WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW 1 WITH STANLEY GREENBERG

January 27, 2005
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TRANSCRIPT

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Riley: This is the Stan Greenberg Oral History, as a part of the Clinton Presidential History Project. First, let me thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to do this. It's important for us to get as many of you recorded as possible, and we would have significant gaps in the record, I'm sure, if we didn't have a chance to talk with you about your experience.

There are a couple of things that we typically do at the beginning as administrative work with respect to the oral history. The first is to reiterate the confidentiality pledge to you. Everybody here is pledged to maintain the confidentiality of the contents of the interview. We're not free to talk about the contents of the interview. You're the only person who can report anything out of the room in that regard. We do this to encourage you to speak candidly to the historical record. A transcript will be prepared and that will become the authoritative record. You'll have the opportunity to make any amendments or stipulations concerning use at that point, again, to encourage you to speak candidly.

The second thing is, as an aid to the transcriber, to go around the table and have each of us identify ourselves and say just a few words so that the transcriber can pick up the voices. I'm Russell Riley, I'm heading up the Clinton Presidential History Project, and I'm an Associate Professor at the Miller Center.

Greenberg: I am Stan Greenberg, CEO of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. Delighted to be here.

Freedman: Paul Freedman, Department of Politics, University of Virginia.

Abraham: I'm Jill Abraham. I'm notetaking for the interview. I'm a researcher at UVA. I'm just writing down speaking order and proper names to assist the transcriber.

Riley: Very good. Let's begin with a little bit of personal biography. I seem to recall that in one of the articles in the briefing book you had told an interviewer that when you were growing up, the political disputes in your family were between the Communists and the Socialists, or the Communists and the Democrats, or something like that. Tell us a little bit about your political background.

Greenberg: It was actually more complicated than that but I'm not sure we're able to spend the whole interview on that—

Riley: No—

Greenberg: My background was not very political in my own family. In fact, there was no politics at all that I can remember, other than I remember some parent or grandparent saying that [Harry S.] Truman had been a good President. And I remember cutting out a picture of [Dwight] Eisenhower and pasting it on a piece of wood and coloring red, white and blue around it.

Riley: Eisenhower?

Greenberg: Eisenhower. Other than that, I have almost no consciousness of politics in my family, and at no point family discussions about politics. We were Democrats. Everybody was Democrats. I didn't know any Republicans. I truly did not know there were Jewish Republicans and I'm still upset about it whenever I encounter them, because it just doesn't make any sense. None in my experience. I do know we were—and some of this I know in retrospect rather than at the time.

My father didn't have a college degree. He worked at Westinghouse and he tried to open a grocery story unsuccessfully a couple times. He had taken courses at night on various aspects of engineering, and so became a self-taught engineer and applied for a job at a company called American Instrument Company in Washington. The whole family was either in Philadelphia or New York, so we moved to Washington to work at American Instrument Company, which was in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Riley: You lived in the city, or out in the suburbs?

Greenberg: We lived in the city. We lived in a relatively poor neighborhood, an all-black neighborhood.

Riley: Which neighborhood?

Greenberg: It was on Ninth Street, right where New Hampshire Avenue intersected with George Avenue. We lived with my grandparents. They were Orthodox Jewish, so we had to be someplace where you could walk to a synagogue. If you drive up George Avenue—American Instrument was in Maryland, so he could drive up there. We lived in the inner city. Schools were segregated.

Riley: Was it Petworth, or—

Greenberg: I went to Raymond Elementary School, and then Keene Elementary, then Barnard Elementary, Paul Junior High School. I went to Montgomery Blair in Silver Spring in high school. We lived in an all-black neighborhood. All my friends were black, but schools were segregated and the school was right behind our alley. I'd go to an all-white school. We were there for a couple of years.

We moved to Riggs Road, a lower middle class, working class Jewish neighborhood. Synagogue was right there and it was built right across from our house. My father was president of the synagogue. My mother was president of the synagogue. They were organizationally active, and the intensity of politics was around synagogue politics, rather than party politics.

But the issue of my father being an engineer—American Instrument had a lot of government contracts and it was in the early ’50s when there was a lot of concern with security issues and Communists. There were relatives that we stopped seeing who were in Washington, who I only learned after the fact were suspect on the Communist front.

Riley: Because of concerns about informing—

Greenberg: Concerns about whether they belonged to the Communist Party and whether that would have an impact on my father’s work, which had government contracts. He had to have security clearance. We actually had almost no contact with them even though we were in Washington. There was a break-off in that part of the family. I didn’t know that at the time; I just knew we weren’t seeing them.

I found out about it when I was in high school and I became more politically active. I was drawn into the civil rights movement. That’s the kind of politics that did get drawn into the family. When I was drawn into the civil rights movement and began to get active in that in high school, I wanted to join a Jewish youth group that it turned out my cousin was part of. They wouldn’t let me join, for the same reason. They thought it was Communist-aligned and they were worried about what impact that would have. That kind of politics played itself out.

The funny thing was, during the Clinton healthcare plan, I went to the Hill to do a presentation in support of the health plan. It was a public event but it took place in the Rayburn Building. I was about to go up and speak and this guy comes up to me and he says, “You probably don’t remember me, but I’m your cousin—” somebody. “Your second cousin.” He apparently was the guy that my parents were worried about, that his Communist affiliations would cause difficulty. I said that I was delighted to see him. Then I spoke, and he put his hand up right at the beginning of the thing and he identified himself. “I’m head of the Gray Panthers.” *[laughter]* And so we had the first question. He was in the Gray Panthers and he attacked something about the Clinton healthcare plan. In any case, that was my reunion with my lost relatives from the [Joseph] McCarthy period.

I was very much in a racial culture. I went to a Jewish white neighborhood school. D.C. was desegregated, *Brown v. Board of Education* was ’54, and 1955 was the decision on desegregating the D.C. schools. In the sixth grade I was then bussed to an all-black school, although it was not “bussed.” There were no buses. You took public transportation, so I took two buses to get to an all-black school, Barnard. Our white class went as a whole. It was not actually intermixed in the school.

Freedman: So it’s a white class—

Greenberg: It was most of the kids from my neighborhood, from where I originally came to Washington, so I had lots of friends who protected me.

Riley: What grade was this?

Greenberg: This was sixth grade.

Freedman: Was there resentment?

Greenberg: Well, yes. Also, I was a school patrol and we were getting chased. But I was protected by my friends from the old neighborhood so I was fine. I had protectors. I was in good shape.

I became active in civil rights. In fact, I picketed my father's company right where he ate lunch, in high school. There was discussion of politics but it was around civil rights. It wasn't around electoral party politics. In the summer before college, I worked in the factory for my father's company, on the line. It was minimum wage and I remember mentioning whether they had entertained the union. *[laughter]* By lunch the same day, I was called in and my father talked to me that night.

I began working that summer in the March on Washington. I would go at night. I'd work in the factory in the day. I'd go downtown to work at the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] office all summer. Right before the march, when the marchers in New York were coming down—this was in Laurel, Maryland, which was a very conservative part of the state—they would come by and people would come out of the factory and throw things, people from Appalachia. Except there was a separate black section in the packing part of the factory. There was otherwise an all-white, rural workforce who were yelling epithets at the marchers.

So my politics emerges there. Before going to college, I can't remember any electoral involvement. I was a Democrat and I was very much for [John F.] Kennedy, and there was a lot of energy and excitement around Kennedy. I joined the Young Democrats when I first went to college.

Riley: I don't want to go too far down this track, but how long had your family been in the United States, just out of curiosity?

Greenberg: My father was born in the States. His parents came from Russia. My mother was from Ukraine, and lived in the Ukraine, and my grandfather was drafted in the Czar's Army, trekked across Siberia, China. It took seven years and then eventually he brought my mother and my uncle over from Russia.

Riley: Was there a great deal of cognizance in the family about what was going on globally beyond this?

Greenberg: I have no consciousness of it. We were Jewish. We lived in Jewish neighborhoods. We lived in Strawberry Mansion in Philadelphia when I grew up. Before I was five, everybody was Jewish as far as I knew. There was never any discussion of people who died, or who were lost in Russia. We were very "in America." I mean, it's not like my parents—my wife is Italian, where there's a lot of back and forth to Italy, so you're still connected. Until this generation, people just basically made almost no attempt to reconstruct. They didn't want to go back. They weren't curious about it. They were done with it.

Riley: When did you first begin thinking about an academic career path? Is this something that arose early in your undergraduate education?

Greenberg: I think so. I didn't have it before going to college. The presumption was that we would go into the professions. The presumption was that my brother would be a doctor, a medical doctor. The presumption was that I would be a lawyer, because of the interest in social science skills. The assumption was that that would lead to law because, if you looked in my neighborhood, the people who went into professions, that's what they did. I didn't know any professors. There was no college generation before mine. Even going to college, I mean, the presumption that you were going to college wasn't even a discussion. You were going to college.

But I was not part of the Ivy League group. I'd come through a working class, lower middle-class family, and it was only late in high school—I had to be bribed to read books through high school. I eventually caught on. It was in eleventh grade. It was in an American Civilization course that something clicked and I became interested.

Riley: A good teacher?

Greenberg: It was interesting. It was a program that they took a part of the school—and it was team-taught. I think it was five or six teachers. It was American Studies, or American Civilization, in which they took the geography and history and American literature and brought it all together in a common part of the school. I tried to get out of it. It was very demanding, and my father came in to see if they could get me out of it. Then I decided to stick with it. But there's no doubt about its importance in my doing what I'm doing.

I didn't know when I went to college that I'd be an academic. Political science became very early on—I wasn't majoring in it, but early on I really committed to it, and apparently was good at it. I went to Miami University in Ohio. It was a small department. They were very attentive to the people who cared about things like this. I knew a lot of the professors personally.

Freedman: So they encouraged you. They said, "You go and do this."

Greenberg: Yes. And then they encouraged me to do graduate work, and I don't know if there was any moment in that when you began to presume that you would teach. I ran for office in student government in college but it never occurred to me that I wanted to be in elective office.

Riley: Did you win?

Greenberg: Yes. It's a little complicated. First of all, my brother went to Miami University, and he was president. My brother was a star. He was the quarterback in high school.

Riley: There's a lot of psychology here we would love to dig into, but—

Greenberg: Right. I was short, I was not a sports—I did gymnastics. Our gymnastics was to create a big pyramid. Anyway, so he went ahead. He was not in political science. Ultimately, he does make that turn, because he was going to go to medical school. He had applied to, and was accepted to medical school, but had married someone who was not Jewish, and got cut off. My parents cut him off. He then stayed and got a Masters in political science and government at Miami. So we ended up both in political science.

Riley: He didn't get a doctorate in the—

Greenberg: He did. He teaches at the University of Colorado. He had a textbook. Ed Greenberg.

Freedman: No kidding! Ed Greenberg, I never knew that connection. Boy, what a family, and quite the political science dynasty—

Greenberg: Small world. I ran for the student senate and got elected. I'd run for student body president as a sophomore against Mike Oxley, who is now the head of the Banking Committee of the House, and lost. But barely. It was a very close election. He was a junior, you weren't supposed to run, and so on. The next time I ran for senate, I was first out of the—whatever the list was.

I actually got thrown out of the senate as I began to lose interest in this. I went to Washington and interned in the summer for Lee Hamilton. This was his second race, a very difficult district. I think he came in in the [Lyndon B.] Johnson landslide in '64. He went in '66, so I could go to work volunteering on his campaign. I missed more student senate meetings than I was allowed to do and I actually got kicked out because of the alumni association. I had headed—the issues that were serious in college at the time were not quite the same. The issues were over women being able to live in apartments off-campus, and we had a movement to rewrite the principle of *in loco parentis,* that the university could exercise that kind of control over students. We had a button that said, "One man, one mother." *[laughter]*

Freedman: Did you test that message?

Greenberg: No, we didn't test it. There really was a big political movement that I headed. But the alumni association hated us. They thought I was going to endanger all their contributions. The alumni association actually did lead this effort to get me out of the senate over these absences, so I was pushed out of the senate by the alumni association for my political activities. They're very attentive now. They're real nice to me now. And I haven't held it against them. *[laughter]* Anyway, so that's where my—

Riley: You decided to go to graduate school—

Greenberg: I decided to go to graduate school. Herb Waltzer was my main advisor at Miami. He wanted me to go to University of Minnesota where I was accepted. I was also accepted at Harvard, and so I went to Harvard. Let's see, that's—where do you want to start?

Riley: We don't have to park on this for a long time. This is all very informative. One of the things that I'm sure people will want to come back to, in terms of understanding this administration, is to get a picture of the biographies of the collection of people who were working. This is actually very informative material for people to use.

Greenberg: In terms of the politics, I was a Young Democrat so I was a quite mainstream Democrat. I was a Kennedy Democrat. I remember being in physics class when I learned that he had died. My roommate was the very conservative [Barry] Goldwater Republican who went and celebrated his being shot. The dorm collectively moved him out, that is, they moved all his possessions outside the building. I then changed roommates. In 1964 I went back to Washington. I worked at the DNC [Democratic National Committee]. I worked at the Young Democrats. In Washington I remember writing a position paper in support of the war in '64.

Riley: Really? So you were somebody who felt fairly comfortable with Johnson early?

Greenberg: Yes, I was a very strong supporter of Johnson. I went to the convention in '64. I also was dating a woman named Terri Garlin, who was involved there and who was a friend of Beth Jenkins [Bromberg]. Walter Jenkins was Chief of Staff for the President. So we went to the convention.

It gets all very complicated, because over that year I'm dating this person who is close to Beth Jenkins, and also who is best friends with Luci Johnson. They go to school at Marquette in Milwaukee, so I'm going up on the weekends to see my girlfriend, and I'm involved with that. Before Christmas, Walter Jenkins gets caught in a homosexual encounter in the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] and is forced to resign.

I also remember how great Lady Bird Johnson was in dealing with the family and staying committed to them. I remember on New Year's Eve there was a party at the Jenkins' house, and talking to his wife, right after this all happened. It was a very difficult period. I was going to the White House at this point. I was going, but not politically. I was going to the White House and hanging out in the solarium and ordering pizza. So this is just little odd turns in my life.

Freedman: Bizarre.

Greenberg: Anyway, I go to the convention in '64. I know the people who are picketing, because of the Mississippi Freedom delegation. They were people I'd worked with on the March on Washington. And so I joined the pickets as well, but went to the convention. By 1965, I went back and picketed the White House over the war. I had turned on the war. I don't know the process of what turned me on the war, but I had become very much against the war. It must be later in '65, closer to '66. I graduated in '67, but I was at that point involved with those against the war. I finished college against the war. I go to Harvard—

Riley: In ’67?

Greenberg: Right. I did a poll in my senior project—

Riley: This was when you were in college?

Greenberg: Right, in college. For my senior project, I did a student survey. I have it somewhere. I’m assuming this is where I developed the first known interest on my part in this subject. That survey is important because between college and graduate school I’m looking for a job, and MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] has a program. They’ve developed a new program, an interactive program for doing surveys, and when asked whether I had any survey experience, I said, “Of course I do.” I did this mail survey, which—I think I hand-counted the results.

Freedman: What was your topic?

Greenberg: I don’t remember. I’m not sure it was political. I think it was much more on student social issues. The survey at MIT was about student life and housing. It was a survey but it was mainly this program that they were trying to develop. I don’t remember whether it survived. The survey had already been administered. It was a question of analyzing the data. I developed further skills in analyzing the data doing that. And I wrote a report from that for MIT.

When the first class began at Harvard—Karl Deutsch was actually the principal person I studied with at the outset. I didn’t know where I was going in terms of my specialty. I was doing political theory, political economy. I didn’t do electoral politics, particularly in political science as an undergrad, it was much more political systems, comparative. Deutsch was who I gravitated to, and Louis Hartz in political theory. At that point the cutting edge was much more empirical.

Freedman: The American voter, this kind of stuff?

Greenberg: Right. Part of the excitement around that was the change in political science. The key to what happened there was—and I view this as kind of the luck of the draw—Deutsch had us write our names down and also write down any experience we had with social science and survey research methodology. We wrote our names and I wrote this stuff down. One of the people there was a guy named Bruce Jacobs, who I think may be at Rochester. Anyway, Bruce Jacobs was there and saw my name and my background. He worked at a company called Barss-Reitzel, which did research projects and consultancy for government. He saw it and asked whether I wanted to work at this company, because I had this survey expertise from these two hokey student surveys.

What happened with the study that they hired me for—and I was just doing part-time work, not a lot of time—it was a hundred-city evaluation of the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] of the War on Poverty, which involved a lot of quantitative work, trying to evaluate whether they were being effective.

Freedman: For the government?

Greenberg: For the government. They had commissioned this company. I had a part-time job doing that. Some time into this project, a year into this, they decided that maybe they should ask the poor what they think of the program as part of the evaluation. What a good idea! They said to Barss-Reitzel, "Do you have the capacity to do this?" And they said, "Of course. We've got Stan Greenberg here who's done these two hokey student surveys." So I was head of the hundred-city survey. At this point I also began studying design issues. I started right at the beginning in both sociology and political science, doing courses on statistics and probability and methodology. I was developing an expertise, but I ended up head of this study, which was way beyond what I should have—

Freedman: As a grad student—

Greenberg: As a grad student.

Freedman: A one hundred-city survey.

Greenberg: A one hundred-city survey, a quantitative survey.

Freedman: And these are all in-person interviews?

Greenberg: Yes, and very difficult surveys to conduct. Now, we did it together with a team from UCLA that was more skilled in the methodology than me, so I didn't design how the work was to be done. But I was head of the project.

In my second year, my wife became pregnant. That was unintended. We had twins. Unintended. She couldn't work. I was a full-time student, full-time on this project, and had my Ph.D. exams. And so it was like—ultimately, out of that study—first of all, I began studying with James Q. Wilson and [Edward C.] Banfield, who were there heading up the urban—at that time the idea of urban politics was a new concept. I was doing this hundred-city survey. Wilson then ended up as my thesis advisor on this.

Ultimately I focused on five neighborhoods. I had the quantitative from the hundred, but I focused on five where we had more in-depth work, which I did for the thesis and then for the book, *Politics and Poverty*. After my Ph.D. exams and in the midst of this thesis, Bob Lane, who was then Chairman of Political Science at Yale, approached Wilson on graduate students that he should be looking at. I went down to Yale, gave a talk, and then got hired in political science, but with a specialty, because it was joint-funded with the Urban Studies program. Then I'm with Yale.

Riley: But you don't stay at Yale.

Greenberg: No. I'm at Yale for—

Riley: Do you get tenure?

Greenberg: I do not. This is another complicated story, a good story. I'm at Yale from 1970 until '79 and then come back in '80, and I'm there on and off until '87.

Riley: As a Research Associate?

Greenberg: I was actually, at the end, an adjunct professor.

Riley: Okay.

Greenberg: Let's see—the evolution of my expertise. When I went, it was as an urban studies specialty. My book is *Politics and Poverty,* which I worked on in the first year that I'm there. Actually, I finished my thesis in the first year that I was there, and then the book the following year. In the process of writing the book, I was getting very interested in political economy, political theory, and was teaching courses on it.

Also, in the course of working on the five neighborhoods, I became more and more interested in the history of the neighborhoods and the history of how these neighborhoods got created. On the Hispanic neighborhood in San Jose that I studied, I began studying the migration patterns from Mexico as part of that, as my overall political economic view of the world. Particularly in the black neighborhoods, because I was dealing with an area of Atlanta, Summer Hill, and also the east side of Detroit. Also, for the migration from Appalachia as well, down in Hamilton, Ohio.

I began getting interested in the whole history of how this all gets formed. I'm doing less with the politics of the neighborhood. When I did the neighborhoods, it wasn't really electoral politics. It was much more about the organizational politics rather than the electoral politics. While I had done the surveys and quantitative analysis, I was not doing electoral. Now, I was electorally active in parallel to this, so that when I moved to Cheshire, Connecticut, I got involved in the local Democratic town committee. There had never been Democrats elected there. It was only by minority representation. They came within 13 votes of winning control of the council. So I was doing local, but in terms of my sanity, I viewed it as wholly separate—that my political activity was completely separate from my academic.

I became interested in race relations and designed a research project that was essentially a study of comparative race relations, looking at the American South and looking at South Africa. My interest came out of the first book. I designed the project and I got funded for it. In parallel, I was involved in the [George] McGovern campaign. I was the McGovern coordinator for the New Haven area. My wife was now a member of Congress; I was in the basement as a phone banker. So it was in parallel. But academically I wasn't doing electoral. I was going in totally different directions.

I went to South Africa and got very taken with South Africa. The book was not intended to be dominated by South Africa, but if you read *Race and State in Capitalist Development*, South Africa is the largest part of the book. I helped organize, and I was co-director of the Southern African Research Program, Ford Foundation funding. That Southern African part of my life is there, and I was going to South Africa and planning to write another book about South Africa. That was carrying on.

Then I got involved—in 1975 there was a mayoral race in New Haven. My wife—she became my wife later—was the treasurer of the campaign for Frank Logue who ran for mayor, challenging the urban machine. Bob Abelson, who is an historic figure in this field, had volunteered the survey for the campaign. I re-analyzed his data and wrote a report.

