or twenty years later. So I was an agnostic in the great Mondale–Hart debate about the economy—not because I didn't care about either side, but because I thought each side had some elements of truth, and that to the extent that the Mondale campaign wasn't open to the truth the Hart folks were articulating and the constituency they stood for, we would probably be a weaker campaign in the general.

Jones: Can you talk a little bit more about how you got interested in politics? You're saying at this point that it wasn't necessarily some overarching, "We have to get this done," or "We have to get that done." What attracts you?

Galston: First of all, beneath this wonkish exterior beats the heart of a ward heeler. I find the political process, the drama of elections, intrinsically interesting. That's part of it. A second part of it—and this has been true for a very long time—is a fairly exalted idea of public service and what politics at its best can look like. I was not old enough or psychologically ready to respond to John Kennedy the way people five years older than me did. There's a big difference between the end of the Silent generation and the beginning of the Baby Boom generation.

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Silents like Joe Lieberman were more influenced—because of the age and the temper of the times—by John Kennedy. Baby Boomers were more influenced by Robert Kennedy, which is a different sensibility. I wasn't particularly influenced by either, except that the generic idea of public service that wasn't mired in the routines of partisanship was inherently attractive to me. There's also something about the idea of prudent stewardship of resources and of the country that I find very attractive.

It is certainly the case that I was drawn to John Anderson in part because I found his mixture of progressive impulses and fiscal prudence intuitively attractive. I don't think it's any accident that the very first thing I wrote about—and wrote publicly about as a policy matter—was the federal budget deficit under Reagan and what I thought it meant for the future of the country. That's continued to be a concern.

So although I was just a bit player in the famous debate in the very early days of the Clinton administration, I was much more sympathetic to the [Robert] Rubin side of that argument than the [Robert] Reich side, even though I knew that from the standpoint of domestic policy, the Rubin side of the argument would mean postponing—if not eviscerating—many of the things I wanted to do.

Jones: Given what you described as a motivation, it seems to me that there are probably many options, but I think of three: running for office, going into government yourself, into public service, bureaucracy, and then—what you seem to have chosen—to identify with a candidate and be a staff person in politics, a political servant, in a sense. Did you consider the other two options?

Galston: Not really. The idea of turning my life and my family's life upside down forever and running for office never crossed my mind. Also, with regard to option number two, I became increasingly self conscious about the fact that I enjoyed combining the life of the mind and the political life, and that that would be much less feasible as a full time, public service, senior member of the bureaucracy or something of that sort. I know what those jobs are like. They're all-consuming. I did not want to be all-consumed permanently. I was willing to be all-consumed temporarily—if I hadn't been, I wouldn't have given two and a half years of my life to a Presidential campaign and another two and a half years of my life to a Presidential administration.

But the idea of being able to take the ideas that I was beginning to develop, and some of the skills that I learned in academia, into the political realm in service to someone, something that I believed in, but then be able to go back—that was an attractive balance for me. I have never ceased to think of myself as a scholar. For me to give up scholarship permanently there would have to be a national emergency.

Walcott: I pursued that a little bit because it seems to me that people like you come to be very important, particularly in contemporary politics, and so little is written about the motivations of those people. [G. Calvin] Mackenzie talks about "in and outers." But the motivation of such people hasn't been explored, and it seems to me an important subject.

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Galston: I should say also that what happened to me during the 1980s was that I became clearer and clearer about what I'll call the "ideas nexus." My two and a half years in the Mondale campaign were absolutely formative politically, because it was sustained reflection on those two and a half years, after the fact—what had happened to the Mondale campaign, why it had happened—that launched me on the political course that defined me substantively. By the end of the 1980s, I knew *precisely* what I wanted to do with a small share of power if I ever got it. That was not the case in 1980. But by 1990, it was crystal clear.

Riley: Let me follow up on a couple of threads that have appeared already. One is about partisanship. Did you feel any anxiety about leaving your Democratic roots behind and embracing John Anderson in 1980?

Galston: Probably not as much anxiety as I should have felt, because I really did not believe that President Carter could be reelected, and honestly, I wasn't sure I wanted him to be. If the two big issues are peace and prosperity, and what you're staring at is Afghanistan and the great inflation, it wasn't a great predicate for a Presidency. But at the same time, my understanding, although not fully formed—isn't now, but it certainly wasn't then—of what government was for, what principles should guide it, the kinds of people I wanted to be associated with politically, made it impossible for me to imagine following so many of my friends into the Reagan Republican Party. I was never even tempted.

So you might say that I was led to Anderson through that process of double negation rather than through an affirmative understanding of what he stood for. As the old naval term goes, I liked the cut of his jib even though when I showed up on his doorstep, I probably knew about as much as the average reader of the *New York Times*. I knew that he'd had the guts to stand up to the gun nuts. I knew that he'd had the guts to propose something that we still need, namely a substantial energy tax to spur conservation, shifts in a more sustainable direction. And I knew that he had had the courage to break with the party of a lifetime. I was then a young man, and that sort of courage and candor and willingness to be a maverick and to cut cords and burn bridges—I didn't think of myself as permanently leaving the Democratic Party in the same way that he clearly was permanently leaving the Republican Party. But it seemed like the right thing to do at the time, given the political situation at the moment.

Riley: You said that you couldn't imagine any circumstances that would cause you to permanently leave the academe. Let me ask you the reaction among your academic peers to this kind of activity on your part. Did you feel that there were those in the academe who questioned your commitment to your scholarship or questioned the purity of your scholarship because you elected to soil yourself in active politics?

Galston: I'm sure there were, I'm sure there are. At a meeting of the American Political Science Association—in the fall of 2003 or the fall of 2002—an "author-meets-critics" panel was organized to talk about my most recent book on political theory. One of the commentators said something disparaging about a previous book I had written, on the grounds that he thought it had been guided too little by the imperatives of theory and too much by the imperatives of

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reconstructing the Democratic Party of the United States. He was a Brit and a good guy. But I didn't think of it that way.

I thought of the book as reflecting on the political reality of the United States in the late 1980s, trying to put those reflections into a theoretical framework that would enable me and others to make sense of them, and then reading back some of the results of the theoretical historical analysis into the process of party reconstruction.

So I didn't think of myself as Mikhail Suslov, the party ideologist. I thought of myself as a political theorist reflecting on politics—which is what I always thought political theory ought to do, rather than reflecting on itself—and then trying to take the product of those reflections back into the public arena. That's my conception of what it looks like when you do it right. As a political theorist, your value added is a distinctive way of reflecting on politics. It's not absenting yourself from it or distancing yourself from it, it's thinking about it in a distinctive way and then, if you care about it, taking that back.

Walcott: And the critical period for you in that respect was the late 1980s?

Galston: The period from the collapse of the Mondale campaign to the collapse of the [Michael] Dukakis campaign. During that four year period, I figured out exactly who I was politically, what I believed, what I stood for, and what I wanted to do.

Riley: Can you summarize for us what that is?

Galston: I had become convinced by 1986 that the traditional Democratic Party—a product of the New Deal and the Fair Deal and a smattering of the Great Society—had done wonderful things for nearly half a century. But that program and that way of doing politics was essentially played out. And if the Party kept on repeating that motif with minor variations, it would become increasingly irrelevant to the emerging problems facing the country, and it would continue to be judged irrelevant by the American people. I didn't want it to be irrelevant, and I didn't want it to be judged irrelevant.

That then assigned a kind of geometry problem. What is to be proved? A party with progressive ideals can be practical and progressive in practice under the economic and social and political circumstances of the 1980s. That was the problem that led me to join forces with the nascent New Democratic movement, because—despite our internal differences—we were all posing exactly the same question. We conceived of the problem in the same way. I don't need to tell you that having a group of people who share a common view of what the problem is can be the predicate for an enormously fruitful period of intellectual and policy development. And that's exactly what happened.

The period between the mid-1980s and the formal declaration of Bill Clinton's candidacy in the fall of 1991 was one of the most fertile, fruitful periods for policy development in the 20th century history of the Democratic Party. I'm proud to have been a part of it.

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Jones: Before we get too far along, could you compare, from your perspective, Anderson as a candidate and Mondale as a candidate?

Galston: Totally different, as different as night and day. John Anderson ran as a maverick. He had broken with his party, and when he was doing best, it was because he was going against the grain and saying things that people didn't particularly want to hear, things they found surprising. Walter Mondale ran as the honorable and committed heir, particularly of the New Deal and Fair Deal tradition. That's where he grew up, that's where he learned politics, that was what he believed. It not only provided him with his ideals and programmatic commitments, it also provided him with his understanding of how you do politics, what the political world is made of, and how you engage with it.

It was a picture of the practicalities of the political world that was dead-on until about ten years before he attained national prominence. The tragedy of Walter Mondale's political career is that the world shifted. If he had been a contemporary of Hubert Humphrey instead of a protégé, he would have been a spectacularly successful American politician. But the times were out of joint.

Jones: Was his heart in it?

Galston: Oh, yes.

Jones: In being a candidate?

Galston: When he decided to become a candidate, his heart was in it. When his heart wasn't in it, he said that very frankly and declined to become a candidate.

Riley: From where you were sitting in the campaign, your vantage point, you said that Mondale had a very established set of ideals and programmatic commitments. How difficult was it for you as an issues person to bring new ideas into a campaign where those programmatic commitments were already well established and firmly rooted?

Galston: As you might imagine, the market for new ideas was not terribly robust.

Walcott: After that experience and the Anderson experience, did you give any thought to the idea of a third party as opposed to a third way?

Galston: People I know have visited and revisited that idea. You don't need to know a lot about American politics to know that, given the structure and construction of our constitutional system, there isn't room for a permanent third party. You either become a second party by destroying one of the established parties, or you are co-opted in one way or another by one of the established parties. Obviously, the idea of founding something entirely new is always exhilarating and attractive, but I think until there's a fundamental change in the structure and the incentives of the American political system, that would be a fool's errand.

Jones: Would it be fair to say—again comparing Anderson and Mondale in your experience—that the Anderson experience was a positive one for you in the sense that it was looking to a

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different way and turning your back on what was, in a sense? The Mondale experience was negative—and yet, in a strange way reinforcing—because it was looking back and not forward.

Galston: I think it's fair to say that Mondale in 1982 and '83 had hoped to run—I'm now imputing this to him because, given his Scandinavian reserve and his hatred of abstraction, he would never put it this way—as a kind of bridge between the older and the newer politics. But because of the way the primary campaign came to be structured, he had no choice but to run as the tribune of the old party. It was only by becoming crystal clear about that fault line that he was able to save his candidacy. And at that point, the gates slammed shut on the reform impulse—with one conspicuous exception, and I've actually written about this.

The permanent consequence of the capture of the Republican Party by supply-siders starting in mid- and late-1970s was the conversion of the Democratic Party into the party of fiscal responsibility. And the fact that it was Fritz Mondale who was articulating the philosophy of fiscal rectitude and balanced budgets signaled that historic reversal in the fiscal relationship of the two parties. That has stuck, and nobody has ever written this story. I'm probably one of the few people who could, but I don't have time.

Basically, the economic program that Bill Clinton enacted in 1993 was Walter Mondale's 1984 proposal with a few details changed. The impulse was the same.

Jones: Why do you make the judgments you do about Carter? It strikes me that there are roots also on the fiscal side with Carter, and also on the side of special interests, or "Let's do some things differently and not politics in the old way" and so forth.

Galston: One reason that so many of us in the Democratic center were attracted to Carter—now that you put it that way, why was I a Carter guy and not a [Morris] Mo Udall guy? Mo Udall was a lot more fun than Jimmy Carter, that's for sure.

It was because, on reflection, I can see that Carter's Democratic centrism (and more than that, his being in touch with the religious sensibilities of many Americans—including the sorts of people the Democrats have by and large lost touch with), his belief in fiscal rectitude—these were things that in one way or another, in a very inchoate way, I thought, ought to be part of the Democratic Party's political orientation.

The problem with Carter was not his intentions. It was what happened to them in the course of politics. By the way, to a lesser extent what I'm about to say is also true of Bill Clinton: He never figured out how to make his ideas as salable within the Democratic Party as they were within the country. Carter became less popular as he capitulated to the forces of the established Democratic Party. And the same thing happened to Bill Clinton in 1993 and 1994.

So my break with Carter had nothing to do with what he wanted to do. It was based on what he failed to do.

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Walcott: One way to interpret the Carter experience—at least in terms of his own party—is that he was ahead of his time, arguing for things that congressional Democrats, for example, weren't ready to accept.

Galston: And Bill Clinton was ahead of his time. And he may still be ahead of his time. I have said repeatedly—as a matter of fact, I think I may even have been imprudent enough to say it during the administration in one of the articles that your diligent graduate students found—Bill Clinton ran, and won, on the basis of ideas that enjoyed widespread support in the country, but much less widespread support within his own party. You can write the history of the first two years of the Clinton administration around that proposition.

Jones: Partly with Carter, it has to be stylistic, though, as well.

Galston: Carter, I think, was not a good politician.

Riley: Not enough of a ward heeler?

Galston: I have often said that among the best preparations for the Presidency is being Governor of a large state; among the worst is being Governor of a small state. The reason for that is you come to Washington thinking that you can dominate Congress the way you dominated your state legislature. What's typical about talented Governors of small states is that they are head and shoulders above the other politicians in their state, and they can—through force of intellect and character and a loyal dedicated staff—move the political system of those states. Jimmy Carter did it. Bill Clinton did it, God knows. Washington is not that way *at all*.

So when a Governor from a small state runs into the institutionalized inertia of the Washington Democratic Party, unless he knows what he's doing, he's "cruisin' for a bruisin'," and that's just what happened.

Jones: He was also term-limited in Georgia for a time.

Galston: Not in Arkansas, I can assure you. [laughter]

Jones: But in Georgia it fed into, I think, Carter's anti-political view that because you're only there for a short time, you have to get what's needed done. You do the right thing because you can't get reelected anyway.

Riley: You talked about the period of the late '80s and early '90s being an extraordinarily fruitful period for Democratic ideas. How much of that is attributable to Reagan and Reaganism?

Galston: Well, in the negative political sense, a lot. I have often said that Michael Dukakis's defeat was much more shattering for the Democratic Party than Walter Mondale's. By the summer of 1984, it was clear—to those who had eyes to see—that Walter Mondale was not going to beat Ronald Reagan. It was morning in America. And not only that, here's something I will never forget as long as I live. Ronald Reagan goes to France for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of D-Day. Remember this?

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Riley: Yes.

Galston: The entire Mondale campaign gathered in the press room to watch his famous speech on the cliffs overlooking Normandy beach. It was a cliff called Pointe du Hoc, and in a feat of incredible bravery, young army guys had rappelled up that cliff and had taken the German machine gun and other encampments on top. The ones who survived—these hobbling, gray-haired soldiers forty years after the fact—were arrayed with their backs to the Atlantic Ocean. The camera was on Reagan. And then, at the emotional peak of his speech, he pivoted towards them and said, "These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc."

And at that point, through the genius of Michael Deaver, the camera morphed from the picture of them as the sixty- and seventy-year-old gray-haired men they were to the brave young black-haired soldiers that they had been forty years ago. I looked around the Mondale press office. Everybody was crying, and so was I.

At that point I said to myself, *This is not a fair fight.* [laughter] That was the point. This is even before the summer. This was obviously early, the first week of June 1984. That was the point at which I knew in my gut that we were dead men walking.

On the basis of my encounter with Ronald Reagan in the two and a half years of the Mondale campaign, I had formed some negative views about the kind of politics that wasn't going to work anymore, nationally speaking. The conventional wisdom in the Democratic Party in the spring and summer of 1988 was that Michael Dukakis could slip the punch. I never believed that. He was up seventeen points in June of 1988, and I let it slip to a few friends of mine that I didn't think Dukakis was going to win. They were astonished. Apparently they repeated it, because a few days later I got a telephone call from David Broder. He said, "Hey, Galston, I hear you're one of two Democrats in Washington who doesn't think that Dukakis has this in the bag. Would you be willing to tell me why?" I said, "Yes."

Then he said, "Well, you know that I never talk with people on background." I said, "Yes." Then I proceeded to tell him why—based on my emerging understanding of American politics at the end of the 20th century—someone with Michael Dukakis's background was not going to beat George Herbert Walker Bush. It was a very fortifying experience when the campaign played out exactly the way I hypothesized that it would in my mind's eye in June of 1988. I said to myself, *If I was able to see this when he was up by seventeen points, if I understood something about the structure, the plate tectonics, of American politics, I have something solid to build on*.

I immediately began writing a sort of historical structural analysis of the Democratic Party and American politics, which I then publicly delivered in early 1989 at an annual convention of the Democratic Leadership Council. I'm sure there's a record of this someplace. I laid out my understanding of where the Democratic Party had gone astray—substantively, and in the eyes of the people. I did it as the keynote address on a panel that included, among others, Chuck Robb, Jim Blanchard, Dick Gephardt, and Jesse Jackson.

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After I finished this speech, all hell broke loose. There's a memorable picture, after the panel broke up, of Robb and Jesse Jackson going at it face-to-face, so close that they were jabbing their fingers into each other's chests. There are some famous pictures of this scrum with all the media booms hanging over it and concentric circles of people around it.

Then I spent the spring and summer coauthoring with another political scientist—a Berkeley Ph.D. named Elaine Kamarck—a political manifesto called *The Politics of Evasion*, which formulated this analysis and derived a political strategy from it. Al From and others regard that as sort of the political charter of the next phase of the New Democratic movement.

Jones: Were you at DLC [Democratic Leadership Council] at that time?

Galston: No.

Jones: Associated with it?

Galston: No. I had gradually come into their orbit in 1987.

Riley: How did that happen?

Galston: Beats the hell out of me. I'm quite serious about that. I became involved in a series of party renewal efforts during that period. I didn't think of myself as a DLC'er. I barely knew what the DLC was at that point. But I knew that the Party needed to be renewed. And I guess I wasn't too shy about saying so. So at some point I came onto their radar screen, and we talked off and on through 1988.

After the '88 election, I had breakfast at *La Colline* restaurant with Al From and Will Marshall and a bunch of other people. We had a very good conversation. At the end of it, From looked at me and said, "Galston, I think we're going to make you the most famous political scientist in the United States." I said to him, "No, I don't think that's going to happen. But if I can be of any service to you, I'll be happy to be." That then led to the invitation to keynote the 1989 convention, and then we were really off and running.

Walcott: Get us to the point where you discover Bill Clinton and he discovers you.

Jones: Before that, you worked for [Albert] Gore in '88.

Galston: I did indeed. I'm one of the few guys who went down with the good ship Gore—not once but twice. I'm a slow learner. [laughter]

Riley: What was your role there?

Jones: And when did it start?

Galston: It started in the spring of '88. Gore's 1988 campaign manager, Fred Martin, was a colleague from the Mondale campaign. He'd been a speechwriter, he was a fellow Ph.D.—he

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had a Ph.D. in American History. He kept reaching out to me as the nascent Gore campaign took shape in '87, early '88. I kept on saying, "No, no, I just can't do it. I can't do it." Finally I capitulated and said, "Okay, Fred, I'll help. I'm not leaving my day job this time, but I'll do as much as I can as long as the Gore campaign lasts."

I joined a few weeks before Super Tuesday, and as is traditional with my political involvements, I went down with the ship. As a matter of fact, with regard to the Gore campaign, I've often characterized myself as one of the few recorded instances of a rat swimming *toward* the ship. [laughter]

Riley: I'm trying to recall when Gore actually pulled out. It would have been not long after Super Tuesday.

Galston: No, it was long after Super Tuesday. Remember the New York primary? Never to be forgotten. What a primary. Of course, Gore's great sponsor in New York at that point was none other than his honor, Mayor [Ed] Koch. The basic structure of the campaign was this: Gore would start campaigning in the morning, usually at a subway stop. At another subway stop, across the street or something, Koch would pop off and say something about Jesse Jackson. The reporters would then run across the street and say, "Senator Gore, do you know what your chief New York backer, Ed Koch, just said about Jesse Jackson? What do you have to say about that?"

In New York, of course, there are about ten news cycles a day, so this just kept happening over and over and over again. It was the worst fiasco I've ever been involved in. And New York is typically Waterloo for white Protestant candidates from the south anyway. If you're Catholic, you're fine in New York. But if you're a white Southern Protestant, you're a fish out of water, and it's just horrible.

Jones: Let's do a comparison now with Anderson and Mondale and Gore as candidates.

Galston: Gore was getting closer. One of the views that I had formed during that period—which was just absolutely chiseled into stone by the famous Dukakis tank ride—was that if the Democratic nominee (particularly after the sorry twenty-year history of Vietnam and the post-Vietnam party) were not credible on defense and foreign policy issues, if the American people couldn't imagine him in the role of Commander-in-Chief, he wouldn't be elected President—unless the world changed so fundamentally that it no longer mattered.

Little did I know that the world was going to change so fundamentally that it would no longer matter, at least for a while. It does now. It's interesting to speculate what would have happened to Bill Clinton if he'd been running before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism rather than in what I now refer to as the "interval period." Be that as it may, Gore, of all of the Democrats in the race in 1988, was the one who seemed to me to have gotten it on that issue.

Also, as a young man with a mixed bag of political experiences—including running for statewide office in a state that's much more centrist than places that most Democrats come from—he would at least be willing to entertain some dissenting thoughts. He was not a fully formed

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political personality. Hell, he started running for President at the age of 39. How could he have been? There were some possibilities, possibilities that I didn't see in the rest of the field.

So in addition to my ties of personal friendship with Fred Martin, it was a pretty easy choice. If I was going to help anybody, I was going to help Gore.

Jones: And he was active in the DLC at that point.

Galston: Fred Martin?

Jones: No, no, Gore.

Galston: Yes, yes he was. But frankly, that connection, since I barely knew what the DLC was in late '87, early '88, that connection was not—

Jones: But it's coming together.

Galston: Right. In other words, there was what [Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe called "elective affinities." Even if you're not quite aware of what it is that's lining up the iron filings in a particular direction, there is a grab, there is a magnetic force.

Jones: You took that Goethe quote right out of my mouth. Not bad for a ward heeler. Was his heart in it?

Galston: Who? Gore's?

Jones: Yes.

Galston: Gosh, that's the second time you've asked that question. Of course it was. Nobody twisted his arm to get him into the race. Some people lied to him, but that was a different matter.

Walcott: What's the political lesson from Gore's failure in '88 other than don't get too close to Ed Koch in the New York primary?

Galston: I actually have just drafted a paper, an essay for publication, on the history, the rise, and the partial victories—that's the title of the paper, "Partial Victory"—about the New Democrats. One of the major messages of the Gore campaign—which, by the way, the DLC and the New Democratic movement took away and put in the bank—was that manipulating the party rules was not going to suffice to change the direction of the party. Let me back up two steps.

There is something to the proposition that the DLC got its start from the fear and disaffection of southern Democrats in the wake of the Mondale campaign. I remember very clearly that by the fall of 1984, you could not build a platform long enough, south of the Mason-Dixon Line, that southern Democratic politicians were willing to occupy it with Walter Mondale.

Riley: Yes, I was in Alabama at the time.

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Galston: That was how bad it was. So there is something to the proposition that the DLC began as a regional movement rather than an ideological movement. The basic political argument was very simple: Democrats can't win unless they do a whole lot better in the south than Walter Mondale did. But they're not going to do a whole lot better in the south unless some things about the nominating process change. So southerners and nascent New Democrats bet the farm. They pushed all of the chips out onto the table on Super Tuesday, and it didn't work. There's a reason why it didn't work: The southern Democratic Party at that point had lost its center of moderate Democrats and had become—to a first approximation—a coalition of African-Americans and white liberals.

So it's no accident that Jesse Jackson did very well on Super Tuesday, it's no accident that Michael Dukakis won the biggest prizes on Super Tuesday. Gore did very well. He won five primaries, and he came in second in five others. But that wasn't good enough, because there were nearly twenty states in play on Super Tuesday. He had a slice of the pie.

The fact was that maximally friendly party rules had not sufficed. In any year when Michael Dukakis finishes first and Jesse Jackson finishes second, and nobody else finishes, that's proof positive that if you're trying to reorient the party, you haven't done it. The lesson of the Gore campaign was that it was going to have to be an effort on a much broader political ideological front, and that change—rearranging the deck chairs on the sinking ship of the Democratic National Committee, or rearranging primary and nominating rules—was not nearly fundamental enough to get the job done. It was at that point that the DLC made a fundamental decision to go in a different direction. And it was at that point that I joined forces with them.

I sort of knew bits and pieces of this. I wasn't able to connect the dots. But in retrospect it's absolutely clear what happened. Phase one of the New Democratic movement was the four years from Mondale's defeat to Dukakis's defeat. After that, it was a totally different ballgame. The idea of an alternative governing agenda and an alternative political analysis of how majorities are put together in American politics became the overriding imperatives for the New Democratic platform.

Walcott: Let's bring Bill Clinton in. How did you first become aware of him, connected to him, and he to you?

Galston: I first caught sight of him during the Mondale campaign. I've forgotten when this was. We did visit the Arkansas state house, Mondale and a small entourage in which I was included. I had no particular impression of Bill Clinton at that point. I was older than he was—still am, as a matter of fact. But the first time I had a serious conversation with him was, I believe, in 1990. The DLC had a retreat, I think in Williamsburg. It may have been Charlottesville.

At that point, he had clearly read the notorious manifesto I coauthored, *The Politics of Evasion*. It had been published in the fall of 1989. We had, as you might imagine, a very spirited conversation. We were agreeing emphatically, but two things were clear to me on the basis of that one conversation: First of all, Bill Clinton had it. And secondly, he got it. He had enormous political skills, charm, and considerable intellectual agility. He's smarter than just about any

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college professor I'd ever met. Not along a different dimension, as smart analytically and dialectically as anybody you'd ever want to meet. It was also clear to me that this alternative political analysis we were developing was something that resonated with every fiber of his being in all of his political experiences. It was clear by early 1990 that Clinton was going to be the guy.

Riley: For you or the presumptive nominee?

Galston: For us, meaning that he would be—if he were able to bring it off—the New Democrat standard bearer. I'm comparing that moment of unity and clarity to what happened, let's say, in 2003, 2004, where the New Democratic movement was all over the map. There were people working for Lieberman, people working for [John] Kerry, people working for [John] Edwards. There were New Democrats flirting with Wes Clark. There was just total chaos. In 1990—Stalinist unity, but not because anybody was forcing us into it.

Riley: But there was a truncated field of Democrats at that point because of Bush's political standing. I mean, in 1990, his approval ratings—

Galston: 1990 is not the same thing as 1991. And it wasn't until the fall of '90, early spring of 1991—the first Gulf War—that Bush soared into the political stratosphere. So Democrats were making their calculations in the spring, summer, and fall of '91. And most of them got it wrong.

[BREAK]

Riley: When is it that you moved to the Washington area permanently? That occurs before the period we're talking about?

Galston: Very much so, June of 1982. When I joined the Mondale campaign, I took a leave of absence from the University of Texas, expecting to go back. But it didn't happen.

Riley: Your appointment at Maryland was post-Clinton or pre-Clinton?

Galston: Pre-Clinton.

Jones: Eighty-eight, right?

Galston: Yes. I spent four years, the *interregnum* years, at a now-defunct Washington think tank called the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies. Then in the spring of 1988 I was approached by the University of Maryland for a joint appointment in the School of Public Affairs, which is our [John F.] Kennedy School [of Government], and a research center called the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, which I've directed since I left the Clinton administration.

Riley: So that's what's going on professionally at the time you're beginning to develop an association with Bill Clinton.

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Jones: Can you talk about the hook-up with DLC and Progressive Policy Institute? And in doing that, you make reference to a group of people who decided, *Yes, Bill Clinton is the guy*.

Galston: Yes.

Jones: Identify those people and some of those dynamics.

Galston: As you probably know, the guy who's really driven the DLC since its inception nearly twenty years ago is Al From. His long-time comrade-in-arms, Will Marshall, has—since the establishment of the Progressive Policy Institute—driven the policy side. But I'm quite sure—and if you want chapter and verse on this, read Kenny Baer's book, if you haven't. This is a blow-by-blow history of the rise of the New Democratic movement, but Kenny gives a history of that (which I think is absolutely accurate) about Al deciding early on that Bill Clinton and the New Democratic movement were a match made in heaven. Each had something to offer the other.

Under Clinton's leadership, the DLC could move to the forefront politically and substantively. And not only that, the relationship could enable Bill Clinton to move around the country on somebody else's dime in the guise—a legitimate guise—of establishing chapters in various states, but also plant his own flag. It took Al a long time to persuade Clinton to do it. But once the seduction was completed, the partnership worked out exactly as planned.

Jones: Talk about your participation in or role—

Galston: This is an area where what I said at the beginning of this interview is true in spades. I do not have a clear memory of the sequence of events in 1987 and 1988 that gradually brought me into the DLC orbit. All I know is that I was in active conversation with those folks by 1988, that my views about the likely fate of the Dukakis campaign—which David Broder published in a column—certainly helped to cement the relationship. In the immediate wake of the Dukakis campaign, we had fully come together. I've talked about that breakfast at La Colline where—after I presented the outlines of what became *The Politics of Evasion*—it clearly crystallized in academic, analytical form, some of the political intuitions that the DLC folks had been developing through the mid 1980s. At that point it was clear that we were together.

Jones: But you didn't have any official position?

Galston: Never did. I've always been an unpaid fellow traveler, never been an official of the DLC.

Walcott: What was your role with the nascent Clinton Presidential campaign?

Galston: I don't want to exaggerate it: basically outside kibitzer. I was not on the staff of the campaign. I was not traveling with the candidate. I met with him a couple of times. I knew what the country was in for when I had a meeting with him at Logan Airport. There were four of us arrayed around a table about half this size (it was more nearly square than anything else). Four

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people and four little packets of cookies. I don't think I need to tell the rest of this story. [laughter] I found out two things about Bill Clinton that day: how long his arms are and how big his appetite is. [laughter]

Riley: This is in Boston?

Galston: In Logan Airport.

Riley: What were you doing in Boston? Did you travel with him?

Galston: I traveled to this meeting. It involved me and Elaine Kamarck and a couple of others. These were people who'd been through Democratic primaries, and we were beginning to talk with him about what it meant to go through a Democratic primary.

Riley: Who would have extended the invitation for you to meet with them?

