

Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
Dick Cheney
Interviewed by
Richard Norton Smith
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Smith: First of all, obviously, thank you very much for doing this.

Cheney: No, no, it's nice to be asked. It's an important subject.

Smith: Before your path crossed with Gerald Ford's - what's the concise, Dick Cheney autobiography leading up to, I guess, August of 1974?

Cheney: I grew up in Wyoming, graduate of Wyoming High School, recruited to go Yale – got kicked out twice. The second time they said, “Don't come back.” Built power lines and transmission lines in the west, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and then got serious about getting married, and said, I'd better go back and work on my education, which I did at the University of Wyoming.

Lynn and I got married a year later. She was then an instructor. We were the same age, but she moved rapidly through her academic requirements and I didn't. But I got both my BA and a Masters' at Wyoming. While I was there, did a stint in the Wyoming legislature as an intern, which was a new concept in those days, in 1965, with the Republicans in the State Senate – my first political job.

I wrote a paper about that experience and won a national competition and was then selected for a follow on a year later, in 1966, to spend a year with the governor of Wisconsin - all supported by the Ford Foundation and the National Center for Education and Politics. We moved to Madison. Lynn started graduate school, and then I started in Madison. After I finished with the governor, I did all the coursework for a PhD in political science. I had my dissertation left to do, passed my prelims, then went off to Washington to work on a dissertation on another grant – this one from the American Political Science Association.

I spent what was supposed to be a year on the Hill. I moved there in the fall of '68. It was the year we had Tet and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King

assassinated, riots in the cities, the Democratic National Convention. It was a wild time. Liz had been born in Madison, so we had at that stage, a two year old, and moved as poverty-stricken graduate students. All of a sudden we had \$500 a month tax free and thought we were in hog heaven. A guy named Don Rumsfeld came and spoke to the group as part of the orientation program that they ran for the Fellows. And I was impressed.

We had to negotiate our own arrangements with members of Congress; we were free help to them. But I asked to interview with Rumsfeld. Went and did an interview with Rumsfeld, and it didn't last very long. It was the worst interview of my life, and he threw me out – thought I was some kind of fuzzy-headed academic. I thought he was about the most arrogant young man I had ever met. And we were both right to some extent.

I went down the hall and went to work for Bill Steiger from Wisconsin. He was a great guy and a friend of Rumsfeld's. Working in Bill's office was a woman named Maureen Drummy, and Maureen had been involved in getting me the fellowship to go to Wisconsin originally. She was a significant player in terms of moving me along in my career, because she would show up, like in the National Center for Education and Politics, and had been involved when I won the award after the state legislature, and then recruited me to work for the governor. Now she's working for the Congressman and put me on the payroll there.

Shortly after I went to work for Steiger, Rumsfeld got nominated by Nixon to be the director of the Anti-Poverty Program in the Office of Economic Opportunity. Bill was advising Rumsfeld about that because they were friends and Bill was on the committee. I sat down one night and wrote an unsolicited twelve-page memo to Rumsfeld, telling him how he ought to handle himself in his confirmation hearings, what he should do with the agency once he took over. It was a little presumptuous of me because I hadn't been asked for it, but I gave it to Bill and he really liked it. So he passed it on to Rumsfeld. Then I didn't hear any more about it for a couple of weeks.

Then Rumsfeld got confirmed and sworn in and I got a phone call from a guy named Frank Carlucci, who was a Princeton buddy of Rumsfeld's, a foreign

service officer who was temporarily detailed to help him over at OEO. Frank invited me to come down the next day and be part of a transition advisory group. They were getting a bunch of academic types and policy wonks together to advise on the transition at OEO. I went down, there were about forty or fifty of us gathered in a room. Rumsfeld came in and spoke and gave us his marching orders and then left. After he left his secretary came in. She said, "Is there somebody here named Cheney?" I held up my hand. She took me out and walked me back into Rumsfeld's office and Don was working at his desk. This was his first day on the job. The room isn't even furnished. He's obviously pressured for time, but he looked up at me and said, "You. You're Congressional Relations. Now get the hell out of here." He didn't say, "I'm sorry I threw you out last time, or I liked the memo, or how would you like to come to work for me. He said, 'You're Congressional Relations. Now get out of here.'"