Freedman: During the campaign?

Greenberg: During the campaign. I argued that they would win this thing, which was very improbable. And they did win. They overturned the established Italian machine of Arthur Barbieri. If you read any of who governs—Bob Dahl—Arthur Barbieri is a big figure. Anyway, defeated him. I didn't field the poll, but I analyzed the data. I still was not doing any polling in any electoral context. I was off doing my South Africa stuff.

At the end of the '70s, the tenure issue came up. You may not believe this, but the presumption was that no one gets tenure. I was pretty indifferent to this question of tenure, but it came at a moment—I was two books, three books—

Freedman: Which gets you tenure, anyway.

Greenberg: It was an interesting period. It came time for tenure. They sent it out for initial reviews, and the department came back with the decision that they wanted to recommend two people for tenure, myself and a person who was in political theory. This was at a point when Bart [A. Bartlett] Giamatti came over and became president, and said we have to have a focus on humanities more broadly. He approved only one position and it had to be in the humanities. There was not, in effect, a second. When I say it's complicated, there was not a formal second-stage review beyond the department saying that it wanted the positions.

I considered—actually, I didn't consider, but there was an option to sue on the basis that there was never a review at the end of the process, and it was presumed in the contract that at least there would be a review. Anyway, there was no review. There was very strong support from Bob Dahl and [Charles E.] Lindblom, principal people who relate to my field. It didn't happen. I was approached about three years later, whether I would—there was an important intersection here.

As soon as that happened, the Rockefeller Foundation offered me a position. They were forming a commission on U.S. policy toward southern Africa, and they asked me to be the coordinator of human rights research. I agreed to do that. My family was still there. My kids were there; my wife was there. I wasn't. I was living in New Haven. As part of that, I went to South Africa.

Now things got complicated, because my book came out. *Race and State* came out while this was going on. I gave a talk in South Africa in someone's living room. By the way, I had testified in favor of sanctions against South Africa, from my position at Yale. The logic of my book was—more than you want to know—the main argument was the assumption that capitalist development, industrial development, breaks down racial barriers. My argument was that it's the opposite—that all the interests involved, whether it's commercial agriculture, or the corporations, the unions, all basically conspire to exacerbate the racial divisions. They use them

as part of advancing. If you take the way they should operate under conventional rules in a racial context, it gives them a further instrument to advance their interests, and deepens the racial divide.

The argument on sanctions in terms of South Africa, my argument, is that you can't make the assumption that investment, industrial development, is going to bring amelioration of racial conflict, and that, in fact, could exacerbate it. It was a strong argument in support of sanctions. I said that in the living room. It was recorded by somebody. Before I flew back to Johannesburg, the South African ambassador had flown to New York, met with the head of the commission, said that they were protesting my trip and that they were going to deny visas to the entire commission, which included the CEO of Xerox, and the head of the Ford Foundation, because of my statements.

This led to negotiations. I left, but I left with a series of consultancies. I was going back to Yale because the Southern African Research Program was still there, and funded. I still had the ability to teach there as part of that, in American Studies, African-American Studies. And so I was back at Yale. I go back to Yale in the fall, right? This is taking place in January, February.

Freedman: Of '80?

Greenberg: This is 1980. My wife is the head of the Chris Dodd campaign, who was running in 1980. I had this window here now, from the winter until September to—I had these consultancies. I had to write chapters for their book so I was doing work for that. Nonetheless, I had this period of time. I headed up a volunteer thing for the campaign on polling and targeting. It was mainly bringing academics around Connecticut working on the Dodd campaign, to figure out statistically where he ought to go, and things like that. He did a poll in that election that was done by Pat [Patrick] Caddell. It was a major poll and I think it cost $25,000 at the time. That was an immense sum, very very expensive.

Riley: Caddell had time on his hands—

Greenberg: But they actually could not get a meeting with Caddell. The meeting was going to be—Dodd had to go up to Boston. Dodd asked me to look at the survey, and go. We went to the meeting. It was in a rented office place. The media consultant, [David] Sawyer, who was theirs, also came up. I went to this meeting. Caddell really was not on top of the data. Dodd asked me to then look at the data. So I looked at the data in the banner book. I wrote a memo on the campaign.

Dodd, who had been running for the House, was now running for the Senate. I'd never done any polling in a political campaign. I wrote a memo and he fired Caddell. I was now the pollster for Chris Dodd—not paid. I was doing it for free. Because of South Africa. But for the intelligence service for the South African government who bugged my presentation, I'd be happily ensconced somewhere in the Ford Foundation.

Riley: When the butterfly flaps its wings—

Greenberg: Anyway, I ended up doing the polling. I installed ten phones in our basement. We quickly put up some sheetrock. All the polling took place in our basement. We had our own phone bank and did the polling. It was reasonably accurate. So at that time, I became a pollster.

Riley: Let me step in to ask one question here. Bill and Hillary Clinton are at Yale.

Greenberg: Never met them.

Riley: Never met them. And had you ever heard of them at this time? He, at least, had been important in—

Greenberg: My wife had, because there was a Labor Socialist challenge to the machine. Before Frank Logue ran, there was an independent challenge by the head of the Labor movement, Vinnie [Vincent J.] Sirabella. My wife was involved in that campaign and Clinton had worked in that campaign. My wife knew him from that. She remembers him from the time. There weren't that many people involved in that campaign.

You see these connections. When I first went to Yale and did the Urban Studies, I was not into the Ivy League routine. I picketed the first graduation, because of the workers' strike. And I taught a course with John Wilhelm, who was head of, I think it was called the Restaurant or Bartenders Union. He had organized the workers. We did a course together on New Haven and urban politics. That was done in one of the colleges, because each college can sponsor courses. We did that for a couple of years.

Wilhelm eventually goes out to Las Vegas, becomes head of Organize Las Vegas, becomes head of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, is now, I think, co-head of UNITE [UNITEHERE: Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textiles Employees, and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union], and is the candidate for AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations] president. The connection in terms of—I'm still assuming I'm doing an academic life. It doesn't occur to me that I'm doing anything—the people I was involved with at other universities have the idea of forming a company, based on the polling.

Freedman: People from the Dodd—

Greenberg: From the Dodd campaign. We didn't have a company at the time that we did the actual polling, but they think afterwards that we should form—

Riley: There's a market for it.

Greenberg: We created a company and it's called the Analysis Group. It does voter files, targeting, polling. We actually did targeting for [Joseph] Lieberman. He ran for Congress in '80 and lost. We didn't do the polling for him. I did tell him, as Reagan was surging at the end, that our polling was showing that for every two points that Reagan was getting, we were losing a point. We alerted him that it might be happening in his race. And he ended up losing.
Freedman: Do you have other clients? I mean, '80 is just Dodd?

Greenberg: Just Dodd. What happens there is that Doug Sosnik's aunt lives in New Haven. She is a supporter of Dodd. He graduates from Duke and she asks Rosa [DeLauro], my wife, who was the manager, whether she had a job for him. She says she has, so she has Doug become Dodd's driver.

Freedman: That was his start in politics?

Greenberg: Right. He was Dodd's driver in 1980. I would present the polls to Dodd in the van that they drove around. Doug, when he left the campaign, ended up heading up Bob Carr's 1982 congressional race to try to retake his seat. He convinced Carr to hire me. I came out and Carr said, "Get your Ph.D. off your letterhead," of the Analysis Group. He said, "Ph.D. is not a good calling card in politics." So the first out-of-state race that I did was the Carr campaign in 1982. I was happily teaching. I was also a visiting professor at Wesleyan for two years while doing this. I forget which two years. I think '83, '84.

After '84, after the Reagan landslide, because of the Michigan work, which was growing—I did Carr and I ended up doing the state party—I was then asked after '84 by the state party chair, to do what became the Macomb County Studies, funded by the UAW [United Auto Workers], in which I then wrote about the Reagan Democrats.

That's the root to all this. But I was still assuming that I was an academic. I eventually moved the company out of my basement to a little office on E Street in New Haven and continued there until '87. Lieberman is an important part of this piece because, after I did the Macomb County Studies, which were fine and interesting—that has its own history. I don't know if you want to go into that whole history—

Riley: Go ahead, unless you have anything in particular you want to ask about that.

Freedman: I can hold my tongue.

Riley: Why don't you go ahead, and we'll move on beyond that. What we're heading toward is sort of your first cognizance of Clinton, but there are some important pieces about who your major clients are and what you're—

Freedman: Yes, I wanted to hear how Lieberman fits into this.

Riley: Yes, exactly. So go ahead with that.

Greenberg: So we did Macomb County Studies, '85. Rick Wiener is the head of the Michigan State Party, becomes head of the state party chairs. Their meetings were in Chicago. I presented the Macomb County Studies and they caused a great stir. They were very controversial because you couldn't really talk about race at that time among Democrats. As a result of that, people who were associated with the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee brought me in and convened a very large presentation to all the Democratic consultants.

Riley: In Washington?

Greenberg: In Washington. I grew up in Washington, but I have no relation to Washington. I'm not part of the scene. I present this in '85. It causes a stir and [Paul] Kirk, who is party chair, says, "We're not going to have any more of this." You've got an emergence of Jesse Jackson and they don't want this. I'm kind of *persona non grata* with the party, which, since I'm not politically from Washington, it's—But there are a number of groups that are interested in what I'm doing, who end up supporting it. One is the NEA [National Educational Association], and the other is the DLC [Democratic Leadership Council]. I develop a relationship with the DLC, which is important to the Clinton piece of it.

Riley: Who at the DLC?

Greenberg: [Al] From brings me in, but I'm presenting to and meeting with [Sam] Nunn, and eventually Chuck Robb. Through that period I'm in an ongoing discussion with them about the character of the party. The central part of my discussion is, "You can't have a majority Democratic party without a working-class base, without a popular base. You can't carve out that part of it."

I was focused very much on the race issues and values in that discussion, somewhat on military security issues, and we did a survey for the DLC specifically around the national security debate, in the lead-up to the '88 election. In the period, I'm polling for the DLC. I polled for the DLC from '85, '86, through '94. For the whole period that the DLC is emerging as the main intellectual and political force for changing the Democratic Party, that's who I'm working for. I have this odd politics, because I come from the Left in my own thinking, but they're comfortable with that because we have a similar kind of interest in trying to reach the same kind of voters. We don't break until I break with—until I'm out of the Clinton White House, that relationship was maintained.

Riley: Did you have, among the—

Greenberg: I had one presentation at the Greenbrier when [Tony] Coelho was in the leadership. I spoke at the Greenbrier on the same panel with Clinton. Clinton was kind of the—we knew he was the young exciting Governor, but it wasn't presumed that he was going to be the presidential candidate.

Riley: Was there anybody else in that cohort of relatively conservative Democrats that you were eyeballing and saying, "This looks like the guy who could take the rest of—

Greenberg: Maybe Nunn. Now, we can't write this history backwards. I mean, I'm a presidential pollster now, but I was still teaching. During this whole period, I have not chosen. I didn't feel forced to choose. And my academic work—I wrote a book, *Legitimating the Illegitimate,* on South Africa. I was doing a whole different thing, a different set of subjects in the academic stuff, and never did anything on electoral politics in my academic life. Those worlds were separate.

Riley: Were you doing anything in the ’88 presidential campaign?

Greenberg: Well, yes. Let’s lead up to that. I do the Macomb County Studies, I have the DLC relationship, and I have a relationship with Lieberman. He’s from New Haven. I help him at various times along the way. I do polling for him in his Attorney General races in Connecticut, so I’m involved with Lieberman at that level. He’s considering then running for the Senate, so we’re in 1987. This was actually the first time that the issues that I raised in the Macomb County were being put to a real test. It was all theoretical then. In significant areas of Connecticut and Naugatuck Valley, which were very conservative, could these ideas have—this is a working class area where there had been the tire factories. Democrat Dodd always had difficulty there.

So this was a long-shot race. Lowell Weicker was immensely popular. No one thought that Lowell Weicker could be beaten. He was famous from Watergate, a moderate Republican, very popular. He was an icon. So we did the race. I remember going down. I came from Connecticut. I was still considered—I’m not in Washington. I came down from Connecticut to make the case to the Democratic Senate Campaign that he could win this race.

I did the presentation and Carter Eskew heard it and said, “You know what? This is real.” Carter Eskew came over to do the media for that race. I’m just a Connecticut pollster trying to convince them to fund this race against an icon who looked unbeatable. We beat him. And that’s a real earthquake. I mean, he’s not a typical Democrat. Lieberman’s running as a liberal Republican. He’s gone to the right of him on a whole range of issues. Cuba was one of those issues. And Lieberman wins Naugatuck Valley. This is where the Clinton—you have Lieberman, who joins DLC, and at this point you have Clinton increasingly active there.

Riley: Heading into ’88?

Greenberg: At this point Lieberman is the person I’m associated with, not Clinton. He’s the guy who took these DLC ideas and made them electorally successful. That changes my whole—what I’m doing. During that election cycle, ’87, ’88, I open up a Washington office. I could show you the building. It’s the basement of a—it’s in the back alley. There’s the main building and then there’s a little thing in the back alley, and it’s in the basement of the building of the back alley, in ’87. There was a fax machine that’s running between the Connecticut office and there, continuously. I’m not there very much in this process.

I was drawn into the presidential—I was hired. [Michael] Dukakis was a very strange campaign. You had the whole [Willie] Horton issue. Willie Horton was a race issue that I was seen to have some ability to handle because of what I had done on this. Tony Podesta was head of the California campaign for Dukakis. Tom Cosgrove was head of the Texas campaign. They were both desperate for Dukakis to deal with this. The national campaign would not deal with it.

Riley: You knew Tony from Connecticut?

Greenberg: No. The way I operated, which was unusual—after the Macomb County Study and given the amount of attention that got, I actually changed the name of the county and called it “Greene County” and circulated it. I used to write things, self-fund and do research and strategic

notes, and circulate them. You know, *Kids as Politics*—if you look at the website you can see there's a list of—but my contact was through this network of—I was a pamphleteer and sending it out. Not much of it was published. I began to publish in the *American Prospect*. I was mainly sending this out on the networks of progressives and Democrats—my ideas. I don't know how Tony Podesta—I don't know where I get—

Riley: They're coming to you, based on this.

Greenberg: Yes, I'm not marketing. Right, I'm not marketing. I'm teaching. I'm quite content. Anyway, in '87 I opened up the office. After that, I closed the Connecticut office and opened a Washington office in '89. I'm actually pretty late into this, relative to other—

Riley: Was there something on the Horton thing that you wanted to say?

Greenberg: Well, I did research in California and Texas—focus groups. The Macomb County used focus groups. There was not a tradition, on the Democratic side, of doing that. Apparently, Republicans had. I had a person who worked for me who was the executive director of the company in Connecticut, a specialist, a Ph.D., in qualitative research.

Riley: Who is that?

Greenberg: Barbara Kaplan.

Riley: Okay.

Greenberg: My own academic research, in terms of methodology, had moved from quantitative to heavily in-depth interviews. If you look at *Race and State*, and *Legitimating the Illegitimate*, they're all with lots of unusual interviews. In *Legitimating the Illegitimate*, the apartheid state, I conducted interviews in labor bureaus with white labor bureau officials who were regulating African movements.

There are a couple of things about this, in terms of methodology. One is that I was more and more, in my academic work, doing in-depth interviews and trying to build a narrative from that work. The other piece of it, which I view as central to why I'm skilled in what I do, is that even though I was writing about people who were racist, I wrote about what decisions they made as rational decisions that drew on their lives, their history, their needs, interests, and did not write about them as bad people. In fact, it got me in trouble because I began to write about the history of the Druse in Israel and argued that there was a reason why they had a hundred percent Jewish labor, and segregated the labor market. They don't have to be racist to use these divisions that are there.

I'm coming to this out of studying people who are at the time politically reviled, and making the case that they're making these decisions on understandable grounds. When I come to Macomb County—the people who hired me didn't know what my skills were, but I assume this is why it had the impact it did. When I wrote about them, even though I didn't suggest that Democrats cater to them on race issues, I didn't write about them as people who were "outs" because they

were clearly racist and angry about what blacks were doing in their neighborhoods. They were also people who had families and were trying to live in safe communities and wanted the best for their kids. They were not precluded from my narrative because of their racial views. You know, coming out of the civil rights period, and particularly Detroit and that whole tense history there, just to say that these are people we're talking to was a very important change for Democrats.

But the methodology and the approach is coming out of my academic—Even though I'm not doing electoral content, the way I'm relating to people, building narrative, and understanding why people make decisions is obviously, in ways that I can't quite figure out, impacting what I'm doing on the political side.

Riley: Sure. But it also suggests why there appears to be such a great sympathy between you and Bill Clinton when you first meet.

Greenberg: The Clinton piece comes—in '88 we've had the—I've set up the Washington office. I'm working for Andy Young in Georgia in his race that he's running for Governor against Zell Miller. That's when I meet James [Carville] and [Paul] Begala who were on the other side. But I just meet him in an adversarial position.

Now, Frank Greer—I need to get Frank Greer into this. Frank Greer is ultimately hired by Dodd. I get to know Greer in the '86—I have to search back on whether there were other races, but '86 for sure. Frank was involved in Michigan. He did Bob Carr. We built a strong relationship in our Michigan work. He did the UAW. I did the UAW. We're very close. He came out of a very populist Harris—Senator [Fred] Harris—tradition. So, I'm close to Frank. And he does Dodd in '86. While I'm doing Andy Young in '90, after the Lieberman thing, he's doing Bill Clinton on the Governor's race in Arkansas. By the way, I left the academic world in the spring of '87. I said, "I can't do this anymore. I can't balance these two things in terms of—" That's when academia is done. Frank is talking to me, because Frank is very conscious of Bill Clinton as a potential presidential candidate and is obviously very pleased to be—

Freedman: As early as '90, or even earlier?

Greenberg: Before. Yes, before. He's always talking to me about Clinton. Obviously, Clinton in '88 was all speculation. But he almost ran in '88 and he's obviously one of the candidates out there.

Keep in mind, the idea that you're polling on a presidential election, I mean, this is—I just created this company in Washington in '89. I'm doing what I'm doing and it's interesting, but I'm not even sure it's a real job. The idea that I'm looking around for someone to work for President is not quite right. I'm driving issues. Most of my work is issue work. I have candidates, but I've barely elected anybody. Lieberman is the first person congressionally. Lieberman is the first one at a statewide level, outside of Connecticut. Actually, it is Connecticut, but it's viewed nationally, as being a national figure. I'd done state in Connecticut. I'm mostly known for issues. And I'm starting to do environmental work.

In 1990, Clinton has a very difficult primary. He's clearly wanting to look toward running for the Presidency. He's now been in office—I think it's ten years. I can't remember the exact number of years, but he was in the fifth term. Anyway, the justification for another term was hard to figure. He had a difficult primary and he was running against a former Democrat in the general. It was a real question as to whether he could, indeed, lose. Obviously, if he lost the Governor's race, his presidential ambitions were done.

Dick Morris was the pollster and kind of media guy, but I think Clinton was bringing in people with the idea of putting together a team that could do his presidential—obviously, he was desperate to win in '90, but he was also bringing in people who could carry beyond. He couldn't take Dick Morris beyond Arkansas in a Democratic world. It wasn't an option. So he had Frank Greer involved doing media in the '90 race. From the beginning, I think, Frank was talking me up during this process. I wrote a piece in *American Prospect*—

Freedman: Right around this time?

Greenberg: Right. Which Clinton read—No, which I gave him a copy of, but he also read it in the magazine—which is arguing, essentially, my Macomb County argument about what one has to do to bring blue collar workers back, the Reagan Democrats, back into the party. We had to get the timing of it just exactly right. But that wasn't my introduction. My introduction was, "Come in. Focus groups are yours. Your skills—we've just had a difficult primary." I think he won 55-45. It was close. "We want you to do focus groups and help figure out the rationale in the general election for another term as Governor."

Now, I am a morning person and he is a night person. Also, I also have a philosophy on how I do focus groups. I believe the sooner you begin to draw conclusions, the sooner you close out information and learning. I try not to draw conclusions. I try to watch the groups that I can. I take some notes. I'll then read the transcript and begin to say what I think the main narrative is. I usually go through about three times before I decide, *All right, this is where it is*. I'm one of the people who do this, who get transcripts and still do, because I want to be able to go over and over it.

Most clients actually like to be there behind the window and get you to draw conclusions right away, but I know—and to the people who work for me, I'd say, "The moment you say, 'This is what is happening,' then you begin to organize information around that conclusion. It closes out information. Keeping your mind open to what is going on is critical to this process."

So we do the focus groups. I forget where our focus groups were the first night, but they weren't in Little Rock. They were about an hour out. The groups end at probably ten o'clock, and he wants a preliminary report. Frank says, "He has to have a preliminary report." I go to the Governor's Mansion after the focus groups, and—

Freedman: Late at night?