Galston: I'm sure it was part of the DLC apparatus. This would not have happened if Al From or someone who reported to him had not put this delegation together. I'll be seeing Elaine next week, and she probably knows the answer to that question.

Riley: She should be on our list of people to talk with.

Galston: You'd be crazy not to.

Jones: So your role in the campaign was limited.

Galston: I got a lot of telephone calls, and obviously I answered them. I was on a lot of conference calls. I can remember some very agitated discussions about what Bill Clinton should say about healthcare in the wake of the plan that Bob Kerrey had put on the table right before the New Hampshire primary, etc. So there were things like that.

Walcott: Did you write position papers, speeches?

Galston: I contributed. But, as I said, compared to my involvement in the Anderson campaign, the Mondale campaign, the Gore campaign, I would characterize my relationship to the Clinton campaign as much more of a classic outside, episodic advisor.

Riley: Do you recall who you were mostly dealing with inside the camp? Was it Bruce?

Galston: That's easy. Bruce Reed was the guy inside. He was at the epicenter of the policy process. I witnessed that from afar with some envy, because he had a role as issues director of that campaign, which, for the structural reasons we've already talked about, was just not in the cards for the issues director of the Mondale campaign. Bill Clinton hadn't been on the national political stage all of his life. He'd been someplace else, and he was in the forefront of new policy development. So there was a kind of exciting fluidity—that's the charitable way of putting it.

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Riley: There was a series of three important speeches in 1991 that Bruce is instrumental in.

Galston: Oh, yes.

Riley: Were you involved in them?

Galston: Very much so.

Riley: Anything that you recall about those, specifically?

Galston: Writing speeches with or for Bill Clinton is not a linear process, and most of it tends to take place in the hours immediately before the speech. The contrast between Bill Clinton and George Bush (the lesser) on the speechwriting process is really stark. It is really night and day, polar opposites: orderly, linear process versus creative chaos.

Writing a speech for Bill Clinton was a lot like writing a script for a Hollywood movie. Everybody was involved. You were doing it and doing it and doing it, and if you thought the speech was done but you weren't the person driving with him to the venue, you were wrong.

Riley: Did you learn this in '91 or are these realizations—

Galston: By the time the first of those three speeches was done—the famous "New Covenant" speech—I knew what it was like.

Walcott: Basically that didn't change throughout his Presidency.

Galston: Famously it didn't change. There are these great State of the Union speech stories that we've all heard, and they're all true.

Jones: How did you get your job? Through Bruce Reed?

Galston: No. Here's the sequence of events. In the immediate wake of the election, Al and Bruce—who were chair and deputy at the policy side of transition—asked me to take charge of two transition groups, one dealing with developing the legislative blueprints for what became AmeriCorps, and the other to develop the legislative blueprint for what became the direct lending program.

So I spent a very intense six weeks, meeting almost every day, getting lobbied by every interest group under the sun. I had Sally Mae lobbyists in my living room at all hours of the night. It was really an amazing process once it got out that I was head of these two transition committees. We finished our reports, made our recommendations, wrote them up, and delivered them on time. This was in the middle of December. I said, "Okay, that's that." I had no expectation of going into the White House. As I frequently said, my courses were assigned, syllabi were typed, students had signed up, and then a funny thing happened on the way to the spring semester.

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I was in the Clinton campaign office in downtown Washington, which was in the process of being dismantled. People were throwing things into boxes and carrying away furniture, etc. I was actually being interviewed by Steve Waldman—who was already thinking about writing his book—and the phone rang. It was Harold Ickes from Little Rock. He said a few words and then handed the phone to one of his deputies. We had a talk. I think I didn't quite understand what was going on, because the deputy then turned, after a few minutes, to Ickes, put her hand over the receiver—but imperfectly, so I could still hear what was going on—and said to Harold, "Gee, I'm not sure he's going to come down to Little Rock."

So Ickes grabbed the phone, and in his inevitable curmudgeonly fashion, said, "Get your ass down to Little Rock." Being an ex-Marine, I could certainly recognize a direct order when I heard one. So I got my ass down to Little Rock, suspecting at that point that it certainly had something to do with a position in the administration.

Jones: This is what time again?

Galston: This is early January of 1993, something like January 10. This is part and parcel of the disorderly process that led to the constitution of the White House staff.

There was a lot going on behind the scenes at that point that I do not understand. Some of it, I think, involved Hillary [Clinton] and some tension at that point between her and the DLC guys. I heard rumors about some tension between Bruce and some of the people who were known to be Hillary's people. So it's possible—but this is not something I can verify based on facts known to me—that I was being wheeled in as a DLC type who—because of his distance from the campaign—had not run afoul of these internal campaign dynamics. I could field left, bat right. But, as I said, I don't know that to be true.

Jones: So you went to Little Rock. Who did you see?

Galston: I saw Carol Rasco.

Jones: She had already been appointed?

Galston: None of us had been formally announced. But it was clear that she was the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy designate. I couldn't have said that at that point because I had no idea of how the White House was organized and what these titles meant, but she was clearly in that position at that time.

Riley: Had you met or talked to Carol before?

Galston: I might have talked to her on the telephone once or twice.

Riley: No enduring relationship.

Galston: Had no relationship.

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Riley: What was the substance of your conversations with Carol? Did you meet her at the campaign headquarters?

Galston: I actually think I met her at her house. I know she was off doing something. I'm an amateur jazz pianist, so I sat down at her family spinet—she was quite late—and I just noodled jazz for an hour or so. That's what I was doing when she walked in.

Jones: And the discussion was?

Galston: I cannot remember. That's an excellent example of the sort of thing I can't remember.

Walcott: At what point did you get an offer and discover what your position was going to be if you took it?

Galston: About 36 hours after my trip to Little Rock.

Riley: So you'd already come back to Washington?

Galston: I'd already come back to Washington. I do recall—and this may be a way of connecting the dots—I think she was sounding me out to be the Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, singular. Then there was more by-play behind the scenes (that I know nothing about except by rumor), and by the time she called me 36 hours later, it was to offer me a position as one of the *two* deputies on the Domestic Policy Council.

Walcott: And Bruce Reed had been settled on as the other one?

Galston: I assume so, yes.

Jones: Did you have any conversations with Bruce during this time that you recall? Comparing how you were approached?

Galston: No, we did not.

Riley: This is—what? just a week before the inauguration at this point?

Galston: Yes. I do recall, in that telephone call, after the trip to Little Rock, I said, very imperturbably, "Well, the arrangement that you're describing to me now is somewhat different from what we were talking about in Little Rock."

Jones: This is the call with Rasco. She called you?

Galston: Yes. And she said yes, she acknowledged that. I said words to the effect, just checking, it's not a deal breaker, not a problem, God knows. I just wanted to make sure I was understanding the new terrain accurately.

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Riley: Now that you're reflecting on this, do you remember what the differences in the terrain were?

Galston: I do. The difference in the terrain was very straightforward. As I said, when I was talking with her in Little Rock, it was my distinct impression that she had a single-headed deputy arrangement. Then 36 hours later—after what I suspect, but have never verified, was some pretty vigorous behind-the-scenes politicking on behalf of someone who'd served Clinton loyally as his issues director for a year and a half—this dual-headed deputy arrangement was devised.

Riley: According to the original arrangement, was there any discussion that you recall about specific divisions of labor between you and her?

Galston: No, no. Nor would there have been, because as deputy, my role was to be of service to her. As you may know already, once the dual deputy arrangement was agreed to, almost the first order of business Bruce and I settled was the division of the issues terrain between us. We had that discussion, obviously, within days of walking into the White House. That was a very bright line. We both wanted it to be unambiguously clear who was responsible for what.

Walcott: The two of you worked that out?

Galston: We did. We worked it out in draft form, then, obviously, we presented it to Carol—I cannot remember whether it was orally or in writing or both—and she assented to it. That then structured our areas of responsibility as long as I was in the White House.

Riley: Was it an amicable division?

Galston: Totally. As it happened, I was more interested in half of the issues terrain, and he was more interested in the other half, and there was almost no overlap between our two lists. It was clear that he wanted the heart of his agenda to be welfare and crime. And it was clear that the heart of my agenda was going to be human capital investment, plus, as it turned out, a lot of other things. But if you're looking at the big areas of domestic policy, he got the two that politically had a significantly higher profile during that period, namely welfare and crime. They were also the two that he cared the most about. I—given my lifelong occupation of educator—was not at all unhappy to get the education portfolio. To say nothing of the fact that it built on work I had been doing during the transition.

It was also clear that I was going to take the lead on behalf of the Domestic Policy Council in the development of the national service program. I was way up the curve not only on the policy, but also on the politics of that, because of the six weeks I'd spent working that issue during the transition.

Jones: Was the point ever made that the deputy position had to be a heavyweight and since neither of you were yet, you had to have two?

Galston: Or, if I stand on Bruce's shoulders, then I'm Yao Ming. [laughter]

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Riley: Before we get completely away from this period, I want to dial back and just hit a couple of loose ends related to the period before you get in the White House. Did you go to the Democratic convention?

Galston: Yes.

Riley: Did you have a role in the convention in '92?

Galston: Not a big one. I was there. You ask me what I was doing. Frankly, there are very few things that can be described as big roles at conventions, unless you happen to be one of the stage managers, or if there are some issues brush fires to help put out. I've been good friends with Joe Lieberman for a long time, and clearly after his nomination in 2000 there were some issues brush fires to put out, so I had a sort of informal role with that. But with Clinton-Gore there were no brush fires and Ron Brown, bless his heart—although his heart was elsewhere, his heart of hearts—decided that the '92 convention was going to be a Clinton-Gore convention, period, full stop. And if you weren't with the program, you weren't on the program. So there weren't a lot of loose ends in 1992. It was orchestrated very efficiently and tightly.

Walcott: Were you involved in drafting the platform?

Galston: I must have been, because that was a sort of "all hands on deck" DLC operation. But I can't remember the details. For example, Elaine Kamarck and I had written a paper on family policy that was almost as notorious as our political manifesto, and that found its way pretty much lock, stock, and barrel into the Democratic Party platform.

Riley: Were you involved at all in construction of the campaign book, *Putting People First*?

Galston: No, that was very much an inside operation.

Riley: Were you involved in debate preparation or anything specific to the campaign?

Galston: I can't remember. But once again, the fact that I can't remember tells you most of what you need to know. I was not intimately involved in the 1992 Clinton campaign. Frankly, I wasn't bitterly disappointed not to be, because I really felt I'd made my major contribution in the '89-'92 period. I spent most of my time in the summer and fall of '92 co-authoring the chapters that found their way into "Mandate for Change."

I had occasion, thanks to Jessica, to reread the chapter on Presidential transitioning and appointments that Elaine and I wrote, and I have to say, I wouldn't change a word of that thing. That was as good a piece of political institutional analysis as I will ever do, and I believe to this day that if Clinton had paid attention to that, he would have had a significantly different and better transition.

Walcott: That brings to mind a broad question I wanted to ask. The 1992 transition was famously disorganized.

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Galston: Yes.

Walcott: What was the cost of that from your standpoint?

Galston: There were two principal costs, and both of them are well chronicled so I'm not going to break a lot of new ground here. First of all, the emphasis on the construction of the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet led to a White House staff that was constructed late, on the fly and almost by remainder. I don't think any of the obvious warning flags about the differences between campaign and governing, and what you're looking for in a campaign staff and in a White House staff, were raised. And if they were, nobody saluted a single one of them. That was the first problem.

The second problem is that the issues agenda was not appropriately clarified. The one area where I think some clarity did occur was around the fundamental fiscal choices. By the time Bill Clinton took office, it was pretty clear that Rubin had won the big game, and Reich and company had lost it. Then it was just going to be a question of filling in the blanks. There was a rear-guard skirmish about the ill-fated stimulus package, but basically Clinton had bet his Presidency on Rubinomics by the time he took office. That was an unusually clear decision and an unusually early decision because of the obvious centrality of the economic issue. Whatever you thought the rest of the domestic agenda could look like, everybody saw that the President's first order of business had to be to redeem—in some way, shape, or form—his campaign promises on that issue.

Secondly, Bob Rubin—whom I came to know quite well during that period and subsequently—is not someone who's comfortable with slack policy processes. So the fact that he emerged as *primus inter pares* was really of decisive importance.

Walcott: Had the domestic staff, Rasco's staff, your staff, had more time to sort out priorities and prepare a policy agenda, would it have ultimately had more impact within the administration? Or was it the case that the economics were dominant no matter what?

Galston: I think that in the early going, a fundamental agenda decision had been made really early. The lead had to be the economic plan—that is, the macroeconomic and fiscal plan. The situation of the country, the logic of the campaign, made that mandatory. So the question was not what was going to come first. The question was what was going to come next. And that's where the struggle set in. You really had a sort of a triangular struggle at that point. For the rest of 1993, the issue was what the next phase of the economic plan—particularly the international dimension, NAFTA [North America Free Trade Agreement] and GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade]—was going to be. Is it going to be healthcare, or is it going to be welfare?

Riley: We'll want to dig into that thoroughly.

Galston: You could write a history of the twelve months from the late winter of '93 to the late winter of '94 around that triangular struggle and you wouldn't miss much.

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Jones: I had one more question on the transition and your role with the task forces you headed up. You said that Al From was principal in appointing you to these?

Galston: He was the head of the policy development piece of the transition, and Bruce was his deputy in that process.

Jones: When you finished your reports, the reports went to—?

Galston: To the two of them. I handed the copies of the report personally to Bruce and Al.

Jones: They then did what with them?

Galston: Well, you've spoken to Bruce. You should probably speak to Al, and they'll be able to tell you. I don't know.

Walcott: So you had no evidence later on that your reports had provoked anything?

Galston: Let me put it this way. We ended up doing, during 1993, virtually everything that was in those two reports. Now whether there was a causal link between the reports and what we ended up doing, or whether the fact that on the part of the domestic policy council, I was in the middle of both of those first-year policy developments in the White House—I can't say with any conviction. I do not know what the paper flow was. I said to myself when I handed those reports to Bruce and Al, *My job is done*. I thought that would be the end of my formal relationship with the Clinton administration. I made it very clear that I had no expectation of going into the administration. I didn't serve on the transition committee with that aspiration in mind. It happened, but that's not why I did it.

Jones: Did the reports deal only with policy substance, or also personnel?

Galston: They said nothing about personnel whatsoever. That wasn't my department.

Jones: Apart from your name on it.

Galston: There was a personnel track, and it was clear if you thought about it for a nanosecond, that the people who were serving on those policy transition groups were people who were way up the curve substantively and who were also connected. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been on those groups. So the groups, in a way, represented a first cut at relevant personnel.

Jones: Were there members of the group, apart from you, who later were appointed to positions?

Galston: Oh yes, many, many, virtually all, different kinds of positions. One of the people on the national service group was Richard Danzig, who ended up as Secretary of the Navy. Shirley Sagawa was on the national service group, and you know where she ended up, Melanne Verveer was on it. That's where I met her for the first time. I met a lot of people for the first time in those two groups who turned out to be pretty important in my life and pretty important in the Clinton campaign. So yes, there was a relationship between the personnel track and the policy track. But

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my mandate, which I stuck to very strictly, was to prepare reasonably detailed—not legislative language—legislative specifications, blueprints, for the first year of policy in those two areas. And that's exactly what we did.

Walcott: Were you taking into account political strategy, the situation in Congress, or just policy?

Galston: Frankly, we didn't think that was our job either. Obviously, none of us had been born yesterday, and we were aware of the fact that, for example, fiscal realities would surely determine how large the national service program could start and how fast it could grow. We took a stab at a plan that over a five-year period would have ramped it up to about a quarter of a million annually. I think 200,000 was the number we settled on. We planned within that horizon. If we had known in December of 1992 about the mixed congressional reaction to the proposal (which we learned by June of 1993), we might have ratcheted it down somewhat. We thought that 200,000 was a reasonable compromise between what Clinton had talked about during the campaign and what the political market would bear. We didn't get that one right; but the basic structure of what ended up going into place bore pretty close resemblance to the basic structure of what the working group had worked out during the transition.

Riley: You mentioned your contributions to "Mandate for Change," and this is something I think is important. Do you recall when you were approached about doing this, or when you learned that there was going to be a volume like this produced?

Galston: Some time in 1991.

Riley: That early?

Galston: Oh yes, because the idea was that we would have something to put on the President-elect's desk the day after he was elected, and it would be a leaner, meaner version of what the Heritage Foundation had done for Reagan.

Riley: So it was self-conscious mimicry.

Galston: Oh you betcha, right down to the title, "Mandate for Leadership, Mandate for Change." This was imitation being the sincerest form of flattery. Now, what we produced was a lot more parsimonious. The Heritage Foundation produced, in effect, two yellow books, and we produced one slim volume with twelve or thirteen chapters, maybe fourteen.

Riley: Yes, fourteen.

Galston: It was very clear that Elaine and I were going to do the family policy chapter. I don't remember the sequence of events clearly, but she and I may have proposed to Will and Al that we also co-author what became the Presidential transition chapter. I can't remember whether they came to us with that idea or we went to them.

Riley: It's a striking piece of reading now, in retrospect.

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Galston: I hadn't read it for ten years, and I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Walcott: If it makes you feel good, that has become the conventional wisdom, there's no question about it. The various projects that tried to prepare the 2000 transition for whoever won were 100% in synch with what you and Elaine wrote back then.

Riley: Do you remember how you went about preparing yourselves to do this piece on the transition?

Galston: I do. I sat down and read a small sheath of books by political scientists and political pundits on Presidential transitions, not that many of them, it turned out. I read them very carefully, took very detailed notes. Then I worked through my notes and pulled out the points that seemed to me the most important, most immediately relevant to the circumstances we faced, and that cohered into a story we could tell. Elaine did the same thing. Some coauthorships are difficult, but this one was relatively easy.

Riley: This was true of the family chapter as well?

Galston: Absolutely. We don't have the same writing styles at all, but we work together very comfortably.

Riley: You begin by saying there are two keys to reasserting leadership: "The principal challenge facing President Bill Clinton is to reassert Presidential leadership over the Democratic Party." Clearly, your sense about the lessons learned from previous—

Galston: It was absolutely clear to us that Clinton's ideas were more powerful in the country than they were in the party. That's why we led off the document with that statement.

Riley: "Two keys to reasserting leadership: Number one: the President must systematically define his mandate." How did they do on that? You're a professor, give us a grade.

Galston: It wouldn't be higher than C minus.

Riley: Any places where you were particularly successful during that period?

Galston: This sort of piggybacks on the discussion we just had. The success was in focusing on the economy and defining a clear path forward. Virtually everything else was a failure.

Riley: "Number two: must place loyalists in positions to achieve success." You've touched on that a bit, but—

Galston: Failure, failure on all fronts. The construction of the Cabinet was guided by other principles. The construction of the White House was guided by no principles at all. I can't be blunter than that, can I?

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Walcott: Do you have any insight into what Clinton's thinking was when, for example, he appointed Mack McLarty Chief of Staff and decided somehow that there would not be a strong staff system?

Galston: This is what I meant before when I said the best preparation for being President is to be Governor of a large state, and the worst to be Governor of a small state. Not only are you accustomed to thinking of the legislature as something that can be manipulated, but your sense of executive leadership is a highly personalized one, and the idea of a structure that enables your effectiveness is not on your radar screen.

You do it yourself. You deliver speeches by writing twenty words on the back of an envelope, and if you're really smart and really quick that's enough. You're personally involved in every detail of the policy process. You are the sun, and everybody rotates around you, right? A lot of people have access to you. That's classic Governor-of-a-small-state syndrome. Mack McLarty was selected because he's a decent man, utterly loyal to the President, grew up with him and would not interfere with that model of executive leadership, would enable it rather than interfere with it. It's obvious.

Riley: One other comment for you to reflect on: "There are severe penalties for being too cautious and incremental in defining a mandate: opportunities squandered, momentum used, cynicism reinforced."

Galston: I'm sure if you interviewed the former President as part of this project, he would tell you that the decision to lead domestic policy with an issue that collapsed catastrophically and ignominiously dealt a blow to the momentum of the Clinton Presidency from which it never recovered. From the collapse of the healthcare plan to the last day of his Presidency he was on the defensive.

Riley: But that's not incremental.

Galston: No, there are two ways you can go wrong. One is to squander the opportunity. And the other is to swing for the fences and miss the ball. So, no, I can't fault the President for timidity, but I'm sure he would fault himself for judgment.

Riley: Two other questions about the transitional period. Were there discussions before you went into the White House about how the National Economic Council was going to work?

Galston: Sure there were. I wasn't party to them, but in current Defense Department parlance, it was stood up so quickly—and Bob Rubin is such a smart operator—I'm sure the ink had been dry on his contract with the President for a long time by the time he walked into the White House for the first time.

Riley: But that was not something that you had previously given thought to?

Galston: None whatsoever. You don't see any reflection of anything like that in the transition memo. If somebody had put that question to me in October of 1992, I wouldn't necessarily have

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dismissed it as a bad idea. It would have occurred to me if I'd thought about it for a nanosecond that it would surely come at the expense of the Domestic Policy Council. But it strikes me as entirely appropriate if a President chooses to create an institutionalized base for what he's denominated as his major policy focus. And, speaking out of school, I think the NEC [National Economic Council] worked brilliantly under Rubin's leadership and not badly under his successors.

Jones: What is your analysis of why it went so badly in this transition period? Does it require experience on the part of the President himself, or sufficient knowledge of Washington to at least appoint people who are savvy about Washington, as Reagan did?

Galston: That's a good question.

Jones: He certainly had some good political people.

Galston: Yes. But one of the problems was that the Carter administration and the Mondale campaigns were viewed as such fiascos—for reasons that I can understand—that people who had been associated with them, particularly in a political capacity, were pretty much screened out of the Clinton inner circle. There was a real bias against them. What that meant was that people in senior levels of the transition—and certainly in the White House—almost without exception were devoid of experience at that level. It didn't have to be that way. I'll just put one name on the table. Stuart Eizenstat could have been enormously important to the functioning of the White House during the early months and beyond.

Walcott: My impression is Anne Wexler was trying to be.

Galston: But she didn't have a position in the White House either. Almost without exception, if you had been associated in a senior capacity in the Carter administration, you were not on anybody's list. That was nearly a disqualification.

Riley: It was a positive disqualification rather than disqualification by absence of prior association.

Galston: I know for a fact that the people who tried to put Stuart's name forward for a senior White House position in the early going were rebuffed. That's the only case I know about for sure, but I can't believe it was the only case. It's a very conspicuous example of a self-denying ordinance.

Walcott: So you really have a double whammy because new administrations of the opposite party always reject the handiwork of their predecessors as wrong. That's what they've been campaigning against. But now Clinton is also rejecting the handiwork of his own partisan predecessors as inadequate. You virtually have to invent it from scratch.

Galston: No kidding.

Walcott: That was the situation they were in.

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Galston: Very unfortunate. The White House was young people with campaign experience and then some old Clinton friends, and not a lot in between. If you added up all the years of White House experience of all the people in the Clinton White House, I don't think you would have gotten to a hundred. I'm not sure you would have gotten to fifty. As a matter of fact, it's not clear to me you would have gotten to twenty-five. If you'd been in the White House before, you were extremely unlikely to be there then. Go figure.

Riley: Did you have a conversation with the President or the First Lady about your position before inauguration day?

Galston: No.

Riley: So your contacts were exclusively through Carol Rasco, or Harold Ickes.

Galston: Yes. If you stood me up in a court of law and asked me to swear to it, I can't swear that there wasn't a President-elect laying on of hands, but I sure don't remember it.

Riley: So you accept the position a few days before inauguration—

Galston: Less than a week before inauguration.

Riley: You and Carol and Bruce meet before inauguration day to establish these parameters for your office?

Galston: No, it was after inauguration day, sometime in that first week. I'm pretty sure that's right. Among other things, in the parlance of the time, the Clinton administration in waiting didn't break camp—that is, didn't leave Little Rock and come to Washington—until just a few days before. That's not to say these meetings didn't happen. But I know for a fact that the division of domestic policy between me and Bruce occurred in a meeting between the two of us in his office shortly after the inauguration, days rather than weeks.

Jones: I have one other question about the transition, which is a point I make about Clinton in my Brookings book on transitions.

Riley: Published subsequent to his piece, right?

Jones: Right. In puzzling about the question I asked you, one of the conclusions I drew that I'd like to get your reaction to was that, in a way, it wasn't only inexperience, but was also a question of a different style of governing—which I labeled "campaigning to govern." The Clinton folks didn't themselves know how to go about managing a transition into that kind of governing style. Nor was Washington itself prepared to accept that kind of governing style, even if they understood it. And that helped to explain some of the problems that developed.

The real strength, then, of what Clinton was doing consistently was an agenda articulation function that was a direct consequence of his abilities in campaigning and constantly testing and

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refining and articulating what was going on. Anyway, I make the point that that's a permanent change that the Bush folks learned something from. I want to get your reaction to that.

Galston: Could I turn the tables and ask you a question or two? On the basis of that brief description, I'm not sure what this key phrase, "campaigning to govern," actually means. As distinguished from what?

Jones: From in-town governing, accepting the role of the Presidency as essentially an "in-town" operation, the emergence, truly, of the permanent campaign.

Galston: Well, yes and no. I would turn that on its head and say that a reasonable critique of Clinton, especially during '93, is that having campaigned brilliantly—in exactly the role you just described—he then pivoted very quickly to the inside game and spent an enormous amount of time not going around the country articulating the policy agenda, but actually deep negotiating—first within his own administration on the details of the economic plan, and then with members of Congress as the plan twisted in the wind for all that time.

Then, of course, more arms needed to be twisted to get NAFTA through, etc. Then there were all the negotiations about the healthcare plan. I've heard Clinton say that he got too far down in the weeds. He got too involved in the actual process of being the party leader negotiating with Congress to try to get his programs through.

Jones: My response to that would be that he was never really able to do either effectively. The record shows that he traveled and campaigned a great deal more than either Reagan or Bush during those first two years. We've done an analysis of the topics he talked about—it was essentially healthcare—and where he went. There was a combination—in my judgment, anyway—of continuing to do that, but also having to do something in town, which no doubt bogged him down as far as his style was concerned.

Galston: If I'm ever invited to write another memo like this one that had such a dramatic impact on history, I will have to read your book. I was seeing it from a particular perspective—that is, one of the leaders of the Domestic Policy Council involved in these legislative drafting processes and negotiations, etc. Clinton was hardly hands-off in that process, *au contraire*.

Jones: But I'd also say that my conclusion was that nobody knew how to have this kind of transition to a different form of governing and role for the President, nor was it acceptable in Washington.

Galston: That may be, but I'd say something simpler. I don't think that the White House was put together with any clear plan, and I think history will bear me out on that. It wasn't as though there was a conception of what it should do that failed. It just sort of materialized through a series of promises to campaign workers and jostling for position and proximity. If the Cabinet ended up looking like America, the White House ended up looking like the campaign. I don't think either was a very good idea.

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Walcott: It does leave you without some of the support systems that most new Presidents would want if they were to undertake what Clinton was undertaking: people experienced in dealing with Congress, for example, and people experienced in dealing with the White House press corps. He just didn't have those.

Galston: And also, people with some experience of the White House as an institution, which is distinguished from both of those important functions. How it works, how it can malfunction, what the external expectations of the institution are going to be, how you can structure it to try to meet those external expectations so you can then meet your own internal expectations. I could go on. Those are incredibly important functions, and in discharging them, there's no substitute for experience.

Riley: Did you, in your own personal experience, find yourself discomforted by the fact that there wasn't somebody around who had done all this before and had a feel for the institution?

Galston: In my first few weeks in the White House I was totally lost. I had no idea what I was doing, where I was supposed to fit in. Some of the history that I've read subsequently helped me to understand why I felt so lost and confused. Part of it had to do with the fact that the surgical separation of the NEC and the DPC [Domestic Policy Council] didn't exactly leave two equal parts in its wake. It wasn't like separating two otherwise healthy Siamese twins, not at all. Part of it had to do with the fact that the fiscal and macroeconomic agenda was, by its very nature, going to be a lot clearer than the domestic policy agenda.

The economic agenda quickly sorted itself into a series of questions that had to be faced and answered. The domestic policy agenda was much more malleable. If you reread *Putting People First*, you'll see that Clinton decided to put people first because he couldn't decide which policy to put first. That had to be a clear choice, and that gets back to what we started to talk about a few minutes ago. It was more like a rugby scrum. I will believe to my dying day that the decision to lead with healthcare rather than welfare was not a very well considered judgment, and certainly was ill judged. I don't think the gravity of that sequential decision was really understood at the time it was made, although some of us had strong feelings about it. But it was impossible to articulate those feelings, for obvious reasons.

Riley: If I recall correctly, healthcare didn't show up on the list of issues you divided with Bruce as having any responsibility for, is that correct?

Galston: That is correct.

Riley: You just assumed by that point that there was going to be—

Galston: Another process for healthcare, that is correct.

Riley: So that was off your plate.

Galston: That was off the table. That's not to say—

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Jones: It not being domestic at all. [laughter]

Walcott: Domestic in a different sense.

Galston: It wasn't domesticated, I'll tell you that. Carol's great passion was for intergovernmental relations and how policy crosshatched the federal system. She'd had a lot of experience working those problems from the other side of the table, so she understood cold the way programs like Medicare and Medicaid interacted with the Washington–state capital nexus. She spent an enormous percentage of her time on policy and administrative issues in the healthcare arena, which arose within the four corners of existing legislation.

But, as the whole world knows, the process of healthcare policy development was botched from the beginning.

Riley: Do you remember your first day in the White House?

Galston: Ah, yes. I remember bits and pieces of it.

Riley: Can you tell us a little about it?

Galston: As you probably know, Gene Sperling and I ended up sharing a broom closet.

Riley: I didn't know that.

Galston: I don't know if you've ever seen that little office.

Jones: I've heard about it.

Galston: It became famous. Neither of us is a neatnik, so we were not an odd couple in that sense, although Gene's dirty socks and his basketball and rotting french fries became a pretty conspicuous part of the landscape during those early days.

Riley: Go to the end of the hall and follow your nose, was that—

Galston: I would have to say, I was not much better. I think it may have been that very first day, the *Washington Post* took a full page to enumerate Clinton's campaign promises, one line per promise. I clipped that page and tacked it up to the wall that I would see every day when I came in and sat down—just to make sure I never forgot what I was supposed to be doing there. I remember doing that the first day. I remember pinching myself literally and figuratively—*What the hell am I doing here?* I think most of us had that feeling. There was a real air of unreality.