So I went out and asked where Congressional Relations was and they pointed me to it. I went down and took it over and ran the Congressional Relations shop at OEO the last several months of my fellowship. I'm still getting paid by the Ford Foundation and the American Political Science Association. That led into a four year stint with Don. We worked at OEO, we also worked at the White House. We split our time – part of the time during the day at the White House and part of the time at OEO. And then later on, full-time at the White House for about a year, and then when wage-price controls came in, we took over the Cost of Living Council. I was the director of operations for the Cost of Living Council, had three thousand IRS agents who were responsible for enforcing it.

Smith: Was that philosophically difficult?

Cheney: It got more and more philosophically difficult all the time through this. Terrible experience.

Smith: Would you dissent from the Nixonian view that "we're all Keynesians now" in that instance?

Cheney: The Democrats passed legislation giving Nixon the authority to control prices because inflation was supposedly a big issue. They never dreamed he'd do it. And then he took the authority and used it, imposed the ninety day freeze, and then we moved to flexible rules and regulations. But it was a fundamentally bad idea.

A great story I love about Nixon wage-price controls: we started them in August of '71, and we moved to flexible controls ninety days later. But we got to the point where we trained the American people to believe that whatever the price of hamburger was, it was the government's fault. If it went up ten cents a pound, Richard Nixon was the guy that raised my hamburger price. But we got on to the summer of '72 and it's the re-election campaign. We had a big meeting over in the Cabinet room one day with the members of the Cost of Living Council, which is about half the Cabinet - anybody with economic responsibilities. John Connally is the chairman of the Council, as Treasury Secretary. Rumsfeld is the executive director. And Nixon was in this meeting.

The debate was whether or not we should refreeze food prices going into the campaign, because there was the perception out there in the public mind that food prices were going up like crazy. So we had this big debate, and in the middle of it Nixon told a story about Nikita Khrushchev. He said he'd been talking to Khrushchev once, and Khrushchev had told him that sometimes, in order to continue being a statesman, you have to be a politician. If the people believed there is an imaginary river out there, you don't tell them - the politician doesn't tell them there's no river there. He builds an imaginary bridge over the imaginary river. Therefore, obviously, we've got to refreeze food prices. Food prices had gone up zero point zero percent. There had been no increase in food prices, but there was this public perception that there was.

Anyway, it was that kind of a program, and it moved me in a decidedly conservative direction. The idea that you're going to have the federal government controlling, literally, wages, prices, and profits of every man, woman, and child in America was just fundamentally a bad idea.

Smith: Out of sequence, but I have to ask you: can you imagine Gerald Ford imposing wage-price controls?

Cheney: No. But it's interesting, Arthur Burns was a big advocate of wage-price controls. Part of this harked back to his World War II experiences, I think. I think Nixon had been part of that for a while, before he shipped out back during the War.

Smith: That's right. He always claimed that that's where he really got his loathing of bureaucracy, if not necessarily bureaucrats. He was in the OPA.

Cheney: Yeah. Well, anyway, it was a bad idea. We got down to the end of this '72 election, and I'd been given a choice. Back in the summer of '71 I was working helping set up the Committee to Re-elect the President, when Rumsfeld got tapped for the controls. And I was given a choice whether or not I went to CREEP, the Committee to Re-elect, or whether I went with Rumsfeld on controls. I picked controls. That was a good choice. Most of the guys that I would have been working with ended up in a lot of trouble after the '72 election – Watergate.

When the campaign was over, the morning after the election, as I recall, Haldeman and Erlichman asked Rumsfeld, and all the other agency heads to pick up resignations from all the political appointees and their departments and agencies. Don refused to do it. He said, "You tell me who you want me to fire and I'll fire them. That's your prerogative." But what they were going to do was collect all these resignations and then keep some of them and give the rest of them back. And he thought that was a terrible way to treat people and said so.

I always had the feeling that, in part, triggered his assignment to NATO. He went from working in the White House to being the ambassador to NATO in January of '73. When he did that he gave me a chance to go with him, but I really didn't want to go to NATO. Went to work for a private company there in Washington, an investment advisory firm, and for the eighteen months that the administration was unfolding - Watergate was at its peak - I was outside government, watching all of that unfold.

Don was thinking seriously about running for the Senate from Illinois in '74. We actually opened up an office out there – set up a secretary – I was sort of the link to it. Then as things got worse and worse on the Watergate, we finally had to fold that up. It was just going to be a terrible year to run, so we dropped that idea. Then August 9th, I had come back from Wyoming and left Lynn and the girls in Wyoming. We'd been on vacation out there. Lynn was helping a friend of ours who was running for Congress in his campaign. So I went back to Washington early. I got a phone call – this would have been on the 9th (?) of August. I'd gone to a friend's house for dinner, and then went home. When I got home there was the phone call from Don's secretary – Brussels, saying that he was going to be coming back to land at Dulles the next day...afternoon about two o'clock. Would I meet his plane? So I did. This was the night that Nixon went on the tube and announced his resignation.