Greenberg: Late at night. It's got to be eleven-thirty, twelve o'clock at night. I go there, I sit down, and I start to do this, and then I say, "You know what? I can't do this." I'm mumbling. "I

don't know, I haven't drawn conclusions. I'm not doing this." He says, "Okay, when do you want to do it?" And I said, "Well, how about early in the morning?" He says, "Okay," which surprises everybody because he's not a morning person. I go back to my hotel. I have my notes, I have the written things that people have written, and I work into the night sorting this out, what I'm going to say, which is much sooner than I would do it in any case. And I sleep through the alarm.

Freedman: Oooh!

Greenberg: I get a call from Bruce Lindsey about, "Where are you?" I show up, I don't know, an hour late, an hour-and-a-half late, for the meeting with the Governor. I did my presentation. That I have any relationship with Bill Clinton is clearly testimony to his good nature. It's hard to imagine that this did not end the relationship but it didn't, maybe because of what I had to say.

I figured out a rationale that centered around not going back. It's not important to your overall narrative, but it was focused on things he had done, including sex education, which surprised everybody, that sex education was popular in Arkansas. The Republican running was against all this and many of the education reforms.

"Turn the clock back" became the symbol, and it was all around the idea of, rather than him having a new agenda for his eleventh year in office—whatever it was—it was focused on not allowing the clock to be turned back on a modern Arkansas. It was effective and he won the election. So I spent a lot of time there, and a lot of time in these discussions. I didn't do polling. Morris did the polling. I did the focus groups and the media testing. I had a good relationship with Gloria Cabe who was there, and obviously Frank.

Then there was the issue of whether he'd take the head of DLC, which he did, and then the initial meetings. There were a couple of them. I forget the dates, but starting the next spring we began to have meetings up at the Mansion.

Freedman: Before we get there, just to turn back a moment to the campaign itself. Did you have a relationship with Morris at all? Did you work in tandem?

Greenberg: No. We were together at the same meetings, but I never saw his polls.

Freedman: Really? So all your work was based on your analysis of your—

Greenberg: Right. I didn't do any analysis of his stuff. It was only based on the focus groups.

Freedman: But Clinton goes with the themes that emerge from this one late-night—

Greenberg: Oh, no, no, no. That was just the first night of that. We did many more. We did much more research than that night. But we developed themes out of that, which became the themes for the—

Freedman: Are you nervous at this point though? I mean, you've been doing a good deal of qualitative research, and you've done focus groups and in-depth face-to-face interviews for some time, it seems, by this point. Doesn't it make you nervous not to put them to a statewide survey?

Greenberg: Morris says he's done it. Who knows what he's done? He says he's done it. He says they're tested. He did test the ads. You saw the execution of it was effective from the groups. I'm very uncomfortable doing focus groups alone, on anything, without being paired with quantitative research. But I was there. I didn't know Morris. I made the assumption that he was a pollster, that he did polls that were legitimate, and so I didn't see him. I was happy just—I was delighted to have the opportunity to do this.

Freedman: And you're doing the ad testing? Are you guys doing dial tests at this point?

Greenberg: No, no. This was just focus groups.

Riley: What are you finding out about Clinton at this point? This is evidently the first time that you're working with him. How does he compare with other clients that you've worked with?

Greenberg: Oh, by the way, Hillary is in the meetings, too. There isn't any meeting here that I'm doing that Hillary's not in.

Riley: But what are you finding out about this guy in comparison with the other clients that you've worked with? Was there anything remarkable? Did you walk in and say, "Oh, this guy's going to be the next President of the United States"? What can you tell us about your initial impressions of this guy as a candidate and as somebody to work with, as a pollster?

Greenberg: I had been there for the Atlanta speech, so I knew that there was an unevenness, or potential unevenness to this, but I'm happy as a clam to be here. My dominant impression is being mortified that I've done a no-show on the Governor, so I don't get much—the fact that I survived beyond that is—

Riley: But this is literally your first encounter with him.

Greenberg: Yes. I'm not sure how I would have reacted in a similar position. Usually Governors get their way. The fact that he could deal with this was a big statement. He was a big figure. And he listened. You know, I presented my ideas. I can't remember whether the ideas I presented that morning were the ones I ultimately presented. I'm sure that the elements of what I ultimately presented were there that first morning. I don't remember what I said, but he was an intent listener, and much more than other candidates. Lieberman is a good listener, too. Usually, candidates are very full of themselves and Governors are full of themselves, but he was a listener, easy to deal with, but very smart, clearly very smart. He asked clearly probing questions, understood, got it, asked real follow-up questions. You knew you were dealing with someone who was smart.

Riley: So there wasn't a general education process. There was more of a back and forth, or a give and take among people with the—

Greenberg: Well, you had people—this was somewhat odd. Everybody else in the room knew each other and had worked together, gone to a primary and almost lost. They all knew each other and had good relationships. I was the only one there—I had the Frank relationship, but no relationship with any of the others, including Bruce Lindsey, Gloria Cabe, or Morris. I had no relationship with any of those folks.

This was an audition of sorts, because I think the President, the Governor at the time, had brought in Greer with a view—Gloria spoke to me right after the campaign about a longer term relationship, recognizing that they were going to have to build a team that could win a Democratic primary. They spoke to me right after the election about it. Clearly this was auditioning for them, but they wanted to win the election. I'm sure they were interested in whatever good advice would get them a thematic, a framework, for the election. They accepted it. There was not resistance. In other words, clearly it clicked. You could tell that it clicked. It made sense.

There was no dynamic that I saw, where, for example, Morris is competitive and resisting the ideas coming from me. That fact that I developed the concept didn't seem—Now, I didn't become part of their campaign. It's not like they had a young campaign where I'm part of the team in their war room, and when we have a campaign decision, I'm part of it. They were clearly a campaign that would make decisions and I would present to it. I'd come down and present and leave. I would not stay there and do the campaign in the way that I would ultimately do for him and other candidates.

Riley: Did you do anything special to educate yourself about Clinton or Arkansas before you went down?

Greenberg: I don't remember. I do as a matter of course, deeply. Keep in mind, I have a lot of Southern history in terms of my academic background. I spent a lot of time, particularly in Alabama and Georgia, because Summer Hill was part of Atlanta. I've read a lot of Southern. I've read a lot of history. I taught Reconstruction. I have a lot of Southern history in my academic head. So that's there as I go into it. I don't remember specifically what I did, but I always read heavily before going in.

Riley: I would guess your conversations—you had said earlier that you had had ongoing conversations with Frank Greer.

Greenberg: It was very self-conscious when I went in. It was not just about helping them develop a rationale for winning this election. It was very self-conscious that this is a relationship you want. He could be President. It's a special person. I have no doubt that we read deeply going in. One of my skills is that I listen to people. I went to all the groups, personally. I didn't pass this off.

By the way, I don't actually moderate groups. Most pollsters moderate the groups. I come out of a different background, and my executive director has her Ph.D. in qualitative research. I don't believe that being a pollster necessarily gives you the skills to be a good moderator. They're

different professions. In fact, I felt I could learn much more by being behind the glass watching this process and listening, than moderating it myself. Plus, there are professionals who have these skills.

Freedman: It's a completely different set.

Greenberg: Right. So we're always much more expensive than anybody else, because I don't moderate. I don't even understand how you'd survive that way, just as a way of life, if you do your normal day and then do four hours of moderating groups. You're spent, intellectually.

Riley: Would you hire locals to do that?

Greenberg: No, no, no, no. We bring trained people. We train people who are full-time.

Riley: I just didn't know whether, in a situation like this, Arkansans would be self-conscious about having someone who clearly was not from the state?

Greenberg: The person who was our moderator actually was from the South.

Riley: Okay.

Greenberg: And I usually use women moderators rather than men, because women in groups are more—it's very hard in terms of expense to bring two moderators for two groups. If you have to choose, women moderators are more likely to get people to talk.

Freedman: So you would always do males and females separately?

Greenberg: Yes. In terms of methodology, that's actually a very big change from—I'm not sure what others still do. I'm deeply opposed to mixing gender, because the dynamics of the groups is radically different. I would also make it homogeneous on race and other things that were critical, particularly in that period of time, if you're talking politics. You can't get a real discussion if you mix it racially. I went to homogeneity by class, race, and gender.

Gender was more for the dynamics, not that there was so much gender issues. It's just the whole dynamic of the group. It's just a complete change. You go around a group of women and begin your first discussion, and you begin talking about your lives. People are deep into this thing and have a great time. You put men in that mix and it's, *whew*, it just dampens. It's very different. Also, the men won't react in the same way or use the same language. So we separate by gender.

Freedman: What about by party? Do you have Democrats and Republicans in the same room?

Greenberg: Yes. It depends on what you're doing, but usually it's people who are either independents, or leaning to a party but who are swing voters, by some criteria. We tend not to have strong partisans. Not tend—we exclude strong partisans of either side because that impacts people's willingness to reveal their views.

In terms of methodology, first of all, I had an academic background, and the people who handled my qualitative methodology were academics. We're different from the other polling firms, which mostly come out of politics. People who have polling skills that come out of politics—one of my hardest things is to find people who know both campaigns and academia, who have an academic experimental design kind of background. Finding that mix is very hard.

We have a much more academic company with much more rigor around the structure of the qualitative research. We're much more expensive because if you have homogeneity as a concept, once you begin to divide by gender and class you end up having many more groups in order to get at the issue. So it costs more. You do more groups. It's hard to use us unless you have resources.

Freedman: So you know at this point—you're down there, you're working with them, you have a full sense that this is potentially a relationship that's going to extend beyond the general election. Then Cabe approaches you afterwards. At that point, are you ready to sign on? What do you say? What was your reaction?

Greenberg: Well, I would say, yes, I was very interested. But also understand that I have a [Albert, Jr.] Gore relationship at the same time, which also came out of the DLC. You didn't know about my Gore side, did you?

Freedman: There's a Gore side?

Greenberg: I do a project for Gore, with [Tom] Downey. They want to talk about an energy tax. They have an idea for a vote, which is an environmental question, but it's also a way of creating a kind of a consumption tax as a way of reforming the tax system. Again, they view themselves as moderates, and making changes, very reformist, and trying to crash existing structures that Democrats have supported. I'm doing that for Gore during this period of time, so that when Gore begins to discuss running for President I get drawn into his discussion at the same time.

Freedman: And this is after '88?

Greenberg: Right. This is after the '90 election. Actually, I worked for Downey as well, in his congressional race, so we have that relationship. Anyway, I'm dealing with Gore in that. He's clearly very smart, a lot of energy, and somebody who had run for President before. Carter Eskew is pushing me to work with Gore. There is that possibility.

I'm not personally committed to anybody here. I'm more taken with Clinton. And I'd worked with him more closely. I'd do a series of presentations to Gore, but it wasn't during the campaign, so it's not as intense. But there was a series of meetings with Gore and his group to discuss his run.

Riley: Stan, I want to dial back and ask two substantive questions about that '90 gubernatorial race before we completely leave it behind. One is, in the course of doing your work for Clinton, are you picking up any worrisome signs about him as a prospective candidate? I guess there must be negatives that you're seeing, and I'm wondering if you have any recollection of the specifics

of some of the negatives and where those vulnerabilities are, as kind of a benchmark for the things that happened later.

Greenberg: Is this a subtle question about extramarital sex?

Riley: Well, that's one component of it, but there are other—

Greenberg: Well, there are a number of things. There were lots of rumors about Clinton and that issue. The things that became issues out of being Governor of Arkansas, and land deals and stuff, I have no consciousness of. It was not an issue that I was dealing with, and when I came in to work for him, it was not a threat to him. He'd been Governor for a long time. Usually, people who are in power for a long time develop problems just from the length of incumbency.

Riley: That's my question.

Greenberg: There was a sense that this was an honest guy, smart, honest, went to Yale, came back to Arkansas, a special person, a successful Governor. He had education reforms and welfare reform, and was recognized by other Governors. There was a sense that this was a successful Governor. There was no sense that this was someone tainted by scandal. There was concern about whether issues related to social life would have some bearing. Those were there.

Riley: You're picking them up in focus groups?

Greenberg: No, no, no, no—not in the research, just in the political circles. That was it. And the reason I raise it is because some of our early meetings on the run for the Presidency were on this subject. Obviously, it was at the top of mine as something to think about when running for the Presidency.

Riley: All right, we'll come back to that when you get to that stage. My other substantive question was, he made a pledge, as I recall, in '90, that he was going to serve his term out, that there was concern about '92 in the state. Were you involved in the discussions about whether that was a wise course of action?

Greenberg: No. First of all, I think he made it early on. I came in after the primary to try to figure out a rationale for the general. I believe he had already said this.

Riley: That makes sense—

Greenberg: I don't remember it being something that we litigated.

Riley: And you don't remember it being a factor in your focus groups—whether that was something that resonated particularly with people or not?

Greenberg: I'd have to go look. I don't remember. I think once he said it, it was a non-issue. It only became an issue when he made the decision to run for the Presidency and he was himself consumed with the pledge.

Riley: Again.

Greenberg: So he spent a lot of time going around the state to deal with that. It was something that he was concerned about. But that's building back. I think he made the decision to say it. I don't remember in the groups that he had national aspirations being something that they held against him. They thought it was good that the state got recognized for these gains. That he was running around the country active in the Governors Association was a positive, not a negative.

Riley: Good. I just wanted to make sure, because it becomes important later and I didn't know whether there was something that needed to be said about it before then. So you were now weighing a decision about whether to cast your lot with the Gore people or the Clinton people.

Greenberg: Well, first of all, you don't know whether both or neither are going to run. So it's not so much my choosing between them. Understand, my relationship deepens with Clinton because, one, we have meetings that are—it's different showing up at a Washington meeting and going down to Little Rock to meet. There are meetings. Two, he's giving a series of speeches as part of the DLC that are important to his developing thinking and running for the Presidency. I'm getting those drafts. I'm in the process. I'm reacting to those drafts.

Freedman: You're giving feedback and analysis on those?

Greenberg: I'm not doing any research but I'm getting the drafts. I'm commenting on the drafts. I'm writing to him and talking, through Gloria mostly, and Bruce, about the speeches.

Riley: Bruce—

Greenberg: Bruce Lindsey. I'm on an ongoing intellectual political—

Freedman: Being drawn in—

Greenberg: Right, into that world. Either they're drawing me in, or they're—he has lots of networks. I'm sure he's sending it out to thousands of people. But I was flattered, at least, that I was getting it. When we would meet, it was a small group. It wasn't more than five of us when we sat down to talk about the possibilities. And he always left it open when we met on whether he was going to run.

I thought he was going to run. He has a way of going through a process to convince himself of a decision he's already made, and also bringing everybody else on board. I had no reason to think—I mean, he'd never said it and he always kept his options open until the very end, even with—we had a meeting in September in Washington in which all the FOBs [Friends of Bill] were gathered in over a weekend to discuss this. It was always tentative, but I didn't believe it was tentative. I thought he had made this decision and was going to do it. I was pretty convinced he was going to do it.

I didn't know what Gore was going to do. I let them know that I was a part of the discussions, not the Presidential discussions, but that I am part of each other's groups. There was full disclosure that I was in both camps.

Riley: Okay. So at what point do you—

Greenberg: Gore did make the decision not to run. That settles the issue. He didn't call me up. He just did it. I'm sure his family and everything was much of the decision. Gore had his own—his family, I'm sure, was the center part of his decision-making. He pulled out and it made that obviously much easier for me. It wasn't complicated at all. I was committed to Clinton's running.

Riley: Right. You developed a—

Greenberg: I thought he should run. Remember, during this period, the doubts on running. The major candidates are dropping out. You have the Persian Gulf War. [George Herbert Walker] Bush is immensely popular. It really looks like a fool's errand. Starting in the spring, I began to write notes that said, "He can really be beaten." I think Clinton would have run because this was just the moment. He would have run, regardless, even if it looked like a fool's errand.

Freedman: What were those memos? What did you see that early as potential?

Greenberg: I don't remember the specific surveys, but you had the very high approval rating—I have the surveys. I can go back and look for the memos. I'm trying to remember how I sent things. I guess it was memos then. We didn't do e-mail. I guess there are actually memos.

Riley: It's the Dark Ages.

Greenberg: We had the overall approval numbers, but you had a whole series. You had the rising doubts on the economy, you had the whole budget and what had happened with the budget, and the doubts about Bush. We had asked attributes, which would be about different attributes of Bush, and the attributes just didn't match up to the overall approval rating. There was just a disconnect.

I thought it would crash at some point, that these lines would cross and it would be in a different place. I was advising that this was a winnable race. Not about the primary. Primaries are a crapshoot. Who knows? It was much more affected by the fact that Gore dropped out. That made him the moderate and Southern candidate in the race. But then everything was [Mario] Cuomo. Whether Cuomo would run becomes the dominant figure. Once Gore pulled out and he was the only Southern moderate candidate running, it became hard not to run, hard not to make the decision to go. We didn't do any research on the primary. The first research I did was in September.

Riley: In New Hampshire.

Greenberg: Yes.

Riley: That was the first contractual work you did for him then?

Greenberg: Since the Governor's race, I was not in his pay in any way.

Riley: What did you do in New Hampshire? Can you tell us about going to New Hampshire, what you did, and what you were finding out?

Greenberg: I'm trying to remember. I went to observe the groups. It was primary voters. We essentially took the DLC themes, because the issue then was—the assumption was a very liberal primary electorate. Would a Southern moderate with these kinds of perspectives be successful? That was the conventional wisdom, even though I'm not sure the conventional wisdom was right, given Jimmy Carter. Given that [Tom] Harkin was running, the assumption was that New Hampshire was a place that you would be tested.

Riley: So they weren't going to spend any effort in Iowa?

Greenberg: Right. We assumed that there was no point in learning about it. It's also assumed that Iowa caucus goers are very liberal. It's not the place where Bill Clinton is going to get his rise. New Hampshire was just a broad test. Oddly, given the presumption that it was a poll-driven candidate, we didn't do any poll, we didn't do any quantitative, we didn't do any primary polls. We didn't do anything to assess the electability in the primaries.

The focus groups were simply kind of a rough, "Let's get a feel for this electorate. How much are we at odds? How much of an opening is there?" I know the conclusion from it was that this is very receptive ground. Forget conventional wisdom. There's a great openness to what you're saying. In terms of Bill Clinton, it's interesting. If you look at the speeches that he wrote—that was the other part of this, beginning to go through the process of the way he does speeches, which is the way he clarifies his thinking.

If you look at the New Orleans, his first DLC speech for his Presidency, and then Cleveland at the end of it, his ideas were well formed before—the research I did for him in the Governor's race was not about this. It was very focused on a sense of purpose for Arkansas. The themes that he evolves as he runs for the Presidency, mainly developed at various forums from DLC, are fully there. The dominant themes in his announcement speech in October that become the dominant themes in the New Covenant addresses are his. They're not derived from any kind of research process. There's interaction. "What do you think of these ideas?" But there's no research commissioned. It's coming out of an intellectual process for Bill Clinton over the year. I think the DLC was just a critical year that he went through. But it is not a research process; it was an intellectual process for him that became the themes of his campaign.

When I did the research in New Hampshire, I didn't go in and say, "Guess what, there's this alternative set of themes that you ought to run on." All we were trying to say is, "Here's what you're saying. Is this at odds with this electorate, or is there a receptivity to it?" We basically found receptivity, and there is a memo from that. I don't remember what I wrote, but there was a memo that I wrote off the groups that fed into the speech process. If you look at his

announcement speech right at the beginning of October, it very much dovetails with the DLC speeches.

Freedman: But what about, during this period, the stories, the rumors, the allegations that do start to come out? What's the response like internally? How are you dealing with that, leading up to New Hampshire?

Greenberg: We did deal with this in the—New Hampshire's his whole world—but we did have a meeting. Do you remember when he went to Washington and did the [Gene] Sperling breakfast? I think it was the Sperling breakfast in which he acknowledged having extramarital affairs.

Riley: I think it was December.

Greenberg: Was it December? No, it was much earlier, closer to the time of the announcement. In any case, there is a series of meetings as he is getting more serious. I don't remember when the meetings were. I'm always impressed with people when they go in the courtroom and they get asked these questions and know with great specificity, and they ask about a specific date. I can't tell you. I don't know whether it was fall, spring. I haven't a clue.

Riley: The sequencing is the—

Greenberg: I'm talking to Gloria Cabe, and I'm obviously then getting the speech drafts. Then she says, "Will you come down?" We did this a number of times in the late winter and spring, a series of meetings to talk about this, and what needs to be put in place, and what needs to be thought through as he's trying to decide whether to run.

But we had one meeting that was solely on this subject, at which Hillary was present. It was an uncomfortable meeting, I can assure you, raising the issue. I believe I introduced the topic that there were rumors and we have to be—we can't be surprised by this. Now, sometimes you have meetings and then there is another meeting. You know that Bruce Lindsey and Gloria, who have a very different kind of relationship with them, and over a longer period, particularly Bruce, are having a separate meeting where they're discussing this.

But this was the first meeting with the campaign people, or the next tier, where we're asking for a discussion on it. I remember Hilary saying that, "Obviously, if I could say 'no' to this question, we would say 'no,' and therefore, there is an issue." She spoke about this as much as he did. I don't remember the specific kind of things that were said, because it wasn't a meeting where he said, "Okay, there's these five relationships. Let's talk about those and what the exposure is." That wasn't the nature of the conversation. It was more a general characterization of the types of potential risks, but assurances that, given the people and given the long-term relationships, this was not going to be a major problem. And that they were able to handle it because their relationship was strong. They'd be able to respond to it in ways that would minimize the problems. So we had this discussion but it was not a detailed discussion.