I remember saying to myself, *Well, you know this is a lot of fun, but when are the grownups going to show up and take over?* It gradually dawned on me, and then on all of us, that our parents were not going to show up and take over. It was very sobering. The center of gravity of the White House during those early days was the communications operation. George Stephanopoulos was at the peak of his influence in those early months. I remember walking into

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the very first communications meeting in 1993—I was then 47 years old. I looked around and said, "My God, not only am I the oldest person in this room by a considerable margin, but I'm the only person in this room who's ever seen military service." As I pondered those two facts, I wasn't sure what to think, but I didn't think it augured well.

Jones: Interesting.

Riley: Did you have a functional computer when you showed up the first day?

Galston: No, because there was some lawsuit that I'd forgotten about and all the hard drives had been ripped out of the computers and sequestered. I'm sure you've heard that from other people. I don't think the computer was functional. I also recall that the communications technology in general would not have been acceptable in a 1950-style Holiday Inn. It was old. There had obviously not been a serious investment in White House communications technology—starting with the phones on our desks and going to the infrastructure—for a very long time.

Riley: You had a good piece of real estate. Was that something you negotiated, or did Carol?

Galston: That was part of the package.

Jones: What are you referring to?

Riley: His office. You had a West Wing office.

Galston: I had a West Wing office.

Riley: That's not a given.

Galston: No, it wasn't a given, and in that 36-hour period I've referred to between my leaving Little Rock and Carol phoning me with the revised offer, I think she must have realized that I would notice the revision, and leaving a small piece of valuable real estate as part of the offer was a way of sweetening it. Not that if I had gotten one of those beautiful offices in the Old Executive Office Building, I would have turned it down. But frankly, when I was dealing with other departments and agencies, the fact that I was literally in the West Wing at the office—even though that perception didn't necessarily correspond to any underlying reality—was not insignificant. I thought if I had that advantage, I might as well hold onto it and try to use it.

Walcott: I asked that question about the underlying reality, because there has been this notion that if you're in the West Wing it really makes a lot of difference. Obviously, in terms of status and prestige, it does. Is there any other advantage? Do you, in fact, encounter people, get access to the President or others at the top that you wouldn't if you were in the EOB?

Galston: Look, if you do the informal sociogram of who you cross steps with as you're walking to the men's room and the White House mess and what have you, yes. But I don't think it made any difference at all to Bruce Reed's effectiveness that he had a beautiful office in a suite in the Old Executive Office Building. As a matter of fact, I think it may have enhanced his

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effectiveness because he was able to have a bunch of people working his issues around him, there was no real estate. So my West Wing location came at a cost—namely, greater geographical and social distance between me and some of the younger people on the Domestic Policy Council.

Riley: That's interesting.

Galston: You pay your money and you take your choice. I chose to work one way, and Bruce chose to work another. I think it worked for both of us.

Riley: Was there an advantage to sharing an office with Gene other than the obvious disadvantages we've talked about?

Galston: Well, it gave me a clearer idea of what this parallel NEC process was up to. Gene didn't spend a lot of time talking to me about it, but since he was always on the telephone, it became clear pretty quickly.

Walcott: But it sounds like there wasn't much cross talk between those two units.

Galston: Not at the beginning, that's for sure. The NEC was almost in permanent session during those early meetings. NEC meetings involving not only Rubin but the President would start and never end. I think the administration's reputation for being an endless seminar was born during those early days and weeks of endless meetings plus NEC meetings. On the other hand, they were doing serious business.

Riley: But it gave you a comparative perspective on the relative importance to the President of those issues as opposed to the ones you were dealing with.

Galston: Absolutely.

Riley: This guy's always down with the President, I'm stuck in my office all the time.

Galston: And I decided early on that if I was going to be effective, it wouldn't be through lots of face time with the President. I would have to establish relationships in a different way, including a relationship with *him* in a different way. I early on decided—and Carol, to her eternal credit, did not stand in my way—that if this President liked to read, I would furnish him with crisp, regular memoranda on topics of interest. I wanted him to know what we were doing, not because I wanted him to put his arm around my shoulder and say, "Well done." I wanted him to be in the flow. Obviously I had to be very selective, but I wanted him to know about the basics insofar as I thought they were important to shaping the judgment of what needed to be done ultimately and what it all meant to the plan.

Riley: Tell us about the process of making decisions about what you wanted him to see. I don't know whether you recall any specifically, but how do you make those judgments?

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Galston: The answer to that question is simpler than you might think. I early figured out that part of my job was to diagnose those points of conflict or abrasion between the President's agenda in a particular area and the agendas and policy preferences of other key actors in the system, and to make sure he understood that. So if I was having a problem—as I almost always was—with congressional Democrats on some aspect of policy, and if I thought that the conflict rose or was likely to rise to Presidential significance in that a) it would significantly impede the achievement of his objectives, and b) it might well require his personal involvement to overcome it, then I wanted him to know it. That was one of the chief screens I used. I didn't brief him for the sake of briefing him, but I wanted him to understand, as best I could understand it, the terrain of conflict—

Riley: Troubleshooting.

Galston: Troubleshooting—that's what I thought was. And given how much he knew about domestic policy, I didn't have to spend a lot of time walking him through the basics. I could always start three or four levels of sophistication down and say, "Okay, Mr. President, you know as well as I do what you want to achieve with your education portfolio. There's a problem. The relevant committee in the House of Representatives doesn't agree with you about anything, and if we're going to get this done in a recognizable form, we're going to really have to wrestle with the system. This may require you to intervene personally. It may require you to make common cause with moderate Republicans against senior members of your own party. This is going to be a long, hard slog." I wanted him to know that because he might otherwise not have understood why key pieces of education legislation—like Goals 2000 and the Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ["No Child Left Behind"]—were such heavy lifting. It was really hard work.

Jones: How did you prepare yourself to do that kind of analysis?

Galston: There are different ways of functioning as a reasonably senior White House aide to the President of the United States. One way is that you say, "This is the President's agenda, and using power and bluff, I'm going to try to wrestle—or beat—the other actors into submission." My roommate was really quite good at that. Having been central to the campaign, having a close relationship with George Stephanopoulos, he was good at using the press and all the levers of power to enhance not only the reality but also the perception of his own influence. He was a master at it, but I knew that wasn't me.

Riley: He kept longer hours than you?

Galston: He kept longer hours than everybody else. But even if I'd worked as many hours as he did, I couldn't have used those hours the way he did. I thought that I needed to forge relationships with key people, in the Congress and also in the departments and agencies. By carefully listening and observing, I could develop insight over time about what the real pressure points or chalk points were for different parts of the President's agenda.

There's another piece of this puzzle that's extremely important, and which people don't write about enough: the relationship between the White House staff and the Office of Management and

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Budget. I can tell you that I went to school at the knees of the senior career people in the Office of Management and Budget, and I could not have done my job if they hadn't brought me up the policy and political curve in areas where I came in, frankly, not knowing very much. I can't say enough about the quality and professionalism of the senior OMB career people. That really helped me because these were people with decades of institutional memory.

I'd come up with some idea, and someone on the other side of the table from OMB would lean back and chuckle ruefully and say, "Oh yeah, wasn't it in 1976 that we tried to do that? Let me tell you what happened the last time we tried to do that." It was fantastic. It sure saved me from sending a lot of stupid ideas forward. They could usually persuade me that things hadn't changed so much since the last fiasco, and I would do well not to repeat it.

Jones: And with good savvy regarding the Hill.

Galston: Yes. I took what they had to offer. Obviously I had to filter it in different ways, and I had to examine it against other opinions I was getting and other accounts and narratives. But putting together information from OMB, from the Hill, and from the departments and agencies, I could usually come up with a pretty good picture of what was going on.

Walcott: Did you work at all with the Congressional Relations staff in the White House?

Galston: I tried, but the Congressional Relations staff was so beleaguered dealing with the big-ticket items on the President's agenda that they didn't have a lot of time for the likes of me. I can remember over and over again cooling my heels for fifteen minutes, half an hour, even an hour, outside Howard Paster's office. It wasn't that he was ignoring me. He was just inundated. But I wanted to have a thirty-second transaction with him to make sure that I was authorized to do something that I thought might come back to bite us. I was very careful about that. A couple of times I wasn't careful and—

Riley: Can you elaborate?

Galston: Well, it wasn't under Howard, but I do recall that once I conspired with the Department of Education to get the President to write a public letter to the House Education and Labor Committee in effect opposing them and making common cause with a coalition that included some Republican Governors. There had been a transition in the White House Congressional Relations office, and I'd done that without adequately briefing Pat Griffin. And he, for the first and last time, was really pissed off because he'd gotten quite a blow-back, as you can imagine, from the committee. But I tried not to do that all that often.

Riley: The clearance was important then so that you could—

Galston: I wanted to feel fully empowered. First of all, I thought that as part of this White House team, if I was going to do something that affected relations with Congress, our Congressional Relations office ought to know something about it. Also, I wanted to deal confidently with Congress, knowing that the head guy—or that failing, his deputies, Susan Brophy [McGowan] or someone like that—had in fact said that. Given what we know about the current state of

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Congressional Relations, and also given the fact that it's a three-dimensional chess game where you're playing a lot of policy games at the same time, you have to worry about spillovers. I wanted to make sure that from their professional standpoint it was okay to go forward.

Walcott: Were you unusual in being so scrupulous about making sure that you cleared things?

Galston: I have no idea. I would like to think that I wasn't unusual. Part of it may have had to do with the fact that there were different tribes in the White House. There was the Little Rock tribe, the campaign tribe, and the friends of Bill and/or Hillary tribes. If you weren't a member of one of those tribes, the best you could be was an anthropologist trying to study the customs.

Riley: That was you.

Galston: That was me. I thought it was a matter of simple self-preservation and institutional effectiveness—that is to say, my effectiveness in the institution. I'd be an idiot not to cover my butt, to put it as bluntly as possible. If I started doing a lot of freelancing—especially during those early months, with the press or the Congress—I would have gotten my head handed to me. And given the fact that I came in without any of these alliances, any of these tribal relationships, I not only had to invent my job, I had to invent and create the support structure that would enable me to do that job.

Riley: Did you not become an honorary member of the Little Rock tribe by virtue of Carol's presence? Tell us about your relationship with Carol. Are you reporting on a daily basis?

Galston: Pretty much. It was very standard. I made the mistake of blindsiding her once or twice when things were just moving so fast and I did something. But I tried to have a normal reporting relationship, either face-to-face or on paper.

Riley: Her office in proximity to yours?

Galston: It was an arduous twenty-five-foot walk. You walked up the West Wing stairs, and after you went by the men's room, you came to the Sperling-Galston broom closet. About twenty feet across a divided bay was Hillary's office, and Maggie Williams, her Chief of Staff, and in the corner was Carol's office. In the opposing corner was Bob Rubin's office. It was a very simple arrangement with a lot of people working in bays and cubicles.

Jones: Did you draw any conclusions about her relative effectiveness, balancing two factors, one, that she had a very close prior relationship and position with Clinton in Little Rock that was in a sense cemented, as being a Little Rock person—and not only that, the rather important position that she had there, over and against her relative inexperience in Washington. From your perspective, was she effective as far as that balance is concerned?

Galston: I think the most straightforward answer is to say that it depends on how you define effectiveness. If you're comparing what the NEC did during those early months to what the DPC did, obviously there's no comparison.

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On the other hand, when you consider the fact that the two huge items during that early period were the economic plan and healthcare, and the Domestic Policy Council in effect had literally almost nothing to do with either one of them, then you define effectiveness relative to the tasks at hand. I think she thought of her role more in administrative terms than in policy development terms. She focused, from the Washington side of the table, on the kinds of issue that then-Governor Clinton had asked her to focus on when she was on the Little Rock side of the table, the gubernatorial side of the table.

As I said before, she was extremely invested in questions like the fiscal consequences for the federal government of what the states were doing in healthcare programs, probably because she knew very well how the states were gaming that system. There's a wonderful discussion in the first book of Plato's *Republic*—see? theory is good for something—about how, from a knowledge standpoint, what you need to be a good guardian is the same as what you need to be a good thief. Well, if you're stealing the federal government's money as a senior official in the state government, you're in a pretty good position to try to turn off the spigot once you shift to the federal side of the table, if the politics warrant it.

She spent a lot of time dealing with what I'd call gubernatorial politics, remaining in contact—because that had been Governor Clinton's field of battle, and also field of accomplishment—for all those years. She continued to maintain and use those relationships. Was she a presence in the Washington press? No. She never wanted to be. As a matter of fact, I think she would have viewed that as a sign of failure rather than success. Did she have her name on a major piece of public policy during that period? I don't think so. I think she saw herself, she defined success, as serving the President (and I would say the First Lady—that's another complication) loyally. Her priority was making sure they knew what they needed to know in order not to step on landmines and to move forward as they defined moving forward. By her own standards, I think she was successful. By Washington standards, probably less so.

It's not clear to me that the people she viewed as her ultimate clients and the customers for her product—namely the President and the First Lady—wanted her to do anything other than what she was doing. If they had wanted her to do something different, they wouldn't have arranged the White House the way they did. It does seem to me that anatomy is destiny here. Those critical institutional decisions to form the NEC and to put it under the control of someone like Bob Rubin—and, on the other hand to hive off healthcare to a separate task force and to constitute the leadership of the task force the way the President did—those were institutional decisions that sent the clearest possible message about what the mission of the Domestic Policy Council was supposed to be.

Jones: From your perspective and from what you were doing in your job, did she ever define some constraints?

Galston: From time to time, but basically I saw our relationship as being—she enabled me to do my job, permitted me to do my job, occasionally yanked the chain, but not very often. If I got off the reservation—that is, if I did something operationally that she knew because of all of her years with Clinton was just not the way he liked to do things—she told me about it. That may have happened half a dozen times in the two and a half years I worked for her, but it was not a daily or

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weekly, or even monthly, occurrence. I was probably more respectful of the White House hierarchy than nearly anyone else. I figured if I was working for somebody, I ought to work for somebody. That was not a universal or even a common view. So I don't recall a lot of tension.

Walcott: That's interesting, because her mandate was to facilitate, not to be a policy development shop or anything like that. And yet you come in, as does Reed, as advocates of a particular point of view with respect to domestic policy. You're there expected to push a position.

Galston: Right.

Walcott: Was there no tension between her sense of managerial role and your sense of advocacy?

Galston: Because of the intellectual and policy transactions that occurred during the '89-'92 period, many of the things I cared about had already been folded into the campaign and the platform. So it wasn't as though I had to make a case for national service or anything like that. It wasn't as though I had to make a case for family policy or education. Thank God. Although the transition was a failure, what preceded the transition was a success. I decided to draw on the solvent account rather than the insolvent account.

When Carol appointed me the DPC's lead on the national service program, everybody knew what I was supposed to do, because not only had the President marched around the country talking about it just about every day, but the transition group had put together a blueprint that was not questioned except in detail. The question became—for me as the DPC's representative, for Eli Segal, Jack Lew, Shirley Sagawa—how we were going to make this happen. It's as close to the President's heart as anything else. There's hardly anybody in the Congress who cares about this sort of thing. How are we going to make it happen? That was the problem. So many people saw it as either diversionary—or worse than diversionary, as a competitor for funds and Presidential attention. A lot of Democrats as well as Republicans, for different reasons, would have strangled the baby in the cradle if they could have.

The short answer to your question is no. Fortunately, the President as Governor and campaigner for President—as a Presidential candidate—had imbibed and expressed and endorsed so much of the formal agenda that it was simply a question of trying to get it done, frequently beneath the radar screen. If the President and the Congressional Relations Office were going to be spending all of their time trying to get the economic plan through, for example, or lobbying for NAFTA, I couldn't use the President as a policy weapon very often. If I was able to do that once a month, I was doing very well. My job, I thought, was to figure out how to get as much of his agenda done with the assets that were available.

Riley: Doesn't that actually suggest a principal virtue of the division of labor between the Domestic Policy Council and the National Economic Council? According to the old model, if the President's and the White House's principal focus is on economics, that's going to suck up all the staff time and all the energy of the White House in promoting that core part of the agenda. There's nothing left over to deal with these other issues.

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Galston: But that's pretty much what happened. I was left over.

Riley: And Bruce is left over.

Galston: That's true. But the Domestic Policy Council, as I'm sure you know, was not very large at the beginning of the administration, and it got smaller. So for all practical purposes, nearly everybody else in the White House was kicking another ball down the field. That was both bad news and good news. The bad news was that all the top guys were kicking the other ball down the field. The good news was that I had relative freedom to work on my piece of the agenda. Frankly, it wasn't until nearly a year later that anybody started paying any attention. People in the summer and fall of 1994 were desperate for good news.

I wrote the President a memo saying, "While nobody was looking, we moved nine pieces of education legislation through the Congress of the United States, and you, right now, are one of the most significant education reform Presidents in the history of the Republic."

He started talking about that. But nobody in the White House other than me and a handful of others who were working on it knew that until I sent him that memo.

Jones: You didn't have an in-house selling job, as you were saying earlier. There was an agreement that from '89-'92—

Galston: That's part of it. The other is that in the areas I was working in, particularly education, there was a lot of trust built up between the two former Governors, two former southern Governors, education reformers. I think the President took the view that if Dick Riley and I—or if one of Riley's deputies and I—decided that X, whatever it is, is a reasonable way to translate something—a piece of the President's concern—into a piece of legislation or a regulation, he probably wasn't going to second-guess us. A piece of this I haven't talked about is the importance of appropriate relationships with the people in the departments and agencies who are worthy of trust from the standpoint of the President's agenda.

If you have that, then the fact that the White House staff is relatively small is not as much of an impediment as it would be otherwise. Smart, well-intentioned people in the department are then pulling in the same direction, as opposed to reflecting the will of the clients in the department.

[BREAK]

Riley: You said this morning that you prepared memoranda for the President on issues you thought were important—that was the way you elected to communicate with him. What was the process for actually getting that paper in the President's hands? What was your sense about whether he read it? How engaged a reader was he? How did you know he read it? Did you get notes back?

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Galston: I can answer that one very quickly. I would typically first show the memo to Carol and make sure she didn't wave me off sending it to him. It then goes to the Presidential staff secretary. The Presidential staff secretary puts it in the President's nightly briefing book. The way you know that the President has read it, in the case of Bill Clinton, is you would get the memo back—usually with not too much wait—and there would be underlinings and marginal notations in the typical way you see that somebody has read it. In his case, it was almost invariably from beginning to end. Sometimes he'd send me messages about what he cared about or what he wanted me to focus on or do. So I was never in any doubt. I can't remember an instance where a memo of mine went to the President and he didn't read it.

Walcott: Did he ever call you in to talk about it?

Galston: That happened occasionally, but that wasn't our principal mode of communication. Presidential face time is the scarcest of all commodities. I never presumed on it. First of all, one of the things Carol really cared about was her regular face time with the President, and given her history, I can understand that immediately. The last thing I wanted to do was behave in such a way that could ever be interpreted as cutting into that. Occasionally, it was a disadvantage not to have a direct Presidential message with all of the attendant body languages and qualifications. But I was willing to pay that price because the alternative—getting embroiled in the endless fights for face time—was not something I cared to get mired in.

Riley: The second question builds on your observation of yourself as a kind of in-house anthropologist. You have indicated that there were three tribes.

Galston: Three or four.

Riley: The Little Rock tribe.

Galston: The campaign tribe.

Riley: The First Lady's tribe.

Galston: And the "Friends of Bill" tribe.

Riley: I imposed First Lady.

Galston: No, no, that was in addition. There was a clearly distinguishable First Lady's tribe.

Walcott: In the West Wing?

Galston: Carol was an interesting combination: She was in three of the four tribes, at least, which made her life complicated and also generated a certain security for the position she held as she defined it. I mean, if you're a friend of Bill, a friend of Hillary, and Little Rock, those are three pretty strong building blocks for a position at the White House.

Riley: Can you tell us anything about the folkways of these tribes?

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Galston: Yes. The "Friends of Bill" were people with whom he could be comfortable in different ways, whether as a golfing partner, or playing hearts or someone to schmooze with, someone to swap dirty jokes with—Vernon Jordan would be an excellent example of that. He really valued that. One thing I'm acutely aware of is that whatever else I may have contributed to him, I did not set him at ease, in part because I was not fully at ease in his company. I could never forget the fact that this was the President of the United States I was dealing with, and that if I made a mistake in something I said to him, he could easily end up repeating and amplifying that mistake. So I found conversations with him—because of that sense of responsibility to the absolute accuracy of what I was conveying—acutely uncomfortable experiences. Others were not similarly afflicted with doubt.

Most of the friends of Hillary were women, and especially in the early days, there was a very clear sense of an opening to genuine power potentials. There was a very strong consciousness of that. The Little Rock crowd was a very interesting interpenetration of law, business, politics, and a few other hangers-on. A few of them were born wealthy; most of them had attained it in one way or another. They went back a long way, but in different ways. Some of them were members of the same law firm; some of them had been in business together. It was a very tangled social web with a lot of history that no outsider could possibly plumb. It's clear that the late Vince Foster was a very important part of that Little Rock sociogram and that his suicide destabilized it in all sorts of ways. It was just an intensely traumatic event for Bill and for the White House.

The brotherhood and sisterhood of the campaign was something I could understand more readily because I've been through that myself. It's sort of like war buddies. Once you've had that kind of bonding experience, you know people, you're connected to them in ways that other people haven't been. There's always a sense that the people who didn't go through it with you are outsiders in some respect. They haven't earned their battle stripes. That's a thumbnail description of the tribes.

Jones: I haven't put you in any one of these.

Galston: I wasn't.

Jones: Was there yet another—if not tribe, at least another group of compatriots like yourself, who came into the White House and were working alongside this set?

Galston: Not many. This description of the White House tribes and me as alien anthropologist was a pretty lonely feeling in many ways. I didn't feel that I was connected to any particular network. One reason for that is that the network to which I naturally would have been connected—my comrades in arms of the New Democratic movement—were not exactly dense on the ground, particularly during that period. We were like a few raisins in a very large cake, and we would lose sight of one another for days at a time. We didn't reach critical mass.

Jones: Did you maintain contacts with From and Marshall?

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Galston: Yes, but not on a daily basis. When they were unhappy, you tended to find out about it. Whatever else one can say about Al From, he's never been one to suffer in silence for very long.

Walcott: You were often characterized as the "White House intellectual," having a Ph.D., having been a professor and all. It's natural. A very recent book about it by Tevi Troy [*Intellectuals and the American Presidency*, 2002], from the Bush administration, says that's a role that goes back at least to Arthur Schlesinger, and you can trace it back to [Franklin] Roosevelt. In the good old days, White House intellectuals thought of themselves as having a constituency: the intellectual community, or at least their side of the intellectual community. Did you ever feel that you had a constituency you were representing in that sense?

Galston: Not really. Occasionally, when there were meetings of presidents of the 57 major research universities, things of that sort, the President would always make sure that I was around. But, among other things, operationally that's not really what I was or what I did. I was stunned to discover early on that I was expected to be "vertically integrated," as the business manager said. I'd helped to devise the direct lending program. I was also responsible for selling it to the Congress. I ended up doing whip counts on many occasions—whip counts with people in the political shop over in the Department of Education. I made at one time a very risky political decision in the end-game where Senator [Nancy] Kassebaum called me to offer a compromise. I took a deep breath and turned it down, knowing that there was some appreciable chance that she would be able to get 51 votes and defeat the whole program. But I thought that if I accepted her compromise at that point, that would put a ceiling on the extent to which the President's program could actually be enacted, and I didn't want to, in effect, negotiate with myself at that point.

So it's not as though I was sitting there dreaming up utopian ideas or making notes for Presidential history. I was expected to be operational. Given the fact that the Congressional Relations folks and the political folks were otherwise engaged, I was in many ways more operational than people involved in healthcare were. That was more nearly a pure policy process. I was involved in everything from soup to nuts. It was a crash course in reality, but it was not exactly the classic role of the White House intellectual.

Walcott: Did they ever send you out to sell the administration to the intellectual community?

Galston: No, but I decided that was something I'd better do. Obviously, if Carol hadn't wanted me to do it, I wouldn't have done it, but I personally accepted a lot of speaking invitations, and I organized two intellectuals' dinners for the President in advance of two State of the Union speeches, one in 1995 and the other in 1996. I had a dual purpose in mind. Part of it was picking their brains for the State of the Union address and policy ideas, but part of it, quite frankly—these people were carefully chosen for their visibility and representativeness—was to send a signal to the intellectual community that this was a President they shouldn't give up on. In January 1995 a lot of people, in different ways, were giving up on the President.

Jones: The second one was after you'd left.

Galston: That's correct, but I was invited to put the dinner together nonetheless.

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Riley: Could we go back and get your story about national service?

Galston: It can be a long story or a short story. The short version is that Steve [Steven] Waldman got just about everything right. You can pretty much put that book in the bank. He's a good reporter, good interpreter, good amateur historian, and he taught me things about the process that I didn't know. There were a lot of parallel processes proceedings, and I was part of some of them but not all. Those are the major compromises, and those were the basic decisions that were made.

I'd be happy to talk about it. But I want you to know that from my perspective, that is one of the better books written—obviously not a political science view, but one of the better analytical narratives about how a bill becomes law.

Jones: You were involved in a lot of things. In doing your job, where did you think that everything went really well and why? Where did you think it did not go so well and why?

Galston: It depends on what the "it" is. If the "it" is particular things I was trying to get done, I can give you one kind of answer to that question. If the "it" is my job, I can give you a different kind of answer. So what's the "it"?

Jones: I'll let you define it, either one or both.

Galston: I wasn't involved with anything easy in the two and a half years I was there. I wasn't involved in anything that went smoothly with the grain of the President plus an easily mobilized congressional majority.

Riley: Do you include Family and Medical Leave?

Galston: That was a slam dunk (to quote George Tenet) and so nobody was involved. That just happened immediately. It was something that had been passed repeatedly by the House and the Senate, and the previous Bush (Bush the greater) had vetoed it more than once. It was just there, low-hanging fruit ready to be plucked. But with regard to my agenda, everything was hard in spite of the fact that Democrats controlled both Houses by comfortable margins.

Jones: Why don't you list your agenda? National service we've already made reference to.

Galston: The other major thing I was working on during that period was the Goals 2000 bill which was, in many ways, the successor to the legislation that George Bush the greater had negotiated with the Governors in this city.

Jones: In Charlottesville, right.

Galston: In many ways it was the precursor to "no child left behind." It was a very ambitious piece of legislation, and congressional Democrats, particularly in the House (but not only in the House) didn't like it because it was a pretty long step down the road towards the goals, standards, and assessment model that most Democrats never really bought into. Also the

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President and the Secretary made it clear that they wanted to leave the Goals 2000 as a template for the 1994 reform bill, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Most Democrats believed that the order ought to be just the reverse: The President's major educational emphasis ought to be on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and his strategy with regard to ESEA should be to pour a lot more wine into approximately the same bottle.

The President and the Secretary very deliberately flipped the order because that's exactly what they didn't want to do. So there was this policy tug-of-war built into the entire education agenda. I would say I spent 50% of my time on a series of education bills between January of '93 and October of '94. By October of '94—as I told you before the break—we had succeeded in moving nine education bills through the Congress and creating a reasonably solid—and I think impressive—reform record. But every single one of them was difficult because the President's education reform agenda collided almost head-on with the sort of the "status quo plus" educational predilections of most of the key actors among the Democrats in Congress.

Over and over again we found a somewhat more sympathetic reaction among moderate and reform-minded Republicans than we did among mainstream Democrats. There's an interesting history here. A lot of the President's political instincts were shaped by the bipartisan work on education and related issues that occurred within the National Governors Association. So the President, for fifteen years—ten years, anyway—had gotten into the habit of working with reform-minded, moderate Republicans across party lines to move education reform forward. He brought that mindset with him to negotiations with Congress. But that infuriated Democrats, particularly in the House, who thought of every transaction as a highly partisan transaction with a bright line. The bad guys were on the other side of the line. If you do business with them, as the President did—boom!

So that was very difficult, and I had some of my most difficult moments trying to negotiate with the House Education and Labor Committee, of which it was said during that period that they'd enact the Communist Manifesto if only they thought they had jurisdiction. [laughter] It was a very left-leaning bunch of folks, and the President in education and a number of other domestic policy areas was leaning more in a New Democrat direction—or certainly reflecting more of the bipartisan consensus that had occurred horizontally between the Governors during the 1980s.

Actually, if you look at the NGA during the 1980s, it was a very fertile ground for reform-minded policy development across party lines. Bill Clinton brought those hopes and expectations and habits with him to Washington. One of his bitterest disappointments was the almost complete absence of bipartisan cooperation.

Jones: Could you select one of those nine to illustrate what was done? Is there enough uniformity to make one instructive?

Galston: I think that probably the single most instructive one was the Goals 2000 bill because that was the flagship of the reform agenda. I've already mentioned that most congressional Democrats stumbled at the threshold because they didn't think that should be the lead dog (to alter the metaphor for probably the sixth time). Then, once we actually got down to brass tacks, most congressional Democrats believed that the fundamental problem with education was that

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there simply wasn't enough money in the system. Their policy prescription was to write bigger checks. There are ways of prettying that up, but that fundamentally was the position.

The kind of reform-mindedness that Bush the lesser was able to build on in 2001 moved senior Democrats like George Miller and Ted Kennedy to push "no child left behind" through the Congress with bipartisan support. That basically didn't exist ten years earlier when we were trying to do our business.

So when the President started talking about more uniform national curricula and about federal entities that wouldn't necessarily mandate that but would create a mechanism for assessing the substantive adequacy of standards and curricular models at the state level, that was very unpopular among Republicans who characterized it as Clinton's "national school board." But it was almost equally unpopular among Democrats for a different reason. As I said, their view was that there wasn't much wrong with the system that additional money wouldn't cure, and these sorts of structural reforms were going to create standard stumbling blocks—particularly for poorer kids. So the entire mindset that made "no child left behind" possible in 2001 was missing in 1993.

Walcott: Was the Democrats' position heavily indebted to the teachers' unions?

Galston: What do you think? [laughter]

Walcott: Did you deal directly with them at all?