The next morning I watched television coverage of Nixon's goodbye speech in the East Room, and then Ford's swearing in. Got in the car and drove out to Dulles, met Rumsfeld, and there waiting for him out there was one of the White House drivers with a letter for him, which he opened up and it instructed him to come straight to the White House. It said the president wanted him to run the transition signed by Bill Scranton. He turned to me and asked me if I could spring myself for a couple of weeks to help out with the transition. I said yes, and we reported into the White House.

This is the afternoon, I guess, of the 9th of August. Ford's been sworn in, and he spent the afternoon meeting with the ambassadors and so forth. I did not know Jerry Ford. I'd been in a meeting once where he presided on the Hill, when I was a staffer. That's the only time I'd been around him. He didn't know me at all, and I didn't deal directly with him during the transition. The transition is about ten or twelve days long, is all. It focused on the domestic side of the house. He said not to mess with the national security side. You may remember the night that Nixon announced that he was going to resign, the cameras then cut to Jerry Ford out in front of his townhouse in Alexandria, and the first words out of his mouth were, "I've asked Henry Kissinger to stay and he has agreed."

He gave clear instructions to the transition team that they were not to dabble in the national security arena. He didn't want anybody involved with that. We were to look at domestic policy at OMB, the relationship between the White House and Cabinet and so forth. But the idea was to wrap it up as quickly as possible. You didn't want two tracks running on the regular White House operation ongoing, and then sort of lay over transition on that. You wanted to pass the football, so to speak, as quickly as possible.

Smith: In that initial phase, in that transition, was there discussion of this "spokes of the wheel" concept of running the West Wing? And did that play any part in Rumsfeld's departure? Was there any discussion of Rumsfeld staying on, for example, on a more permanent basis?

The reason I'm asking is because a number of people have indicated that there's a consensus that it didn't work. That it was well intentioned, but that it couldn't work. That it is emblematic, essentially, of a Congressional mindset imposed upon an executive institution. In fact, I think Rumsfeld told us, but other people have told us *about* Rumsfeld, that he had made it a condition of his coming back, that that was going to go. That the White House was going to be organized differently. Does that ring a bell?

Cheney: My recollection of it is that, you start with a proposition that there was a conventional wisdom that said the reason, or one of the reasons, Nixon had created and then there had been Watergate and the cover up and so forth, was because of the way Haldeman had organized and ran the White House - that the strong centralized staff system was part of the problem. I, personally, believe that was not true, and I'll come back to that in a minute. But, anyway, that's literally what everybody believed out there - the press, the Congress, the Ford people that were moving in - some of whom had been with him in the House, with him as vice president.

Ford is the one, I believe, who came up with notion of the spokes of the wheel - that there wouldn't be a chief of staff. That there wouldn't be any one person in charge - there'd be eight or ten people, all of whom would have equal access to the president. It was a fundamentally bad idea, but they didn't know it at the time. Al Haig is still around, and Haig's not leaving. Haig has been

the guy that provided continuity during those fourteen months of Watergate. Nixon leaves, Haig's still there. We're there for the transition and Haig's still there. Nobody had gotten up the gumption to ask Al when he was going to leave. It just hadn't been addressed. It is a messy period of time. You've got the old Nixon crowd, you've got the new Ford crowd. One of Ford's first responsibilities is to find a vice president to replace himself, where he picks Rockefeller. That happened during that transition period. And I do not recall, I'm not aware of – Don would know better than I would – that there was any discussion of his coming back to be chief of staff at that stage.

We left in late August, I want to say around the 20th, 21st, 22nd, of August. He went back to NATO and I went back to my firm in Washington. We'd completed the transition. And then, on the 9th of September, I think it was the 9th, Ford pardoned Nixon. All hell breaks loose. I always thought, at the time, I didn't disagree with the decision, I did disagree with the timing. I thought he could have waited until after the election, which was just not far away – a couple of months away.

Smith: Well, remember, Nixon almost died.

Cheney: Oh, yeah.

Smith: It's crass, but if you take advantage of that fact, I mean, you would have eventually had some sympathy out there.