Freedman: What about detail in terms of the nature of the response? Was there a discussion about specifics, what they would say, when and if it came out?

Greenberg: Yes. Well, the instinct of Bill and Hillary was, "It's none of your business." I think that was their starting point. "This is our private lives; it's none of your business." Once you began going beyond that, it would open the door to endless discussion and legitimate the issue. That was the starting position.

We convinced them that that was not quite sufficient, that they had to go further, that there had to be some kind of acknowledgement that there were these issues, but they were not a problem for them. If you recall—I believe it was the Sperling breakfast—they came up and did it together. This is not the *60 Minutes* during the Gennifer Flowers thing. This is early on. I can't remember when the *60 Minutes*—but it was decided to do the Sperling. I was asked to—I called Gloria Borger to talk about it, and indicated it would be okay to raise it, which she did. They responded. But it was reluctantly. In fact, looking back, I think they think it was a mistake, that their position should have been, "It's none of your business."

Freedman: But the hope is that this would have been all that was necessary?

Greenberg: Right. Well, it was true. I mean, it was authentic. It had closure to it. We didn't know Gennifer Flowers, that whole—when I say "we," I mean the campaign people. I'm sure Bruce Lindsey has a much deeper knowledge of all this. Have you interviewed Bruce?

Riley: Not yet. He said he'll talk to us after the President talks to us. But he's on the list.

Greenberg: [*laughing*] Okay.

Freedman: Do you remember what that was like, seeing that Gennifer Flowers interview?

Greenberg: Oh, yes, I think I remember this. Well, let's see. The campaign evolves, very high level. Then we do the New Covenant speeches.

Riley: And you're screening those—I'm not going to lose sight of this question, but there may be some preliminary stuff before we actually get to—

Greenberg: Well, you have the announcement speech. That goes through drafts. I did mention—I'll have to decide what to do with it—I do have the diaries, which I kept starting in September, through to the election.

Riley: Right, and let's think about how we want to deal with that.

Greenberg: It's more of a log about meetings held, and quotations, or reflections about—

Riley: Right. Are they at your house or are they—

Greenberg: What I don't understand is how people write diaries. Do you know how long it takes just to write a log, a short little log thing at the end of the day? Anyway, from September at least I can check my facts against contemporaneous notes about what was happening. But I was deeply involved in the speech. Bruce Reed had come on at that point. Clinton, bigger than any candidate I've ever seen, wrote his first drafts. He played a very very big part in what he wanted to say.

Riley: And it's good stuff? His drafts would be—

Greenberg: Oh, yes, yes—but also remembering that he's given this evolving speech at the DLC. It's not like he was starting from scratch.

[Doorbell interrupts.]

Greenberg: Bruce Reed was involved in the speech writing. We go down to Little Rock for this. It's unbelievable. You're learning about what he's like in this process. It's all night, because he is a night person. It's all night, and he throws the draft out. You know, it's 2:00 in the morning and he just throws out the entire draft. Start over. You can persuade him at some point—you'll go through a process, actually, of rewriting the whole draft to a new place, and then, at 5:00, he'll say, "You know what? That earlier draft was better." He did that. I remember he did that. So you end up—then you're going to be able to do it. He'll come back to it. If he's thrown it out, it doesn't mean that he's—you'll recover the draft and you'll go through a process right up to the moment of delivery, of reworking.

It all looks brilliant, and it was a standout. He really stood out when he gave this speech, not just delivery but also as a narrative and a framework. It was very fresh and exciting. But it was incredibly painful, too, to get there. Many drafts. Then you would go through practicing the speech, which in this case was minimal because we were rewriting until right before the speech. It was like one or two. The way he edits the speeches is to edit it while he's delivering it. So it's being recorded and then you've got to go capture the changes. It's a very intense process.

Riley: How many people are in the room while he's doing this, and who are they?

Greenberg: I know Frank was there. Bruce was there. I was there.

Riley: Bruce Reed or Lindsey, or both?

Greenberg: Both. Actually, Lindsey is kind of in the background. He doesn't try to litigate the specifics. No, this was Frank and Bruce and me.

Freedman: Is this a pattern that plays out speech after speech?

Greenberg: Every speech. I didn't think it was possible that I've been at every speech, but it's true of every speech. Now, obviously the announcement speeches were more important than

others, and there were many drafts and many circulations of drafts to other people, but when you got down to it, it was a small number of people.

Riley: The other people who would be in the room at this time—

Greenberg: The only ones I remember were Frank, Bruce, and myself.

Riley: Okay, so the campaign team at that point has not been—

Greenberg: There's no other—there's no campaign team.

Riley: Okay, no campaign team.

Greenberg: And Bruce Lindsey wouldn't be in the room and Gloria wouldn't be in the room.

Riley: Mrs. Clinton?

Greenberg: No.

Riley: Okay.

Greenberg: No. At various times she would read a draft, or he'd show it to her, but she would not be part of this. There are other speeches I can think of that are different, but on this one and the New Covenant speeches he had his perspective, I mean, he had a point of view. And he had an overall framework and issues that he cared about. This was intense, but it was within a framework that was well established by him. So you have that speech that's well received. And he stands out from the other candidates because other people were supporting Bob Kerrey. People that I knew, progressives, were supporting Kerrey. He was running on healthcare.

None of the other announcement speeches stood out like Clinton's. And you quickly rolled into the New Covenant speeches, which was an amazing thing to do. The New Covenant speeches, the idea that what you do in your campaign is to give very high level speeches about the future of the country, to deal with military and security issues, and economic policy, and philosophy—nobody else was doing it. It was something that From had raised coming out of the announcement. He had raised this as something we should do. We constituted a group out of my office where we worked through the speeches.

We announced in October. We were giving the New Covenant speeches, I think, by the end of October, early November. It's a remarkably short period to give those kinds of speeches. We won the kind of "intellectual" primary of being the serious candidate in this early period.

Riley: October 23rd was the first, November 20th the second, and December 12th was the third.

Greenberg: Well, for a campaign to have that coherent a vision, particularly when you look at the 2004 election and the lack of vision on the Democratic side. It wasn't possible because he had a campaign that had a vision—*He* had a vision. There was a collective decision to start this

campaign not in a frenzy all over the country, but to start it intellectually, to create it in a single venue.

At this point you're bringing in policy people, but there's no campaign. Clinton interviews George Stephanopoulos at my office while we're preparing for the New Covenant speeches. Dave Wilhelm is hired as the campaign manager, kind of a political director/campaign manager, which is the first hire, which I think didn't happen until after the announcement speech, so it's in October. There's no real staff. My office in Washington is where a lot of it is happening. In fact, there's two kinds of hiring. With Al From, we're hiring staff and consultants on the campaign. Eli Segal is also charged to do it. We're going through a staffing process at that point.

Freedman: Throughout all of this period, is there any testing going on? Are you taking any of these themes and playing them out?

Greenberg: No. [laughs]

Freedman: That's fascinating.

Riley: None of the New Covenant speeches were tested at all?

Greenberg: No.

Freedman: You knew on the basis of the work that you had done.

Greenberg: Well, it's actually a special case where a candidate really has a vision, even though he's seen as a poll-driven candidate. Here's what we did do. For example, in the announcement speech he says, "End welfare as we know it." I believe I wrote that sentence, but I think Bruce Reed thinks he wrote it, too, so there's more than one claim of authorship on it. But we went to South Carolina and tested our themes with African-Americans.

Riley: When was this?

Greenberg: I'd have to go check, but we did it before the New Hampshire primary because we wanted to make sure—on the one hand the perception was, New Hampshire, liberal Democratic electorate—are these themes going to resonate? The other is, are we going to find ourselves in deep trouble because of his—once you go to the Southern primaries, which is his strength, if we articulate these themes, do we lose an African-American primary electorate in doing it? Particularly because Jesse Jackson is running. So there are real issues here.

Then again, these were focus groups, not polling. Part of the issue is, it's very hard to poll in a primary electorate. We found tremendous resonance on welfare reform among African Americans, who wanted responsibility and cheered what he was saying, which gave us the confidence to go ahead on all our themes and not worry that we were going to then find ourselves down the line getting stopped in the South because of those positions.

We did some testing of that sort, but we were not—I was heavily involved in getting these speeches organized. We were not doing research.

Freedman: Fascinating, very interesting.

Riley: And you were involved in staffing up at this point, too, which you've already discussed.

Greenberg: Yes. Now, we do poll. I'll have to go look at when we did our first poll. Our themes were being established through the inertia of who he is, and the rationale, the national argument that he's been engaged in.

We begin the poll in New Hampshire. I'll have to check on when we did the poll in New Hampshire—I'm sure we began the poll in October, November—to see where we are and which themes do best in New Hampshire. I'm sure we're starting that process more systematically. The first ads go on the air immediately after New Year's Day in New Hampshire. In order for that to be true—I have to work backwards here. These are 60-second ads that were on the economy. Greer does his economic plan. We had tested the themes and I probably tested the ads—it's amazing I can't remember—in New Hampshire focus groups. That would have happened in December.

Riley: Stan, let me come at this from a slightly different angle. One of the things, presumably, that you're doing in the primary is trying to position yourself as opposed to your—

Greenberg: I just remembered something. I must have done a poll in—it was after he announced. It was probably October, November, because of the—the reason I remember this, because I had never polled for him. This is the only one—

Freedman: Right, exactly, this is new—

Greenberg: Right, I've never done a quantitative, I mean, I've done his focus groups in Arkansas. That entire year of DLC there was never any research. I have these polls that I do and I circulate, national polls that I did, my whole mode of operation, and writing strategy memos. So I had national polls that I had done, not for him, and he's seen that. But I've never actually been commissioned by him to do polling.

I'm pretty self-directed. I'm actually not used to candidates having that much input into the survey. I'm sure others do, but I'm not actually used to that. I would send the survey—and it would go through Bruce Lindsey—to him for comment. Since candidates rarely—the campaign manager might do something—and then I would circulate to others, to Greer and others, and Wilhelm, for comments. But the candidate, it's kind of *pro forma* you send it to them. They're busy. They don't get it on time and stuff. Apparently, in his relationship with Morris he was very different. Apparently, he would very closely read the survey, edit the survey, and was very much involved in it.

Freedman: Edit the questions?

Greenberg: Edit the questions. I only know this because that's what Bruce told me. When he didn't get the comments back to me, when I was ready to go, I went to the field. I didn't stop the survey. I went into the field and did the survey. This apparently caused a stir [laughing] because that had not happened before, because he wants to make a major contribution to the surveys. I said no. You should talk to Bruce about this. I said, "This is not like running for Governor where you do a poll and then you wait three months. This is an ongoing process. We're going to do this. There will be plenty of opportunity in the next survey. This is a national election. This is not a once-a-year survey, or in a run-up to the primary. There will be lots of surveys." Whatever thinking he has, I'll reflect it in the next survey, which I did, which is what he agreed to do. But everything stopped when I went ahead with the first survey. I had a deadline for when his comments were going to come, and when they didn't come, I went ahead.

I'll have to ask Bruce to recollect, but it was a momentary crisis in the campaign that I had gone ahead, and that I didn't accept his methodology as the way we were going to proceed. I said, "We can't proceed in a Presidential election waiting for him, given that he's all over the country, and waiting for his detailed comments on the questionnaire." I mean, he's got more important things to do. As long as I know his thinking, I can carry it into the survey and obviously impact the next survey. You can't run for President and be doing detailed editing of the questionnaire. And so he accepted that as a major change in the way he operates.

Freedman: It's fascinating though, that he had the inclination, the desire, to be so hands-on at that level.

Greenberg: Oh, yes. I didn't know that until I went ahead and fielded without his comments.

Riley: And I guess he did not lose that inclination. It was still there and he did it occasionally.

Greenberg: That was one of his concessions to me, because when we would have other issues, if we get to those at later points, he would bring up the fact that this is the only time he's ever agreed not to be involved in the questionnaire at that level.

Freedman: Interesting.

Riley: I guess the microscopic interest in the survey and the results of the survey—there is an equally detailed interest in the results of the survey as well as the way the survey is phrased?

Greenberg: Yes.

Riley: Is that unusual?

Greenberg: I don't think so. But he was interested at a very in-depth level, more than most candidates, in the content of it. I'd write more, probably, than most pollsters, so there was a narrative that he would work off of. Many of the surveys you'd present. Most of them you wouldn't, simply because of the pace of the campaign. You couldn't just physically be in the same place and present. There were moments that—when we created the Manhattan Project later

in the primaries—where you would really formally present the stuff. More often, I'd write a memo and he would write notes back on the memo, or there'd be a phone conversation.

Riley: He was comfortable with your presentation, then, without having to see the hard data that went beneath it.

Greenberg: I sent it to him. He would read the frequency questionnaire.

Freedman: And the whole banner book?

Greenberg: He wouldn't read the banner book.

Freedman: You'd give him cross-tabs and he would, he could read a cross-tab?

Greenberg: Yes, but I never gave him cross-tabs on it. We worked from the memos that I wrote off the surveys.

Riley: But there would be summaries of the poll—

Greenberg: Of the cross-tabs, right. Yes. He would not get the cross-tabs. He'd look at the time series. He was interested in that. He'd get that as part of what we'd send out. He'd look at the frequency questionnaire and the time series, but not the banners and all the cross-tabs. He would go through the survey in a second. Fast read. I developed—actually, Erskine Bowles is the one who taught me this in the White House, that when you present to him, never give him the document, because he'll just go [sound effect, *whoosh*] through the document. If you have a PowerPoint presentation, and it's bound and you give it to him, he goes [sound effect, *whoosh*], and you say, "What's next?" You give him page by page as you want him to get it. He would zip through the questionnaire and he would know it. Usually I had a memo in advance, and usually the only thing was interaction around the memo.

Riley: I want to go back to the question I was about to pose. Presumably during this period of time—December of '91, January of '92—one of the things that you're interested in is differentiating your candidate against the opposition.

Greenberg: Not really.

Riley: Not really, okay.

Greenberg: No. The strategy was that he was a general election candidate, that he was a cut above, very different, raising big issues, challenging Bush at a fundamental level, a new perspective in the Democratic Party, and that the way to win the primary was to demonstrate that you were the most believable challenger to Bush. If you look at the ads that were run in New Hampshire before we had to deal with Gennifer Flowers and the draft, if you look at the ads that were run in January, they were on the economy. We were challenging Bush on his main problem, which was the economy. New Hampshire also was a state which was deeply hurt by

that recession. Economic anger was very great in New Hampshire. We didn't run ideologically; we ran against Bush. That was conscious—that we were running against Bush.

Riley: All right. But there was a sort of change of emphasis thematically at that point. Is that complicated by the fact that [Paul] Tsongas appears in a way that, I as recall, kind of surprised people? My perception from rereading this material is that you weren't really counting on Tsongas being much of a factor at this point.

Greenberg: Well, the assumption was that Tsongas would run. He's next door, he's the local guy, he'd run. He might even win. But it wouldn't be consequential, because he was local. We did not realize until into the primary that Tsongas had a message that actually had resonance among some Democratic primary voters, and that he was relevant as a candidate beyond New England. We thought he was the local candidate. We began to realize that his message about the deficit and reform was real. But not at the outset. At the outset we thought he'd do well just because he's from the neighboring area. He wasn't the competition that we worried about, once we went beyond New Hampshire, that we'd have to differentiate ourselves from.

We were more worried about Kerrey, and—I'm not sure we worried about Harkin. There was the assumption of a liberal electorate. We didn't quite accept the assumption. So you had Harkin as kind of the liberal candidate in the race. Kerrey—there was a lot of worry. He was the guy who had the biography, an interesting guy, outsider kind of style, and he owned healthcare as an issue. Healthcare was a consuming issue in '92, and there was great worry that he would ride healthcare right into the White House. I'd say we worried more about Kerrey than anybody else.

Freedman: Did you do anything about that concern? Was there talk about somehow addressing Kerrey head-on?

Greenberg: No. There was, later on when Kerrey attacked us. We were consumed with getting it out on healthcare. Actually, this is really an interesting case because Kerrey was for a single payer system. He was the only one who seemed to be talking about healthcare, and had a very coherent position. There was a strong desire for change on healthcare, and Clinton had a very muddled position. I organized briefings for him, policy briefings, in Washington.

Riley: In '91?

Greenberg: Yes, in '91. That's taking place probably in September. It could be October. I think it's after his announcement, so it's probably in October. They were held at the—

Freeman: Were these DLC?

Greenberg: From was involved in it. It was at the Washington Court Hotel. We had a Middle East briefing, foreign policy stuff. We had economic team people in. He was trying to get up on a broader set of policy issues. It's actually at one of those—it could have been November, because I think that James and Paul met with him while he was coming in, so it had to be in November after [Harris] Wofford had won the Senate seat. I don't know when the special election was, so I'm not sure of the exact dates of this.

Riley: That's checkable.

Greenberg: We had the policy briefings. I didn't do a lot of research during this period. Actually, one of the issues was how I was getting paid. I wanted a retainer because I wasn't doing any research, so that there was something to support what I was doing here. He didn't know about a concept of retainer, so there was some financial discussion during this period. What point was I trying to follow up here?

Riley: This was about how healthcare became—

Greenberg: Oh, yes. We had the healthcare panel. He very much had a kind of managed care view of this, that is, he had been paying attention to the literature and work being done on creating competitive managed care structures. But it's a very hard concept to explain to people. That's where his head was, so that's in fact what he designed.

Again, it's not polling. If you're taking a signature issue that helped bring him down at the outset of his Presidency, it's the failure on healthcare. But the design of his healthcare came out of his intellectual work and thinking through what policy made the most sense. We never polled and said, "All right, what should be the form of this healthcare proposal?" It came out of a policy process, not out of a polling process. We polled it in New Hampshire, later, after the first of the year when we were trying to deal with the fact that Kerrey had a clear healthcare position.

We just decided at one point—there was a debate coming, he had to have a healthcare position paper out, a policy paper out, before the debate. He kept working. He holed himself up in a hotel room writing it while we were waiting, like we were waiting for the Pope, for the smoke to change. He produced this thing. We took it out and it was kind of this managed care stuff. It was consuming because the belief was—and he was concerned—that he couldn't go into these debates with Kerrey, not having a clear position on healthcare. He never really did have a clear position. Kerrey was the one we were worried about, who could surprise us, and he thought healthcare would be the issue on which he would do it. But he did not move to a different healthcare policy position in order to address it. He tried to just crystallize his policy thinking.

Riley: But it's fair to say that it becomes a more prominent issue, less because of Clinton's own inclinations at this point than because of Kerrey's activity on this point, that Kerrey's pushing him—

Greenberg: Right. He had a position on it, he was thinking about it, he knew it was important, but it wasn't his top issue. It was because of Kerrey that they felt a potential threat.

Riley: This preceded Paul and James' arrival?

Greenberg: Yes. Paul and James—I'm not sure exactly—they're not involved. My recollection is it's in November. They had the special—it must have been in November. They would have come on in November, probably December. We go, they settle in. This is a campaign with many centers, and so it's not—

Riley: Yes, that's very confusing, and I hope you can help clarify it, too.

Greenberg: You had a Little Rock crowd, you had a Washington crowd, you had the crowd that was traveling with him, and you had the FOBs. You worked backwards from how successful the election was in '92 and you think of it as a coherent campaign. This was not coherent. There were continuous conference calls just because of all the different centers that were out there, and trying to get them together. It was a very disorganized campaign. James came in, but James was not the premier figure. He became the premier figure when we faced Gennifer Flowers. Frank was a big figure, in terms of—

Riley: The reason that I pose the question is that, looking at this from the outside, one might conclude that healthcare becomes prominent when the two guys who made the biggest hit of their careers come into the campaign. And I didn't know whether the momentum was already building, based on what Kerrey was doing before their arrival—again, based on what had happened in Pennsylvania—or not.

Greenberg: No, because the first ads we ran were on the economy, not healthcare. The economy was our lead issue. We had to look at the advertising. I'm sure we did something on healthcare, but it was not what we ran on first. We ran on the economy.

Riley: I want to ask one question that may be rather naïve, and that is about the decision not to do anything in Iowa. You've got Harkin in Iowa. The assumption is that Harkin is—that's where he's going to do well. No need to contest. But you've just indicated that Tsongas, as a neighbor, was going to do well in New Hampshire and yet the decision there was different. Yes, we will go into New Hampshire. We will contest. Why the difference?

Greenberg: The assumption, and it's accurate, was that—I did a poll. We evaluated, we reassessed this decision along the way. Even though we made that decision and we announced it, we kept open the possibility that, as there was this new interest in him nationally, it might play out in Iowa, and create a possibility. One, you had Harkin, with the caucus, not a primary, much more liberal, and so the belief was that there was much less room to break through. If you made a decision to do it, it required an immense amount of personal time, as opposed to advertising.