Galston: Yes, and I actually found it easier to deal with Al [Albert] Shanker than with anybody representing the NEA [National Education Association]. Shanker on alternate Tuesdays was a real reformer and also an intelligent, open-minded man. I always thought of the NEA as staffed almost entirely by apparatchiks, and I've never had occasion to revise that view. They were a huge thorn in my side.

Jones: Would it also be just the distributive nature of ESEA and that there's no interest in upsetting that?

Galston: I was talking here about the Goals 2000 bill, which was the structural reform bill.

Jones: The uncertainty about how Goals 2000 was going to work might have an effect on the reticence to—

Galston: It might well, and people may have been thinking that, but they were talking about other things during that period. On the other hand, I think your conjecture is at least plausible because the President and the Secretary made it absolutely clear that they saw Goals 2000 as the template, the guide for the reform of the '94 ESEA. And to the extent that Democrats objected to that template—if the President and the Secretary were busy connecting those two bills, then I'm sure they did too.

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Jones: You've said with Goals 2000 that it was easier to work with the moderate Republicans. How did that go in specifics? With whom did you negotiate, and what was the effect on the Democratic side? How do you balance that?

Galston: We talked to people like Bill Goodling, who was the ranking Republican, and to Tom Petri. We talked to Republican Governors like Carroll Campbell. And those relationships created some difficulties. Perhaps the biggest one was created by Carroll Campbell, then the Governor of South Carolina.

Jones: Who had been active in the NGA on this issue.

Galston: Very much so. Clinton agreed with a lot of what he had to say and trusted him. Before the break I referred to my one big explosion with Pat Griffin, and this was the occasion. Carroll Campbell co-signed a letter from the NGA objecting to the course of the negotiations between the White House and the House Democrats on some contested point about Goals 2000. This was a serious intervention. As I recall, it wasn't just Carroll Campbell, and it wasn't just Republican Governors, but Carroll's name was very prominently on the letter.

Dick Riley and his deputies became very alarmed, and they called me up and said, "Look, we have to get the President to step in and make it clear to the House that the President is listening to what these Governors have to say." I took a deep breath and said, "Okay." My compatriot in the Department of Education, Mike Cohen, and I drafted this letter and then redrafted it. Then we sent a draft to the President, which he changed a little bit. Then he said, "Okay, I'll sign this." Unfortunately, this was a matter of such urgency that I neglected to check off with the Congressional Relations staff. Well then, this letter goes to Bill Ford, and if you know anything about Bill Ford—boom! I got my head handed to me.

The letter, by the way, actually moved the committee. Once Ford had exploded—he and the people around him exploded—he met the President more than halfway. So I'm not sorry I did it. That would be an example of how the process worked.

Riley: How successful was Dick Riley in moving the Education Department in the direction that you and others in the administration wanted it to go?

Galston: At the level of high policy, I think he was successful, because he was intuitively in synch with the President on this, had worked shoulder-to-shoulder with him in the NGA for all those years. They really came out of the same tradition, were inspired by the same sense of their states as being backward in part because of the inadequacy of their education system. They saw education as the only route out of poverty and disadvantage and lack of opportunity for such big sections of their population. They didn't have to spend a lot of time persuading one another. It was never the case that I had to call up Riley or the people around him and say, "You've gone native. You're going off the reservation. The President is perturbed." It just didn't happen. That was the easy part of my job. The people I was working with at the departmental level were by and large pretty easy to work with.

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I'm sure Bruce Reed's war stories about the development of the welfare reform legislation would be very different. I know you're not supposed to reveal any confidences, but I know for a fact that substantial portions of the Department of Health and Human Services were pulling very hard against the President's basic agenda—

Riley: And they resigned publicly—

Galston: —when they didn't get their way. Nothing like that ever happened with the Department of Education. Dick Riley—as a seasoned, elected public official—felt the need to break bread with and to pay obeisance to the established educational interest groups within the party to a greater extent than I felt it necessary to do. I was not as nice a cop as he was.

Riley: You mentioned the name Mike Cohen. You called him your—

Galston: Compatriot.

Riley: What position did he hold in the department?

Galston: Various positions. He was a trusted senior advisor to Dick Riley. After I left the White House, he spent some time there doing the education agenda. He had worked with a lot of the Clinton people at the NGA level. He then went back to become assistant secretary of something or other in the department. But we practically lived with each other for a substantial portion of '93 and '94.

Jones: Where do you judge that you had such problems with education that you just couldn't overcome? Why was that?

Galston: No, no, no. I've emphasized that everything we tried to do was very difficult. Everything we tried to do we ended up compromising, but we didn't leave the field, ever. So, for example, on direct lending, we got precisely half a loaf after very tough negotiations. Frankly, as I said a few minutes ago, there were some moments when I thought we were going to lose the whole thing. I'm not a gambler by nature, and turning down Senator Kassebaum's offer when she made it was probably my riskiest legislative decision when I was in the White House. In the end, it didn't end up costing us anything. But it might have. There was nothing I was involved in that was like healthcare where the Clinton forces were just routed, left their dead and wounded on the field.

Jones: That's because people were acquainted with what you were proposing. There was the support there. It may not be sufficient support at the time to pass it as legislation, as distinct from a national healthcare plan.

Galston: Health and welfare were much more radical departures from the status quo than anything we achieved in education—it's probably fair to say than anything we *proposed* in education. So we were almost always in a zone where if we persevered in the face of tough opposition, we could get enough of what we wanted that it was worth settling for.

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For example, when we were negotiating about the percentage of a student loan program that was going to be open to the direct lending reform, that was actually a very radical structure and reform of the system, which is why it was ardently resisted by all of the self-interested players in the system. All the banks, all the intermediaries, all the politicians who got money from the banks and intermediaries—they were all against us. Then there were some people who were against us because they were familiar with the subsidized loan program with lots of intermediaries and they didn't see anything particularly wrong with it. Yes, it might not be the most efficient system in the world, but at least the students were getting their checks, so shut up. That was basically Senator [Claiborne] Pell's position, for example.

But we were able to move the ball down the field far enough that, while we didn't score a lot of touchdowns, we got close enough to kick a few field goals. The President got upset from time to time when I had to go back to him and report that, in my judgment, a compromise was the best that could be achieved. He got furious with me once in an entirely different area. He was strongly in favor of relaxing federal restraints on interracial adoption. You can imagine what a high-emotion issue that was. He basically called me into the Oval Office—he didn't do that very often—and he ordered me to tear down those restraints.

There was a major coalition on the other side of that issue. The President was listening to Senator [Howard] Metzenbaum and a few others who were hundred-percenters on the issue. After months of negotiation, I'd say we got about 80%. Senator Metzenbaum signed off on the compromise, and then a few days later, a hundred-percenter got to him, and he was then persuaded to think, *Oh my God. What have I done?* He called the President. The President called me into the Oval Office and rather angrily asked me what I thought I was doing. I told him as best I could. He wagged his finger and said, "I don't like this. I don't like this at all," or words to that effect.

Usually he understood that when I would write him a memo and say, "Look, this is where we are, I think this is about the best we can do," he was a politician and understood that was probably true.

Riley: When he told you, "I don't like this. I don't like this at all," was there any implication that he was willing at that point to take his own time to try to rescue something that he felt could be rescued if he brought his own personal will to bear on it?

Galston: That's a good question. I chose to interpret his eruption as a sign of distress, perhaps a temporary distress, reflecting the pressure that had been brought to bear on him, and also the fact that he genuinely believed in the hundred-percent solution on that question—but not that he was ordering me to rip up the compromise and start all over again. At least that was the message I chose to receive, and 80% became the new law of the land.

Jones: You mentioned that Senator Kassebaum called you. Was that a frequent occurrence, for either the House or Senate to call you?

Galston: No, and I knew it was serious for exactly that reason. I knew that she was calling me as the President's lead representative on this issue, someone who she assumed—probably rightly in

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this instance—was empowered to say yea or nay. It was a pretty late-night call, which is another sign of seriousness. Also, the atmospherics of the call made it clear that she thought I would be making a major mistake if I didn't accept her compromise. This wasn't just a way station along the road of negotiation, this was the ballgame.

If I said yes, we'd have a bipartisan agreement, and that would be the end of the discussion. If I said no, she would do her best to blow the whole thing up. She was very polite and soft spoken and direct, a Midwesterner. There was nothing unpleasant about the conversation, but she conveyed the seriousness of the offer and the situation from her perspective very clearly.

Jones: But also representing her savvy and knowledge about who was central in the whole—

Galston: Yes. She had clearly done some talking to people and had come to the judgment that if she was going to make a telephone call to someone on this issue, she should call me. But that was not a regular occurrence.

Jones: Did it ever happen in other cases?

Galston: I got calls from members of Congress from time to time, frequently registering complaints on behalf of constituents. It wasn't usually the legislative process, but times like when the Department of Education (with the White House's full support) started enforcing quality standards on educational institutions that were receiving federal training funds. There were various norms and standards which, if not complied with for a certain period of time, would lead to the withdrawal of eligibility—usually of occupational training centers of one sort or another, schools of cosmetology, schools of truck repair, things of that sort. There were a lot of fly-by-night, for profit, post-secondary training ventures that clearly were well connected with local members of Congress. I got some calls about that.

Walcott: When you got calls like that, was it expected that you would inform somebody after you finished the call? Congressional Relations or the department involved—anybody else?

Galston: Generally speaking, they called me after they had tried and failed to get satisfaction from the department. So referring them to the department was not the socially apt thing to do. But did I invariably, or even usually, pass these complaints on?

Walcott: Pass the complaints on, or simply notify others in the White House that you'd been talking to members of Congress. Some previous administrations were bears about that. Anybody talks to someone in Congress has to report it back up through the system.

Galston: I tried to keep the Congressional Relations Office apprised. I used my judgment. I can't say that I did it 100% of the time, but when I thought it crossed some threshold of significance, I surely did. I was not a hundred-percenter on that issue, and I wasn't called on it. The attitude of Congressional Relations was that if I exercised decent judgment and didn't get the White House and the President in trouble—that is, if the member of Congress in effect was just trying to be in a position to say to the constituent, "I've done due diligence on this issue. The Department of Education said no and I wasn't satisfied with that. I went straight to the White House. I went

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straight to the top, and believe me, if I could have moved them I would. I waxed eloquent and nothing happened" (Woody Allen, not me).

I could usually tell if it was serious, because members of Congress are usually not very subtle about this. If they say, "If I don't get satisfaction on X, I'm going to do Y," and I know that the President cares a lot about Y, if there's any reason to believe that said member of Congress was in a position to do Y and inflict damage, well, of course, I'd pass that on.

I had an interesting series of interactions—first telephone and then face-to-face—with representative Bart [Barton] Gordon, I believe from Tennessee, who didn't like the direct lending program at all and basically took the position, as the Brits say, that he was going to "throw a spanner" into the President's entire education agenda if he didn't get a good hearing at the White House. When he didn't get satisfaction from me—at one of these barbecue dinners or something that Presidents hold for members of Congress—he actually grabbed Clinton by the arm and buttonholed him directly on this issue. He inveighed against me as an obstacle to progress.

Jones: How much time did you spend on the Hill?

Galston: I don't know, maybe 20% of my time.

Riley: You mentioned a meeting that you had with the President in which he expressed his frustration and anger. The President is kind of famous for having a hot temper.

Galston: Yes.

Riley: Were there other occasions when you saw the President angry? Was this the angriest you ever saw him?

Galston: Directed at me, yes. I didn't bear the brunt of his discontent too often. Maybe it was because I didn't spend all that much face time with him. Also, I think he understood that while I might make mistakes from time to time, I was on his wavelength. I didn't have an agenda of my own. If I screwed up, it was out of incompetence and not malevolence. I wasn't playing games with anyone.

Riley: Did you get the sense that the President's anger was functional or dysfunctional?

Galston: I'd have to know a lot more about depth psychology than I do.

Riley: In other words, did it frustrate his purposes, or did it serve his purposes?

Galston: Neither. Unlike Lyndon Johnson, for example, I'm convinced on the basis of listening to all of those tapes, and reading Robert Caro and what have you, that Johnson used anger strategically as a weapon of intimidation. With Clinton it wasn't nearly as controlled or as strategic. A certain amount of frustration built up, Mount Clinton would erupt, and a little bit of lava would flow. But then when things cooled down, the mountain sort of looked the way it had before the eruption. I didn't view it as a device for moving things in a different direction.

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Sometimes it may have had that effect, and I may be misjudging the President. It may have been more strategic. But it just seemed like an honest human expression of frustration.

Riley: On the education issues first, and then maybe more generally, how frequently would you say you called on the President to make phone calls or to meet with you and a group of people?

Galston: Not very often. As I said, I viewed face time with the President as an unbelievably valuable resource, and I also knew that the policy agenda was structured for the first two years in a way that put a premium on my operating below the radar screen whenever I could. I just felt such sympathy for the guy.

Here he was, facing a series of policy crises: the economic program that prevailed by the narrowest conceivable margin, and an endless series of crises over healthcare; an international trade agenda that his own party rejected and so coalitions had to be built vote by vote. Plus everything else he was trying to do. It seemed to me that it would be better for me to get 70% without him than 80% with him—given the fact that the President's time was the scarcest resource. You have to consider the opportunity costs for other pieces of the agenda.

I did notice that people in the White House who were monomaniacal about their agendas and were not interested in opportunity costs or collateral damage could frequently move the ball farther down the field faster. It just wasn't the way I chose to play the game. I might have been more effective if I had, but at what cost to other parts of the agenda?

Riley: Do you have any specific recollections of instances where you had him make phone calls for you or had him meet with a group of people on your behalf?

Galston: I've already told you about one episode where I prevailed on him to write what turned out to be an important letter. I dimly recall a couple of other events, pieces of the legislative sequence where I asked him to do that sort of thing. I did work with Congressional Relations and some of the people in the national service office towards the end game of those difficult negotiations about a list of telephone calls that the President should make to shore up support.

Walcott: If you want the President to make some congressional phone calls, is that where you go—to Congressional Relations with the proposal, and then they decide whether that's high enough priority?

Galston: That seemed to me to be the right sequence. I didn't think it was my business usually to take these sorts of requests straight to the President.

Walcott: But others did?

Galston: I'll let them speak for themselves.

Walcott: The gatekeeper is usually the staff system as to the President's time. About 18 months into the administration that changed.

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Galston: Yes.

Walcott: Mack McLarty leaves. Leon Panetta is brought in to restore order.

Jones: To create order.

Walcott: An idealized past. What difference did that make from your standpoint?

Galston: I'd gotten to know Leon quite well in his previous capacity as OMB director because that turned out to be such an important institutional relationship (between White House staff and OMB). Given the fact that he was such a hands-on OMB director, I was not surprised when he became such a hands-on manager on behalf of the President. There's no question about the fact that the structure of the policy process and the policy flow changed significantly in the White House after Panetta came on stream.

You have a lot more issues hashed out for the President around Panetta's table in the Chief of Staff's office. I can recall many such meetings. And I think it was a move towards a more organized and systematized policy process. There's no question about it.

Walcott: Can you give us an example of an issue?

Galston: Yes, I sure can. I had multiple portfolios. The education and training portfolio was part of it, but—in part because of my academic training and reputation—I got several issues in the religion and morality basket as well. That was a bigger basket than you might imagine during that period of the Clinton administration. You recall, for example, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act? I could go on for hours about the sequence of events that led up to that. It was very important for the President.

But to get back to the specifics of your question, in the fall of 1994 we got wind of the fact that the NIH [National Institutes of Health] under Harold Varmus was in the end-game of a regulatory process that would lead to authorization of federal funding for various kinds of research on stem cells, including the creation of embryos specifically for research purposes. All sorts of alarm bills went off, and Panetta briskly assembled a cross-cutting group of senior White House aides to assess the policy and politics of the issue at an accelerated pace and to come up with a recommendation about how the President could get ahead of the issue.

Part of my job was to examine all the testimony of the various commissions and groups under the NIH aegis that had talked about the issue since the early 1990s to get some of the ethical and policy issues teed up so that the President and the Chief of Staff could see what was really at stake and then draft a memo. It wasn't exactly a decision memo, but it was more than a briefing memo. Panetta oversaw and drove that entire process, George Stephanopoulos was part of it, the President's science advisor, John Gibbons, was part of it. There were probably six or eight people representing very different parts of the White House and the Executive Office of the President who were involved in that discussion.

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Harold Varmus came over and gave our group and others a briefing. He clearly was there as an advocate for the more expansive science-oriented interpretation of his policy as opposed to a more restrictive variant of it. And at the end of the day, this working group concurred on a recommendation. Panetta was at the meeting, and he conveyed the recommendation to the President. The President in effect acted preemptively to make it clear that it was not his administration's policy to approve federal funding for stem cell research that included the creation of embryos for research purposes only with no intention or possibility of implantation. So the President did decide to act preemptively and put out a statement before Varmus had a chance to receive and act on a very different recommendation from the science advisory group he had constituted.

It's clear to me that absent Panetta's leadership of that policy process—first of all, assembling the group in a timely fashion, and secondly, driving it towards a nearly unanimous recommendation (although I recall the science advisor was quite unhappy about this turn of events). That's an example of how it worked. The President would never have gotten ahead of the issue. He would have been in a reactive mode if a different Chief of Staff—

Walcott: And vulnerable to whoever saw him last?

Galston: Among other things. But also vulnerable to the political difficulty of playing catch-up as opposed to timing your intervention strategically for maximum effect.

Walcott: When a memo like that went in, was the minority point of view related there as well?

Galston: Absolutely, it would have been. By the way, speaking out of school, that's one of the things that Bob Rubin is really good at. He was good on the one hand at creating solid majority decisions. But he was also very fair and balanced about making sure the President was aware of the range of contending views on a question. If a particular department dissented from Bob's recommendation, the President would know that.

Jones: Is there an example like that with Mack McLarty? Beyond that, discuss your working relationship with Mack.

Galston: Frankly, I don't know a lot about how Mack actually operated beyond what he's on the record saying. We had a very cordial relationship, but it wasn't a close working relationship. I'm trying to remember a time when he approached me personally to do something. I think it's entirely possible the things that Carol asked me to do from time to time were the result of conversations she had with him. I mean, here's a guy who grew up with Bill Clinton. I'm sure that he and Carol have known one another for decades. Mack was pretty well attuned not only to what the President thought, but also with what intensity he thought it and for what purpose, as was Carol. My assumption is that the working relationship between them was pretty comfortable, pretty close. I liked Mack a lot, but we didn't have a horizontal relationship, for all the obvious reasons.

But here's a sign of his decency. This was during the early, maximally chaotic months of the Clinton administration. I had missed a half dozen of my son's Little League games in a row, and

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I said to myself on this particular afternoon, *This is going to work because we have this meeting that starts at one, and it surely can't go past three. I'll get in my car, and I'll make his game by 3:45*.

Well, the meeting ran on Clinton time, which meant it started about an hour and a half late. We were sitting around noodling, and the President walked in. I hoped that once the President walked in, the issue would be teed up, and the decision would be made fairly quickly. I can't remember what the meeting was about, because the emotional valence of the meeting was elsewhere for me. But after about 45 minutes, it became clear that it wasn't Mack's style to tee up issues that way, and the President was unraveling what had been woven. He was going to knit a new scarf, and this could take quite some time.

I was getting desperate. I was there representing the Domestic Policy Council at a meeting with the President of the United States. My son is already very angry with me for missing six Little League games in a row. Finally I said to myself, *This is an existential moment. It's the choices you make in moments like this that define who you are.*

Being old enough to recognize that, I took out a piece of paper and wrote a note to Mack saying, "I promised my son I would go to this game. What should I do?" The note got to Mack, he glanced over at me, smiled a little bit and mouthed "go." So I picked up my stuff, and as unobtrusively as I could, left the room. That's the kind of guy he was, and a different kind of Chief of Staff. Imagine James Baker doing that.

Jones: Imagine you writing a note to James Baker.

Galston: I'd like to believe I would have written a note. I cannot believe the response would have been the same.

Jones: At least in your observation his acquaintance with Clinton and his sensitivity to how Clinton looked at things didn't typically lead him to take initiatives of the kind you described Leon—

Galston: Not in my experience. On the other hand, that may just be my experience.

Jones: I understand.

Galston: Every time I begin to think of myself as a significant historical actor, I sort of mutter to myself the title of Tom Stoppard's famous play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. I think it's really important for people like us to understand that there was more than a little Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. So I might have observed 1% of what actually transpired in the White House. But in my experience, the answer to your question is no.

Riley: Did you have any involvement in the crafting of the economic plan? There were certain aspects of it that touched on—

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Galston: There sure were, but to the best of my knowledge, the Domestic Policy Council was excluded almost entirely from the deliberations about the economic plan. I think it's possible that even Carol was not in the majority of those meetings. I don't know that to be true. I do know that NEC deputies—people like Gene Sperling—were there morning, noon, and night. I think I may have attended one of those meetings very late in the game, but as a supernumerary, as a fly on the wall, not as an advocate for a particular DPC position.

I'm sure there were side discussions. For example, of the fact that in order to meet the deficit reduction target Bob Rubin and Alan Greenspan had agreed to—I think the transaction may have been as blunt as that—we were arithmetically required to excise a reserve fund that would have been dedicated to the extra costs of welfare reform. That had been stripped out of the '93 budget, if memory serves me right.

Many of us on the Domestic Policy Council were extremely upset when we found out about that because we viewed the promise to end welfare as we know it arguably the most central domestic policy promise the President had made. We didn't see how he could represent himself as serious about redeeming that pledge—at least during the first couple of years—if all the money for welfare reform had been stripped out of the most important budget document of his Presidency.

But my recollection is that by the time we found out about it, this budget proposal had already gone to the printers, and we could only splutter impotently. That's my distinct recollection. I remember an air of intense distress in the Domestic Policy Council when it was revealed that were going to be asked to make welfare reform bricks without any straw. (You Bible readers will pick up that reference.)

Riley: Were you getting informal reports from Gene?

Galston: Hmmmm?

Riley: Let the tape reflect that there was almost spewing of cola across the table at that suggestion.

Jones: You almost choked the witness.

Riley: So he was being very tight-lipped.

Galston: Yes.

Riley: How were you getting your—reading the newspaper?

Galston: That was an important source of information.

Riley: The specific issue that comes to mind that you had a record on was the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC].

Galston: Yes.

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Riley: Did anybody ever ask your opinion about this?

Galston: People knew my opinion. George Bush the lesser didn't ask Colin Powell his opinion on Iraq. He knew what his opinion was. But also, there was nothing to argue about, thank God. The President and the NEC agreed that whatever else would or would not be in the President's budget plan, there would be a major expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit. That was an example of the DLC and the PPI [Progressive Policy Institute] winning the policy debate before the administration even started. The very first policy paper the PPI ever published was an argument in favor of the EITC as the major policy vehicle for reducing working poverty.

Bill Clinton had had a couple of years to get really comfortable with that approach, and he was really comfortable with that approach. He insisted, as I understand it, at the beginning of the budget discussions, that that be one of the building blocks, one of the non-negotiable items. Frankly, he came out with a bigger expansion of EITC than any of us dreamed possible when we were crafting and advocating the policy in 1989.

I'd much rather not be consulted and have things go that way, than to be consulted and have things go the other way.

Riley: I'm trying to recall what other elements of that package might have been pieces that you would naturally have thought should be—

Galston: Step back. Since the Second World War, other than a few years in the Eisenhower administration, the only period of sustained restraint in domestic discretionary spending was the Clinton administration, and I have the numbers to prove it. The fact of the matter is that decisions made in that very first budget created the four corners within which domestic policy would operate for the rest of the Clinton administration.

If you look at the charts, you will see that domestic policy funding increases substantially in excess of inflation did not occur in the Clinton administration until 1999. So I think it's fair to say that *the* most fundamental decisions about the domestic policy agenda were made in that room in a few weeks in January and February of 1993.

Jones: Came to be the box in which you played.

Galston: Absolutely. Believe me, there were immediate political costs. I was in the meeting with Mike Smith, a senior official in the Department of Education, when we unveiled the education budget for the education advocacy groups. There was dismay, there was hostility. This was in early 1993, when it became clear what would be in the education box pursuant to this macrodecision about the overall level of domestic spending. The answer was a very small increase over the Bush administration—barely enough to account for inflation.

You can imagine what the education lobbyists—who had been waiting twelve years for a Democratic administration—thought about that. But I could tell that story over and over again.

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That was the game we had to play. It obviously contributed to the troubles we had in Congress that we talked about previously. We didn't have any grease for the machine.

Riley: There was one small piece of grease, the stimulus package.

Galston: Right.

Riley: Again, I hope the record will reflect a chuckle. I'm amusing our respondent with my questions. Were you invited to weigh in on the contours of that stimulus package?

Galston: No. The message that I'm trying to convey is that—especially in those early months—the NEC was really in the lead, really driving things forward. We could do our policy business in the DPC to the extent that we were within that context and not otherwise. It had never occurred to me, until you asked that question, that it is possible that one reason the President and Dick Riley wanted to lead with the Goals 2000 bill was that its immediate fiscal implications were much more modest than the discussion eighteen months later about the ESEA would have been. We, frankly, at that point didn't have anything to throw in the pot. The President was putting a credible package of fiscal restraint on the table and then hoping that economic growth would pick up soon enough so that he could sweeten the pot in the next budget. But that didn't happen. That generated a very difficult policy environment.

Walcott: Did you or anyone else in your shop feel blindsided by all of this?

Galston: I've already reported one incident where we felt blindsided, namely the disappearance of the Welfare Reform Reserve Fund. As a faithful reader of all of the newspapers that anyone in Washington reads and then some, I would have had to be deaf, dumb, and blind not to realize that the consequences of severe, multi-year restraint of discretionary domestic spending would flow through to everything on the table. That seemed to lead straight to the conclusion that the focus would be on either low-cost legislation or important symbolic gestures—or legislation that dealt with moral, religious, or political questions that didn't cost a lot of money, but would make important change nonetheless and please important people that the President was interested in pleasing.

Jones: But it also became a constraint to the President himself.

Galston: Sure. And it really frustrated him. There was that famous episode (I didn't witness it directly, but it has never been denied, and Bob Woodward reported in his book) where the President got so angry at being in this fiscal box that he exploded and said, "God damn it, we're all Eisenhower Republicans now." There was a lot of truth to that. Centrist Democrats had turned into what moderate Republicans used to be. What Republicans used to be had morphed into something unrecognizable.

Riley: We'll break and then come back and put in the last hour.

[BREAK]

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Riley: I don't know that I have any more questions about the earliest period. You had earlier today raised the matter about the decision making on priorities with respect to what was going to happen after all of the economic issues were taken care of. That takes us up to about August of '93. What can you tell us about what was going on inside in terms of jockeying for position at that point—whether it's going to be NAFTA, or healthcare, or welfare reform, or something that we don't know about?

Galston: My impression is that in the spring and early summer, the decision had pretty much been made to sequence healthcare before welfare reform—over Senator [Patrick] Moynihan's vigorous public protests. But most of the rest of the congressional leadership was sending the President a signal—which turned out to be more wrong than right—that healthcare would unite the Democrats and welfare reform would divide them. It turns out that they were almost equally divisive, but for different reasons. So, welfare reform in effect having been saved for 1994, and because the policy process was organized in such a way that, absent the President's vigorous leadership, it was not going to bear fruit quickly (and that vigorous leadership was absent)—the issue for the fall had to do with a tug-of-war between the healthcare agenda and a particular trade agenda.

There were a lot of people arguing that continuing to pursue NAFTA would inevitably come at the expense, first of all, of crucial timing and momentum for the healthcare bill, and might also come at the expense of actual support for it. I was in on a series of scheduling meetings during that period representing the Domestic Policy Council, not because we had a particular dog in that hunt. NAFTA was the NEC's bailiwick, and healthcare was the Healthcare Task Force's bailiwick, but as a sort of DPC fly on the wall, it's clear to me that the mastodons were butting heads here.

Riley: Who called this meeting?

Galston: These were a series of meetings. I think they must have been at the deputy level. The Clinton White House was not a model of order, but it tended to be understood which meetings were at the assistant-to-the-President level, which meetings were at the deputy level, and which were more open-door than that. This must have been a deputies meeting.

But this all came to a head—as things frequently do in a White House as well as in a campaign—around the President's schedule, because decisions about the President's schedule, the allocation of his inside time and his outside time, were in effect decisions about priorities and vice versa. I'm now redeeming my promise at the beginning of the morning to be a poor witness, because in most cases I don't remember who said what to whom in meetings of this sort.

I know in general who tended to advocate which position, because here as elsewhere anatomy is destiny. If you're representing the Healthcare Task Force answering to the First Lady, you're not going to roll over and play dead in the face of a NAFTA advocate and vice versa. But I think there was a reasonably clean decision made not to shelve NAFTA during this period.

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Jones: There was a timing issue with NAFTA, right?

Galston: Very much so.

Jones: So shelving it was a very serious—

Galston: Absolutely. That was one of the arguments in favor of not shelving it. On the other hand, lots of people were saying, "Mr. President, if healthcare goes down, your Presidency may as well. Aren't you taking risks that maybe you don't have to take?" So it was recognized that this was a fairly consequential decision. But the President, to his great credit—knowing that he didn't command anything like consensus, and perhaps not even a majority within his own party, and knowing that this would foul the political waters inside the party—really thought that it was important to send a signal to the country and the world that he meant it when he said a more open regime and international trade were in the long-term interest of the United States. This is why in the end-game he took the unusual step of mobilizing several past Presidents and bringing them to the White House.

That was a sign of how important he thought the issue was to the national interest. He lobbied ardently for it.

Jones: Secretaries of State too, didn't he?

Galston: Oh yes. Former President [Gerald] Ford was there, former President Bush was there, a reasonable cross-section of living Presidents at that point. He kept working at it 'til it was done. At the end, in part because he hadn't wavered, more Democrats came on board than he expected, and in turn more Republicans did. So the margin of victory was greater than it had appeared it would be a couple of weeks before the vote.

Riley: During the course of the first year, are you spending much time commiserating with Bruce about the direction the White House is taking?

Galston: No, we were too busy to do that. And that's one of the things that happen to you in a job like that. If you were twenty blocks away at the DLC headquarters looking at what was happening, you'd be wringing your hands all the time. If you're inside the building, trying to get done what you can get done, that's a luxury of time and energy you simply don't have. And it's also the case that you lose perspective, to some extent. You're working at something on the inside, and you tacitly buy into the mindset of collective self-justification that tends to operate in various intense circumstances.

Having said that, I knew that things weren't going well politically for the President, and I'm on record as having said that before the 1994 congressional elections. As time went on, I was under fewer and fewer illusions on that score. Nonetheless, I was not brought to the White House to be the President's political advisor. I assumed, wrongly, that he had other, wiser people doing that. [laughter] He actually would have done better to listen to more of what I was thinking on that score, but I didn't think that poaching on Stan Greenberg's territory would be particularly useful.

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Jones: I got to know Dean Birch when I was at the University of Arizona and he was Republican National Committee chair during [Barry] Goldwater. I asked him at one point, "Didn't you know you were losing as badly as you were losing?" He essentially said what you said: "I didn't have time to think about that."

Galston: In a very similar vein, on some level in the last month of the Mondale campaign, after the second debate, it was obvious that we were going to lose badly. The only question was how badly. Did that mean that we stopped working hard? No.

Jones: I meant to follow up talking about your relationship with Carol to ask about your relationship with Bruce. Did you ever get in each other's way? Were the issues themselves sufficiently segmented, or did your previous relationship with him mean that it didn't happen?

Galston: Once again, this may just be forgetfulness being nature's way of healing wounds, but I don't recall a single significant incident of sort of a border war. The division we made in the first week of the administration was clean enough, and each agenda was sufficiently demanding. If I was trying to persuade the Congress of the United States to do one thing in one area while Bruce was trying desperately to head up an inter-agency task force on welfare reform while moving the President's crime agenda through a House of Representatives that was very restive, not only about spending federal money for local police, but for various gun control measures the President was pushing—we each had enough work to do, we really did. He had a bigger staff than I did, but that didn't mean he had less work than I did. We didn't spend a lot of times commiserating, and we didn't spend any time fighting with each other that I can recall. We were on parallel tracks, both heading in the same direction, doing our jobs as we understood them and as we agreed between ourselves that we would understand.

Jones: He was located in the EOB with proximity to his staff, and you were located in the West Wing. Where was your staff?

Galston: Over in the OEOB, except for the occasional volunteer and part-time assistant. As I said much earlier, my physical location bought me something and lost me something. I was willing to accept the package, and Bruce was willing to accept his package.

Walcott: You mentioned the political side of the White House. One of the criticisms we hear of Clinton is too much influence from the politicals as opposed to the policy people, governing through the polls and that kind of thing. Did you see any evidence of that?

Galston: On the contrary. I think that the tough decisions he made—particularly in 1993 that cost him dearly in 1994—were not poll-driven. They were conviction-driven, and he understood very well that the short-term politics of fiscal restraint were not positive. And they weren't. All the costs were up front, and the economic gains came long after the midterm elections. Because he had Congressional Relations people and National Security Council vote counters (a good friend of mine, Jeremy Rosner, was the head, in effect, of the NSC whip operation), the President was under no illusion about the split in the Democratic Party that NAFTA was causing.

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The two most significant economic decisions he made in ’93—that is to say, the two most important decisions he made in 1993—were both agenda-driven and not poll-driven. He started looking at the polls and not liking what he was seeing in 1994, but there is no way that he polled his way to a Bob Rubin economic plan. There isn’t a competent survey in the world that would get you to those numbers. You didn’t have to take more than a week of Democratic Politics 101 to know what a free trade agenda was going to do to the party when the country perceptually was still mired in a fairly prolonged recession.

If you look at the official statistics, we were climbing out of it even before Bush’s defeat. But from the standpoint of the Democratic Party electorate, with unemployment still very high, historically that is a very poor climate for a free trade agenda. Look at what’s happening now. So I have to give Clinton a lot of credit for those two decisions, which were very important decisions for the country for the remainder of the decade, because he paid a huge political price for them.

Jones: The fiscal package and NAFTA.

Galston: He could not have imagined that he was building short-term political capital with those two items.

Jones: I want to ask about the ’94 election.

Riley: There are a couple of things I’d like to get to before that. The first is that you had pretty close to a front-row seat for the healthcare reform effort. You weren’t involved in it, but it was clearly going on while you were there. I’d like to get your assessment of that.

Galston: I’m amused by your metaphor, because I had a seat very close to a closed door, behind which the healthcare task force was doing its work. [laughter]

Riley: That was exactly what I meant when I said “pretty close to a front-row seat.”

Galston: I’ve never seen an operation quite like that. Either you were in it or you weren’t. And if you weren’t, it wasn’t as though you had a window to look through.

Jones: Or a keyhole even.

Riley: It was completely walled off?

Galston: It was completely walled off, absolutely. Not only that, people with a lot more seniority than I had—for example, the Secretary of the Treasury—were basically told to butt out. And it wasn’t as though Lloyd Bentsen a) didn’t have the institutional stature, and b) didn’t have a track record of views on healthcare.

Walcott: There were no leaks?

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Galston: Well, yes, but if you're talking about a task force with 600 people, you can find a leak, I suspect, supporting virtually any view of what's going on. So frankly I didn't spend a lot of time trying to read those tea leaves. Since I had known Ira Magaziner for a long time, I had some idea of structurally what was going on behind those closed doors. But substantively I had no idea.

Riley: Tell us. That was my question, your assessment of Magaziner.

Galston: Ira's a very bright guy and an idealist, which is not to say that he's impractical. But it's the case, for example, that a ballot initiative he put together for the state of Rhode Island, trying to bring a greater measure of economic planning etc. (I think this was in the late '80s, it was called the Greenhouse Compact or something of that sort), got less than 20% of the popular vote in the referendum. It lost support steadily from the minute it was proposed.

Ira was, and is, a planner, and he believes in the power of rationality to overcome political obstacles. He must. That's the only way of accounting for his behavior. As a business consultant and as a policy consultant, he has done, I think, very good work. As a high-stakes political/policy person, I think his track record is not distinguished.

Riley: Were you surprised he was given the position?

Galston: I didn't know enough to be surprised. I figured it must reflect a long-standing relationship of confidence and trust that he had with the First Lady. Hillary, whom I got to know very well, is nobody's fool, so I figured she picked him because she had confidence in him. And he had been part of policy discussions in the Democratic Party going back as far as the Mondale campaign. I invited him and Bob Reich to participate in the economic discussions and to meet with the candidates. It wasn't as though he came out of left field. He'd been an important voice in those debates for at least a decade before he was asked to take on healthcare. I don't think he was an expert in healthcare. I think he thought of himself as an expert in consultative, deliberative policy processes leading to comprehensive plans. That's what he structured.

Jones: Was there talk about what was going on or what was not going on? The process? We're talking about one of the more politically savvy residents of the Oval Office in terms of process, what has to happen, personal relationships in politics, and so forth. But it's such a puzzle to me, quite apart from what came out, the manner in which—For example, you said you'd be sitting outside a closed door, the notion of a closed door.

The experience of the Carter administration with their energy proposal—nobody who has ever written about that or discussed it thought that was a way to go about it. And yet here was a repeat, if anything, tighter.

Galston: Yes, and your question is? [laughter]

Jones: Was this seen as, "What the hell is going on here?"

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Galston: On the one hand, we've already established that most of the White House staff was very young, and that people with institutional memory going back to the Carter administration were conspicuous by their absence. So is there going to be a critical mass of people with that kind of perspective? No. And, in addition—to be direct—the way the leadership of that effort was constituted did not invite a lot of vocal dissent. If you really wanted to screw up things with the First Lady (and arguably with the President as well), expressing doubts about the healthcare process or its product was a damn good way to go about it.

Jones: That was no form for doing so—[laughter]

Galston: It certainly wasn't. Emphatically wasn't. There was an atmosphere of real optimism. There's a bigger story here having to do with the rise of the new American meritocracy and the distinctive sort of consciousness that it generated. I do think that there was a real sense that if you're smarter than anyone else and harder working than anyone else, there's nothing you can't do. And, God knows, Bill and Hillary Clinton met both of those standards and then some. I think they learned better. They may be an irresistible force, but they met an immovable object. I don't think it crossed their minds that they could fail, I really don't.

Jones: Interesting.

Riley: The other metaphor that comes to mind is a black hole. I wonder about the existence of the tremendously labor-intensive operation going on behind closed doors in the White House. You would think it would have a negative gravitational force on everything going on around it.

Galston: I don't think so. Such a high percentage of the people involved were outside experts and consultants, probably 80% of them plus. So if you're asking me whether that diverted vital resources from policy development in other areas, I don't think so. I don't think that was the problem. The problem was not the collateral damage. The problem was the direct damage. There's no question about the fact that if you think of an administration as a social process that works better when people are pulling in the same direction, and if you have a Secretary of the Treasury who has been invited to butt out, if you have a Vice President of the United States who's been invited to butt out—

Jones: The Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Galston: —you have a structural problem. And there was a structural problem. But it didn't come at the level of diversion of resources. It came at the level of the integrity and unity of the overall enterprise.

Riley: And eventually an opportunity cost in terms of what's in the queue at any given time.

Galston: If you take the healthcare cassette of the first two years and shove the welfare cassette in and leave everything else the same, the history of the Clinton administration is totally different. If Bill Clinton had gone to the country in the fall of 1994 saying, "It was tough, but we did it. We said in the campaign we were going to end welfare as we know it, and we have broken with fifty years of policy tradition and set this country on a fundamentally different course," it

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would have made all the difference in the world. The symbolic value of that issue during the campaign was enormous; it was the centerpiece of the television advertising they did in the swing states in the last two weeks before the election.

But once the decision was made, there was nothing to be done about it. The President had shoved all the chips onto the table, and he couldn't take them back.

Jones: And to make the decision otherwise, he would have had to say no to his wife.

Galston: It's not clear to me where the idea for a big push on healthcare came from in the first place. But once it was on the table, she wanted to do it. But if the President had decided during the transition that as soon as the economic plan was done he was going to preside over an intensive policy process which by the late summer would have led to a welfare plan that could have been proposed Labor Day of 1993—and given a full year to get it passed before the election started up in earnest in September of '94—I think he could have done it, despite the divisions in the Democratic Party. It would have meant looking the Democratic leadership in the eye and saying, "I've heard what you have to say, but I don't agree with you. I was elected to do this and, by God, I'm going to do it." But that didn't happen. They called his bluff. They called his bluff before he ever took office.

Jones: It also would have been consistent with what survey data showed in the '92 election: Clinton had presented himself as more of a centrist Democrat.

Galston: A different kind of Democrat.

Jones: A different kind of Democrat. Welfare reform, rather than healthcare, would have been consistent with that. The inconsistency permitted the Republicans to say, "We're outta here."

Galston: It was clear by the fall of 1994 that the American people had decided that the Clinton campaign of '92 had been a bait-and-switch operation, and they didn't like it. You're absolutely right. It makes me sad just thinking of what might have been. We're still living with the consequences.

Walcott: Once healthcare crashed, from your perspective, what did that do to the position or the salience of the First Lady as a policy actor?

Galston: My impression is that she retreated for a while and licked her wounds. I didn't spend a lot of time and energy monitoring her whereabouts.

Riley: It's hard to separate that from the '94 election, right? You're looking at September, October, not even three months before that election. What can you tell us about the Vice President's role in this particular White House?

Galston: I can tell you two things. First of all, he was very smart to carve out particular areas of responsibility. Three come to mind prominently: He took charge of the "reinventing government" agenda. Secondly, he was clearly "Mr. Environment." Third, he played an

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extremely significant role in foreign policy, particularly with the Russians through the Gore-[Viktor] Chernomyrdin Commission. Above and beyond that—and I can say from direct experience—he was the single best advisor the President had. I was in a number of meetings with them, and the Vice President always gave the President the clearest, the crispest, and the frankest advice he got. It was extremely impressive.

That's why I believe to this day that although he was a lousy candidate, he would have been a pretty good President. If he had been able to solicit and take advice of the quality he was able to give, I think things would have gone pretty well with the country. Those are the two big things I'd say about the Vice President.

Riley: Two of those are areas that might otherwise have been a part of your portfolio within the domestic policy operation, right? It's noticeable that the environment wasn't among the things you and Bruce divvied up.

Galston: Maybe, although when you consider that's there's also a CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] in the Executive Office of the President it's quite likely that the center of gravity would have been elsewhere. The fact of the matter was that environmental policy had been subcontracted to the Vice President, and I think that was more good than bad, because he had the interest and the commitment and the passion. He had the staff resources to dedicate to it. He was in the position to do a better job with that agenda than the Domestic Policy Council.

Riley: And the same was true of the "reinventing government" initiative?

Galston: That's a closer call. But the fact of the matter is that my closest political comrade in arms, Elaine Kamarck, ended up as the head of that entire venture. So from my standpoint, that was a distinction without a difference. She did exactly what I would have done, only better. So why not?

Walcott: Your office and their office didn't have much overlap? You didn't have to deal with them very much?

Galston: Not very much. But Elaine and I talked reasonably frequently because I'm sort of a phlegmatic Jew, and she's an excitable Italian, so she had things to complain about pretty frequently.

Jones: The big question in the '94 election is how it affected what you were doing. So I'll ask for your overall analysis of the effect of it on the White House and specifically on your job.

Riley: If I can ask a preliminary question: Did you expect what happened in '94?

Galston: I publicly predicted it in October. I gave an interview, which is in the briefing book. I was at a convention convened by *Mother Jones* magazine, and I took a deep breath and told them exactly what the political flow was and what we were facing. A reporter from the *Wall Street Journal* was in the room, and he wrote a very long article on that set of remarks.

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Riley: Is this the first time a *Wall Street Journal* reporter has ever been at a *Mother Jones* event?

Galston: I do not know.

Walcott: I think they come in disguise.

Jones: You also presaged it in the evasion case, where you talk about the myth of congressional domination.

Galston: That was the single most controversial prediction we made, that somehow Congress was a bastion that would be insulated from under-performance at the Presidential level. We didn't expect it to come true as cataclysmically as it did. One of my most vivid memories of the White House is sitting in the Roosevelt Room at the senior staff meeting the morning after the election. One of the people from the political office read the roll of the fifty-some odd House Democrats who had been defeated. It was as though a bell was tolling. [laughter] No, seriously. A name would be mentioned, and a gasp would run through the room. "My God, he couldn't possibly have lost." When Dan Glickman's name was mentioned—"gasp!"—nobody could believe it. It was really an incredible list and one of these indelible experiences—dong, dong, dong. Fifty-five times.

Riley: I didn't mean to get you too far away—

Galston: The short answer is that for the handful of chartered New Democrats in the White House, the 1994 congressional loss was a directly empowering experience. I think the President parsed what had happened as follows: He'd been listening to advice from advisors who were oriented toward congressional Democrats and a sort of social Democratic agenda. That's shorthand for George Stephanopoulos and Stan Greenberg. That experiment had been tried, and it had failed.

He reached out to me and others to give even political advice during this difficult period. I can assure you that was the first and last time I was asked for political advice in the White House. But the fact that there were some of us who had clearly advocated a different strategic course—not just a policy course, but a different strategic course—and the fact that the New Democratic strategic course had never gotten a careful examination during the first two years were not lost on the President. I don't think he felt very happy about it. He had only himself to blame. My first law of politics is that every candidate gets the campaign he deserves. My first law of Presidencies is that every President gets the White House he deserves.

To be fair, the President didn't spend a lot of time blaming other people. He fired some other people, but I think in his heart of hearts he internalized responsibility for the catastrophe.

Jones: The analysis he provided right after the election suits exactly what you're describing in the sense of his acknowledging that in the first two years he and the White House had really not accomplished what they intended to accomplish in the way and the direction they meant for the accomplishments to come. This was by way of giving a positive spin to what was a disaster. But it seems to me to follow along from his sensitivity to what had occurred.

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Galston: There was a total change in the tone and substance of the White House in the weeks immediately after November of 1994. People who had been disempowered were empowered. People who had been in the lead were downgraded or dismissed. It was quite dramatic.

Riley: How were you approached? You said the President asked for your political advice. Can you give us some particulars about this? Did he want to talk with you under these circumstances? Did he ask you to write him a memo?

Galston: Once again, my recollection of the direct sequence of events is vague. I suddenly started getting invitations to political and strategic meetings from which I and others like me had been systematically excluded during the first eighteen months. I got invitations to write memos. I don't know whether the President, through intermediaries, directly solicited them, but I do know that they reached him. So that was just a day and night transformation. It was temporary in my role in the White House.

I say temporary, because once the President decided to go a lot farther down that road and start dealing with Dick Morris—he's the classic "suck up all the oxygen in the room" kind of guy, as everybody knows. And also, for family reasons, I made the decision early in 1995 that I had to inform the President that I had to leave. But based on my multiple conversations with Bill Curry, who was working as Dick Morris's secret agent in the White House without quite acknowledging the connection during those early months of 1995—

Riley: Yeah, there was a period there when he was just "Charlie."

Galston: Right, exactly. I didn't fully understand at the time, but Curry was there, I think, as his eyes and ears. The entire dynamic of the White House had changed, and it was clear that there was an opening for New Democratic thinking, precisely at the time when the White House had no power to make it happen. It was really a bittersweet feeling. On the one hand, yes, now he's listening to us. On the other hand, so what? So it was not a happy time for anybody. There was Newt Gingrich and his snarling majorities. Eeew.

Jones: When did you make the decision to leave, in January?

Galston: It was more like March. I gave about two months' notice. I left at the end of May.

Jones: What happened at that point in your job?

Galston: Not much. I kept on doing my job. The education agenda was done. There were various pieces. Something we haven't talked about is that I invented a sort of citizenship beat for myself. I opened up the doors of the White House to representatives of civic organizations and people advocating on behalf of reinvigorating the citizenry. I staged a series of conferences in the White House on reinvigoration of citizenship in the community, etc. I spent an increasing portion of my time doing that, and the President was increasingly interested in that portion of the agenda because it fit in with New Democratic thematics.

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Riley: When did this start, Bill, roughly?

Galston: I started doing this very early on in the White House. Nobody asked me to do it, but I figured if nobody told me I couldn't or shouldn't do it, then part of my value-added as a scholar and someone who'd thought about those questions is that I could try at least to open up the White House for conversations without committing the White House to any particular result of those conversations. But I think it's fair to say that the President from the get-go was interested in that sort of conversation. I organized meetings on community citizenship, civic education. He came and spoke at two or three of them.

For example, I had worked with a sociologist named Amital Etzioni in the late '80s and early '90s to start this communitarian organization. A lot of people who were interested in character education, in civic education, in community-based dialogue—groups of that sort—gathered under those umbrellas. There were also people who were interested in restoring—the way they put it is, "Let's put the public back in public service." It was people both inside and outside the administration who were interested in opening up the rule-making process to more citizen inspection and deliberation, people who were interested in using devolution and federalism to increase real empowerment at the community and civic level.

I held more than one meeting involving people from inside the bureaucracy, outside scholars, foundation people who were interested in this question. It was either in late '94 or early '95 that I took a run at getting the President to agree to a blue-ribbon Presidential commission on the status of citizenship in the United States. I got him interested, but he never quite signed off on it. That was part of the sequence of events that led to the creation of the bipartisan National Commission on Civic Renewal as a voluntary sector venture, with me serving as executive director starting in 1996.

Some of the foundation people and scholars and civic activists who were involved in those White House discussions then went on to either empower or to help staff the national commission. So that citizenship beat was always an important thread in what I was doing, and it became more important.

Riley: Was that primarily an outreach thing, or was it something that the President was actually involved in when your groups were there? Would he come speak to them? Or was it just the fact that it was being held at the White House that was seen as—

Galston: When I was doing the Sherpa work, I would open up the Roosevelt Room of the White House, which served as very attractive bait for people to come in and talk with me. Then, when there were large conferences, on two or three occasions the President came and addressed them for as long as 45 minutes. So the people felt that they had gotten a big chunk of the President's time and attention.

This is all by way of answering the question of what life was like right after the election. November, December was the period of what might be called political empowerment of New Democrats, a space within which some of our strategic ideas were welcome. The last part of my service in the White House was increasingly focused on this civic and citizenship agenda. Some

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people in the First Lady's office picked that up and carried it forward after I left—to my surprise. I didn't think of them as my natural allies, but some of them turned out to be.

Jones: Was it the case that some of what you talk about as a New Democratic approach to things was also consistent with advice that Dick Morris was giving the President?

Galston: I had no reason to doubt that. You have a lot of colinearity here, because Dick Morris was empowered to give that advice by exactly the same factors that created the political space for the likes of me. Clearly Morris was a hundred times more important than I was, but I see it as part of the same package. Also, it wasn't just that Morris was giving the President that advice, but that the President was ready to listen to it. That was the fundamental point. You hear what you want to hear, I don't care who you are.

Morris, I'm sure, was giving the same advice in 1994 to someone who was getting it to the President. For all I know, the President was hearing it directly, but he wasn't listening. After the cataclysm, after the flood, he listened. The rest is history.

Jones: Did you have any connection or relationship with Morris?

Galston: No. I met him once or twice. It wasn't my cup of tea.

Riley: How so?

Galston: I don't mind assertive people. I do mind people who think they're the only game in town. Don't rely on my word. You can talk to anyone.

Riley: We do.

Galston: You'll get the same answer.

Riley: We talk to everyone about this.

Galston: I can't believe anybody would say anything different.

Riley: As somebody with a broad interest in American politics, how did you react to the Contract with America?

Galston: I had a mixed reaction. On the one hand, I thought it was an amazing political feat that Gingrich and company had pulled off—in effect to marginalize a President in an off-year election, and at least to create the impression that they had done so not simply as a reactive matter—let's pummel the President—but on behalf of an agenda. I thought that it was a sign of political seriousness that everybody in the Republican Party, in effect, signed—not just in effect, they were all there on the steps of the Capitol signing the Contract with America. I thought that was party politics at a pretty high level.

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On the other hand, I detested its entire substance. So it's sort of classic good news, bad news story, right?

Riley: There wasn't anything in there that resonated with you?

Galston: No, no, it was not a New Democratic agenda. It was a conservative movement, Republican agenda. It was all poll-tested to a fare-thee-well. They were absolutely frank about it: If something didn't get 70% support, it wasn't in the Contract, regardless of its substantive merits.

Jones: A lot of it also had to do with changes in Congress, which were put in place right away with the new Congress—changing the limitations for committee chairs, even for the Speaker, and so forth. Did that have any immediate impact as far as the White House was concerned?

Galston: I don't think so. Every chair, full chair and subcommittee chair, was going to be brand new. So the fact that they couldn't last as long as the Bill Fords of the Democratic Party did was neither here nor there. They were all newly in office, they were proud, they were feeling their oats. They felt that the world was open before them, and Clinton was irrelevant—leading to his famous spring 1995 declaration that "the President is relevant." You remember that one.

Jones: Were there strategy sessions in which you were involved?

Galston: There were strategy sessions, for sure. I was not involved. A lot of them, as I understand it now, were in the President's private residence. As I understand it (my scouts advise), they usually involved long lectures by Dick Morris on what everybody had to do. My information is that the President conveyed pretty clearly the idea that Morris was in charge, at least as regards the nexus of policy and politics. So if he sent out an APB [all points bulletin] for particular kinds of policy, you should drop everything and do your best to comply.

Jones: This included Congressional Relations, relations with the Republicans on the Hill? I mean, we have triangulation.

Galston: The relation with Republicans on the Hill was pursuant to the political strategy. I don't think it immediately manifested itself in relations with Republicans on the Hill, but clearly in the middle of 1995—I was actually present when this happened, but I can't remember the venue. I remember how distressed some people were when they emerged from a meeting with the President—this was the economic team. Some of them were shaking their heads. The President had made the decision that he was going to agree to a balanced budget, but redefine the budget in Democratic as opposed to Republican terms. There was a substantial faction in the White House that was appalled by that decision.

But once you decide to change the terms of the debate, the issue is not whether we're going to balance the budget, but how. That then is the predicate for redefining the terms of political engagement with the Republicans. Ultimately that didn't lead to cooperation, God knows. It led to a government shutdown. It did create a different dynamic. But the idea that triangulation

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meant that the President was talking with Republicans more than he used to—I don't think it worked that way.

Jones: What about your assessment of what was happening with the House Republicans in particular—that a Speaker was essentially seeking to be the source of agenda and source of policy and proposals, rather than the committee chairs. How did you assess that?

Galston: It was clear to me that we hadn't seen such a thing for the better part of a century. I had about the same assessment of that as I did of the Contract with America. In process terms, it was a very interesting institutional change, a very interesting turn towards, at least temporarily, an effort to have quasi-parliamentary government in the United States. But since the substance attached to it was so unacceptable, I didn't spend much time as a political scientist analyzing these marvelous institutional innovations as I might have. That was something I was perfectly prepared to think about afterwards. The most important thing is that such centralization in the Speaker led to radical political misjudgments.

Jones: But, again from your perspective and while you're still in this job, did it mean that you couldn't get anything done, or you didn't try to get anything done?

Galston: The President was back on his heels in early 1995. Things hit bottom right before the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City and sort of rebounded. He found a voice and very cleverly linked that episode with hostility of government run amuck. I think he began to turn the corner perceptually about that point. But mainly what was happening was jousting. Was there a lot of domestic policy going on during that period? Hell, no. How could there have been?

The Republicans had taken over the House for the first time in forty years. The President gave a very interesting State of the Union speech in 1995 which, to some extent, reflected the impact of the scholars' dinner that I'd organized for him at Camp David in January, so I felt sort of thematically empowered; but from a policy standpoint, how could there have been? The Republicans were not of a mind to listen, and the President was focused on political regrouping. That was the whole point of the accession of Dick Morris.

The issue was not how you're going to move a policy agenda forward in those circumstances. The issue was how he was going to save his Presidency. The first thing you have to do when you're seriously wounded is stop the bleeding. And that's what he did. He stopped the bleeding principally by shifting the terms of the debate on budget issues and defining the difference as m-squared e-squared. The Republicans are going to slash and burn Medicare, Medicaid, Education, and Environment (I can do that one in my sleep) and we won't. We'll balance the budget—but in a way that reflects our values. That was the mantra. That stopped the bleeding.

Once citizens began hearing that message, it was Gingrich and company who were on the defensive, because they were trying to do something that they didn't have the majority to do. That wasn't the Contract with America.

Riley: There were discussions back and forth about the extent to which the administration ought to play offense or defense at this stage, right? It was at least within the realm of possibility that

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you could have decided to rely on a veto strategy at this point. Yet a decision must have been taken that that's not what we're going to do.

Galston: As I said, I wasn't part of those strategy discussions. But it's almost a mirror image. The single most important decision that was taken in the first two years was the economic plan, going towards fiscal restraint rather than a Bob Reich "investment in the future" strategy. There were two equally significant decisions in the second two years. The first was the decision to endorse the principle of the balanced budget and shift the terrain of battle. The second was the decision to sign the welfare reform bill.

That was a combination of a defensive strategy and an offensive strategy, because the President vetoed the first two versions and then withstood intense lobbying—including from some people inside the White House—to veto the third version. He signed it instead. I think he won the '96 election the day he signed the third version of the welfare bill. I don't think there's any doubt about the outcome of that.

Riley: Even the decision to engage the Republicans on the question of a balanced budget becomes an offensive strategy at that point.

Galston: As every general of a retreating army knows, before you can advance again, you have to stop the retreat. By giving the Democrats a defensible principle around which they could organize, the retreat stopped, and ultimately the counterattack began. Then, with the White House on the offensive—"They want to shut down the government so they can force me to agree to cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, and I won't do it." That was a pretty good message. It won the election for him—along with the welfare bill.

Walcott: Had he not signed the third version of the welfare reform, you think he would have lost the election?

Galston: I believe that. I believe that the most important promise he made to the American people, the one they remembered, was that he would end the single most unpopular symbol of the social policy of the old Democratic Party, the one that Republican Presidents and candidates had used to beat up on the Democratic Party ever since the civil rights movement. There was not going to be a fourth version of the welfare bill. He would either sign the third version or live with his veto. I think the Republicans would have crammed it up every orifice in his body. I genuinely believe that. That was the only chance they had to be competitive in the '96 election, if Clinton had given them that opening.

Riley: Anything else, Chuck?

Jones: Just a comment, especially about the balanced budget situation. Dick Neustadt always says, "When your professional reputation has hit a low point, about all you can do is create uncertainty." It seems to me that what Clinton did in '95 was a beautiful example. What Gingrich expected to be certain—in fact, he said so—that the President would have to sign whatever they produced—Clinton made uncertain. That was a beautiful example of reestablishment of reputation.

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Galston: But I can't stress to you enough how unpopular that decision was inside the White House.

Jones: That's interesting.

Galston: The two things Clinton did that secured his reelection—going for the balanced budget and signing the welfare bill—were intensely unpopular.

Walcott: Did that have long-term consequences for the distribution of influence within the White House?

Galston: I don't think so. Well, it did in the following sense: Some people were viscerally unable to get with the new program—but some people pivoted very nicely. I was not at these meetings so I don't know. I don't think my roommate was particularly in favor of the balanced budget strategy, but he sure turned into an able executor of it once the President had decided. But people who were more closely linked to the House Democrats inside the White House could not make that shift.

Walcott: So they left.

Galston: They either left or lost influence. Dick Morris was not the sort of guy who brooked a lot of opposition and dissent. He was not in a position to fire anybody, but he sure was in a position to marginalize people.

Jones: What's your analysis of the Democratic Party now, based upon your evasion memo of '91—was it?

Galston: '89.

Jones: How do you see it now?

Galston: I actually dealt with that question at the very end of an essay I finished last week on the current status of the Democratic Party. A substantial portion of the Clinton agenda remains controversial within the Democratic Party. The contrast with, let's say, the Republicans on fiscal policy is really stark. The supply-side revolution has become the dominant fiscal orthodoxy within the Republican Party. I'm hard pressed to think of any piece of the New Democratic thematics that has achieved comparable hegemony within the Democratic Party. Substantial portions of the old Democratic Party are unreconciled to these changes. Every time the going gets tough politically or economically, the same old cleavages open up. We have the same debates about trade, for example. Or the teachers' unions now take the same stance towards education reform that they did at the beginning of the Clinton administration, in spite of all those years of policy development and policy advocacy.