In New Hampshire we had a state consumed with the economy, but we also had an open primary. A large number of Independents were going to be voting. We're coming in with the moderate. We're assuming we'll get Independent votes and have a much better shot in New Hampshire. Both things were true, because we went back and did a special poll, twice, in Iowa, to see, as our popularity went up nationally—It was going up at the end of '91 based on national coverage—whether that was affecting Iowa. The polls showed us getting killed, so we never went in.

Riley: Is there anything else? I guess Florida's got a straw poll that happened some time in here? Was that happening in '91 or '92, or is that just something that's completely off the radar?

Greenberg: I'm sure it wasn't off the radar at the time. I remember the Florida straw poll. I can't remember when it was. I remember him going down. He did well. He was worried because it was the South and there would be a presumption that we would do well.

Riley: So, we're deep into New Hampshire at this point.

Freedman: It's January. The ads are going up.

Greenberg: The ads are unbelievably effective. We zoom into first place with the ad. Though you're beginning to realize how unmanageable a candidate he is. We're set to go. We know we're running on the economy for all kinds of reasons. It comes out of this whole New Hampshire—the main rationale against Bush. New Hampshire's been deeply hurt by the recession. We're running on the economy. We're going to own the economy.

We decide to start with a 60-second spot, which is unusual. He delivers it. It's the first time I've seen those skills. He records it almost in one shot. There aren't many candidates who can do a 30-second without a—he looks at a piece of paper and then does it. He does the 60-second spot. I was there, but Greer was the one who did it. It's our economic plan. We do the ad. We do a press conference. The plans are there piled up and volunteers are going to take the plans to all the libraries around the state. We're off the launch with our economic plan.

We held a press conference and he goes off and gives a wholly different speech and doesn't mention the plans that are sitting there.

Riley: How does this happen?

Greenberg: It works out, because you run the ads and you get the news coverage around the distribution of the plans. But he decided to do something else. [laughing]

Freedman: And what's the conversation afterwards?

Greenberg: It was the first time he really—he obviously has his own thinking, what he wants to do, and he decided he wanted to do something else. I can't remember what he did—you'd have to go look at the text—but it wasn't the economic plan. So we did a lot of scrambling. I'm not sure that there were any conversations with him. I can't remember. I'm sure he was sheepish. George probably spoke to him about it.

Riley: You're still in Washington at this point?

Greenberg: Still in Washington, yes. I don't go to Little Rock. Wilhelm is in Little Rock. James and Paul were in Washington. George is traveling with him. But what centralizes the campaign is Gennifer Flowers.

Riley: Okay, so back to that.

Greenberg: Gennifer Flowers. I'm in Washington when we get a call about the story that's about to break.

Freedman: From somebody in the media?

Greenberg: I can't remember from whom. Let me check my diary. It was within the campaign that this is happening, and that there is a press conference. There was a second press conference that was later, I think. They announced that they were going to have a press conference. It was James' decision that everybody get to New Hampshire, and that we have to throw every resource—

By the way, I never mentioned Rahm Emanuel in this course of things. I thought of it now because Rahm was Finance Director, and immensely successful. Now that we have to fight this problem, we have to raise a lot of money. We have to spend our way into success. And Rahm is to raise it. Rahm becomes part of the Michigan world. He was overseeing a congressional race for the DCCC [Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee] in Michigan, so I developed a relationship with Rahm and we're close throughout. I get Rahm to come in to do the Finance Chair. Actually, initially to do the opposition research for the Clinton campaign, but then he becomes the Finance Chair. Rahm needs to raise the money.

Anyway, James at this point says, "Everybody in New Hampshire."

Riley: Is that because you want to have resources to deploy there, or because there is an efficiency in having all the heads in one place to figure out how to deal with this?

Greenberg: There's a sense that this entire candidacy could crash in a second. If we don't do everything conceivable to save it, it's gone. And so, enough of these conference calls all over America. Everybody get to New Hampshire.

Freedman: Is this what you think, as well? Do you think this whole thing is in jeopardy?

Greenberg: Yes, yes, yes—immediately. Though his poll numbers don't collapse immediately, which is the surprise.

Freedman: So you made the decision to either keep or start polling at this point?

Greenberg: Right. Well, we had done polls prior to Christmas to help design what the campaign would be. I can't remember what the planned tracking program was. I do know we polled after the advertising—It was probably weekly in New Hampshire—because I saw the shift that took place from the advertising.

We come, we get into a single hotel, motel, in which we have one large room that is, in effect, the war room and the center for all the activity. It's very much determined by James that there's no amount of research—"Just tell me everything that can be done." Obviously, we do daily polling from that point on. We're also doing nightly focus groups, both in Manchester and—I'm

trying to think of where the other place was. Anyway, we had daily focus groups. The structure of the focus groups is to play the news at the outset, to watch people watch the news.

Riley: This is as it's being broadcast live?

Greenberg: Yes. In the first group you do it live. Then in the second group you would do a recording of the news. You went through a process of trying to be with people in the way they're watching the news. The first discovery from this, which gave us a sense of why our poll numbers didn't drop after this, was the coverage of him—I knew we had the groups. We organized them very fast—when he was confronted by the reporters when he was traveling.

In the groups, we listened to people and had them talk about Clinton. What they took away from it was that he didn't lean back on his heels; he kind of leaned into them and he was comfortable. He didn't look like someone who was on the run, who was defensive. He was comfortable with himself under pressure. They were making a judgment about his character in different kinds of ways. There was, certainly, absolute resistance to the invasion of privacy, to this kind of scandal stuff.

That created—part of the reason why it didn't drop was that people were—there was some kind of blockage to allowing themselves to make a judgment based on Gennifer Flowers. They looked at him and they were judging him on, "How does he look? Does he look like a guilty guy who was—" But also, they were judging him as a guy. How does he handle pressure? He's a pretty self-confident guy under pressure. He has strengths that may be admirable leadership qualities. They came away positive.

We made a decision out of that not to go—even though he was being flooded by cameras—never to go in through back doors. Always go right into the crowd of cameras. Let the cameras come in on him and show his self-confidence despite the pressure. We always went in the front. This somewhat played up the public's dislike of the media, this crush of cameras, but him looking strong in it. So part of the decision, a way to handle the issue, was there.

I forget the timing on the *60 Minutes* piece of this. The draft issue is the one that takes him down. The *Wall Street Journal* story is where you get the "melt-down," and that's my phrase, about what happened in the polls. But that's later in the sequence. I think *60 Minutes* takes place prior to that. Is that right, in your recollection?

Riley: It's Superbowl, so it would have been either the last week in January or the first couple of days in February?

Greenberg: I don't remember the draft being the subject of the *60 Minutes* discussion, and I'm quite sure that we're dealing with the Gennifer Flowers—

Riley: Let me interrupt and ask one question about this. You had indicated earlier that you thought the Clintons felt that the Sperling breakfast confessional, or whatever you call it, had been a mistake. Is it a fair interpretation, or a fair surmise, that maybe what you're picking up in New Hampshire is partly a result of this having been dealt with a bit before, that it wasn't a

complete out-of-the-blue surprise? Or is it fair to conclude that perhaps part of Bill Clinton's own confidence in dealing with this at this point is the fact that this groundwork had been laid before he gets hit with it right square between the eyes?

Greenberg: Well, the press had an interpretation. In effect, what the Sperling breakfast had done was give the press an interpretation. Once an event happened, they already had an interpretation, which was, "Yes, things happened. We don't know whether this one's true, but we know things happened. They've acknowledged that. This is past. Their relationship is fine." That framework was there. I don't know about the voters, but I think it's part of the way the press, itself, dealt with it. It was critical, actually, to have in place prior to this breaking. Otherwise it looks like it was just cover-up before. It was the right thing to do, and I think it helped in that period, and was part of why they didn't lose ground. And you had sympathetic press.

Riley: The other question was about Clinton's own confidence level, having had this Sperling situation—

Freedman: *Was* he confident at this point? Or is he nervous? I mean, is this—

Greenberg: Well, sure he's nervous. We're all nervous. This is very frightening stuff. We think this could crash and end at any moment. We're buying up everything that can be bought in terms of media. We're buying up town meetings and paying for them ourselves. We've made a decision to do everything possible to keep this thing from crashing. That's the state of mind that—when we come back we should talk about *60 Minutes*. I have to decide to what degree I want to discuss that.

Freedman: Well, we hope to a great degree.

[BREAK]

Riley: Back to work. Let's go ahead and stipulate for the record that we're probably about to get into something that is a little delicate, and that you want to put a hold on for a while. We were talking about the *60 Minutes* appearance. Paul's broad question was, how did we go from a situation where this was off-limits to a situation that was very much at the center of activity? And how did you go about preparing for this appearance? Whose idea was it? How did you go about orchestrating the event? We're assuming you were involved in all of those decisions.

Greenberg: First of all, everybody was in their respective rooms, but we had a common area that we were constantly in and out of, including the Governor and his wife. All decisions kind of ran into each other. I do have a diary, so it's conceivable that some of this—I could unpack it. But in my mind it all runs together. Key to the thinking was the learning that we were getting in the focus groups about how people were reacting to him.

I remember one particular event where she—Again, I can't date this, whether it's before or after *60 Minutes*. I'm trying to remember which town it was. It was late. We got in late into the night

where they were campaigning. After he spoke, Hillary then spoke about him. It was a great moment. It was also apparent that she could speak in ways that he couldn't about the issue, and so her role—obviously, at other key points in his Presidency her role was very important and it was extremely important then. She spoke about his character in ways that he couldn't do, and talked about his passion for kids and things.

Hillary was a very important part of affirming for people that he could be trusted. We understood that they had to do this together. And that was true from the beginning. It was true in that earliest meeting I talked about. It was true at the Sperling breakfast. And it was true in the *60 Minutes* appearance. He couldn't do this without her. There was no point at which he could go forward without her affirmation.

Riley: If there had been a perception that she was at odds with him over this, there would—

Greenberg: Right. Either at odds with him, or hurt—a victim rather than a supportive spouse. That would have immediately—and this was really under the spotlight that this was all happening. So there's a reality here. It's the real experience. What's happening with people is they're reading the two of them and making a judgment, because we're not losing support, despite—it seems unbelievable that that would be the case.

There was some transfer of support. I think we began losing older women, but picking up younger men, and they kind of were balancing off. But overall the numbers were not dropping. Given the scale of this and the massive potential, it was unbelievable to us that that was true, but it was true.

Riley: And you're polling on a daily basis at this point?

Greenberg: Yes.

Riley: And running focus groups in the middle of it?

Greenberg: We'd have focus groups every night. We had four or six focus groups every night, always, getting a constant read on the way people were reacting to events.

On *60 Minutes*—I'm trying to remember the conversations that led to the decision to do this. It was not a conversation with Governor Clinton or Hillary, but there was a decision that we should do research prior to *60 Minutes*. It was done on an urgent basis. It was done together with George and with Paul and James. We conducted groups, I don't remember where, on the Saturday prior to *60 Minutes*. I can't remember whether there was one or two groups. Much of what he said on *60 Minutes* were things he was saying all the time, but this was to a *60 Minutes* audience. It's not like you were creating a new narrative. He was just saying it to a national audience, which was going to feed back into New Hampshire.

He was in Boston to do the show for the next morning with Hillary. We did the groups. Keep in mind, this account is all very self-centered because it's around me, but there are other groupings of people that he's talking to about what he should do. We did hold focus groups and we did test

things that he'd been saying. I think we tested some phrases, some parts of it, to see his credibility and reactions to it.

We arrived at the hotel in Boston. I can't remember which hotel, but that's knowable. It was getting late. I feel like it was ten or eleven at night. It was like back to that first focus group where I had to report on something when my body wants me to do something else. We gathered in a large suite like almost a living room. Everybody was there. Susan Thomases was there. I'm trying to remember who was there. It was James, and Frank Greer, Paul, George, Hillary, Bill. I mentioned Susan Thomases. Mandy Grunwald was there, who was helping particularly with the *60 Minutes*.

Riley: You mentioned Susan.

Greenberg: Susan Thomases.

Riley: Yes, Susan Thomases. Was she somebody that Hillary treated as a personal confidante at this time? One of the things that we would be interested in knowing, as outsiders, is—this is excruciating pressure on these two people. Are they relying only on the power of their relationship to get them through this? Or are there other people in the orbits here who are close enough to them that they can also rely on for the kind of personal resources to work through this very difficult time?

Greenberg: Well, I didn't really observe them in that way. For sure, Susan Thomases was important and was very important to Hillary. At various times in the campaign, and certainly at crisis points in the campaign, she would be there. And when it got to this kind of personal issue, she was central in the decision-making. She was not, when dealing with other kinds of issues. But on this she was there and, as it turned out, we had lots of crises in the campaign. She would inevitably be there, but Hillary was the person she was with. Her judgment was trusted by both of them.

I reported on the results. To be honest, the fact is that we did research we never want to talk about, and never have talked about. I reported on how people were reacting. The bottom line was that people were still very open, that they were still making a judgment, hadn't closed down, weren't about to break away from us. They were quite willing to listen to them, which was the main thing you wanted to know. Would this national show—how would it play back into New Hampshire? It was helpful in the sense of—this is uncharted territory here. After two terms, it's all second nature, but this was the beginning. We're three weeks into a scandal, or however long it is, and none of us had been through anything with this kind of intensity. Having some confidence that what you're doing will get heard and not be viewed cynically gave some confidence to the piece.

It was past midnight they were having these conversations. Then they were getting up to do rehearsals in the morning, to go through the questions and answers, and to get ready for it.

Riley: This is internal rehearsal, rather than—

Greenberg: Internal, that's right. Internal rehearsal in the hotel where they were set up to do those sessions. I didn't stay for the practice. It was Mandy who was handling this for the campaign and had a good relationship with Hillary. It was Mandy, Susan Thomases, George, and Bill and Hillary who did the Q and A, and getting ready for it.

Riley: Stan, you said the most important thing that you discovered in the groups was that people's minds were still open, that they were able to be persuaded. Were you testing approaches as to how best to present this with the groups?

Greenberg: We showed them clips of things. We were mostly presenting them with things that people had already seen. They went through this very intensive reaction to the press conference and if you look at what they actually said on the shows, there's nothing new in what they said. It's just that they said it in that venue.

I don't know what would have happened if people had listened to it and said, "Inauthentic. This is a grave question about his character," and if I had then come back and said, "Well, guess what? This is twelve o'clock the night before you're going on, and everything you've been saying is—" In retrospect, I'm not even sure that it was worth doing. I wasn't making it up. Clearly, it's just confidence as you get ready for this, knowing you're generally on the right track. They're not closed down.

There's a dynamic throughout this whole thing, throughout his Presidency, but particularly during the Gennifer Flowers there was a dynamic with the media. The public doesn't like the media and when there's this horde of media going after somebody, the public can become sympathetic. Bush uses it, obviously, very effectively. Part of the dynamic was, "Gennifer Flowers is not a reputable critic or source of information. This couple is under pressure. The press is trying to heat up the story." And so the press were part of this. We were mainly testing the exchanges between them and the press, since we were about to have a press exchange.

Riley: Right.

Greenberg: I don't remember testing any new way of approaching the issue.

Freedman: What about Tammy Wynette? Was that spontaneous, or—

Greenberg: I don't know the answer because I wasn't there for the prep.

Freedman: Is Hillary, during this period, resisting any of this?

Greenberg: No, no. She's offended by this. I mean, Gennifer Flowers is a different—Gennifer Flowers was an old story in Arkansas. This was new nationally, but Gennifer Flowers was part of the suit. She had said things publicly that were completely different than what she was saying now. This was kind of like an old soap opera that's playing itself now in New Hampshire. No, she was offended by it. There was nothing, from what I saw in New Hampshire, for me to believe that she was lying. I thought Gennifer Flowers was lying. Given what Gennifer Flowers

had said publicly, given what the Governor and Hillary had said, my assumption in all this was that she was lying.

Riley: I'm trying to recall—the tapes come out before this or after this?

Greenberg: I can't remember whether it was in the first press conference or not. Was it in the very first press conference?

Freedman: Yes, because *60 Minutes*, I believe, was after the tapes had been—

Riley: Okay, so everything—

Greenberg: But all the tapes were phone calls.

Freedman: Do you recall what the sense was like within the group after the *60 Minutes* ran? Did you have focus groups while—

Greenberg: We had focus groups every night. And the reaction to it was it was fine. This was Super Bowl. The day of the Super Bowl, I went to Connecticut with my family to see the game. I didn't stay and watch it with them. People kind of dispersed and then came back after that.

Freedman: Was there a sense that the crisis had broken somehow, or that the tide was turning?

Greenberg: There was a sense that it was under control. We knew we were at the edge, until we then had the draft story.

Riley: That comes up fairly close—

Greenberg: Yes, because we thought that we got this. People were drawing conclusions. *60 Minutes* gives a closure to it. Then we have the draft story, which is the letter. I'm trying to remember the sequence. I can't remember whether they went back to Arkansas, and came back—I know that they get a copy of the letter when they get off the plane in New Hampshire.

The letter is later. The *Wall Street Journal* story is earlier. The *Wall Street Journal* story—the press treats this differently because it's a legitimate source. This is a legitimate story. It's not a sex scandal. Unlike in 2004, people thought it to be a real issue. It became apparent, either because it was different in character or because it came on top of the other story, that it was like, *enough*. It's just too much trouble for one person. And the focus groups were a problem. Unlike Gennifer Flowers where we were watching people react and they were drawing positive conclusions, that wasn't happening on this story.

Riley: Why the difference?

Greenberg: Well, as I said, one, because it's on top of the previous story. It was not about a sex scandal, it's about whether he served his country. He was not feeling well. He went back to Arkansas, which was a mistake. We should have stayed and campaigned right through. Unlike

the Gennifer Flowers story, this one did not have him in the middle of it, responding. I also think he was a little less certain on how to respond.

So he goes to Arkansas. He has a cold and goes to Arkansas. We have our survey in the field. I go to Connecticut. James is with them and George is with them at the Mansion. I remember I get the results at my house in Connecticut. I remember which room I was in on the second floor, getting the results. It was disastrous.

Riley: This is the polling numbers.

Greenberg: Yes, the polling numbers had crashed. I called George. He was with them. They were in the room. He asked what it was and I said, "Meltdown."

Freedman: And meltdown was, fallen off the map?

Greenberg: Crash. I mean, I forget how many we dropped. I can't remember the number, but we dropped something like twelve points. It was a gigantic drop after a period of great stability. I think he paused, and then I gave the basic numbers. It was a very short conversation. And they decided what to do. I'm pretty sure this was Sunday night that I got the results. Because the polling—we finished calling on Sunday night. This call happened after the polling was completed out there.

Riley: So this is probably one week after Gennifer Flowers, maybe as many as two weeks. But it's a Sunday following a Sunday.

Greenberg: The next day I flew back to New Hampshire. They flew up and I believe that's when they were given the letter. I think they were given his letter that he wrote to his draft board when they arrived in New Hampshire.

Then we were immediately gathered in the war room in the hotel on how to handle the letter. This has been reported on. James is actually the one who took the lead on this, that this is our friend. Actually, to be honest, when I read the letter I said, "This is one impressive letter for a kid to write." I read this letter and I said, "This is one impressive letter. This is not as problematic—there's something revealed here that is very interesting." As we kept talking it through, we increasingly came to the view that we have to treat this letter as a plus rather than a problem.

That's when he decided—we went on *Nightline*, in which they read the whole letter and then he did the whole show, which was—again, we were risk-taking. That's when we went to the town meetings format after that. Then it was just energy. It was just pure energy and intensity and fighting back, and we began to see our numbers coming back in the primary. I still have in my head that we won the primary even though we came in second. But we treated it as—coming in second was miraculous. As we talk about it it's hard to believe that we came in second after all that.

Freedman: So, what was it? Earlier you described people's responses to his body language, leaning forward and being very confident in the face of this onslaught. Is that part of what allowed him to come back after that letter?

Greenberg: Sure. Yes. Because we had—I'm not very conscious of what the other campaigns had, other than Kerrey attacked us on it, which was a mistake on his part and helped fuel his energy. We played off of it. He campaigned with great intensity. There was just this tremendous momentum to the campaign schedule. None of the other candidates were able to—first of all, they were blanketed out. I mean, one of the consequences of all this—other than Tsongas—it was very hard for anybody else to emerge. They could do their advertising, but there was so much free media centered on Clinton that they, ironically, got buried. He was getting covered in a way that the others weren't, and he just campaigned non-stop into the night. The rallies had tremendous energy. I think people rallied to his stamina, to his comeback, to his intensity, and believed that he had strength, and special leadership qualities.

Freedman: After which, do you personally feel as though *we have the nomination*?

Greenberg: No, I thought we dodged a bullet. I thought we were dead. We all thought we were dead. We did not think we were coming back.

Freedman: Do you think he shared that sense?

Greenberg: I don't know. You've got to ask him. But I—we all thought we were dead. None of us thought we could win. I still describe it as a win. Now, we knew in the last few days that the numbers were coming back, that we had a very good chance of coming in second. We then knew that it was quite possible we were going to have a strong result. I wrote out—we sat down to talk about what the different scenarios would be. Actually, we couldn't game out the scenario of losing. Coming in third was, we were done. We had to finish a credible second to go on. We had basically two scenarios, disaster and—"Comeback Kid" was the name of the scenario that we wrote out.