Speaking as someone who's growing old in the cause of the reform of the Democratic Party, it's not clear to me that it's an entirely reformable institution. I do not entirely understand why it is

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that the conservative movement could redefine the Republican Party so completely, but the New Democratic movement can't do the same thing with the Democrats. That's a very interesting comparison that needs to be thought through.

Jones: Is it in part that if the party is losing or has lost its majority status, it shrinks to the old rather than to the new?

Galston: I don't think you can write the history of the conservative movement's rise to dominance in the Republican Party on the basis of that principle. By that standard, they should have imploded to Bob Taft Republicanism. That's not what happened, right? That was the default position of the Republican Party—smaller government, lower taxes, fiscal balance, a sort of flinty-eyed classic conservativism. What we have now is something entirely different. How did that happen?

Jones: That's one story, but how about the Democrats currently?

Galston: How about the Democrats? The best answer I can come up with is that the organized interest group structure of the Democratic Party is at least as strong as any of the forces seeking to change it. The Democratic barons of the House used to take the position that we can outlast Presidential folly, whether it's Carter's, Clinton's, or anybody else's. The organized interest groups in the Democratic Party have now assumed the "we can outlast them" mantle, and they are highly unreconstructed. I think it's really interesting that liberal Democrats who are elected public officials have come a lot closer to the Clinton position than the interest-group structure of the Democratic Party.

George Miller has moved three standard deviations toward sanity in the past twenty years, and the National Education Association has moved in the other direction. Go figure. Has the organized labor movement as a whole reformed itself? Have the various bastions of social activism tried to seek a more moderate agenda on race or choice or anything else? Not that I can see.

Riley: We'll reconvene back here tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

April 23, 2004

Riley: This is day two of the William Galston interview as a part of the Clinton Presidential History Project. It's not unusual for people who have been interviewed to come up with something overnight that they wish they had touched on in the prior day. Did anything come up during dinner last night or while you were resting that you wish you had mentioned?

Galston: No, I dreamed about other things.

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Riley: Something occurred to me about the early part of the administration: the flap over gays in the military. I wanted to ask you this question for two reasons. One is that it's often taken as a sign of the administration tracking in a bad direction: The fact that this was one of the first things to be grappled with, or at a minimum, that it showed a lack of competence in grasping the agenda. Secondly, because you had some military experience, I wondered if you were called on or you had any special insights into this particular issue.

Galston: I was not called on. This was handled at the Presidential level, the political level, and the communications level. It was not seen as a Domestic Policy Council issue. Like a lot of other people, I had sympathy for the President's position on the merits but thought it was a terrible way to begin. I don't think very many people, regardless of their views on the merits, now disagree with that; as a matter of fact, there weren't many at the time, including probably the President.

Walcott: What's your sense of how they got trapped into that issue?

Galston: I don't know. I think it had something to do with some remarks the President made almost offhandedly during the campaign, which reporters then asked him about during the transition. He might have moved back a step and talked about putting together a committee, a task force of people in the White House, people in the Pentagon, to work through this issue in a way that was consistent not only with equal rights for all Americans, but the maintenance of good order and discipline for the military etc. He was confident that men and women of good will can find a way—I could write this in my sleep. That isn't what he did.

I think in making those comments during the campaign, and then not thinking through adequately how he would deal with that question if and when it surfaced—

Riley: That was a court case, right? Something had been settled, I think in the transition or approaching inauguration day, that actually prompted some of the press attention to it.

Galston: I doubt very much that the military was under anything like a court order to go down that road. I don't remember the specifics of the court case. The President had more degrees of freedom than he chose to exercise.

Riley: One of the things that you were recognized for during your time in the White House was the organization of a number of these seminars, or "thinkers' dinners," or things like that. Could you tell us how you got started on that? Was that your idea? Somebody else's idea? The President's idea? Tell us a little bit about how those got organized, the purposes, and then give us a description of how they went.

Galston: I don't remember who initiated it. I did two big ones, the first at Camp David, the second in the White House under memorable circumstances, which I'll describe in a minute—in early January, the weeks prior to the State of the Union in both 1995 and 1996. I organized a third large one in one of the meeting rooms in the East Wing around the idea of crime and juvenile justice. It was thinkers and policy people, it was during the day rather than the evening,

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and it involved both the President and the Vice President. Actually, all three of them involved both the President and the Vice President.

As I think I mentioned yesterday, there were really two principal purposes. The first was to create a venue for somewhat different kind of advice—this was particularly true of Camp David dinners—less oriented towards the details of policy and more towards thematics, strategy, new beginnings, how do you think about your Presidency and your agenda? What are the big things you could do as President of the United States. So that was one part of it: to generate a forum for a different kind of advice and a different atmosphere of exchange between scholars—including political philosophers, not just policy types or political scientists or hacks (although we had them too).

But also, as I mentioned yesterday, it was to allow the President to communicate directly, personally, informally, and impressively with people who carried weight in different parts of the intellectual community. I thought that was a constituency with chattering classes that frequently had an influence out of proportion to their numbers. During that period in the mid-'90s the President needed all the help he could get. If, at the same time the Republicans were taking shots at him, the academic and intellectual community decided to jump ship and go into open opposition or strike up a constant drum beat of criticism, that would have weakened an already weak position.

The art of those dinners was to combine a broad range of advice to which the President could respond, with an opportunity for him to exercise his unique gifts of personal charm and persuasion, which he did naturally. With regard to the selection process, that was me. I chose them, I submitted the lists. Obviously, if a particular name had rung an alarm bell, I would have heard about it. But they didn't, and I didn't.

Walcott: What criteria did you use other than prominence?

Galston: I wanted a range of views. Obviously there were certain sorts of views that wouldn't be useful. But within the broad spectrum of people who were in sympathy with the administration or who might be brought around to that view—either from a somewhat left-of-center perspective or somewhat right-of-center perspective—I then selected people. There were some high-level journalists, political philosophers, law professors, historians, high-gauge analysts of the political system, people like Theda Skocpol. By academic standards it was a pretty diverse group, by diversity standards, I guess somewhat less so.

As I said, the first one in 1995 was organized at Camp David. By the way, one of the participants, Benjamin Barber, has written a book on that, some of the interpretive thrust of which I might argue with, but he gives a reasonably good report, especially the details of the rhythm of the 1995 dinner at Camp David. He goes out of his way to show me fumbling and bumbling, but I guess I can live with that.

Riley: Mostly in not accepting his advice and counsel, if I recall correctly?

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Galston: No, no, he doesn't go that far. The typical organization in the first instance—in addition to the President, the Vice President, the First Lady, and a couple of Cabinet Secretaries—it was the administration there. And there were about a dozen scholars and political actors of one sort or another.

Riley: This is in January—

Galston: This is in January of 1995. I have a feeling I was empowered to do this as part of the President's intellectual and emotional regrouping after the November 1994 catastrophe. I mentioned yesterday that I was empowered and elevated in the wake of that because the President had the sense that the sort of advice I would have given him—if he had asked—might have been helpful in 1993 and 1994. And he was determined to reopen those doors.

Walcott: Did you have the sense that the President really learned from these events? Or was it mostly an opportunity for the President to make an impression on the invited guests?

Galston: The 1995 State of the Union did seem to me and others to have been influenced—particularly the President's own personal insertions—by some of the things he heard and reacted to at Camp David. Since this was explicitly billed as part of the President's intellectual preparation for the State of the Union address, I took that as an indicator that it hadn't been a total waste of time as far as he was concerned. If we had the text in front of me we could go through paragraph by paragraph, and I could point out the things that in my judgment wouldn't have been in there or wouldn't have been in there that way if it hadn't been—

Riley: Was there an agenda for these meetings? Did you craft something?

Galston: Oh yes. It wasn't stage-managed the way some meetings with the President are. It wasn't a pre-rehearsed dog and pony show, but people knew how much time they had to speak in the opening round, what order they were going to go in, what (in broad terms) they were going to talk about. I deliberately structured the '95 Camp David meeting so that people who genuinely believed that the President hadn't been a full-throated enough progressive in 1993 and 1994 would have a chance to speak first. It was sort of the intelligence center-left of the Democratic Party intelligentsia.

The last six speakers more or less represented a New Democrat response to that, with Bob Putnam sort of in the middle as the hinge from part one to part two. Not to my surprise, because Putnam is so good at what he does, he stole a piece of the show, not by taking more time than he was allotted or anything like that, but just because he had an arresting thesis. This was, of course, right after the January 1995 publication of the famous article in the *Journal of Democracy.* He had come to see me in the White House the fall before and had given me a bootlegged copy of the page proofs. He had a hunch that it might turn out to be an important article. I passed it on to the President, and it was clear from his marginal notes that as someone with communitarian instincts himself, he was interested in the "decline of community" thesis. It resonated with some things he was saying.

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So it was not exactly a surprise that the two of them mind-melded, which was not to say that he didn't react strongly to other things he heard, but I remember quite vividly how strongly he reacted to that.

Walcott: How many speakers were there, and how long did they get on the first round?

Galston: There were about a dozen. I gave them five minutes each, and I was pretty strict with it.

Riley: Did you have anybody decline an invitation?

Galston: Are you kidding?

Riley: I'm merely here to ask questions.

Galston: Actually, in 1996 I did. In 1995 I may have as well. I invited Michael Walzer on both occasions, and I think on neither did he come, which is a great sign of integrity. I think he wanted to come, but had other obligations. Then in 1996 I remember quite vividly I wanted to have a friend and colleague of mine who's now a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, political philosopher, Jean Bethke Elshtain, but she had a previous commitment to an event with Nelson Mandela in South Africa and—so you know, "that plus a player to be named later." But, by and large, people accepted the invitations and worked pretty hard to get there. I know that to be true because of the circumstances. Remember the blizzard in '96?

Riley: Yes.

Galston: It hit the day before the White House dinner. Two feet of snow fell in Washington in 24 hours. The drifts were five feet high, the city was paralyzed, and airports likewise. I had to dig for hours, literally, to be able to get to the Metro station. I came to the White House in my old Marine boots and the best wet clothes I could find, with a bag slung over my shoulder with clothes which, if I got there in time, I would change into. If not, I would just have to explain the boots to the President.

People moved heaven and earth to get there, and I think nearly all of them did. One poor guy coming from the West Coast tried every conceivable connection mode to get as close to Washington as possible so he could drive in, but nothing worked. He finally folded. He was a very well-known African-American novelist, Charles Johnson. I really wanted him there. He had just written a very interesting book on slavery [*Middle Passage*], and I knew that he and the President would have a lot to talk about. But it didn't work out.

Riley: The '96 dinner was also in advance of the State of the Union—

Galston: With the same purpose. This one was in a memorable venue, one of the smaller dining rooms in the East Wing. There was a fire crackling in the fireplace, snow continuing to pelt down outside, a real Currier and Ives scene. We went on 'til all hours, and finally Hillary said, "Enough is enough." She knew that her husband could go on forever.

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Walcott: Did she participate actively in these conversations?

Galston: Let me put it this way. She didn't soak up a lot of airtime during the formal conversation; she was in more of listening mode. But she was a very vigorous interactor with the guests one-on-one before and after the formalities of the dinner. I think she decided to cede the formal give and take for the most part to the President. Then afterwards, she was the one who organized the caravan of White House four-wheelers to get the guests home, which was the only way. Otherwise, it would have been the world's most exclusive flophouse. It was impossible to walk. She diagnosed the situation. Then she gave me—I think quite mischievously—the assignment of breaking it up.

So there is the President of the United States, chatting animatedly with Skip [Henry Louis, Jr.] Gates and a bunch of other people, and Hillary kept on glaring at me: "Break it up! I want to go to bed. I don't care if he never goes to bed, but I want to go to bed." She was unwilling to go to bed before she'd seen the guests off. She was a well brought up Midwestern girl. So I finally tapped Skip on the shoulder, and he turned and glared at me, "Dammit, can't you see it's the President of the United States I'm talking to?" I'm well aware of that fact, so I got no mercy from anybody. That was a kamikaze mission from which I barely returned alive.

Riley: Other than breaking things up, did you have an active role as a moderator?

Galston: Oh yes, I was the master of ceremonies. So I would call on people, introduce them very briefly. The President, of course, had a briefing book like this, so if he wanted bios or samples of people's writings or what have you—

Walcott: Did he prepare that way? Did he read what the guests had written?

Galston: I never got the briefing book back, but he is a reader, and given the way he was able to engage—the President has an astonishingly quick mind, can figure things out without doing a lot of work in advance. That drove his fellow students at Yale Law School bananas.

At any rate, either he read or he decided he didn't need to, and he was right. At the 1996 dinner, a pretty prominent Yale Law professor, Bruce Ackerman, was there, and the President and Bruce mixed it up. The President gave as good as he got. Bruce referred to some recherché bit of post-Civil War political history involving President Andrew Johnson, and the President sort of saw him and raised him one, which may have surprised Bruce a little bit.

Riley: Did you prep the participants much before coming in, in terms of what their roles would be?

Galston: Obviously, I asked them what they were going to talk about, because that helped me to arrange the sequence of presentations. I told them that I'd be pretty strict with the time, that after the first round there would be a frank and free exchange of views, and I would probably let loose the moderator's reins and the President would become his own master of ceremonies. But beyond that, I framed it by saying, "Mr. President, these people are here because I think they

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have something important to say. I'm familiar with the thrust of what they've worked on, but this is live and unrehearsed, and if something is said that surprises you, please be assured that it will probably surprise me as well. This is a frank, off-the-record conversation between you and the people who are broadly sympathetic to your administration and would like to contribute their thoughts as to what might be done in the next four years."

Walcott: Was anything inflammatory said? At any point did the President become agitated about what somebody said?

Galston: Agitated? No. I think it's clear that he agreed more with some things than he did with others. I'll give you an example. I invited Alan Ehrenhalt, the editor of *Governing*, the magazine. Alan had just published a wonderful book on Chicago, cultural change in three kinds of Chicago neighborhoods between the late '40s, early '50s and the mid-'90s. Took a working-class Catholic neighborhood, an African-American neighborhood, and an upscale neighborhood, and he just tracked the change. One of the central points he made, and the central reason I wanted him to be there—and I told him so—was that he argued that the kind of community and solidarity that one saw in these neighborhoods fifty years ago was in part a function of a locus of cultural authority. You couldn't have community without a locus of authority. There was a vertical aspect to community as well as a horizontal aspect. It was a mistake to understand community as a "Kumbaya" song. It was much more structured than that.

He came down pretty forcefully in favor of the restoration of some sort of authority in late 20th century as the basis for the restoration of community that the President had talked about in his 1995 State of the Union. I recall Clinton breaking in to react to say something along the lines of, "Darned if I know how I can do that." Clearly, he didn't think that the restoration of cultural authority was likely to happen any time soon. He was not entirely unsympathetic to the idea, and he had talked publicly and approvingly on more than one occasion about a shift of outlooks so that rights and responsibilities were in a better balance. He clearly wanted a recalibration of American culture. But he didn't think that the restoration of authority was going to be part of our future.

Walcott: Was he then generally impatient with ideas that could not be formulated as policy?

Galston: No, no. There was a part of him that was genuinely an intellectual and liked to argue ideas, liked to argue history and counterfactuals, etc. But, in spite of some press coverage to the contrary, he never confused the White House with a college seminar.

Riley: These two activities occurred against very interesting backdrops. You'd just had the Republican revolution in '95, and then this entire sequencing of government shutdowns, which I assume must have just ended by the time of the '96 meeting.

Galston: As I recall, there were two shutdowns. I know one was in the fall, but I can't remember whether the second one occurred later in January.

Riley: It went into the early part of January. But it still would have been very fresh in people's minds. Let's go back to the first instance, in '94. Do you recall anybody being particularly

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enlightening about helping the President figure out what that '94 election might have meant? Was that a central focus?

Galston: I think that people used that as the predicate for what they wanted to say affirmatively. It was obvious that the administration and the Democratic Party were back on their heels politically. So in '95, everybody was in the mode of "Okay, now what do we do?" People used their time, not so much to analyze what had gone wrong—which would have been quite awkward in such quarters anyway. I think even if they had been more inclined to do that, they might have thought better of it when they considered what they would say in all candor, besides which, what was past was past, and the President was clearly in an "Okay, give me advice about what I can do now." For that three-month period or so, after November, he was not in a self-justifying mood and mode at all. He was in a "Maybe I don't know quite as much as I thought I did. Let me open my ears and listen and see what a new beginning might be like" mode.

Riley: But there's a difference between trying to place specific blame for a failing in a particular election, and trying to create, for the President, a kind of historical fabric within which that particular change might have occurred.

Galston: The choreography of the first thinkers' dinner, the 1995 Camp David dinner, was very clear. The President got two counter-hypotheses. The predicate of the first five or six speakers was, "You were not enough of a progressive or a social Democrat. Your message was mugged." The thesis of the second half of the panel was, "You didn't prosper because you weren't enough of a reformer, you weren't enough of a New Democrat." So each of the broad strategic recommendations for moving the administration forward rested on, and clearly implied, a diagnosis of what had gone wrong. People didn't have to spell that out. The President was plenty quick, quick enough to get the point.

Some of the people—particularly on the New Democratic side—were a little bit blunter than others, perhaps because they'd had a somewhat closer association with the President. But, on the other hand, one of these more liberal, New Deal, social Democratic types, the historian Alan Brinkley, in a very measured and modulated way, was also quite forceful about what he thought the way forward would be. People like Theda Skocpol were not shrinking violets either.

Walcott: It sounds as though the composition of these groups was different from what had occurred in other administrations. You recall Lyndon Johnson having to deal with Eartha Kitt, for example, at a famous White House function. You didn't have celebrities from the performing arts and that world, did you?

Galston: I wanted people who would give the President serious advice. The President could wallow in glitz whenever he wanted to, and he wanted to quite a bit. As everybody knows, there's a small movie theater in the White House. The President used it a lot, and a lot of Hollywood people came through. I was there for one of those nights. It was the prescreening of *Philadelphia*. Tom Hanks and his wife were there. I had dinner with his wife, the actress Rita Wilson, and had a chance to ask her if she and Hanks had "met cute." She brightened up at that, wasn't expecting Hollywood jargon in the White House. We had a wonderful dinner while my wife glared at her from the next table. [laughter]

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Riley: Was the Vice President very active in these discussions?

Galston: In 1995, I recall him as being quite active. He made an interesting choice in 1995. He chose, in effect, to present himself as the 13th member of the panel, rather than as the second recipient of the panel's advice. So he had his own analysis, which was a sort of characteristic mix of the two, with a dose of technological change thrown in. I recall that he had something fairly systematic and lengthy to say at Camp David.

In 1996 he approached me in some agitation and unhappiness because his senior aide and my good friend, Elaine Kamarck, had not ended up on the invitation list. I said she had certainly been on every list that I had submitted, and I didn't know how the final cut was made. My authority was over the visitors. The White House machinery ground out the question of who the internal people would be. I was very sorry. But he wasn't mollified—so things were edgy between us that evening.

Walcott: Those decisions were made somewhere in the Chief of Staff's office?

Galston: They were made somewhere. For all I know, the First Lady was involved, the scheduling office was involved, the President was involved. I really don't know. I didn't have time to attend to that.

Riley: You mentioned a third session that was more refined than these two.

Galston: Not refined, but more policy-focused. Once again, I'm very blurry on the sequence of events that led to this. I organized a multi-hour panel. I think there was a lunch served or something. It went from the morning to the afternoon with a larger group of actors, more like twenty-four than twelve. They were people who had done particularly interesting academic or policy work on the question of crime and criminal justice. It was a round-up of some of the most prominent criminologists and some crime thinkers in the country. There was one section devoted to statistics, what the lay of the land is, what's happened in the past ten years, what we can expect in the next ten—people who had written in that vein. There were people who had done important research with different populations in different settings. Because crime and crime reduction was such a central part of the administration's domestic policy agenda—and along with welfare, one of the policy thrusts that drew a clear line with perceived prior history of the party—the President and Vice President were just eager to get advice on that topic.

Riley: And that occurred after you'd left the White House?

Galston: I don't think so. I can't remember when it occurred, but I was still there to organize it.

Riley: That was also true of the '96?

Galston: I was wheeled back in to organize that.

Riley: Do you have any more questions about the seminars?

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Galston: Now, I know a few. You asked me who initiated this. I know for sure that I couldn't possibly have initiated the 1996.

Riley: Right.

Galston: My guess is that what happened in '96 was I continued to be quite deeply involved in the State of the Union preparations, etc.—writing a memo, then being called in for consultation in various phases of the process. My guess is that the speechwriters proposed to the President that it might be a good idea to repeat this, and the President assented.

Riley: We haven't talked extensively about the speechwriting process. We've touched on it once or twice. Were you routinely involved in speechwriting for the President?

Galston: Not routinely. I was involved when there was a specific event that was clearly in my bailiwick. I do recall doing extensive drafting for some education events and for various citizenship, civic, character education meetings that we talked about yesterday where the President came and offered remarks. We typically met in the Oval Office to go over it for fifteen or twenty minutes before those occasions. What he frequently did, rather than delivering remarks from the text, was get an idea of the flow of issues and ideas—the spine—and write things in the margin. He was very good at getting the spine of things, writing down ten or fifteen or twenty words on a single piece of paper and going from that. But a text was a way of getting him to focus.

He gave what was arguably the most important speech of his nascent campaign in Cleveland in 1991. I was an intimate part of that, because Elaine and I were in the room with him. He had inhaled *The Politics of Evasion* and was playing it back to us, but in his own language. He went up and gave the most important political speech of his life, I think, because it persuaded the press corps and all the pols in the room that he was "the guy." It was off the back of an envelope with twenty single words written on it. I know that for a fact. It wasn't that he didn't have a text, but because he figured out what the architecture of the argument was, based on the text, he knew he could do a better job just doing it in his own words. I was involved in those kinds of events, and also in the State of the Union speeches. I was called in to that process.

Walcott: When you were writing speeches in your policy bailiwick, did you write complete drafts and send them in? How did you interact with the speechwriting staff?

Galston: I don't recall ever doing a speech and then sending it straight to the President. I'm sure, although I can't remember the detailed sequence, that it would have gone through the speechwriting department.

Walcott: And they would have been collecting from other sources as well and trying to assemble the speech?

Galston: If you're talking about one of the targeted events—if it was an event I was responsible for, or if it was an education event—they would always ask me, "Whom did you talk with in the

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Department of Education?" and so on. If I could assure the speechwriting department that I had done due diligence, they might or might not retrace my steps. But obviously, if you're talking about something like the State of the Union, that's the witches' brew.

Riley: And a much larger group of people are involved in that across the board.

Galston: Well, there's been a fair amount of good analytical writing about the State of the Union process. It's an "all hands on deck" enterprise, and the departments and agencies in the classic mode see this as their opportunity to get in their hook, on which they can hang a substantial portion of the next year's activities. So there was all of that as well as all the chaos of trying to redact it into a draft for the President, who had his own conception of process. I'll put it like that.

It was not orderly, it was not linear. There was sort of a "Perils of Pauline" aspect to—

Riley: That's the State of the Union? Or all the speeches?

Galston: More State of the Union than anything else. For example, one of my big shticks was family policy, as I think the record shows. Elaine and I, in 1990, had written a version of the essay that ended up in *Mandate for Change*. Among other things, it recommended a national campaign to address the then-rampant problem of teen pregnancy. A small group of us in the White House had pretty much figured out that it would work better as a voluntary sector initiative than as a Presidential program. But we desperately wanted the President's *imprimatur* on it. So one of the things I did in '95 was draft a paragraph where the President would call for the creation of a nationwide organized campaign to reduce teen pregnancy. In succeeding drafts, the paragraph was included and excluded several times. It was out in the penultimate version, and then, at the last minute, back in. A very successful organization was formed on the basis of just a few sentences, and has done great work over the past ten years. That's an example of how the process can work.

That was the only time where I felt strongly enough about a particular piece of the President's agenda that I didn't think had been emphasized enough to use the preeminent pulpit and spectacle of the State of the Union to try to bring it about. I'm not sorry I did.

Riley: That largely explains why the fights over inclusion and exclusion can be so intense.

Galston: Well, they matter. They don't always matter, but if there's something specific at stake, it can matter a lot.

Walcott: It also explains why the State of the Union is seldom a coherent, thematic address. It has to be a laundry list because people are trying to be a part of it.

Galston: That's right. The issue is never whether it's going to be a list, but only how parsimonious it's going to be. Speechwriters always struggle to come up with orderly baskets to put surviving specific items into, and there's almost always an element of rhetorical artificiality to be exercised because the categories are created to house the items and not the other way around.

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Riley: Did you try your hand at that? Were you asked to be involved in the larger conceptual questions?

Galston: Oh yes. I spent hours and hours sitting with speechwriters and communications types and a handful of other policy people. We all had our ideas. I don't think I had significantly greater efficacy than anyone else—or less, for that matter. I won some, I lost some.

Riley: I have a question about the President's reading habits. We talked yesterday about your sending memos into him on specific policy areas, but that referred to the seminars you put together. Did you have conversations with the President more generally about things he was reading or things you thought he ought to read?

Galston: He didn't use me that way, and I didn't presume to do that. On a couple of occasions—no more than half a dozen in two and a half years—I felt that something was important enough to bring to his attention. I gave you an example a few minutes ago: this bootleg copy of Putnam's *Journal of Democracy*. I got that to him. But did we spend a lot of time schmoozing? No. A part of me wishes that we had. I think I might have been able to do more than I did. But I did not want to engage in the kind of debilitating struggles for face time that it would have taken.

Riley: Right. I raise the question because from the outside, you would appear to be somebody the President would be very eager to do that with. He clearly has an interest in the kind of ideas that you're working on—

Galston: You might well have thought so. It didn't work out that way.

Walcott: You said yesterday that Carol Rasco talked a lot with him. Did you have a sense that she was conveying some of your ideas when that happened?

Galston: No. When I say she talked, I mean she had a regularly scheduled slot of half an hour or 45 minutes with him every week, as did the other assistants to the President for policy purposes. She guarded that time very carefully and took it very hard if the President's schedule was reconfigured in a way that squeezed it out. But I'm quite confident that she went in with her list of very concrete matters to talk to him about. I think that those sessions were very much like the sessions she had with him in Arkansas. I would be astonished to learn that they were occasions for conveying other people's thoughts to the President.

Some deputies in other divisions were pretty forceful about trying to accompany their bosses to those occasions whenever possible. I didn't do that. On a handful of occasions when I was working on something she wanted to highlight, she invited me to come along. But that didn't happen very often. Nor did I necessarily think it should.

Riley: You talked yesterday about the President's important relationship with Secretary Riley. I wonder if we could step back and examine his relationship with some of the other departmental Secretaries that you've had some exposure to so that you can give us your assessment of how well those relationships clicked and what is important for us to know about them.

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Galston: I'll see how useful a witness I can be on those points, some more than others.

Riley: I don't know if there's anything more to say about Riley.

Galston: No, I think I said it yesterday. They were comrades in arms, fellow progressives, southern Governors, focused on the reform of education and social services.

Riley: Was there anybody else in the Cabinet he seemed to have that kind of rapport with?

Galston: He had meetings with lots and lots of Cabinet people I wasn't party to. For example, I can't really characterize the nature of the relationship he had with the late Secretary of Commerce, but Ron Brown strikes me as the kind of guy Bill Clinton would have gotten along with just fine, just as he got along with other people whom he knew in Arkansas, like the Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater.

Riley: But you would have gotten a sense from your perch about how smooth White House relations were with the departments.

Galston: Well, yes, but again, some more than others. I know that Donna Shalala got burned early, for example, for some not particularly inflammatory comments she made in April of 1993. I think there was some tax issue on the table and she said something.

Riley: This was in the press?

Galston: Yes, this was in the press. The White House did not react well to incoming surprises from the press, to put it mildly. I think she had to claw her way back in after some episodes early on. My impression is that the relationship between the President and Janet Reno was always an edgy one.

Riley: They had no prior association, right?

Galston: They didn't. History will record that she was not the first choice for the position.

Riley: Or the second choice, as I recall.

Galston: Or the second choice, exactly. That, I think, was a troubled relationship. A part of him respected her independence, and a part of him was quite worried by it.

Riley: For obvious reasons.

Galston: For obvious reasons. So that was a difficult relationship.

Walcott: What about Robert Reich?

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Galston: Oh Lord. I'd have to be a psychoanalyst to get into that one. I guess the President knew Reich longer than anyone else. On the other hand, the choice between Rubinomics and Reichinomics was one of the cleaner choices in the administration. Bob Reich was then in the position of trying to influence things at the margins, largely through a constant stream of memos that he got to the President even when some other people didn't want those memos to get to the President. He was really good at that, better than anyone else at that particular game. But it had the effect of making some senior people in the White House not entirely trust him. They thought he was out for himself a little bit, not entirely a team player, etc.

My sense is that the President was always exquisitely calibrating relationships, and if someone lost a big one, he would usually work overtime to try to restore the relationship along other dimensions. The President knew that Bob Reich had prepared his entire life to draft the progressive investment policy for a Clinton Presidency—I know that to be true. I dealt with Bob for a long time, and there were some memorable meetings in the year between Clinton's declaration of candidacy and his election, where Bob talked, at great length, in Clinton's presence and with Clinton's apparent approval and endorsement. So what happened during the early months of the administration must have been a bitter disappointment. He swallowed it, but as the world knows, not permanently.

Riley: You have comments on his book?

Galston: None that others haven't already made. Let me just put it this way: It was hard to interpret that book as a sign of continuing loyalty and fidelity. [laughter] On the other hand, Bob did have some legitimate complaints.

Riley: During the period running up to the election, you said, there were meetings in '91 you were privy to. Were you comfortable with Reich's direction on economics, or was there something about it that wasn't consistent with your own sense about—

Galston: No. New Democrats were in favor of smarter government, not smaller government. So there were substantial portions of a reasonable social Democratic public investment strategy that New Democrats were firmly on board with. Reich was gung-ho about paying for some of it by closing corporate loopholes. We had published a series of papers on outrageous corporate loopholes and closing them as part of a fairer and more progressive tax system. And Bob, unlike some people advocating a social Democratic agenda, was also a free trader, and someone who had talked in very reasonable terms about the emerging global economy and the challenges it posed to the American economy.

Obviously the crunch came in '92 when it turned out you could either move towards fiscal balance or execute the Reich investment strategy, but not both. Clinton decided not to try to muddle through, but to make a clean decision. Was that an old Democrat, New Democrat struggle? Not exactly, although it turned into that a bit when the issue became should there be a "stimulus package" as part of the '93 economic plan? That package struck many of us as an ill-, poorly conceived buy off, particularly of some heirs who otherwise had cause to be disappointed. It was my impression that Reich decided to throw his support to the stimulus package as a way of

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trying to balance off what he saw as the excessively parsimonious and deflationary orientation of Rubinomics. I didn't agree with him on that.

Riley: Who have we omitted? Treasury, Bentsen?

Galston: I don't know that the President had a particularly close relationship with the Treasury Secretary. I know he respected him, but I came to a sort of Gail Sheehy-like insight about the President that I haven't talked about a lot in public.

For the record, I will say that the President grew up without a father, but unlike a lot of other people who grew up without fathers, he rather enjoyed the freedom. So he did not surround himself with father-figures, never did. *Au contraire*, people remarked that nearly everybody in the White House was either younger than he was or shorter than he was—or in many cases both. I'm only one for two. [laughter] I'm almost exactly six months older than he is, but much—

He was not interested in surrounding himself with peers and competitors or super-egos. People who grew up without fathers tend—if you want to be [Sigmund] Freudian about it—to grow up without a lot of super-ego. The President, I think, did not lament the absence of a super-ego—to an extent that some people regarded as almost pathological.

Riley: In some in respects it would be hard for someone as talented as he is to—There aren't many peers in the political arena.

Galston: No, but if you're clever, quick, mercurial, insightful, but not always wise, then someone who's older than you, somewhat more stable, more balanced, less sort of quicksilver—

Walcott: And that was lacking in—

Galston: I don't think, especially early on, there was any adult supervision.

Riley: Reflecting on the Arkansas period, the only person I can think of who might fit that bill is a woman, Betsy Wright. I don't know that relationship well enough.

Galston: But the fact that she was a woman is critical. There was a mother in his life, but not a father. No man could have played that role, trust me.

Riley: You raised this in relation to a discussion of Lloyd Bentsen.

Galston: Yes. Bentsen was a respected and respectable figure. I don't think he was particularly close to the President personally, and he withdrew substantially when he registered some early doubts about the basic direction of the healthcare initiative and was rebuffed pretty strongly. At that point, he said, "Well, I have all these decades of experience in Congress and working this issue, and if they're not interested, I'm not going to keep banging on a closed door." I think at that point he substantially withdrew. He was always at the table in the critical NEC meetings.

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Riley: It's important for us to get these pictures from you because he can't speak for himself any more. We tried to arrange interviews with him, but I think he had a stroke maybe two years ago.

Galston: Longer ago than that. He is substantially incapacitated.

Riley: So we have to piece this together.

Galston: I actually had fairly extensive dealings with him in the 1980s. He called me in to consult on a few occasions.

Riley: In what capacity?

Galston: I had emerged as a New Democratic strategist, and he was interested in my thinking about some speeches. I got a faint whiff of someone who might be considering a Presidential race himself in 1992, or even 1988. It was in that vague, exploratory mode. He was a courtly gentleman who obviously knew how to throw his elbows when he needed to, but he didn't make a big show of it. I never talked to him about this, and I never heard even directly, I think he was probably surprised and even a little bit hurt that his experience and wisdom did not have more of a role.

Riley: Henry Cisneros?

Galston: I think Clinton liked him. They were the same sort of people. They got into the same sort of trouble. But I didn't get the impression they were particularly close. I think Henry was in some ways a more serious guy. I don't mean that Clinton wasn't serious, but Henry's demeanor is very serious. It's not a lot of "hail fellow well met," not a lot of joking around, not a golfing buddy, not a card player. He's a very focused, serious, policy guy.

Also, in 1995, after the Republican takeover, I remember a long sequence of budget meetings that I was part of. The Republicans were out for blood. There was actually some discussion that we might pitch a Cabinet department or two overboard, and for a while it was possible that HUD [Housing and Urban Development] would be on the chopping block, or the Department of Energy or something. So Henry had to work pretty hard at that point just to save his department and the interests that he cared about. It would have been only human to take that as a sign that he hadn't been assigned a very central role.

He got a full chance to present the case for the reforms that he had overseen at HUD—why it was a mistake to confuse the new HUD with the old HUD, let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Yes, there'd maybe have to be some downward revisions of the budget, but we're still doing something that is important to have represented in the high councils of our nation's government. He ultimately prevailed, but he had to work very hard just to preserve most of what he started with. There was no sense it was going to be part of the administration's forward thrust.

Walcott: You mentioned Ron Brown as someone the President related to easily.

Galston: No, I'm hypothesizing. Brown was the President's kind of guy.

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Walcott: I was curious whether that translated into policy impact or was compartmentalized as friendship.

Galston: In policy terms, since Bob Rubin ran such a tight ship at the NEC, there were no rewards (and many penalties) for trying to do an end-run around the process. I think Ron was smart enough to see that early on. On the other hand—and I am just speculating now—the President was acutely aware of the fact that the kind of campaign for reelection he had decided he had to run in 1996 was going to cost a lot of money. Ron was a guy who was dealing on a daily basis with people in the private sector who were capable of contributing significantly to that campaign.

Just connecting the dots, I have to believe that the President had a relationship with Brown that was in part— First of all, Brown was a very politically savvy guy. He'd been the head of the party. He had maneuvered the party through some very difficult challenges in the late '80s and early '90s. I'm sure the President respected him politician to politician. He had some real savvy and street smarts. He was also a very attractive guy, knew how to present himself, was not stuffy or formal. In addition Secretary of Commerce is a role traditionally reserved for a Don Evans type, Ron Brown type, somebody who's comfortable dealing with money and the barons of money, and who is not necessarily purer than the driven snow.

Walcott: The term "bag man" is sometimes used.

Galston: Well, I actually played with that, but decided that word would come out of your mouth and not mine.

Riley: Who have we missed? Who was at Energy? Hazel O'Leary was still in the White House.

Galston: No, I think she acceded to the Energy Department pretty early in the game. I can't remember under what circumstances. I don't think she was a big player, frankly.

Riley: Let me ask you to reflect on these departments and agencies and give us the view of a White House staffer in the domestic policy operation. Which, for you, were the most vexing departments or agencies to deal with? While it's not in the same category, you talked about the professional staff at OMB being particularly helpful to you. Were there some really gifted and vexing in-fighters in some of these agencies and bureaucracies?

Galston: From a policy standpoint, I had a very hard time with the Department of Agriculture. Brad Patterson, I think, tells the story in his article, an exhaustive and exhausting interagency process that I managed on the reform of pesticide legislation**.** Brad did a good job of putting what I told him in the context of a broader policy discussion. That article was bang-on.

I had a very difficult time persuading the senior leadership of the Agriculture Department to sign on to the compromises that its own negotiators had agreed to after fifteen months. I had a couple of bloody sessions with Mike Espy's Chief of Staff, who subsequently—and not to my surprise—turned out to be a corrupt guy. I think he ended up going to jail. That's one piece of

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some good news a few years later. I really resented, frankly, the way he threw grenades into the process at the last minute, after fifteen months of trench warfare with everybody imaginable at the table. To have this guy play tough in the end-game—to assume that I would be so eager to seal the deal that I would be willing to pitch some pieces of it overboard—was a reasonable assumption on his part, but after fifteen months I wasn't going to do that. I have actually spent a lot of time on agricultural and rural issues, and I have to say that the entrenched forces of the status quo in that area, the determination of the department to serve its own clients and constituents, period, full stop, drove me nuts.

Riley: How do you explain that? How is that different from other departments?

Galston: Just because the customers and clients are smaller, more focused, typically more united—or at least it's possible to buy them off *seriatim*—so money equals unity. And also, to be frank, they're more dependent on the federal government than many other sectors, so they have more to lose, and they fight harder. There are some very good career people over there. The chief economist (whose name I can't remember right now) is just absolutely a first-rate public servant. But it was a very difficult department.

Walcott: When I read Brad's story, I wondered how that becomes a farm issue and not an environmental issue?

Galston: It wasn't a farm issue. It was everybody's issue.

Walcott: How come Gore and his people didn't take the lead on it?

Galston: I see. Here's how this happened. I can remember the sequence of events. Bruce Reed and I decided that we needed a regular deputies meeting, that the principals meeting of the Domestic Policy Council tended to be show-and-tell *pro forma*. Unlike the NEC, it wasn't a serious policy process, largely because, in the domestic policy arena, there weren't different opinions about the same thing. There were different agencies and departments with different tasks. Sometimes they involved interdepartmental issues, but frequently, at least at the principals level, they didn't.

Riley: How early did you and Bruce reach this conclusion?

Galston: I think it was in the spring of '93. It started pretty early. At either the first or the second of these deputies meetings someone from the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] raised his hand and said, "You know, we have this big looming problem about pesticides." And I said, "Oh? Tell me more." He said, "A couple of years ago, the National Resources Defense Council [NRDC] brought a lawsuit against us for not rigorously and vigorously enforcing the existing pesticide law."

He didn't say it, but the implication was on the table that if they had strictly enforced it, dozens of pesticides that are central to agricultural production would have been taken off the market altogether. They just couldn't do that. He said, "Now our hand is being forced, because a federal court has just ruled entirely in favor of the NRDC. Within a couple of months, right at the heart

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of the growing season, we're going to be required by law to take these pesticides off the market. What are we going to do?"

Then the guy from USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] chimed in, and a representative of the Food and Drug Administration who was there chimed in. A little light went off in my head, and I said, "If there was ever a case for an interdepartmental task force. It's clear already that so many different interests are at stake in this, so many different departments have a piece of this issue, we can't do it as a series of bilateral transactions of the White House. We all have to be around the table." Then I threw out the question, "Who should be around that table?"

It just took a few minutes to come up with what turned out to be a pretty complete list, although later it turned out that the Council of Economic Advisors also wanted to play. The now-famous Joe Stiglitz first sent some lieutenants, and when he wasn't satisfied with the reports, he came to see me personally. He said, "Look, I'm an economist, and what you're talking about doesn't make economic sense. Here's what economics says you ought to do." I said, "Joe, I'm not an economist, but I know what economics tells me I ought to do. The problem is I can't do it." That was an amusing exchange with a future Nobel Prize winner.

Brad gets the story basically right. After a few sort of group-grope sessions, it became clear that there were about two dozen specific issues that needed to be worked through, one by one, and we needed to reach agreement. The sum of those decisions would be the outline, would constitute the specifications for reform and some of the pieces of legislation. That's what happened. It took us from the spring of '93 to the summer of '94, meeting quite regularly.

I read thousands of pages of the science. The National Academy of Sciences had come out with a huge report on the differential impact of pesticides *vis-à-vis* children and adults. The environmental community was gung-ho to take the higher sensitivity of children and then build in an extra factor—a protection factor of 10 around that—that would have reduced almost to nothing the amount of allowable pesticides.

You can imagine there was a big push-back: The scientists at the Food and Drug Administration had their own views of what the appropriate margin of safety was. Some of the environmental groups that got involved made the NRDC look quite moderate. I was pushed really hard by the ultras. They were quite frustrated that Gore's management of environmental policy hadn't produced more than it had, and were determined to score a big win here. They wanted to collect a scalp they could take back to their constituency. It was a very difficult process.

Riley: Was somebody from the Vice President's staff actively involved in the process?

Galston: Very much so. In this respect, I think Katie [Kathleen] McGinty and the Council on Environmental Equality functioned as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Vice President's staff. There was also a period when the Vice President's staff was personally represented, but I think they recognized that, unlike urban brown fields or the reform of the Superfund or something of that sort, this was not just an environmental issue. It was something that Carol Browner at the EPA had a piece—but only a piece—of, and they were not even the only regulatory agency involved.

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Walcott: So the Gore people were not just pushing the environmentalist point of view?

Galston: No they weren't, not at all. It was the environmental interest groups that were pushing the pure environmentalist point of view. Frankly, the EPA wanted the recommendation to rest on sound science, and they had their own people in the field who had done some of the tests and the assessments of the pesticide levels. Scientifically there are at least two different issues: One of them is the relationship between the amount of pesticide used and the amount of pesticide actually ingested—given various scenarios about how food gets from seed to the table. The second question is, once it's ingested, or once you're exposed to it, what are the effects and how sensitive are those effects to different concentrations?

The EPA took the position, as I said, that the results ought to be based on solid science and not on pressure groups, either from the farming side or from the ultra environmental side. They also took the entirely reasonable position that they had a big problem. They had a law that they were responsible for, and the law, as interpreted by the courts, was going to require them to do something that would create a firestorm, that would create real economic dislocations—which would create problems for the President.

I did a memo to him, early on, in which I laid out the problems that this could create for the economy and for him. I told him I was setting up this interagency process as a way of trying to get ahead of the problem and to deal with it. Clearly the EPA had a view that wasn't the same as the Department of Agriculture's. At the same time, they saw themselves as part of a group working to find a reasonable solution to a difficult problem.

I spent a lot of time dealing with the EPA, and I didn't always agree with them. But they weren't drawing lines in the sand and saying, "You have to do this, you have to do that." They did a few times, and I typically agreed with them when they insisted on something. They wanted to be part of the solution, and they knew that they were going to be part of the problem, big time, if they actually had to live with the existing law.

[BREAK]

Riley: I'm interested in these deputies meetings. How large were they, and how often did they take place?

Galston: They typically involved the deputies from all the departments and agencies represented in the President's executive order that set up the Domestic Policy Council. So that might have been probably fifteen or sixteen around a conference table somewhat larger than this in the OEOB. Occasionally we got the Roosevelt Room, but not very often; it's precious real estate.

Walcott: Were they regularly scheduled?

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Galston: We tried to do it once a month. I think there were some interruptions during periods of maximum activity.

Riley: And you generally found these to be productive sessions?

Galston: Among other things, they could be important opportunities for information sharing. On at least the one occasion we talked about, they directly triggered an intensive, pretty important process in policy development that might not have occurred, or occurred in the same way. First of all, if we hadn't had these deputies meetings, the EPA might well have reached out to someone else in the White House, or some other part of the White House. It might have become a purely Vice Presidential issue, and I'm not sure it would have been dealt with in exactly the same way.

Bruce and I traded off chairing the meeting. I happened to be the chair that day. I can't even remember whether Bruce was there. But it was absolutely clear that this one was going to fall into my bailiwick, given the way we divided up the world, given the fact that I had already written a book on agricultural policy and was finishing up a book on rural development during the time. It was crystal clear that this was not a boundary dispute. This one was clearly mine. But it's not clear that it would have come to my attention in the same way: someone representing the EPA raises an issue, and suddenly people start paying attention all the way around the table, chiming in and saying, "Yes, what about this?" and "What about that?" It didn't take an expert bureaucrat (which I wasn't and am not) to figure out that this was the classic occasion for an interagency process.

Walcott: Were there any comparable processes during your time?

Galston: The most nearly comparable process was welfare reform. That wasn't triggered in exactly the same way, but it took as long to develop the policy, inexcusably. That's a different issue.

Riley: Part of the reason that this is interesting is that there's a popular perception that if there's an important issue, the principals committee will deal with it. We've seen it in the 9/11 Commission hearings. The impression I'm getting from you in this particular instance is that the deputies committee is actually where a lot more of the important work gets done.

Galston: I think that that's largely true in other venues as well. But it's also typically the case that for anything politically or policy sensitive, there has to be sign-off at the top. This was not a routine matter. One reason I had so much trouble with USDA in the end-game is that Mike Espy's Chief of Staff decided to play hard ass and pretend that whatever the negotiators had said, he wasn't going to recommend that Espy sign on unless I did this, that, and the other thing.

Walcott: Was Espy behind that? Did he know about it?

Galston: I doubt very much that Mike Espy was behind it. I knew Mike pretty well. I tolerated it for a couple of meetings, and then made it clear that Mike and I had a preexisting relationship—

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we had traveled together in Mississippi—and if need be—don't do that. I was more patient than I should have been.

Riley: There are four general areas I want to make sure we get to. One is with respect to your relationship to some other offices within the White House that we haven't touched on. You were doing a fair amount of public outreach in your position. Were you coordinating this with the Office of Public Liaison? Did you have much interaction with them?

Galston: A fair amount, yes. It wasn't always necessary but Alexis Herman and I had a good relationship. I participated in a number of meetings in her office. I saw myself as certainly contributing to that effort, and I spent a lot of time doing it.

Riley: Intergovernmental relations?

Galston: Sure. Anybody working for Carol Rasco had to take intergovernmental relations seriously. She didn't make a lot of things crystal clear to us, but one of the things she made very clear was that this former Governor cared a lot about intergovernmental relations. He was going to take meetings with the National Governors Association very seriously. If he started hearing a lot of static from the Governors about how the administration was screwing up, she would hear about it fast. And she didn't want to hear about it at all. So yes, we thought hard about intergovernmental relations. I actually thought very hard about it.

As a matter of fact, I asked a member of my staff to start charting what we were doing in domestic policy that had an impact on federalism, intergovernmental relations. We actually co-authored an article on that subject, which I then showed to Carol before it was published in *Publius* in 1994. I sent it to the President and the Vice President with a cover note saying, "We're paying attention to intergovernmental relations on a policy level at the same time the governmental relations shop is paying attention to it on a political level."

Riley: Who was heading the shop?

Galston: Marcia Hale.

Riley: Did you have perceptions about that particular shop? Was it very active within the administration?

Galston: I thought it was very active, yes—not surprisingly.

Walcott: What about the press office?

Galston: Particularly in the early months of the administration, I was extremely careful. That's when the communications shop was at its peak, and I did not want to make a mistake. So every time I got a press inquiry that was more than totally routine, I would either call—or more typically—walk over to the press office personally and say, "I have this inquiry from this reporter. I have reason to believe it's about such-and-such a topic. Do you want me to handle it?

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Do you want me to pass it on to someone else? If you want me to handle it, do you have advice on how I should handle it?" I did that for three or four months.

Walcott: Who did you talk to there?

Galston: Sometimes I talked to George directly; sometimes I talked to deputies. I just wanted to make sure that I was going to be authorized to say, roughly speaking, what I would be reported as saying.

Walcott: Did they come to you in reverse to get clarification about policy so they could explain it?

Galston: That happened more and more. This was one of the ways not being a member of the campaign tribe put me in a particular category at first. Over time, they learned that I would respond promptly, and as a team player, not as a freelancer. So the volume of exchange was coming back and increased over time. My relations with the press office deepened over time. Ultimately I think they realized they could not keep such a tight lid on things.

Of course, after the publication of [Bob] Woodward's book, a lot of people who thought of themselves as press savvy ended up somewhat discredited. People whose names did not appear in the index of that book rose in the President's estimation. I felt somewhat freer to make my own decisions at that point. That was a very serious episode for George Stephanopoulos.

Walcott: He makes it clear in his book that it was a serious episode for him.

Galston: Yes, it was a big misjudgment. I think it weakened his position with the President. I'm thanking my lucky stars to this day that I didn't participate in that venture.

Walcott: Could you talk briefly about your staff? How many? How organized? What did they do?

Galston: I had almost no personal staff. There was the staff of the Domestic Policy Council, and a lot of them were switch-hitters. To deal with issues—agriculture, religion (for my sins), I ended up handling the choice agenda on behalf of the Domestic Policy Council. I was on point for the reform and expansion of Head Start. Those were things I couldn't do by myself, so different members of the Domestic Policy Council staff were tasked to do the preparatory research and things of that sort in those areas.

There were regular meetings of the Domestic Policy Council staff at which these assignments were hatched. Then they would typically deliver the memo to me in the West Wing. I would sometimes say, "Wait five minutes." I'd read it and have the conversation with them on the spot. I knew that if I waited it would get buried, and the next crisis would overwhelm me. We had to develop a somewhat different *modus operandi*. That's the way it worked.

Walcott: Bruce was over in the OEOB with the staff, you were not. In what sense did that handicap you in your dealings with the staff?

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Galston: I don't think it did. It meant that they tended to be closer to him personally. Because he'd been over at the DLC in a senior position, he had more of a role in bringing over young staffers from the DLC operation. So I think from the get-go, they probably had a closer relationship with him than they did with me.

Walcott: That didn't give you problems when you had to deal with them?

Galston: Absolutely not. But the Domestic Policy Council as a whole had a problem—it started off too small and then got smaller. We were all stretched to the max. But it wasn't as though I was at some kind of disadvantage. We were all at the same disadvantage.

Walcott: With Clinton's shrinkage of the White House.

Galston: That's what I'm talking about. To this day I still twit Bruce about that because the idea of cutting the White House staff was a campaign promise. I think it was his idea. [laughter]

Walcott: There is poetic justice. Let me ask one more. What about national security? Did you have anything to do with those people?

Galston: The Pentagon runs, in effect, its own social service and educational agencies. So there were some interactions between education policy in the Pentagon and child care policy in the Pentagon. There are all those domestic policy relationships. I spent time on the phone with Jamie Gorelick when she was over there, before she went over to Justice. It wasn't a daily occurrence, but it wasn't unusual either.

Take another example. The Department of Defense has a lot of impact on environmental questions. Environmental legislation has a big impact on the department, so I sometimes got inquiries about that. I had extensive dealings with the State Department. I'll give you an example. One of the issues that arose was whether we should move towards ratification of the UN's [United Nations] International Convention on the Rights of Children. I can't tell you how complicated an issue that turned out to be. I constituted the full interagency process, co-chaired with the State Department to try to figure out what the impact of the hundreds and hundreds of different clauses and articles in that draft treaty would be on existing American law.

You cannot imagine how many hot buttons there were, starting with the cut-off age for the death penalty—about which the international convention had one view, and the former Governor of Arkansas had a very different view—tough on crime, pro-death penalty. Of course, the First Lady—who in her younger years had written law review articles on the rights of children—had some views on it. It got unbelievably complicated. So yes, I had relationships with different pieces of the defense and foreign policy apparatus.

Riley: They didn't routinely sit in on your deputies meetings?

Galston: No, they weren't part of the Domestic Policy Council. If you look at the executive order that constituted the DPC, most parts of the government are in it, but some aren't. That's

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why we have an NSC. There was some overlap between the DPC and the NEC, but to the best of my knowledge, no overlap between the DPC and the NSC.

Riley: Treasury may formally have a role in both.

Walcott: Treasury is not in the NSC.

Galston: And it wasn't in the DPC.

Riley: Well, I struck out on both counts.

Walcott: The NSC changes. Presidents can add stuff. But Treasury is not statutorily in it.

Galston: I don't think any of it is by statute. I think it's all by executive order, isn't it?

Walcott: You may be right. The President, Vice President, Secretaries of State and Defense, I think, may be statutory members.

Galston: That's right, because there is no statutory basis for either the Domestic Policy Council or the National Economic Council. It's part of the '48 bill—

Walcott: Going way back.

Galston: That's right.

Riley: I just want to have a quick look at the domestic policy issues. We've talked a little bit about your "families and values" agenda. Are there some things we haven't talked about that were important for you in your time in the White House?

Galston: Although I wasn't part of the formal interagency process on welfare reform, Bruce ended up bringing me in, in a fairly big way, to run interference with HHS [Health and Human Services] on issues like teen pregnancy and adoption, the impact of welfare reform on family formation, issues of that sort where I clearly had developed positions. HHS was not terribly eager to go along, at least at first, and so I ended up drafting legislative language on those topics for inclusion in the welfare reform proposal. I went over to HHS a couple of times, and we had some large and stormy sessions.

Riley: Let me ask you about the process of putting together the welfare reform package. We were talking yesterday and got your broad sense—although you weren't involved—about the healthcare reform package and how it was put together. I take it you have more favorable things to say about the process by which the welfare reform—

Galston: The welfare reform task force was closer to a classic interagency process. The fundamental problem with that process wasn't internal. It was the fact that the President had made what I regarded as an ill-judged decision to defer to the congressional leadership on the sequence. That was the first problem with the process.

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The second problem—which I think was certainly in part a function of the first, but also of other factors—was that the President did not drive that task force for six or nine months, with the same sense of urgency that he brought to other issues. That baffled me, given the fact that this was a signature campaign issue. So it took too long. Because the President wasn't involved early on in the way he should have been, lots of different discordant voices in the administration were unleashed, and Bruce had a much harder time. (I'm not sure what he would say about it now, because he's a more discrete guy than I am. His nickname wasn't Buddha for nothing.) His job was made substantially more difficult by the fact that it was a playpen without adult supervision.

There were substantial forces—not only in the permanent bureaucracy but also, as the world can now see, among the President's own political appointees—who never agreed with him about welfare reform. He really needed to step in early and say, "This is going to happen, and it's not going to be an incremental change in the system. Yes, I want to see options, but the options have to be within a particular range, and there are some things that are not open to discussion. I went around the country for a year telling people we were going to end welfare as we know it. I meant it, and I mean it. Let's do it." It didn't happen, to the best of my knowledge.

Riley: Ultimately he signed legislation.

Galston: Yes, but the draft legislation wasn't really finished until the summer of 1994, which was much too late. As a result, he totally lost control of the legislative process and was back on his heels on a signature issue. Now he was able, ultimately, to sign the bill—and take partial credit for it, but it never should have worked out that way.

Riley: You were gone from the White House by this time.

Galston: I was.

Riley: Were you asked to weigh in at all on this process? Did you get the sense that—at least in the end game—they were trying to gather input from a lot of different sources about what the President ultimately ought to do?

Galston: I do recall being asked whether I thought the President should sign the bill. I can't remember who asked me. I do recall being asked.

Walcott: What did you answer?

Galston: Yes. I never had cause to regret that, and neither has the country. I worked with Pat Moynihan. I respected him, but I think he went off his rocker on the Clinton welfare reform. That speech he gave on the floor of the Senate about Billy the Kid sleeping on grates if this bill becomes law—

Riley: How did his relationship with the Clintons end up as it did?

Galston: It was a terrible relationship.

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Riley: Explain that to us.

Galston: I'll give you a single factor explanation, although I'm sure it's more complicated. An unnamed senior Clinton staffer during the transition was asked by a reporter what the White House would do if Senator Moynihan—who had his own views on questions that the President and the First Lady had *their* views about—interposed vocal objections. This unnamed senior staffer said, "Oh. No problem. We'll roll right over him." That was a featured quote—in *Newsweek*, I think—the week before the inauguration. Senator Moynihan was not amused, and I don't think the relationship ever recovered from that opening gun.

Then two other things happened. First, when it was clear that the President was moving toward putting healthcare first, Senator Moynihan gave a speech in which he said, "We don't have a healthcare crisis, but we do have a welfare reform crisis." Strike two was that, in Moynihan's view, the administration wasted a year on healthcare reform—and, God knows, it's a little hard to argue with him now. Strike three was that Clinton's substantive views on welfare reform, when that became the topic, were not the same as Senator Moynihan's. Aside from that, it was a great relationship. [laughter]

Riley: Were you one of those who supported the welfare bill because you thought the President would come back and fix components of it? Or were you fairly happy with the overall contours of the bill he had signed?

Galston: I believed that there was much more good than bad in the bill, and that that, rather than perfection, ought to be the criterion. I also took the President at his word because I was pretty sure he meant it. I believed that he would work to take some of the raw edges off, some of the pieces of the legislation that clearly reflected a more punitive Republican approach.

Riley: Were you satisfied from the outside with the efforts he made afterwards to do that?

Galston: I was. I thought that he was as good as his word on that, and actually achieved some moderation of those provisions. A lot of people thought he meant it but didn't think he could do it. I wasn't sure he could do it, either, but he did. I started off 80% satisfied and ended up 90% satisfied. I think the results speak for themselves.

Riley: Anything else on the divorce? It was an issue that you were talking about.

Galston: I think I had more impact on general Presidential rhetoric than atmospherics. I was there, clearly representing that part of the Democratic Party that believed and said that family structure issues were a matter of public concern because they drove a lot of other problems. I was asked to prepare memoranda from time to time for the President on family policy, basic statistics on trends before he would do major interviews, big think-pieces with reporters and news anchors.

I remember early on, for example, prior to a long interview he had with Tom Brokaw, he asked me to prepare a memorandum for him on some family policy issues based on statistics, trends,

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what Elaine and I had talked about in our articles. There wasn't a lot of opportunity to translate that into policy, but it was part of the President's continuing effort to see that—unlike traditional liberal Democrats—he didn't interpret domestic social policy as entirely a question of resources. There were structural and cultural dimensions that he attended to as well. He would never have included such a strong and striking reference to teen pregnancy reduction in the State of the Union address, which is a pretty high-profile venue, if he hadn't thought it was both true and important.

Walcott: If Reich had won the debate with Rubin, would there have been resources for doing more in that area?

Galston: For a lot of those issues, it's not a question necessarily of resources. It's a question of a basic orientation of a culture, and the President, as banger on the bully pulpit, can help to symbolize and perhaps catalyze a culture shift, unlike some other areas—like education, where it's clear that we were asking the department in the early years of the administration to make bricks out of straw.

In other areas, it was a question either of the shape of legislation rather than the resources, the kinds of incentives that were pieces of legislation to create, or what the President had to say, speaking as head of the nation, not just head of state.

Riley: There were some other "small policy areas" in '95 that most people have tended to attribute to Dick Morris's influence, things like V-chips and school uniforms. Were you a part of the ongoing discussion about those issues?

Galston: I was a substantial participant in the V-chip discussion, and certainly when I was asked for my view on school uniforms, I said, based on the research that I had done with Catholic schools for years, I had no reason to believe that it would be legally or constitutionally inappropriate for a public school to do that, if it chose. And I had some reason to believe that in specific circumstances it might be beneficial. It certainly should not be the role of the federal government to discourage local jurisdictions from doing this on liberty grounds. So yes, I was fundamentally supportive of that. I didn't necessarily support it as part of what might be called political Pointillism—dot, dot, dot—leading to reelection. That was Morris's idea. But if the issue was presented to me as a free-standing issue—as it was—I'd say sure.

Walcott: Did single-sex education come up as an issue during your time?

Galston: It may have come up once or twice. I took a similar view there. I thought it was a mistake to interpret either existing legislation or the Constitution as flatly prohibiting the public school system from doing that. The city of Detroit, for example, got into some legal trouble when it tried to move in that direction. I regretted that, and when I was asked, I said so. There was some interesting support for that position. As I recall, for example, the First Lady, in *It Takes a Village*, ended up making more favorable noises about single-sex public education than a lot of people expected her to do. She always ended up surprising a lot of people.