Freedman: Somebody had written that—

Greenberg: "Comeback Kid" was the name of the scenario. Then, when Begala did the speech, Comeback Kid became the key phrase. The name of the scenario that we worked through was called the Comeback Kid scenario—to announce early. Under this scenario we wouldn't wait for results. As soon as we had anything, we'd go out, because we wanted to be out there before anybody else so we could characterize the results.

Creating the sense of a victory, all that energy, was a decision that we made. Now, we wouldn't have done it unless there was some—you couldn't do it unless the exit polls showed that it was possible. We decided not to wait for anybody. I mean, not that night. We decided earlier in the planning for that night that we would go out, that we would make sure we were out there first, to characterize this and to create the sense that we won the primary. And I still think we won.

Riley: Right, convince yourself—

Greenberg: My psychology is that I won.

Freedman: But in a real sense you did.

Riley: Okay, so you moved from there.

Greenberg: And the question—we didn't know how serious Tsongas was. We still believed that Tsongas was regional. There were immediate follow-up things in Maine and elsewhere where Tsongas did well, so we still thought it was regional. I don't think we appreciated yet the potential power of his message. Understand, Tsongas' message, which was centered on deficits and government reform, actually our research showed had real limits. It had a very strong, it was—we were winning.

Given what happened in New Hampshire, we were winning on non-college educated, and he was winning the college educated. It was not ideological. He was winning college; we were non-college. He was kind of the good government, do the right thing. We were kind of the sleazy guy from the South that blue collar people were happy to vote for. Tsongas was the thoughtful guy. We were the emotional passionate candidate. We were also the economic plan, jobs candidate. And while Tsongas was focused on the economy, he was focused on deficits. It was a very different focus.

It bothered Clinton a lot that college educated voters were voting for Tsongas, and that editorial writers, in light of the Constitution, for example, were endorsing Tsongas, because Clinton thought he was, in fact, the more thoughtful candidate in the race. Tsongas bothered him a lot, and a good part of the strategic debate was which approach—you've got the Florida—first of all, you had the South itself. Tsongas had no appeal in the South. You had the Jesse Jackson issue. We did well in South Carolina and extremely well in Georgia. We were getting what was our—Tsongas had gotten his regional gain. We got what was perceived to be our regional gain.

Florida was different. Florida was not seen to be a Southern state, particularly in the primaries. When we looked at the primary electorate in Florida, it was non-college. It was overwhelmingly non-college, like 60 percent non-college, or more. Our message was completely dominating Tsongas. But there was a constant debate with him, who wanted to take Clinton on on deficits, and not wanting to yield the college vote as we were going for the non-college vote. That was a primary debate on how he deals with Tsongas.

Throughout, we always had a candidate who was kind of a truth-teller, who was the honest candidate. You eventually had [Jerry] Brown, but you always had somebody running who was the reformer, the outsider, making us look like we're not the honest, not the candidate of high character, which ultimately became an immense problem as after each primary more and more people would say that he doesn't have the honesty and character to be President. After the New York primary you had well over 60 percent saying in that primary that he didn't have the honesty and character to be President. We were winning, but in trouble, which is why we created the Manhattan Project. I don't know how much detail in all this you want to go into.

Riley: Is there anything in particular you want to know about the primary season, after this?

Freedman: Well, let's hear a little bit about the Manhattan Project.

Riley: Okay, that comes after New York. I'm trying to think. Illinois was viewed as important because it was contested territory outside the South. Is that right?

Greenberg: Sure, because it was coming about the same time as Michigan, so that it was the first—Florida was South, but it was different, and big. Florida was important. Illinois was the first place outside the South where it wasn't home territory for either Tsongas or us. We also had the support of the mayor, and so we thought we would do well there and actually believed that if we won Illinois that we would win, that that would settle it. But we didn't assume we had the nomination until we won in Illinois.

Riley: Was there ever a discussion with the Clintons after the draft letter came up, I mean, another one of these meetings where people are saying, "Is there any more of this stuff out there?"

Greenberg: [laughs] I don't even have to think about it because we then had the marijuana question in the New York primary.

Riley: Oh, yes.

Greenberg: Let's see, we were so shell-shocked, I'm sure. I actually can't remember such a conversation. My assumption—who knew? At that point we were just—I don't remember any moment where we then went back to him and said, "Okay, we've got to revisit this." We figured whatever they had to throw at us, they've already done it, that this was nuclear war in New Hampshire, and there wasn't anything else.

Riley: Well, that was going to be my next question. Were there any time bombs that didn't explode?

Greenberg: I mean, you had the whole issue, the phony issues—passport, Russia, that stuff. We never considered that stuff real, didn't second-guess him on that. Gennifer Flowers we took to be a scam. The draft we thought was a real story, but his story wasn't bad. I mean, there was a story. Clinton's story compared to George Bush's is honorable. We thought we already went through nuclear war and we were still standing.

Now, the drug issue—I had asked him repeatedly on this question, as I recall. I can't remember whether it was the same meeting that we discussed the—but we asked repeatedly on this question, in which he gave careful answers consistent with what he said about not breaking any of the drug laws. He obviously had thought a lot about this. It was amazing to me that no one had asked the question in any of his campaigns for Governor in Arkansas, because it's one of the things people get asked. And people have acknowledged it in the past, so it wouldn't be a great surprise. He answered the question and we kind of put it aside as a risk.

Freedman: Wait. Was his answer to you, you're suggesting, consistent with the "didn't inhale"—

Greenberg: Well, he didn't—no. What happened was—I forget what show he was on. It was during the New York primary. It was one of the morning shows, I think Sunday. George and I were with him. George and I are in the green room watching the show, and he gives his answer about not inhaling. George and I know immediately that this is a disaster, and he comes off the stage and he immediately says, "What do you think? There's no problem. There's no problem, there's no problem."

He was convinced that this was—but it was not an answer that he had given in any discussion prior to—he clearly had built this up in his head. At some point he was going to say it. He had never run it by us, or anybody that I know of. He said it and he thought it was great. I mean, it was also true. I think it's true. I think he didn't inhale. He thought it would be reassuring to people, and it was not. But he didn't get it that it wasn't. George and I knew immediately that it was not. He said, "Don't worry. It's okay. It's not a problem." It was not an answer that he had given in any discussion that we had had on this, and we had talked about it a number of times.

Riley: I'm just running through my mind if there are other areas of delicacy like that, especially coming out of the sixties. You've got basically the woman problem, you've got Vietnam, you've got drugs—I don't know what else, where else one might look for—

Greenberg: The principal preoccupation after New York—and we knew we were going to win the nomination. Michigan—was it before or after Illinois? I think Michigan was after—

Riley: Yes, after.

Greenberg: We met with Ron Brown, who was party chair in Michigan, after we had won Illinois. Brown was of the view that he was going to organize the party to rally around Clinton when it was evident that he had the nomination. He had decided that that's where we were, and so we had the first meeting with him to talk through what that would mean. That was a point of acknowledgement.

Operationally we were—before Michigan was done, but certainly before we went to Connecticut—and we lost Connecticut. Tsongas pulled out, Brown won. Who knows in New York? And so, while we had decided that we had the nomination, there was uncertainty produced by Tsongas' surprise pull-out.

We were going to win Connecticut. We were fine. When he pulled out it changed that dynamic. Then you had Brown emerge, who was running as a reformer against the politicians, and took that to New York. I won't go into the details of New York unless you want to, except that when New York was over, even though we had won and won with a good margin, and it helped that Jesse Jackson endorsed him, and that was a very important piece of why we won. We were going to win anyway, but it made it stronger.

James and I went to Mickey Kantor. I remember meeting with him in his room and we proposed a project called the Manhattan Project. We called it that because we thought we were dealing with that scale of a problem, actually, not because we had this conversation in Manhattan. It was because we thought we were dealing with nuclear issues. We were locking up the primaries, but he's badly damaged.

Freedman: You see this. You know this from number and focus groups?

Greenberg: Yes. Badly damaged, and going to go into a tough general election—damaged goods. What we proposed was that we separate, that we divide the campaign. There is nothing now more important than to figure out how to reemerge from the primary process with character, firmed by the convention. We took—myself, Frank Greer, James—I'm trying to think who else was part of the project. Mandy was doing the media. Other people at my firm were going to do the polling, and we'd separate out the people who had to carry through the primary from the people who were going to think about this issue.

We pulled out of the campaign to focus on this question. I was back based in Washington, and in charge of that. I had an open-ended research budget to go figure this out. We brought together—I remember meeting in my basement—you'll be interested to know that when I created the office in Washington in '89 we bought a building on Second Street where Gary Bauer had been. The Family Research Council was there and had owned the building, and they had given space to Ollie North, which was an office in the basement to use, which the Iran-Contra was run out of. The room, which I then turned into a conference room, was where all these meetings were taking place. Anyway, a little bit of history.

Riley: The feng shui there must have been very bad.

Freedman: There should be a plaque on the wall—

Greenberg: We brought in the FOBs. We wanted out-of-the-box ideas on how to think about the problem and begin to address it outside the primary context. Lots of memos came in from people. We had meetings there where we had hours and hours of discussion just to talk it through. Then we began focus groups, and ultimately we did a whole series of surveys.

The most important part of it was I did an exercise that I hadn't done before, because we were beginning from scratch, in which we took 25 items on a sheet of paper, just facts about his life. We would pass that out in the group and have people talk, circle things that stood out, and what it said about him. What came out of it was "humble origins" and "biography." The "humble origins" was—everything played back. People have a rationality that plays back from—they create a narrative that follows from things they know.

The story was marijuana, Oxford, Yale, draft. So the assumption was *privileged kid*—not just that these things were happening, but that he was a privileged kid. That impacted the totality of the image. When you get that he comes from humble origins and ends up going to Oxford and going back to the state as Governor, and working on education, there's a narrative about biography that allowed people to completely rethink him.

The problem was that he was political—political, political, political—and made a lowlife from their perceptions of what they had learned through this process. But the biography changed it, and it was a revelation, the degree to which it could change—how much biography could change the perceptions of him.

Freedman: Is the film at the convention the culmination of this?

Greenberg: Yes. And those folks were all part of the original meetings in which we brought all the FOBs into this. Part of this was you also had Bill and Hillary, who were under tremendous pressure, being told from all kinds of sources what they should do to fix this. This was an intense constructed exercise to rethink, and not be trapped in a traditional political mode. If you want, I can remember the stages of introducing him to the story and the idea.

Riley: Sure.

Greenberg: By the way, this was dramatic. It was not something that you could say, "If you look real closely you can figure this out." Once you began to refine it, you began to pick out what was happening here, the way people understood him, how that could be, how that unravels, faced with certain kinds of facts. And then the narrative you could build off of that. It was very dramatic. And the whole "People First," because humble origins is related to the People First theme. It eventually led into the broader campaign theme to be unveiled at the convention. But the root of all this was his biography.

We presented it to him when he was in Philadelphia. I believe it was the primary in New Jersey. He had to drive from Philadelphia up to North Jersey, so I presented it to him in the car as we drove an hour and a half to the event where he was going. I laid out what we'd discovered, and where we were going. It was an hour and a half just going through this with him. And he's obviously intensely interested in all this. He basically gave a go-ahead in the sense—a go-ahead being, "I like where you're going. Take it to the next step."

Then we took it into the quantitative and we began to test these things as national messages and developed an overall frame, which we then presented in Little Rock to the Governor and Hillary together. It was Frank and myself—I'm trying to remember who else was there with us. It was Frank and myself with the two of them, where we laid out the overall strategy and themes. He liked it, but he then asked for a meeting in which they had the broader set of advisors, which included Bob Reich and all the other—the broader set of FOBs were there. I'm trying to remember all the people there. It was a large meeting in the basement of the Mansion. My guess is it must have been probably 25 or 30 people, all close friends.

We then laid out—we had big boards and presentations on where we were going. It was both biography and People First, and the People First was kind of an investment message. I know that the DLC people were there. We did two waves of this. We presented it. No decision. Again, this was Bill Clinton. I think he has already made a decision, but he goes through a process of convincing himself, watching other people come on board, watching them because this was a big

decision. We met again a week later, the same group, in Little Rock, where we presented and people affirmed that we were going forward.

It didn't get ultimately refined, crystallized, until right before the convention. We then had a plan. We laid out a plan for as soon as the California primary was over, and that was June 6th or 5th or something like that. It was the end of the—it was a much later process. And we had a convention one month later. Anyway, we had our plan, but the plan included a whole lead-up of things that was to happen in that month period. He was in a funk, coming out of California.

Freedman: Why was that?

Greenberg: I don't know. If you ever read my diaries, it'll talk about it. But he was in a funk. He was down, coming out of the primaries. And we were not executing. We had this plan, but we were not really doing it. It was a whole series of—part of the plan was to play off of various traditional Democratic support groups, to counter-schedule and talk to the groups about things that would not be popular. NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] came up in this period, but it was to go speak to the unions and say tough things to them on trade, and go to Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and be tough there.

In fact, we had the overall message, but the—I've written about it, about what I called the Reich–[David] Osborne Solution, in which our message was "People First," but it began with "Government is Failing," and so it had a kind of an anti-government reform message as you then led into, "It ought to be a government that works for people." It was a merger of—I presented that final integration of this, and these people were there. These people were part of the debate on getting this theme together, on how People First would work and how it would be a broader concept. He was speaking that day. I presented the thing at the hotel, and then he was going over to speak at the Rainbow Coalition where it was agreed he was going to say this.

Freedman: Whose idea was that?

Greenberg: I remember Mandy being—I don't remember it from thinking about the conversations, but my after-the-fact recollection was that Mandy was the principal one who was focused on this.

Freedman: Did anybody say, "This is risky. We don't want—this could backfire"?

Greenberg: Begala was pushing it very hard, and Clinton was pushing back. But it was part risk, part—he was uncomfortable with the whole—the counter-scheduling part of this was a very central part of this. Here you had someone who was seen to be political. Inauthentic and political. The counter-scheduling said you're willing to say to traditional Democratic support groups what they don't want to hear from you. He's willing to tell them what they need to hear. That undermines this sense of being of being political. The plan was the post-primary, last primary, for him to do a series of these, which he did but it was not happily.

On the Jesse Jackson one we had to have a vigil that lasted at least 48 hours of having somebody with him at all times to make sure he didn't—because he wanted to—call Jesse Jackson and

apologize. It really was a vigil. George called and said, "We have problems here. He's going to call." We call Al From. We get Al in. It was really a vigil to keep him from—

Freedman: —getting on the telephone.

Greenberg: Right. I'm not making this up. We really did have a tag team making sure that someone was there to make sure he didn't call Jesse Jackson. He didn't love this part of—it just isn't his nature. I worked for [Tony] Blair, who is a completely different character. Blair enjoys conflict.

Riley: No kidding.

Greenberg: Blair enjoys conflict and relishes the chance to go in and lecture a group about what they got wrong.

Riley: It's interesting, because my first thought when you mentioned this as a trait of Clinton is that it's fairly commonplace for politicians not to want to deliver bad news.

Greenberg: Sure. There's much more to this than—someone else will have to figure out all the dynamics that lead to discomfort with this. He loves to embrace the people that he battles with, whereas Blair steps on their neck and makes sure they don't get up as he goes on to the next battle. His view is, "I've got to win this one completely, because it's going to impact—" Different political strategies, different psychology. He was very, very—I don't know. His mood was obviously more than about that. But he was down in the period.

Riley: Well, the numbers are still looking bad, right?

Greenberg: Oh God, we were—and that's part of second-guessing everything. Now, we haven't unveiled anything. We have a strategy—but you know—nonetheless it leads to the whole second-guessing of the campaign when you come out. We were in third place. We were a month before the convention, in third place. I think we were like 23 percent. There is a threshold on your public match, federal match. I think you had to have 25 percent threshold or something, so it was a worry that we were below the threshold and we could lose our federal match. People were talking about not going to the convention. In retrospect it all looks great, but at the time, it was ugly.

Freedman: So none of the Manhattan Project—

Greenberg: [Ross] Perot had come in, by the way. All of this was theoretical. All of this was how we were going to do the convention, what the lead-in to the convention was—

Freedman: When he took the interim week during which he kind of mulled it over and contemplated it, what are the alternatives? Was he resisting playing to the bio? Was that controversial for him, uncomfortable for him?

Greenberg: Sure. There were lots of different things on the table, some of which was message, some of which was form of communication. The idea of going to wholly different ways of reaching people, getting around the national media, which was hostile to him and had this developed view of him. Town meetings were effective in New Hampshire, so let's go to a different kind of campaigning that takes us directly to people. Everything was on the table in terms of what could we do differently to break out of this perception that he's just a politician without—

There were some—I can't remember who espoused which position—who thought it ought to be in our well-developed plans, that the clarity position on our plans would be one way of addressing it. But we weren't sure bio would work. It sounds good, and we believed it. It wasn't close in terms of—it clearly worked in the groups and in the quantitative. We would do split-sample exercises with the surveys where in half the sample we would include bio and in the other half we'd include no bio. We do our message stuff and at the end we do a re-ballot and see. In those places where we had bio we had a significantly bigger shift in our support—

Freedman: So bio is enhancing the message in that sense?

Greenberg: We tested sequence. No, you had to have it before. This has important implications for how you unveil things, what sequence. We had to get agreement on it because the producing of the movie for the convention had to start. Also, People First had to be—we ended up with People First. But at the time that the banners for the convention were all created, it said, "*Put* People First," so the banners—the convention was not quite in sync with where we were as we were distilling—it seems like a small thing, but when I think about the amount of research to get down to the two words [laughing].

Behind those two words were a whole set of statements about him—about bio, and also the nature of the attack on Bush, because the attack on Bush is not just on the economy; it's also an attack on Bush that says he's out of touch with people. So there are all kinds of things that come off of this, which need to be affirmed that they're effective.

Riley: Stan, how closely, during the primary season first, and secondly, during the period that you're investing your time in the Manhattan Project, are you paying attention to what's going on on the Republican side? Pat Buchanan is making a lot of noise over there. Are you polling that, too?

Greenberg: No.

Riley: You're ignoring it for the time being?

Greenberg: Right. No, we didn't do anything on the Republican side. Getting through New Hampshire was just survival. But the primaries were painful because we always had a truth-teller, kind of a high-minded truth-teller who was saying, "He's political. He's just telling you what you want to hear. I'm against the special interest. I don't take this PAC [Political Action Committee] money and political money. I only take small contributions." Or, "I'll tell you the

truth about the deficit. These other people will lie about everything they can do." Then you had Perot with a similar kind of message.

From beginning to end, you had somebody in the race who was making us look political. So the Manhattan Project—we really pulled out. When I think about [John] Kerry and the decisions they made, I went to Bob Shrum—

Riley: This is John Kerry.

Greenberg: Right, John Kerry—a number of weeks before Super Tuesday, and said that we're doing these national polls for Democracy Corps, which are general election polls. They didn't have any general election polls. I said, "We would like to brief you on it, so as you're moving toward the finish of the primary, you have a sense of what the general election framework is."

Freedman: Right.

Greenberg: They were so consumed with [John] Edwards. He says, "We can't take a meeting. We really can't do this." Now, they did it a week after the primary. But they said, "We can't take a meeting." Bush was waging all-out war the moment that he had the nomination, and they weren't ready for him. What they should have done was something similar to what we did. We were forced by—what we faced is that we had a general election team pulling out—the primary in New York was in April, I think. We were essentially preparing for the convention in July. We were basically pulling out for months. We had our people dealing with winning the primaries, locking that up. But we took a chunk of the campaign and said, "Only think about the general."

Riley: So at that point you are thinking about the Republican side?

Greenberg: Right. We're not worried about the primary process on the Republican side. We're figuring out how to restore his character and get heard, and then how to have an overall framing for the general election. How to save ourselves after the—because we knew he would come out of the—and it was true. After the last primary, I forget what the number was on honesty and character to be President but it was bad, and we were in third place in an awful position at that moment. But we knew what we were going to do. The schedule was laid out every day what we were going to do. These speeches were laid out. The films were being made.

He had, I'm sure, a lot of self-doubt about the campaign, himself, whatever. I don't know. I shouldn't say that. I don't know if he—I presume he did, because if you're in third place at that point after being beat up this badly, you could easily come out of this depressed that you've done all this and it's not going to happen because you've been so badly damaged by the primaries. There can be a lot of things that explain his mood, but it was no doubt that he was down, and didn't love the strategy that we were unfolding, probably second-guessing whether biography was strong enough. Was his biography a strong enough concept to overcome all these perceptions about him?

Riley: He's a policy guy. He's used to thinking about politics and policy and it's—

Greenberg: Right. I'm not sure. We hadn't done it, and if you think, biography was not our—in New Hampshire we launched with our economic plan. We started after his announcement with the New Covenant speeches. It was not biography. And so this was new, and I'm not sure he was completely comfortable with it.

Freedman: It's funny though, because as you've said, it seems so obvious now. In retrospect it seems—of course, that's what you would have done. It's actually surprising to learn that that hadn't been part of his gubernatorial campaigns.

Greenberg: No. Well, they knew him—and I don't actually—No, he was much more policy. If you look at the advertising from his Governor's race, it was much more policy.

Riley: To the extent there was bio there, I guess it was local boy done well, and then comeback.

Greenberg: Right. But I can't remember having very much bio in the primary process. We were much more the guy with an economic plan.

Freedman: But by the time of the convention, everybody was on the same page? You're all moving forward with this strategy, these messages?

Greenberg: Yes. Well, we're moving up. It took a couple of weeks, but people were paying close attention. We were moving up. Then you got the combination of these speeches, the Rainbow Coalition, Jesse Jackson. But then he had the Gore selection, which had a big impact, and then into the convention. And then Perot pulling out during the convention.

Freedman: That was obviously a time of rejoicing for you.

Greenberg: Yes, great, excellent. Particularly since Perot, when he pulled out, endorsed us.

Riley: How difficult was it for you to do your work with Perot as a factor? We haven't talked very much about—

Greenberg: I was teaching full time during this period—no, no, that's not true. *[laughter]*

Riley: I want to get you to reflect a little bit on—that's an extraordinary part of this story. You see almost no Presidential elections in which you've got an outside party candidate creating this kind of fuss. I would think in part that might explain some of the President's disequilibrium at this point—

Greenberg: Sure.

Riley: —trying to figure out how you are going to do something in a three-way match when you're—

Greenberg: Perot was polling in the high 30s. So, great uncertainty. Why would you trust any of us? Nobody has dealt with anything like this. Our focus was Clinton. It was not in contrast to

Perot. Only with a sense that we had Tsongas, kind of holier-than-thou; and then you had Brown, who was holier-than-thou and contemptuous of us; you had [Robert P.] Casey during the convention; you had Perot's candidacy; and so you always have this hanging over you.

Therefore, the obligation for you—in order to be authentic and for people to listen to you, you can never lose track of it. If people have to choose from two candidates, you can get sloppy. But you can't get sloppy, because there is tremendous uncertainty in all this—who he was going to take these votes away from. When he pulled out—obviously, it was when he came back in that we'd have to worry about it again. That was a real honeymoon period when he was out.

We had Perot in the polls, but we didn't do much polling around Perot. It was more that we needed to get us right, to communicate. We thought that, given the anger on the economy by that time, which was so strong—the fear was that you'd lose that, that Perot would steal the "outsider" label—or that we're the "change" candidate. Does Perot steal that? For most of the time, he was taking Republican votes and the question is, are there votes that could have gone to us? More important than that, he was maybe the most interesting person in the race, the outsider getting young voters that we thought we should get. That became an increasing—

In the period leading up to the convention, we were just trying to get ourselves into the game. He pulls out during the convention so we have this period of time where he's not a factor. It's when he comes back in again that you've got to then try to make sure that you're the outsider and the change candidate.

Riley: But part of the reason for the question is this: You just said yourself that this is a guy who may be the most interesting person in the race, and yet you're trying to make an argument for your candidate focusing on biography. That's why I'm raising the question. It seems to me that if you're trying to rationally consider all the possibilities, you might actually be creating a strategy for your candidate that helps Perot.

Greenberg: Well, our assumption was that there were a lot of people who wanted to vote for us, who wanted to vote against Bush, and in the end you would not assume, based on history, given [John] Anderson and others, that somebody would end up getting 19 percent of the vote. You presume that at the end he'd get a significant number of votes, but you presumed it would eventually go down to something in the single digits that was manageable.

You didn't want his momentary position to—I don't remember worrying. It was more that we had people who wanted to vote for change. There's a lot of people who want to vote for a Democrat. How do we get out of the way? How do we convince them that he's not—it's about Clinton. If we can convince them that what he says is real, that he's not just telling people what they want to hear, he's authentic, he can bring the right kind of change on economy and healthcare—if we get that done—the votes are there for us. It wasn't in comparison. We didn't worry about Bush. We figured Bush was in trouble. The question is, how do we make sure that we're the candidate that's real?

Riley: Okay. Did you do any polling or focus group work on Vice Presidential candidates, or potential Vice Presidential candidates?

Greenberg: We're back in our "caution" mode. This is interesting. [pause] Let's put a bracket around that. I'm going to talk about it, but I'm going to put a bracket around it. I did polling that was directly for Mickey that was not known to the other people in the campaign—that was not known to George or James or others. It was done solely for Mickey and for the Governor to look at.

There was some general polling and then there was some specific polling when he was entertaining Joe Lieberman as a candidate, the issues around Joe Lieberman, Orthodox Jew, and how that might impact his—if he were on the ticket. That was done purely for the—and the only people I know who saw that research was Mickey, and I met with Governor Clinton on the results of it, which actually were interesting and not in any way prohibitive. He kept his own counsel. He didn't meet with the political group on the Vice Presidential selection. I'm sure there's a lot of people he talked to individually on the Vice Presidential selection, including myself and others. But there was research that took place in that, which was not known to or shared with anybody else.

Riley: Right. And was that disqualifying of anybody in particular?

Greenberg: No. First of all, this was a different process than usual. I would give him the results and then he would make some conclusion. He wasn't looking for a conclusion by me. There was no group that made some group decision on it. It was just information that fed into his thinking as he was making the choice.

Riley: Right. So he's looking at how well various candidates are doing with particular segments of the population, as well as—you're breaking it down?

Greenberg: He was looking, because a lot of these people weren't particularly that well known. A lot of it—some of it was giving the biography of the candidates to get a sense of how people would react to the—and together with him on the ticket.

Riley: Were you surprised that he selected Al Gore?

Greenberg: Yes. *[laughs]* I was, because they were very competitive. And when he was going to meet with Gore, he was not looking forward to it. It turns out they had very good meetings, which turned out to be very important to the ticket. But yes, I was surprised because it was not obvious. After the fact, the idea of doing a reinforcing choice made tremendous sense. I wish I had written the memo.

Actually, let me say this. I will say the following: The consultants were asked to write a memo on their views on the Vice Presidential selection. We wrote the memo. To be honest, I can't really remember what was in this memo, but we wrote on criteria and things to consider. I remember there was a statement that Mandy had put in that said, "The one thing we agree on is that Al Gore shouldn't be it." I crossed that out, or edited it out, because I said that I didn't agree. I didn't think he would select him, but I was intrigued with the possibility. But I didn't think he would do it. We explicitly—the consultants had an explicit conversation. We thought everyone

agreed that it shouldn't be Gore, but I said, "No, I'm not in that camp so we can't use this phrase." So that phrase got eliminated from the memo.

Riley: Your reservations were more about personal interaction?

Greenberg: Right, I just didn't think he would do it.

Freedman: Well, was there somebody, though, who the research suggested really would be a homerun in your view?

Greenberg: I don't remember. I don't remember. Bizarre.

Freedman: Did Hillary weigh in?

Greenberg: Part of my caution is because this was pretty straightforward and the interpretation—he didn't want interpretation. I don't remember developing a point of view, because I wasn't asked to develop a point of view to present to him. It was information for him.

Freedman: So his decision-making process then was something that—he absorbed this memo, he absorbed data—

Greenberg: I wouldn't write a memo. I gave him the results raw.

Freedman: Okay.

Riley: And the rationale—

Greenberg: Oh, I'm sorry—the memo you're talking about—

Freedman: I mean from the consultants.

Greenberg: From the consultants, yes. That was more in the beginning of the process.

Riley: And the rationale for excluding a larger group of people in this consideration is fairly obvious, but I'd like you to speak to it.

Greenberg: I don't think they wanted it to be thought they were polling the Vice Presidential selection. I'm not sure why that should be thought to be different than other things, but there was a sense that one shouldn't be polling it, and there was certainly sensitivity around the issues with respect to Lieberman.

Riley: Was leaking a problem in the campaign? Were there any problems as you remember with things leaving the family and showing up in the newspapers—"family" with quotation marks?

Greenberg: I don't have a recollection about any leak. I was actually struck, because in the general election we had our regular polling and I wrote memos on each poll.

James believed in centralized control and a campaign that was able to move rapidly, but he believed in broad communication, so the war room—it was a large group that in the morning would talk about the day, but it was the entire headquarters, effectively, at the end of the day. We were telling people what we were going to do the next day and stuff. I don't ever remember a leak out of that, to the press, that undermined what we were doing. I circulated the polling very widely in my memos and I don't ever remember a leak in the campaign of the memos. The view was it will be much more effective if people broadly know this information. I'm sure it would have changed if it was leaking, but it didn't leak, despite the fact that it was being circulated widely.

Riley: That's fascinating, given the later experience in the White House with problems, maybe not with political intelligence, but on a variety of other things.

Greenberg: Well, in *The Agenda,* the memos were leaked to [Bob] Woodward.

Freedman: In this period, while we're on the topic of testing things—Obviously, films, generally, are more often tested and researched—which endings audiences liked better. Was *The Man from Hope* tested in any way, or was it just produced?

Greenberg: First of all, we didn't know to what extent that would be aired. I can't remember whether the networks actually aired it. I think some aired parts of it. The assumption was they wouldn't air it. It was for the convention, for the press, for the glitterati, for the activists. We made short ad forms of it that eventually were used in the campaign, and those were tested. But we didn't test the actual film. In fact, I didn't see the film until we were in New York at the convention. I watched it with them on the first viewing in their room. He wasn't sure.

Freedman: While he was watching it?

Greenberg: Right. After he watched it he wasn't too sure.

Riley: Why is that?

Greenberg: It's pretty revealing of yourself. Again, it all seems obvious now, but I think he was uncomfortable. There were a couple of things. Mandy was there, too. There were a couple of things we changed that involved some fighting back and forth with our Hollywood friends, which we got changed. To be honest, I can't remember. My diary would have it. But we did have parts that we wanted to change, which they did change. But we didn't do any public testing.

Riley: I guess it's often the case that people don't have a sense about how powerful their own biography is, how interesting their own biography might be. I wonder if Clinton is actually being atypical in this way.

Greenberg: I don't know. People will use biography and it's kind of a routine progression in a campaign. Biography was our antidote to the poisonous primary atmosphere that had put him at risk. We were investing much more in this. And then off of *The Man from Hope*, the whole

theme, "People First," "Bush out of Touch," everything else played off of it. It anchored everything in biography. It wasn't just a lead-in; people want to know that first.

Freedman: It enabled those other messages to be powerful.

Greenberg: Yes. At the convention we had decided on the war room concept. James was obsessed with the concept of creating the war room in Little Rock, but he couldn't be the champion of it, because it was he who would be the head of it. We think of this campaign as a centralized campaign that was very integrated. It was not, until after the convention. We went through this whole battle with lots of different centers of power, and lots of differences, depending on the issue, and lots of communications issues.

It was only after the convention. Now we knew we were ahead because Perot had pulled out. We met—it would have been on probably the Wednesday night that we met with Hillary because we were basically talking about disempowering everybody. And also, they were the center of the campaign. We were essentially making James and the war room the center in the campaign. It was Mandy, myself, and Paul. We made the case to her, particularly as we surged into the lead, that they were going to do everything to bring him down at this point, that we were going to come off this convention exposed. We were going to face another New Hampshire, and that we need to be organized in a way that we can deal with it.

She agreed to do it. She talked to him. He signed off on it. As soon as they took off on the buses they began construction, physically, to create the war room in Little Rock to do this. The whole campaign organization changed from the convention mode.

Freedman: Why was she the lynchpin? Why did you work through her to push the case forward?

Greenberg: It may have been availability, I'm not sure. That's who we could get to to make the case. We didn't want to go through any intermediary. We were talking about changing—this was a campaign—even though James was important, there were other people who were important. There was no one person other than Bill Clinton in charge of this campaign up to the convention. Creating the war room with one person in charge was a big passage of power.

Freedman: Did you hesitate at all? Did you personally have any doubt that that was the right decision to make?

Greenberg: No.

Riley: It's rather difficult for those of us on the outside to look at, especially the early period of the campaign, where there are so many people with important titles.

Greenberg: With direct relations to the candidate.

Riley: Well, yes. And then to figure out what is it that they did, or what is it that they brought to the campaign?

Greenberg: Right, because James was General Strategist, but the General Strategist had no line authority over anybody. It's a name. And George was not Communications Director. George was kind of body guy and problem solver. We write the history from what actually happened. He became Communications Director as part of this change in creating the war room, and was taken off the road. He had been traveling with Clinton.

Riley: I don't want to get too far down this road, but let me just throw out and ask you—Mickey Kantor—what was Mickey's—I'm not talking about his formal position. What was Mickey doing during the campaign that you saw?

Greenberg: He was Campaign Chairman and he was trusted by the Governor. But it was not operational. But in a moment where, for example, when you want to create the Manhattan Project, he was the person, he was the Chairman. We were talking about dividing the campaign at that point. You would need his support to do that. But Clinton was the decision-maker. Mickey could not say, "All right, let's do that." Mickey had to go to Clinton to make the case for it and get a sign-off on it.

There were periods of time where you would just deal directly with Clinton, and there were other times when you—and usually it was when it was in crisis, when you were all sitting together in the same room. When you're not in crisis and he's off somewhere in America—So, on big decisions. Operationally, Wilhelm, effectively, was political director. He was in charge of getting the state organizations and campaigns going, though that wasn't clear at the outset. His title was Campaign Manager, but his skills were more that and that's what he ended up doing.

Riley: Mostly outreach, or—

Greenberg: No, no. Forming actual campaigns that we—an organizational role creating the campaigns in each state.

Riley: Eli Segal?

Greenberg: He never had a line responsibility. He was very close to Clinton. He was a headhunter, and he was a personnel person who brought people into the campaign. He was a prominent FOB and part of that network of people at Oxford and Yale that would feed in. And that network was very important to his thinking. He was intellectually the center of his campaign, and operationally, through to the convention.

Riley: Who am I omitting? Later I'll come back to it. All right. Bus trip. You're off doing something else by that point. Are you involved in strategizing about the Electoral College math? Are you starting to put together a campaign map? You got the message that you're carrying out. You think that the biography has worked at the convention but you're not going to use biography as the sole means of getting you through November. You've got to change gears at some point, right?

Greenberg: In the period between the two conventions, we now have a big lead and feel pretty comfortable. Normally these leads get narrowed when they have their convention, and it didn't happen. It got narrow, but not anywhere—but we were still out of—we had a significant lead. We operated from the assumption that we were likely to win, though I'm overstating it, because you're constantly in fear, even if it's not rational.

What we did in that period was to game out how Bush could beat us. There was a process for targeting the states. There was a range of people that were brought into that. Paul Tully, Sam Popkin, Mark Gersh, and I created a system for developing your model for what states you'd go into. I could talk about the model if you want to. We did have that and it was constantly being worked through. And you would meet every second day to continually reassess it.

Freedman: Putting in the latest numbers, and figuring out—

Greenberg: Right. Well, important to the model was a certain proportion of the variants. About three quarters of the variants, of the rank order of the state, is a function of changes in the national number, as opposed to anything happening in the specific state. You're tracking your national number as well as the numbers on the states. You were dealing with the interaction between what was happening in the states and at the national level. Then you had past election data that Gersh brought into the model. The states were rank ordered on probability of our winning. That could change, but there was a rank order that pretty much didn't change. The question is where you were to get 50 percent, and to get a majority of electoral votes how many states you had to go down to, and then how much further you went with the probability of winning those states.

Freedman: And every other day you would update it with all of the latest data, and is it safe to say that now you are in the field every night, nationally? Or every night in at least some states?

Greenberg: Yes. Well, the way the polling was done—we were polling nationally. I don't believe in tracking polls; that is, I don't believe in, and never did, rolling polls. I believe in discrete samples, discrete polls with callbacks over—I tried, at least in the primaries, to keep it to a minimum of three-day calling period. But that became not possible. We basically did three two-night polls a week, each one being its own sample, each one being a discrete sample of a thousand. So you'd get results three times a week.

Freedman: Every week.

Greenberg: You'd look at the half-sample, see what it's like, but basically you got the results three times. Sunday–Monday, Tuesday–Wednesday—actually, I think we overlapped in order to have results three times during the week. And that was continuous from their convention on.

Between the conventions, we did what was called the Teeter Project. Bob Teeter was the pollster for Bush. We did a whole research exercise, almost like a Manhattan Project, on "How do we lose?" In other words, let's role-play. We role-play. We do the whole thing. We play their campaign. We did our research on Clinton. We created ads for them against us and developed the response ads to those ads.

I think we would have won no matter what, but the key piece to this is not so much bio, it's about record. The key piece to this—people had heard all this stuff—the draft and Gennifer Flowers—for so long. People were tired of it. When we tested attacks on his character we found that they weren't effective. However, we found that if you attacked his Arkansas record as being a bad record—raising taxes, failed Governor—that that was much more effective. More importantly, the sequence was critical. Given how much people had heard and how sick they were of this stuff, if you started with Arkansas and then went back to draft and character at the end, that could be effective. We developed response ads to it.

They did the opposite, a fundamental mistake. They started right after their convention. Right after Labor Day they went after Moscow and passports and all that stuff. They went right to the character stuff again. The voters said, "Oh, god, not more of this." What we believed was that they had gotten it wrong, and that once you got it wrong, it's very hard to go back. They began to close down the negative advertising. So in September they were doing character. Voters weren't responding to it. At the very end, they decided to do Arkansas.

Freedman: Vulture.

Greenberg: Yes. The vulture ad. They ran the ad and they pulled all their other advertising. They ran entirely focused on the—and Bush's scheduling was flying around Arkansas on the failed record in Arkansas. It was actually a real vulnerability. We could make a case that what he had done there, welfare reform and capital punishment, was a case for him being President, but there was clearly an ability to present the—this is small state, and him failing on a whole range of fronts, raising taxes. They tried running that. They ran the ad.

We tested, and our ads were much better. The vulture looking like this barren state was not believable to people. We had done a much more effective ad on Arkansas than the one they had done. We decided not to respond to the ad, which he and Hillary in particular found wholly unacceptable, that he could be hit with this kind of attack on your whole record at the end of the campaign. Hillary had very strong views about the attacks they had faced at the end in their Governor's races, how they had responded, sent the tapes around to all the radio stations and responded at the last minute to make sure that they didn't get hurt by these things.

To be confident of not responding—we were finishing on the economy. With our economic ad, we were scrolling Nobel laureates who were saying this economic plan is what will get the country moving. We wanted to end on our message, not on our response. Our first gut reaction was, we don't think we'll respond. We tested their ad. It wasn't effective. But to get him to agree not to respond was a—I remember this. He was on a conference call, speaker phone, with James, George and myself—Paul was with the Governor—making the case. We had the focus groups results coming in—it was a very big decision not to respond. But I think we would never have been that confident had we not constructed the other—

Freedman: Right, already gone through—

Greenberg: Already gone through the other exercise where we knew it could be effective, had they done it in a different way. So we didn't respond. He agreed, but nervous—

Freedman: But after a few days, the numbers—

Greenberg: By that point it would have been too late. Had we been wrong, it would have been too late. It was a big judgment.

Freedman: And he was able, though, to stay on his message.

Greenberg: Right.

Freedman: That's interesting. One final roll of the dice at the very end, in that sense. Where are those ads now? Is there somewhere a filing cabinet where there's a tape in—

Greenberg: I assume that. I don't know. There's sadly no system for gathering—there's Presidential papers, but not campaigns.

Riley: I'm hearing this and I'm brainstorming a little bit.

Greenberg: I'm sure the ad agency—Greer did this stuff. Mandy was central. At this point, Mandy was mainly doing this.

Freedman: They actually filmed it? They filmed an Arkansas ad?

Greenberg: Oh, yes. Well, they probably used footage. I don't know if they went out and—yes.
Riley: That would make a hell of a book, Paul.

Greenberg: We created an ad on his Arkansas record.

Freedman: The ads that weren't.

Greenberg: And—scary. Scary. Effective. They closed the race. I'd have to look at the memo, but I think we almost got it tied, in our memo.

Riley: Things were closing very quickly there until Lawrence Walsh.

Greenberg: No.

Riley: No, they were not?

Greenberg: Well, they were closing in the sense that they always close. The real closeness was after the final debate, which was a week later. It was barely two weeks, I think, after the last one. As soon as the last debate was over—and the lead narrowed at that point. Perot had come back in and effectively had won the debates that we had, the successful town hall debate. The closure

took place right after the debates. By the time you got to the end there was a small amount of movement, not much, and nowhere—this is Republican mythology.

Riley: Well, we have done interview projects with Republicans, and yes, we do hear that from them. Did you do anything with the debates? Focus groups with the debates, or anything like that?

Greenberg: Yes. We did lots of things. We began to do dial meters—I forgot that you asked about the dial meters. The first time we did—there's one—it's more humorous and I'm not sure I'm going to—we have two points of holding. One is on the research prior to *60 Minutes* and on the V.P. The first time we used the dial meters, which I don't like as a technology or as a way of understanding people—

Freedman: Why is that? Too blunt?

Greenberg: I think it's too literal a read and I think people—it's a totality of response. I'm not sure the immediate response to a set of words or an image is what carries over. I'm much more likely to add some things in a focus group, then at the end of that, have a conversation and see what the take-away from everything is, rather than the literal immediate response.