Riley: School prayer?

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Galston: I was quite heavily involved in the school prayer discussion in two different venues and occasions. One of them was a fairly orderly process that was undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Education and a lot of religious groups in town. The premise and predicate of that was that schools had much greater degrees of freedom with regard to prayer, with regard to religiously based groups using the schools as meeting places, after-school programs, things of that sort, than they thought.

A lot of superintendents and school boards were simply running scared because they were ignorant. The best thing that Secretary Riley and I could do was to get these groups some good sound legal and legislative advice and publish a document on behalf of the administration laying out specifically what was permitted and what was prohibited. And we did so. Tens of thousands of copies were distributed to every school district in the country. Faith-based organizations made use of it. So we were able to do a great deal of good simply by clarifying the facts and clarifying the law.

Riley: Another kind of use of the bully pulpit.

Galston: Absolutely. If you have reason to believe that it's ignorance that's driving bad policy, then simply clarifying the facts can be quite influential. I'm really quite proud of that effort, a serious effort, legally serious, from a policy standpoint, that involved serious consultation with key religious groups, etc. And we came out with something that stood the test of time.

Riley: Were you the prime mover in that, or was Secretary Riley?

Galston: This was a joint production of the White House and the Department of Education. Secretary Riley had a bigger staff than I did, but I participated in meetings. I made it very clear that the White House was entirely backing this effort. I showed up after it was done. I made joint appearances with the Secretary, making it clear that this wasn't just the Department of Education speaking. This was the White House speaking as well.

The other venue was somewhat more amusing. Not long after the November '94 fiasco, the President went on a foreign trip. When he was coming back from that trip—I think it was a press conference in Indonesia—there was some discussion of a change in the legal or constitutional status with regard to school prayer. I think Gingrich had been fulminating about it (and he wasn't the only one).

The President, instead of rejecting it out of hand when the talk turned to some sort of constitutional amendment said, "Well, I'd have to see what it said." You can imagine the press feeding frenzy that ensued. I was called into an agitated discussion involving the White House political shop, the communications shop. "This is the end of the world! What are we going to do?" I said, "Well, we could begin by getting straight about what the issue is and what the President's position is." I reminded people that as Governor of Arkansas he had taken a position in favor of "a moment of silence" legislation, and that if there were either legislation or even a constitutional amendment making it clear that a moment of silence in public school was appropriate, arguably the President might be in favor of that. Obviously it would depend on the

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wording. You wouldn't want it to be over-inclusive, to open the door to things that clearly shouldn't be constitutionally permitted.

This didn't happen all that often. As I recall, the communications office designated me as one of the two official representatives of the administration to talk to the *New York Times* and try to get on the record exactly what the President was or wasn't in favor of. I think the reporter may have been Rick Burke. I can't remember, but I do recall that I had a very serious conversation with a *New York Times* reporter. And a pretty serious article resulted from it. It didn't make the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] happy, but at least it clarified the President's position and gave him ground that he was comfortable with. It was not breaking new ground so much as reminding him and informing the rest of the administration and the political system where he stood on that issue.

Walcott: Who was in charge, and to what extent did you play a role in liaison with the faith-based community?

Galston: You're looking at him. I spent a lot of time doing that. I wasn't the only one. The Office of Public Liaison had people.

Walcott: Who'd you talk to? What was the range of people?

Galston: They tended to be the executive directors of the major faith-based advocacy groups. So, for example, the long-time executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals became a regular visitor. I had pre-existing connections with senior policy types representing Catholic bishops. I had relationships with all manner of Jewish advocacy organizations. It was an amazing scene on the south lawn of the White House in the fall of '93 when the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was signed. There were representatives of 140 different faiths—Sikhs in turbans and Buddhist monks in robes. It was the religious version of the bar scene in *Star Wars*. It was just amazing. [laughter] (Fortunately, that won't come out until 2029.) Yes, I had extensive dealings with the faith-based. That was part of my morality beat.

Riley: My sense is that, although you've mentioned the evangelicals, there were certain groups that elected not to deal with you. Or is that not the case?

Galston: Not many. Clearly the Christian coalition was not going to spend a lot of time in my office, but I heard from a very wide range of faith-based groups. I spent a lot of time dealing with the Christian Scientists. Why? you might ask.

Ever heard of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act? The interaction between that and Christian Science health practices for children was a perennial running sore. Christian Scientists had negotiated, in effect, regulatory exemptions from CAPTA with the majority of the nation's Governors, including Bill Clinton. So the issue arose, over and over again. A delegation from HHS came over to urge me not to give an inch to the Christian Scientists. Former Christian Scientists who had lost their children because they followed the dictates of the faith with regard to their medical treatment, and who were now wracked by guilt and suffused with anger at their

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former faith—it was unbelievable. You can't imagine how much time I spent dealing with Christian Science issues.

Also, I'd spent some time thinking and writing as a political theorist, about the extent to which the claims of faith could constitute the basis for exemption from otherwise valid legislation. I had written pretty stingingly in opposition to the Supreme Court's 1990 decision in the Indian peyote case, for example. I was one of the leading critics of that case. It was amazing how many liberals were totally comfortable—and to this day remain totally comfortable—with Justice [Antonin] Scalia's majority opinion in that case. Whoo! Don't get me started.

Suffice it to say that when groups like Christian Scientists came to me and said, "We have a faith-based problem with a particular piece of legislation, and we think the centrality of particular practices to our faith and faith practice—and the degree of burden placed on those practices central to our faith by federal legislation—is such as to warrant serious consideration of an exemption. If we can't change the law, can we work out some rules and regulations that will at least diminish the burden on the free exercise of religion as we understand it?" I was of no mind simply to tell those people to get out of my office. I thought I had an intellectual obligation as well as a political obligation to listen to what they had to say and consider it. And I did.

Riley: You don't have to answer this question if you don't want to. Did you also feel a sense of personal obligation? I suppose this is a delicate way of asking whether in your own life you were a person of faith or whether this was an intellectual exercise.

Galston: It was driven much more by the fact that this was an area where I had thought through my position in excruciating detail. I had worked through the theories in court cases, clashes at the level of practice. I had thought more about that issue than anyone else in the administration, and it was also part of my portfolio. So it was for that reason that I thought I had a total obligation to hear those people out and try to be as responsive as possible within the limits of the law.

I ultimately reached the conclusion that the Christian Scientists couldn't get more than a small piece of what they were asking for. I didn't see how the Clinton administration could be in a position of doing something that could very probably endanger the health, or even the lives, of an appreciable number of children.

Walcott: Do you think you were effective in changing the views of any of those organizations or their members toward President Clinton?

Galston: I don't know the answer to that question. If a piece of the answer is whether people received a serious reception and a serious hearing, then I think I may have had an impact, because I spent a lot of time with them, I listened respectfully to what they had to say, I engaged with them seriously.

I did the same for a lot of fatherhood groups. I opened the door of the White House to men who were interested in fatherhood who felt a sense of grievance because they thought that current divorce law as interpreted by family courts worked against them. They ended up excluded from meaningful contact with their children and so on. I spent a lot of time with them. I had written

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about divorce law reform. I didn't agree with most of what they had to say on the legal front, but they presented me with their agendas. We had huge meetings, sometimes once every two months. I invested in those relationships, not because I necessarily thought we could introduce and pass legislation that would be consistent with what they wanted, but I thought it was important for somebody in the administration to know what they were thinking and feeling.

Secondly, I was always on the lookout for ways, through regulation or through a caboose hitched to some other legislative train, that we might be able to do something reasonable. I'd like to believe that the time wasn't totally squandered.

Riley: You mentioned Head Start earlier. That's one piece of the education portfolio that we haven't dealt with very extensively. Is there a story there?

Galston: There sure is. I've told this story over and over again in my classes because it made such an impression on me. One of my early assignments was to be the DPC lead on the interagency task force convened to review Head Start and recommend reforms as well as major expansion. I said, "Okay, I'm an academic. I think I know where to start on this."

So I phoned over to the Office of Planning and Evaluation at HHS and said, "Head Start now has been in existence for more than thirty years. It's one of the biggest programs affecting children in the country. Send me over all of the rigorous academic evaluations of Head Start that you've accumulated over this three-decade period so I can get up the curve."

Silence at the other end. I said, "What's the problem?" They said (more colloquially than I'm about to summarize it), "There aren't any." I said, "Give me a break, of course there are." They said, "No. There have been a lot of less than rigorous, methodologically flimsy evaluations of Head Start, but no serious, long-term longitudinal study of the effects of Head Start." The nearest thing, they said, was a long-term longitudinal study of the famous Perry Preschool Project that showed some very dramatic results.

But that project might be called "Head Start plus plus," Head Start with bells, whistles, a souped-up engine, you name it. There was no particular reason to believe that those results could be mapped onto most Head Start programs as they were in the field, or even that you could make any linearity assumptions. If this was three times as powerful as Head Start, well then—In other words the response curve wasn't necessarily a straight line, and there was no reason to hypothesize that it was.

I said to myself, "My God! What's going on here?" and I asked some questions. It turned out that whenever the Congress of the United States had a choice between investing in evaluation and investing in program, it always invested in program. The same thing happened early on when I started to prepare for the welfare reform debate by beginning to think through a position on teen pregnancy. I asked for all the serious evaluation studies on teen pregnancy reduction programs. HHS didn't have them. So I spent weeks staffing myself, phoning around the country, trying to find out from social scientists and program leaders where the evaluations were and which ones could be relied upon. I ultimately ended up with no studies that were of use in the Head Start debate, and about half a dozen that were of moderate utility in the teen pregnancy debate.

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I came to the conclusion that the federal government in area after area is basically flying blind. It's investing billions and billions of dollars in programs, and it doesn't know what it's doing.

Walcott: That's amazing because, as you know, Head Start has long been held up as "a program that works." How do we know? Because there have been studies that show Head Start works and components of Head Start work. But you say those were either methodologically flawed or didn't exist. That's remarkable.

Galston: I've talked to a lot of social scientists since, as well as Head Start advocates. The dirty little secret is that—while you can do a meta-analysis of all of these flimsy studies and try to connect the dots and come out with something better—the existing research base for that program and many others is not nearly as robust as most people imagine it is.

Riley: Not even independent academic studies?

Galston: To do a serious longitudinal study of something like Head Start, you need millions and millions of dollars and a long time. Why some foundations didn't get together and invest in a ten- or twenty-year study is beyond me.

Riley: Any better when you left?

Galston: A little. Not a lot. Fortunately, there were some people over in HHS—for example, David Ellwood—who really cared about serious program evaluation and who were no happier about the situation than I was.

Riley: Affirmative action and race?

Galston: [chuckle] Well, two former administration officials have given their own accounts of that. I was centrally involved, as you may know, in the affirmative action review.

Riley: What are the two pieces that you're talking about?

Galston: George Stephanopoulos has written about that in his book and Chris Edley [Jr.] wrote an entire book devoted to this episode. That's one of the more interesting ventures. There's George, Chris Edley, Joel Klein—who subsequently has gone on to greater things, but who was representing the Office of Legal Council in the White House. I was involved, a couple of other people were involved. Gene Sperling was involved. It was a very interesting experience, very difficult.

Riley: The existing accounts you find are fairly accurate?

Galston: Not bad. There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing. The President was deeply engaged in the meetings on every level, from educator to politician, to a former professor of constitutional law. It was an amazing experience—the number of different levels on which he can come at this issue. Also, as a progressive white southerner, it was something that viscerally he took very

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seriously. At the same time, as a sentient human being, he—at least in the beginning—had some mildly dissenting thoughts about the current structure of affirmative action programs. As a poor white southerner, he played with the idea that class as well as race ought to have an impact on the structure of affirmative action programs. I think in his heart of hearts that's what he believed through the process. But it became clear to him early on—when he said some things casually that opened the door to that line of argument, and the reaction from the civil rights community was so ferocious—that "mend it, don't end it" would have to proceed along dimensions other than the substitution of some metric for race.

We spent a lot of time meeting, first as a little working group. Then it fanned out to include all the departments and agencies of the government. There were some humongous meetings. We all had assignments. One of my assignments was to spend a lot of time at the Pentagon and figure out how the military had made its program of affirmative action work as well as it had. That was a great learning experience, and I've subsequently written about that.

Riley: What was the general finding there?

Galston: The general finding was that the military had thought harder about the pipeline issue than various other organizations had, and had gone to the extent of setting up post-twelfth-grade academies designed to give promising minority students (who weren't yet ready for admission to the various service academies) the extra boost they needed to qualify. Then, once you actually have people in the services, in the pools, they have developed a very elaborate protocol, which is not a quota system, but where a look-back review process is triggered if there's a vast asymmetry between the contours of the promotion pool on the one hand, and the first cut of selections made from that pool on the other.

That then triggered an intensive process of reexamination of promotion folders to see whether there had been—either in individual cases or more systemically—overlooking of factors that were relevant to the promotion decisions. It was clear, first of all—since the military is very good at accumulating and displaying statistics—that they had made steady changes since the Vietnam era. And it also appeared, based on survey data, that members of the Armed Forces, although not totally content with the state of race or ethnic relations within the Armed Forces, understood that there was commitment from the top to this program, believed that it had made a positive difference. There was not a lot of evidence of the kind of white backlash in the Armed Forces that you have seen in other sectors of society.

Riley: Were you at all involved in the One America initiative after you left the White House?

Galston: Yes, I was. I was called in as a consultant. I was not pleased with what I saw.

Riley: Can you tell us about that?

Galston: It seemed to me that that initiative had spun out of control and that it was increasingly dominated by people who had agendas at some variance with what I took to be the President's. A lot of the scholarly advisors who were involved were part of the diversity industry. I was not surprised when that initiative, in my judgment, did not come to a good end.

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Riley: Did you think it had an opportunity at the outset to do something?

Galston: I think they could have done better than they did. My understanding was that the expectation was that the President would actually work through a report and make it his own. For various reasons, that never happened. I'm not sure a final report of the kind the initiative hoped to issue before the end of the Clinton Presidency ever appeared.

Riley: I don't think so. There was a claim at some point that there would be a Presidential document out.

Galston: There wasn't, and I don't think there ever has been. I don't think that's an accident. This is an issue where the President would have liked to put his personal seal on something significant, but the pieces of the process I saw were not designed to produce something the President could get behind.

Riley: Do you think, given the sensitivities and fissures within the Democratic Party on this, that anything really substantive could have come out of this kind of enterprise?

Galston: The affirmative action review was a reasonably successful policy process in the sense that, while keeping the coalition together, it distinguished between the pieces of the current affirmative action system that were working reasonably well and those that weren't. It established some criteria for the emendation or termination of specific governmental procurement programs. The "mending it" part of the formulation wasn't simply rhetorical window dressing. There was real substance behind it. I think that a more balanced, better crafted, better directed, One America project might have been able to come up with something, an enlarged version of that. But it didn't.

Riley: We haven't talked at all about scandals. Whitewater was roiling during your time at the White House. My assumption is that you wouldn't have been involved in that.

Galston: No involvement whatsoever. I think on a couple of occasions a directive came forth that everybody in the White House was to search his or her files for anything even arguably relevant to X or Y or Z, but there was never anything in my files or in my memory bank even close to being relevant to X, Y, or Z.

Walcott: Were there any shock waves, not only Whitewater, but Travelgate and Filegate and Helicoptergate or whatever?

Galston: I was totally uninvolved.

Walcott: So in no way that affected you.

Riley: Was there a chilling effect on record keeping in any way?

Galston: I wasn't chilled. I had nothing to hide. That may just have been a sign of irrelevance.

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Walcott: I was really thinking more about people going around talking to one another, saying, "What in the world is going on here?"

Galston: Carol Rasco's view—and she was pretty forceful about it—was that that was somebody else's worry. We were here to do a job, and we should stay focused on it.

Riley: Compartmentalize it.

Galston: Yes, very much so. And by the way, that compartmentalization strategy came straight from the top.

Riley: How do you know this?

Galston: Everybody who had anything to do with the President knew it. One of the most amazing sequences involves the preparation for the 1998 State of the Union, which could not have been delivered under more tumultuous circumstances—five days after the *Washington Post* went public with the scandal that almost wrecked the Presidency. People who were intimately involved in that speechwriting process say the President gave the crafting of the State of the Union his full attention as though nothing else were going on.

So when I say it came straight from the top, I mean that his amazing capacity to wall off troubles in one room while he was doing something else was conveyed as a *modus operandi*. And, by the way, I think Carol was absolutely right to take that position. If we'd spent a lot of our time worrying or gossiping about it, it would have had no impact except to divert us from what we could do.

Riley: Sure, and make you subject to further document searches if you could say yes. You left in the spring of '95?

Galston: To be precise, May 31 at 9:48 in the evening. I had a pile of correspondence and thank you notes. I said that May 31 would be my last day. I said, "I'm not leaving until I've finished and sent out each and every one of these." At 9:40 I looked at my watch as I gathered my briefcase and walked out of the White House.

Riley: You maintained relationships with people there and were called back occasionally. You mentioned the One America. On what other areas were you called back?

Galston: For the first few months, I was called back twice a week on a wide range of things.

Riley: By?

Galston: The First Lady's office was putting together some major public events with cultural and civic components, and they wanted my advice on how to structure those, what the invitation list should look like. People from the Domestic Policy Council would continue to call on specific questions. I was so exhausted that my memory, which is not great, as you've seen for the White

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House years—I was so tired, I think I was in a fog for the entire summer after I left the White House.

Walcott: Is it your view that a couple of years more or less are enough for White House staff?

Galston: Not necessarily. Two people I know very well spent eight years there and emerged—as far as I can tell—none the worse for it. But they're unusual people.

Riley: One named Bruce, I suppose.

Galston: Right. And the other was Gene Sperling. They were there from the first day to the last day. So I don't take the blanket position. I do take the position that the White House is a very difficult place for staffers with young children. It's a great place if you're single. It's a great place if you're Leon Panetta and your kids are grown and gone. If you're in the middle, and you have anything but a neo-traditional marriage, you're in a heap of trouble. Gene, of course, isn't married, and Bruce's wife made a tough but necessary decision that she was basically going to put her career on hold.

Riley: I'm not speaking out of school here, but Bruce made a decision about his own schedule fairly early on. He wasn't going to work Sperling-style hours.

Galston: Even so, if his wife hadn't made the decision she did, it could never have worked. Washington is filled with men who chose their jobs over their families, and in retirement have lived to regret it. Kids on drugs and broken families—it's not a pretty picture. There's broken family crockery all over the District of Columbia. I didn't want to be any part of that.

Riley: Did you take a role in the '96 campaign?

Galston: Not really.

Riley: Anything in the second term you were involved with, other than being brought back in for the One America initiative?

Galston: There's that, but I was also involved in what turned out to be an abortive effort to help the President write a book.

Riley: Oh really? Do tell.

Galston: I can't remember what year it was, but it may actually be in the run-up to the '96 election. Somebody, probably the President, got the idea that it would be great if he wrote a book. I knew it wouldn't be great for him to try to write a book. I knew too much about his work habits to believe that for a minute. But when you get a call, and you know there's this small team of advisors—a professional writer was engaged. I'm not surprised that the President's book has been delayed so long that it's about to become a major campaign issue. If you could write a book by pulling an all-nighter, Bill Clinton's your man. [laughter] He would have written a book a long time ago.

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Wolcott: What was going to be in this book?

Galston: It was going to be a thematic discussion of his views, his understanding of the Presidency, his understanding of the major policy thrusts of his administration. Various tables of contents were developed, I think even a preliminary chapter or two drafted. But the effort finally collapsed, and he ended up publishing that little book, *From Hope to History*, or something of that sort. Essentially it was a collection of speeches stitched together. That book was published because the one he wanted to write couldn't get written. Not to my surprise, the book sank without a trace.

I would have loved to be a fly on the wall in the East Wing as Hillary's book soared to best seller status. [laughter] *From Hope to History* was remaindered almost as soon as it was published. The same thing, by the way, may happen all over again. I think it's quite possible that his post-Presidential book won't sell as well as hers.

Walcott: That's what happens to most Presidents' memoirs. They're ponderous and easily forgotten.

Galston: Not that her book was exactly a tell-all effort. *Au contraire*, it was very controlled and very official.

Riley: What's the best book you've read on this President or his time in office?

Galston: That's a good question. I think maybe David Maraniss's book. It's more balanced and more insightful than a lot of others, as well as being very well written. I don't think there's been a really first-rate book about his Presidency yet.

Walcott: Thematically, what would a really first-rate book look like?

Riley: Are you going to write it?

Galston: No. One of the oaths I swore was that I was not going in as Arthur Schlesinger taking notes. I was there to be a participant and not a spectator and I would never have a loyalty divided between looking at it as an academic, and looking at it as a full participant. I would not view it as an opportunity to write articles. I've done some very casual informal reflections, but nothing serious and nothing designed to get anybody's attention.

Walcott: What are the most important things that a really good book about the Clinton administration would want to say to us?

Galston: That's a good question. I would want it to talk about the enduring influence of the preparatory political path to bring someone to the Presidency, what it means to come to the Presidency through a certain kind of Governorship. I would love to see a serious analysis of the proposition I put on the table that being Governor of a large state is excellent preparation for the

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Presidency—New York and California being the two classic examples—and being Governor of a small state probably the worst.

I would love to see a serious analysis of the difficulties of party reform through the vehicle of a Presidential campaign. I would love to see a serious analysis of the ways in which policy formulation at the Presidential level is affected by the presence or absence of a Congress under control of your own party. I could go on. Those are some broad themes.

Then I think there are some large issues that have to be dealt with. What does it mean for a progressive to be devoted to a more open, international economic regime in the 21st century? Is that a circle that could be squared? If so, how?

I would talk about the large systemic questions and particular policy issues that raise the most important questions: What did we learn from the Clinton Presidency about the advantages and perils of international military intervention for different purposes in different circumstances? What did we learn about the conduct of economic policy? What sorts of views of how a modern economy works are either strengthened or undermined by the experience of those eight years? How can the *Wall Street Journal* continue to deny the obvious? The *Journal's* position, as I understand it, with regard to the Clinton economic record, is either that it's all attributable to Ronald Reagan or that it didn't happen. Amazing position, absolutely amazing. They keep on selling more and more newspapers.

I could go on, but these are some ideas right off the top of my head. That question caught me by surprise, so that was live and unrehearsed. I did better than the President.

Riley: Yes, I thought so.

Walcott: Looking back on the Clinton administration, had the President not gone and gotten himself impeached, had there been a transfer of powers to Al Gore without the attendant resentments that seem to have arisen, what difference would it have made for public policy now? What would have been the legacy carried forward?

Galston: Oh man, I could talk for hours about that. I get sick every time I think about it. I believe that the most serious, long-term domestic problem facing the country is how we're going to sustain the safety-net promises we've made to ourselves. Before the scandal broke, the President was teeing up that issue for serious discussion in the second term. Through heroic efforts of political self-restraint which cost the President very dearly, we had rolled the fiscal rock all the way back up the mountain, and we finally had—for the first time in a generation—the opportunity and the resources to address the problem of the long-term stabilization of these entitlement programs.

The transfer of the Presidency into the hands of someone with a very different agenda meant in extremely short order that everything we had worked for in that area was swept away as though it were a sand castle on the edge of a beach. I don't know what we can do now.

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In addition to all the other things that, in my partisan view, have gone wrong, that missed, squandered opportunity is the one that's going to haunt this country for a generation or more.

Riley: What's your assessment of Gore's failure to win the Presidency?

Galston: Some deep ambivalence in his relationship with the President. Here's my thumbnail formulation. The American people had gotten very adept at distinguishing between the Bill Clinton they liked and the Bill Clinton they didn't. I never understood why Gore and company didn't understand that. I was having dinner with a reporter in LA the night before Gore's acceptance speech, and he said, "Here's what I hear about what's going into that speech." I had been a deeply involved advisor to Gore in '99 and 2000, but I had no role in that speech. He told me pretty much what was going to be in it and what wasn't going to be in it, and my jaw dropped. I said, "That can't be right." But he was right.

"It cannot be the case," I said to him in all naïveté, that the Vice President would talk for thirty seconds about the record of the Clinton administration and then immediately pivot to the future. Doesn't he understand that in part he's running for Bill Clinton's third term?

Walcott: Peace and prosperity?

Galston: I think one reason that nobody really wanted to give him another chance is that nobody could understand how he misplayed a winning hand into a situation in which the Supreme Court could decide the election. I think people blamed him more for getting the party into that situation than it even blamed the Court for dealing with the issue the way it did. It was one of the more stunning displays of political ineptitude in modern political history. And it was based, I think, on a fundamental misjudgment that reflected an even deeper ambivalence.

Riley: You had been involved in helping him in '99 and 2000. Tell us about that role.

Galston: I was deeply involved in all the domestic policy discussions, but particularly the development of his education agenda, which I'm still quite proud of, even though we're never going to see it. Also, I think I played probably a decisive role in the discussions leading up to his public support for his own version of what became President Bush's faith-based initiative, which was a big deal in the 2000 campaign. How would Gore orient himself *vis-à-vis* the participation of faith-based groups in the provision of social services?

As you can imagine, there was the strict separationist camp within the Democratic Party, and I represented the minority view. But I really worked hard at it. I did an eight-page single-spaced memo for him reviewing relevant court cases and setting forth what I thought was the appropriate constitutional analysis. For a campaign, we had a remarkably serious policy process because I was the head of team A, Chris Edley, the law professor, was the head of team B, making the separationist argument, and the forces were arrayed.

Gore thought it through very carefully and decided that he was persuaded on both constitutional and policy grounds that he ought to be for his own version of this rather than take the

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separationist line. That was fun. It was fun to make an argument that you believe in, to be an effective advocate for it, to go through a serious policy process and win.

Walcott: Other involvement in the campaign after that?

Galston: Once it became political, purely political, once [Robert] Shrum and company took over, I had no involvement. And frankly, the more I heard, the happier I was. Friends of mine who were involved in a fairly senior way really were bloodied and bruised by the experience.

Riley: Looking back on the Presidency and your time in it, what's your biggest disappointment? Maybe it's the Gore campaign.

Galston: No. The biggest disappointment is more structural than that. The old line between campaigning and governing has been eroded—and perhaps erased—and I don't think that has worked to the benefit of the country. The first President Bush was probably the last President we're ever going to see who tried in his own way to preserve a part of that line, and the popular interpretation in both political parties is that he paid the ultimate political price for trying to govern. So in our lifetime we may never again see a President who isn't part of the permanent campaign, and I really think that's a bad development for the country.

Nor am I convinced that the two political parties have drawn the correct inference from the first Bush administration. Whenever you have an effect that no one can doubt—like moving from 53% in one election to 38% in another—nobody can doubt that George Bush lost support massively between 1988 and 1992. The question then arises from a social scientific point of view: of this entire array of multiple causes, who are the suspects who ought to be fingered as the culprits?

The conventional wisdom is that the President, in his own way, spent too much time thinking about what should be done to govern the nation, and not enough time thinking about shoring up his political base and the process. So that has empowered the Karl Roves of this world to advocate effectively that the President should never allow any daylight to appear between him and his base. This has all sorts of effects on public policy—including, regrettably, foreign policy. I could go on. This is my single biggest regret. I think Bill Clinton was less of an offender than Bush the lesser—

Walcott: But in the aftermath of the '94 election, didn't Clinton more or less go into that mode as well?

Galston: My deepest regret about that period is that it created the impression that the reform strategy of New Democrats was essentially a political tactic and not a governing agenda. We had worked for years creating a governing agenda (that I still believe in) to rebut that charge. It was a charge made by the opponents of the New Democratic movement from day one: This is a political tactic, it's unprincipled. Then here comes this politically androgynous advisor. It was our worst nightmare, because it was impossible to dispel the impression that the President had embraced this way of thinking as a tactic, and that's all it was.

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Riley: Let me flip it around and ask you what you feel the biggest accomplishment was, yours and the administration's.

Galston: I don't know that I personally had huge accomplishments. I tried to do my job honestly. I'm proud of the fact that I considered the White House to be the people's house in some very real way, and I deliberately opened its doors to individuals and groups who hadn't been there previously. I tried to create a space within which serious discussions among those people, and between those people and White House officials, could occur.

I think that the most important thing the President did was demonstrate there was indeed a serious governing agenda—that was neither the traditional Democratic agenda, nor movement Republican conservatism—which had an integrity of its own, and which could work. Exhibit A is obviously his management of the economy during that period. Exhibit B was the courage and clarity that he ultimately displayed on welfare reform. That bill was obviously a break with the traditional Democratic Party view and policy in that area. Nor was it the sort of "pull the plug approach" that Charles Murray and a lot of conservatives were advocating throughout the 1980s. It was a distinctive alternative strategy, a third way, which was not simply the triangulated sum of the two real strategies. It was a real strategy in its own right, and I think the past decade has vindicated the viability of that strategy—not as a political strategy, but as something designed to benefit people who previously had been trapped in a failed system.

Those I think were the two principal accomplishments of the administration. Regrettably, only one of them proved enduring. In spite of the fact that I thought that it was the nearest thing to a controlled experiment on the conduct of economic policy that our country has ever seen—and the experiment succeeded. It reminds me of the old anecdote about the aerodynamic analysis that led to the conclusion that a bumble bee couldn't possibly fly.

Similarly, the *Wall Street Journal* has killed entire forests proving that the Clinton economic bumblebee couldn't fly. But it did fly and, for whatever reason, a program of fiscal restraint, sensitivity to interest rates, to matching programmatic additions with subtractions or deletions, modest targeted investments in pro-growth areas of the economy, restraint in other areas, spending—it produced a boom.

The fact that the boom came to an end isn't an argument against the policy because, in a capitalist system, whatever strategy you pursue you will have cycles of boom and retrenchment. There's no way of avoiding that. But, if the question is, "Is that economic strategy a way of getting out of a period of fiscal recklessness and slow growth and high unemployment?" then I think the record is in: yes it is. I'm not surprised that what we're doing now isn't working nearly as well. It can't.

Riley: Well, William Galston, we're very grateful for the time. You indicated you wouldn't be writing a book about this experience, but I think when you see the transcript, you'll discover that you actually are leaving a very illuminating record of your time in the White House.

Galston: I bet you say that to all your dates.

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Riley: I assure you I don't. It's been fun for us and very educational

Galston: Me too.

Riley: We're grateful for the time and thank you for your contribution.

Galston: My pleasure.

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