But we used it. We were into using everything, and during the Manhattan Project we did dial meters, which was the first time I'd used them, to look at ways to—we were up to try to solve this problem in any way we could find. Also, it is a very effective tool for convincing candidates that they should do something or not do something, because they watch this picture, they're carrying on, and then the line [makes sound of blowing up] is going down [laughing]. It kind of concentrates the mind. It's a good tool for—and painful. Thank god I'm never a candidate, with what you have to go through. So it's good for that purpose.

The first time we tested it on material in the—Hillary was in the visual. We were in his motel room in West Virginia and we were—I think George was on the floor, and James, and myself—I can't remember who else was there. I think Mandy. We started showing the thing. We were just showing news things. We were looking for all kinds of things to get a sense of how people were reacting. Hillary's picture comes on and the line goes [sound of falling]. The line goes down. We're all sitting there waiting for him to say something. And he says, "You know, they just hated the way she was doing her hair then." *[laughter]* And we all kept a straight face, and moved on. Anyway, you can't use that for 25 years.

Riley: Okay.

Greenberg: Sorry. It's not a great moment of history.

Freedman: It is. But also, was that what you were—did you know that to be the case? Was she at that point just a liability?

Greenberg: No. You're getting down into the general election where you're, then you get issues—actually, Illinois is when you had the comments. But Hillary was an asset. We wouldn't

have been in this election, we'd have been gone, if not for Hillary Clinton. Hillary Clinton was a strength. She's also a strong figure. She's a strong figure in her own right, a strong figure in the campaign, a strong figure with the Governor, and was not someone you got around. She was a principal in driving this campaign. And she was what she was, so you don't sit there wondering, "Should we do something differently with her?" I don't remember a meeting to discuss the subject. It was not in our hands.

Riley: One of the distinguishing features of the campaign in '92 was the decision to put your candidate in some unconventional media settings. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the decision to go outside the *Meet the Press* kind of—

Greenberg: It was very much part of the Manhattan Project. It was a very determined part of it that, before we got clarity on what the message was, an overall direction, we were very much focused on how to get around the filter of the press, who had developed a view of him through the primaries. They were a problem. Finding an alternative media—Hollywood, his very close Arkansas friends, as you know, were part of that community and were very helpful in thinking through alternative ways of doing it.

There was the worry about diminishing him as a Presidential candidate, particularly when you ran against Bush. Before that, you were dealing with much more fundamental problems. How do you get to be seen as not a politician who will say anything? How do you get rid of the filter of the press and their cynicism? The overwhelming weight was, let's get ourselves into—and it was successful in New Hampshire, the feeling that we had gone around the press to get heard. There was a real commitment. Mandy was very very strong on this. One of Mandy's strengths is understanding popular culture and modern communication. She was the lead on getting us into unconventional formats. I don't think it was second-guessed.

We thought about it in terms of running against Bush. The difference between us being in touch and him being out of touch was so central to the way we were running. The unconventional media was seen to reinforce that contrast. He would be in formal Presidential settings—and we were running well ahead of him, so we were not—I don't remember it being, others may remember—and I'm sure Mandy, because she had to make the case more directly. I just agreed with the general idea but I didn't have to drive it. Mandy was the one who had to drive particular decisions. You might get someone like Susan Thomases, who might think maybe, "This has gone too far. It diminishes him." You'd have to get past the FOBs on some issues. And she came in and did the scheduling at the end. You'll have to talk to her or talk to Mandy, but her view of that kind of medium is important, because my recollection is she became less enamored of it later.

Riley: There was a fair amount of criticism after the MTV thing with the "boxers or briefs" question, that maybe it had been taken to an extreme. But Perot had opened up the door for doing some of this because he kept showing up on *Larry King* to make his announcements and so forth, but I guess *Larry King* is considered mainstream.

Greenberg: Maybe. You were talking about the other kinds of research. I mentioned the dial meters. We would have the dial meters for all the debates. But what was most interesting from

the dial meters—we had the dial meters so we knew what was happening during the debates. You needed that because, within minutes of the debate being over, you needed to go out and interpret to the press and make the case that we won—this was the most important moment, this theme was most important, whatever.

Freedman: And so you would give those findings to the people before—

Greenberg: Right. Most of the people, like George, would be there while we were getting the numbers during the—but then maybe ten minutes before it was over we'd regroup—"This is what emerged"—and then highlight.

What we would do would be a post—you'd have maybe 50 or 75 people doing your dials. We'd have a pre- and post-survey so we'd get a sense of what was moving from the total debate. Plus we would hold a focus group. We would break up into focus groups based on what happened to people in the group. If they shifted to feeling more positive about Clinton or less positive, because we knew by person, we'd have focus groups that were only with people who had responded to the debate in a particular way. Then we'd hold a discussion with them and try to understand what had happened in the debate. That became the way we used the dial meters.

In the Richmond debate we did a survey. The participants were recruited with certain criteria. Gallop was doing it. There was a real fear about Richmond, because it's a very conservative city, at least the metro area is fairly conservative. The question is, what kind of people were going to be in there, and what kind of questions would they ask? What are their issues? And so we did a survey. We replicated the selection criteria that Gallop was using, and did a survey to understand the issues, but also the questions that they would ask.

Freedman: So you solicited questions from this sample?

Greenberg: From them, right, to get a feel for—and used those in the debate prep.

Freedman: Was it a good predictor?

Greenberg: Yes, it was. He was well prepared for it. The questions were very much in line with what we expected. It also wasn't—it turns out Richmond itself is not as conservative, and so we were less worried about the questions we'd get. We were initially doing it to see what kind of problem we had, but then it actually became a tool in the debate prep.

Freedman: Interesting.

Greenberg: And we would do outtakes. Each day we would take clips from the debate prep and intermix them with Bush clips, so that it didn't look like it was a—what it was. One, it would be balanced, but two, it would be different kinds of settings. We would then take those outtakes to a focus group—actually, to both focus group and dial meters—and get reactions to the way he was responding to particular questions. We would then create a presentation tape. This went all through the night. They'd finish their debate prep and by the next morning we would then

present, at the outset of the prep, what kind of reactions we were getting from people on particular kinds of issues.

A lot of that was guided by—particularly, when he was going somewhere we didn't think he should go, or something that wasn't effective, it enabled you—instead of just trying to convince him that this was a bad thing to be doing, or that this was a run-on answer that was losing people, you could actually show them losing people.

Freedman: So this is like real-time research and presentation of results in an effort to actually get him to change his focus?

Greenberg: Or show him, or underscore something, or to underscore that some things were particularly effective, and that he ought to be doing that instead of something else.

Freedman: Now, to what extent is that driven by the group of people who are assembled here, versus his own instinct, the sense that public opinion research really could guide him in a way that presumably no other candidate had ever done debate prep before?

Greenberg: I don't know what others have done. The backdrop for this is the fact that this is a candidate who has—in terms of the overall narrative, it's very much driven by his own intellectual take, and his own sense of the strategy, which is built up over a number of years. You're operating within that framework. If you look at his convention speech and you look at his announcement speech, and then you go back to the New Orleans speech, the themes are great continuity. You're operating within that, so you have parameters that are set by the candidate.

But when you're doing this, you don't go out and say he took this position on a particular issue versus that position. That's not what this is. This is more the style of answer. You're trying to say that, in a debate context, this works; this doesn't work. We weren't, I don't remember—here's three different answers to that question. Healthcare—should we talk about managed care? Should we talk about—it was much more about how combative, how much of a contrast, how much you talk about your own ideas, and what's the style of this? Debate prep is a very—but it is real time. It is giving people feedback in these exchanges.

Riley: How much do you worry about him becoming so self-conscious about his performance that it depreciates—

Greenberg: I worry about that. There was a great worry with Gore on—this is a different subject, but on him becoming too self-conscious. There was a real holding back of doing much of this with Gore, not being sure how he would handle that much feedback. Clinton was so confident of himself and what he was doing. We might provide him this information, but he's on the phone all night talking to policy people about his response on this, and talking to his friends from Oxford. You know, he'll call Strobe Talbott, and all that. He'll consult—we had our little consultation here and we think it's the whole world, but in fact it's just a part of a larger set of things that he will bring into his judgment.

Now, some people don't want all that. They want to be protected. That's not him. He wants that kind of feedback. But it's just one of a number of types of feedback. It's not the only feedback on the way he's going to respond to that question.

Riley: I just find it remarkable that somebody is self-possessed enough to be able to take this much instruction in a short period of time and for it not to turn into something that's either mechanical or overwhelming for him.

Greenberg: Well, this takes place over a number of days and you've got multiple debates. You do this at the beginning, and then you stop doing it. And by the way, Clinton was not that great a debater. You know, we think—I mean, if you reflect back to the primaries, we were not winning the debates. He was not that strong in the debates. He was much better as someone giving a speech, but he was not that strong in debates. We did not emerge and win in the primaries because of the debates. If you take the first debate, it was Perot who clearly won the first debate. We won the second because of the town hall format. And then the third debate was mixed. But it was not obvious that he was the strongest person on the field there in debating.

Riley: What's his deficiency?

Greenberg: Debating is a difficult thing. The skills you develop as a Governor, or skills you develop as a public speaker, are just not necessarily, I mean, I'm sure that anybody who is a Prime Minister in Britain who has to do *Question Time* every week will be just fine. But these are different kinds of skills. And it also depends on how you react to people, what attitude you show. It's a wholly different kind of exercise. It was very important, particularly the town hall—

Freedman: And probably because that's the least *Question Time*-like debate, and lets him use his forte of connecting with people in that way.

Riley: Right. But if you think about the traits that he had, he thinks very quickly, he's a good talker—

Greenberg: Well, there was a lot of preparation that went into the debates beforehand. Bob [Barnett] was in charge of the debates. He developed the debate book. We did a whole series of research surveys leading into the debates, exploring issues that we think would play back and forth, and simulated the back and forth, for the prep and the planning. A lot of research took place prior to it. He was given the debate books in advance and the memos on the strategy in advance, and he reads that stuff. Before he walked into debate prep, he had it—the policy side he doesn't have to read. He's so deep into the policy that you just know he's not going to be stumped in this area.

Riley: Well, that's the more conventional way that an outsider thinks about the preparation. It's the element that you've just described about stylistic presentation that takes it to a different level that seems to me to make it an even more complicated process and makes it—

Greenberg: Though it's much more about what doesn't work than what works. Is there some particular quirk, style thing that he does, that just is magnified in a debate setting and you can see

it doesn't work, and so you kind of learn what not to do. You learn things like don't sigh. Don't take notes while the other guy is speaking. Don't look at your watch. A lot of this is what you shouldn't do, rather than what you should do.

Riley: But still, it's the case—the closest metaphor I can think of is the second baseman who starts thinking about making the throw before—he loses the natural fluidity of motion. I wonder, evidently Clinton has an extraordinarily high threshold for being over-programmed this way, which you've said is not true of some other people that you've worked with.

Greenberg: Right.

Freedman: At this point in the debate period, as you're working through the debate books and the prep, are you consciously attempting to interweave the People First themes and messages, and are you going back to the bio during the debate prep?

Greenberg: Bio was not, I mean, once we got past the—we did ads, but it was not something that he himself presented. We came back to the bio at various points in the advertising, and at the end. The People First theme was—when you do a speech with Clinton, it's not like you give him a speech and he says, "All right, good speech." And he delivers it. In order to get that convention speech, you've gone through days and days of rewrites and writes, and where's he's rewritten it, and where he's gone off on a riff, and incorporated that.

By the time he gives that speech, he owns it, which is why he was able, when he was giving the State of the Union and in the teleprompter was the healthcare speech—I was doing dials on that speech, and I had the text that we were supposed to be speaking from. I knew that he was wandering from it, but it was still close enough that I was able to follow. He was giving it from memory, even though he was supposed to have the text there.

Once he gives a speech, he owns it. You don't have to keep reminding him that this theme is important. You went from the convention to the bus trip, so you gave a whole series of stump speeches. By that time it's part of his stump speech. Where you can get off is where there is some issue that breaks and you go off and do something that you don't want to be doing. But in terms of being on message and theme, he was on message and he owned it. It was his. It was part of who he was.

Riley: How much time were you spending, during the general election campaign, working on negative spots against the opposition, and working with people doing opposition research?

Greenberg: First of all, the opposition research was done much earlier. There was a lot of opposition research but it was done much earlier. The research was much more a function of a specific—Bush would give a speech. Bush would say something on the stump. What did he say? What has he said in the past? Your systems were set up. At that point, you were executing. You know, hit him on a contradiction, facts don't fit this. Your opposition research was very much centered on the virtual campaign and how it unfolded. It was your systems in place and whether you could execute. We were quite fast in that, which is where we pioneered, I think. You had to

have the opposition research in the databases, but that was just integrated at that point as part of the campaign.

Freedman: Are there some notable instances that come to mind, where there was a successful response in quick time?

Greenberg: I don't know. It was every day of the thing. For sure, during Bush's speech. I can't think of what specific piece of the content of his speech, but I know we were—now it's matter-of-fact, but at the time it wasn't matter-of-fact that we were sending out faxes—I guess it would be e-mail now, on our Blackberries. We'd send faxes to reporters, who would get it during the speech, with counters to what Bush was saying. In that case, in terms of Bush's speech, Clinton was going to give a response to the Detroit Economic Club the Friday after Bush's speech. So researching Bush's whole speech and having a whole serious speech ready for noontime the next day at the Detroit Economic Club was the great challenge that I remember.

Riley: Any surprises on Election Day, looking at the map?

Greenberg: Florida being close. The exit polls were wrong.

Freedman: It won't be the last time.

Greenberg: Why does anybody pay attention to the exit polls? Can we put them out of their misery? The exit polls showed us doing very well, and much better than we actually did. And so the sense of landslide was built through the day in the coverage, but it was actually much closer than that, and particularly in a number of states. But you barely remember it, because he won and that's sufficient. It was much closer in the end than we came in the lead based on the exits.

Florida was close in a first indicator that there were other kinds of changes taking place in the country which made it possible for Democrats to have a national majority. States like New Jersey and Illinois becoming so Democratic and so easy in the election. These states were so hard before, and it was hard to imagine these states were becoming easy, but it was evident then, in '92.

I was surprised, in retrospect, by how quickly the campaign lost its authority back to the Governor and the First Lady. The campaign was kind of given this grant of authority after the convention, to do this. But it took it back within seconds of the polls closing. You could just feel it, so when it came to writing the speech and doing election night and beginning to think about transition, it just sucked away within minutes.

Freedman: Was that something that you noticed at the top—

Greenberg: Oh, yes. Sure. I listened to his acceptance speech and it was like whole new phrases, and whole new subjects that were not in our campaign speeches, things he has clearly been wanting to say—in particular on the racial stuff. Look at the speech on election night about "the country coming together" and "unity." It was clearly the stuff he wanted to say. He has a passion for it, wants to deal with it, viewed it, I'm sure, as a mission of his administration to heal racial

divide and bring people together. For sure, that was not the main theme of our election. It was not about unity and bringing the country together. That was something he obviously wanted to do in his Presidency. And within a very short period of time, that's what he was talking about. I was very conscious that we were in a different place.

Freedman: And then how did that play out over the next several days?

Greenberg: It played through the transition, and it played out—if you look at the inauguration, that was the theme of the inaugural. It was not something that came out of this process. It was some other process or some other part of his brain that emerged. Not a surprise in terms of his passions, of what he did in Arkansas and what he wanted to do in the country. But it's not something he could run for President on.

Freedman: Did you believe or expect, or had you even thought about what kind of a relationship you would have after Election Day?

Greenberg: Believe it or not, I hadn't thought much about it. My assumption was that I was not going to be in the White House. I had met with previous pollsters who had worked for the President—this was actually after the election, not before. [Richard B.] Wirthlin, in particular, was helpful. Wirthlin used to present weekly for about fifteen minutes to the President, to give him a weekly account of things. That was it. Then he wasn't there. He was off developing his Wirthlin Worldwide company. So when I was asked by Bruce to develop a plan for what I would do, I developed a plan in which I would meet with him 15 minutes a week and that was it.

James was smart. James never anticipated, never had any—it was very clear that it would be crazy to ever have him anywhere near the White House. And so he never had any intention of going to the White House, whereas George always intended to be there. I intended to be close and providing input, but not to be there.

Riley: Was there discomfort among some of your colleagues about the kind of shift in emphasis after Election Day? You said that your—

Greenberg: People were joyous. I don't remember anybody saying how disappointed they were with the speech. There was a raised stage that they came out on. We were all in the front row right below the stage, and listened to the speech. I remember at the time saying, "This is a change." I didn't say it to anybody. It was not consequential. There was talk, amused talk, about the fact that suddenly this—you had these drafts of speeches and stuff, but it went into a process that we were now not part of. There were other people and other forces at work, and the campaign was really disempowered very quickly, on election night. But people were joyous. I wasn't planning on going into the Administration or anything like that. It never occurred to me that I would do anything in the transition. I ended up doing some stuff. But I never—I was going on holiday.

Riley: What kind of stuff were you doing during the transition?

Greenberg: Well, I went off to Doug Sosnik's wedding in Argentina. I thought it was done. I packed up and went. Then I went off to Argentina. We were planning on taking a vacation. Then I got a call that I should come back to help out in the transition. So I cut that short, went to the wedding for a weekend, and then flew back to Arkansas. I'd have to check with Doug on when his wedding was, but I ended up back in the transition, dealing with more overall communication, because then you faced the issue on gays in the military and the whole series of—the budget people were moving to a different posture on the economic policy.

Now, I had no clear role. I wasn't doing research, but I was being consulted on how to deal with these various pieces.

Freedman: Were you doing focus groups or survey research on gays in the military, for example?

Greenberg: No. I was strongly opposed to him doing gays in the military, and at the beginning voiced it, wrote it—

Freedman: But you lost that.

Greenberg: Right. On the budget, Sperling came and presented where they were going on the budget and the role of deficit reduction, and the budget estimates being higher than expected, and changing the investment aspects of the—I was concerned about that and where it was going. But it was very much from a distance. I sent a memo in on the inaugural.

I was not involved until I was asked to go to the—after they took office and went to retreat at Camp David with the Cabinet. I was asked to come—since most of the people in the Cabinet had not been involved in the campaign—to do a presentation on what the people thought they were choosing when they elected him President.

Freedman: And this isn't post-election research?

Greenberg: Based on what had happened during the campaign, not post-election. We actually did do a post-election survey, on the night after Election Day, as an interpretation for the DNC on what happened in the election. But nothing during the transition and not in the lead-up to the inaugural. I didn't have a contract with anybody. It was only after I did that presentation that he asked that I change my role.

Riley: Let me ask one final question. Were there any surprises in the election or post-election survey for you?

Greenberg: To be honest, I can't remember.

Riley: This actually makes a pretty good breaking point, because we've basically got you—we've gotten through the transition, although we may have an additional question to come back. I don't know what to say at this point about more scheduling, other than we should talk about some date when it makes sense for us to come back and do this.

Greenberg: We should try to do this. I'm committed to doing it. My schedule gets very difficult, because we'll very likely have an election in Britain in May. And so I'm spending an increasing amount of time in Britain.

Riley: That recommends doing something after—

Greenberg: Something after May.

Freedman: As opposed to next week.

Riley: I'm looking at staff back over there, giving us—

Greenberg: They've got this horrible look. I think you would not find the day—

Freedman: Well, I say that jokingly, but just in an effort to convey that this is just tremendous.

Riley: Oh, yes. We're finding this very valuable. And again, I'm grateful, not just for the time that we've had today, but for your volunteering to do more of this before we even got started. It meant that we were able to get so much more out of what we've done today. It leaves us something that another day would cover.

The other thing that we need to think about is whether we ought to try to do more in the way of incorporating some of the memos or the diary entries. I don't have a clue about how to make a suggestion on that, other than just to let you know that it's something that could be useful or interesting for us. I'll think about it and ask you to think about it, and maybe your staff to think about what might make sense in terms—

Greenberg: I organized it when I did the middle class training—even though I didn't, in the end, draw that much on it, I do have all the primary memos and all the general election memos in books, as well as a diary from the—so I presume that would be—

Freedman: A resource to accompany this—

Riley: Absolutely. Or a resource to help us if we wanted to go back and revisit some of the things that we touched on today, if some of those memos are good points of departure for further discussion. I would have to leave that up to you, because that stuff requires more of your time as well as more of ours. We're willing to make the investment, but—

Greenberg: Yes, the memos won't be hard because I can look at them and judge pretty—but the diaries are actually—I have to be careful because it was for my own use. I'm sure I wrote things that I was not thinking would be circulated, and I'd have to read pretty closely to find out, not scrub it, but figure out what—for example, I remember writing in the period in June when he was down, I remember being struck by this, and so there's some things I said about it.

Riley: Well, because your time is very valuable, I don't know whether it's conceivable to do something like that. I don't know whether to ask you to do it. Our bigger concern would be making sure that ultimately that's in a position where, after you're gone, people could make use of it. That's the most important thing for us to think about. If we can make interim use of pieces of it before then, great.

Greenberg: And I have a thought about this question about where to put things. This interview has raised that question.