Cheney: That's right. It could have been posthumous or something. Yeah.

But about a week after the pardon - this is mid-September - I'm on a business trip in Florida. I get another phone call from Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld, as I recall, is back in Chicago. His dad is very sick, a bad case of Alzheimer's, and is in a home in Chicago. Don asked me if I'd meet him that weekend in Washington, that he'd been asked to come back and talk with the president, and would I meet him on Saturday, as I recall.

So I did, at the Key Bridge Marriott, and we got together that morning. He said he thought he was going to be offered the job as chief of staff. He wanted to know, if he took it, would I sign on as a deputy. This is before it's been

offered. I said yes. So he went and met with the president and then came back and said it's a done deal, and wanted to make sure I was committed. I said I was, so the agreement is reached that Don's going to be chief of staff, Haig's going to depart, and I'm going to move in as the deputy.

We first went over to the White House – maybe it was that Sunday, I remember it was on a Sunday – and we're in the big corner office, the chief of staff's office. Haig is gone. George Joulwan is gone. George was the deputy to Haig, later became a general. You'll come across George, I'm sure. Don left and went down to the Oval Office, and when he came back he brought the president with him. Brought him in and introduced him to me. It was the first time I'd ever formally met Jerry Ford, and it was remarkable in the sense that he immediately, unquestioningly, adopted me as part of the operation.

Don wanted to function in a way that we'd take turns in terms of our regular meetings with the president, or travel. If he was on the road with the president, I'd be running things in the West Wing, and sometimes I'd take the trip and he'd be in the West Wing. Sometimes he'd go in at five o'clock at night for the daily wrap up, sometimes I would. And Ford very quickly adapted to that. I was always, not only very pleasantly surprised, but impressed with the extent of which, once you signed on, he wasn't suspicious or cautious. "You're on the team – you're part of my team," and it was full speed ahead from the very beginning.

Smith: Let me back up just a little bit, because we talked with Haig who had an interesting take, which he repeated, repeatedly. Ostensibly, it concerned the complaint that he'd made to the president about Bob Hartmann. Clearly there was no love lost there – and we won't go into the details – but he felt strongly. The president, according to Haig, said, "Al, you're just going to have to let me handle this." And Haig's response was, "Well, that answers my question. You don't want me to stay on." It sounds like Gerald Ford.

Cheney: Yeah.

Smith: I don't know whether it sounds like Al Haig or not. Was Hartmann possessive?

Cheney: Hartmann was bad news. What Bob could do, he could write a good speech for Jerry Ford, and he wrote some good ones. He was not the right guy to be running the place. He'd been the chief of staff when Ford was vice president, and I remember there was a story, I think it was the *Wall Street Journal*, that ran before Ford becomes president about how screwed up the vice president's staff is. It's Hartmann's bailiwick and it wasn't a happy shop. I'll be direct about it. Bob was the kind of a guy on writing speeches who would say, "You can't see it because the president hasn't seen it yet." And after the president had seen it, he said, "You can't see it because the president signed off on it, and we're not changing it." He made it impossible to work with the policy types. My God, you want Alan Greenspan to look at the economic speech and so forth.

Smith: Is that part of the transition from a Congressional office to the Oval Office, that he never made?

Cheney: I think so. When you are in the Congress, you've got the principal, the member, you've got a speechwriter, and that's all. He wasn't going to check with anybody, the two of them were going to work it out. When you got down to the White House, the day that Ford became president and the Nixon folks moved out, Hartmann moved from his Old Executive Office Building office, when he'd been with the vice president, into the office right next to the Oval Office. I think it had been Rose Mary Woods' office. There is the Oval, and then there is a bathroom, a little hall there with the bathroom on one side, on the other side is a little cubbyhole of an office. Then at the end of that is sort of a regular-sized office and Hartmann took that office. It was a mess.

When Rumsfeld and I took over we're trying to manage the paper flow, the people, the schedule, that's all stuff we've got to control if you're going to run the place. And we would find stuff. I would get everything coming out of the president's outbox – it would come across my desk. And there was stuff in there that I hadn't sent in. Somebody is feeding the beast from another source someplace.

Then we had a situation where, I think it was Bill Timmons, wrote a memo to the president and it showed up in *Evans and Novak*. Hartmann had gone in,

taken the Timmons memo off the president's desk, took it out and leaked it to *Evans and Novak*. So, it's a zoo, and we're trying to get control of the paper flow and the scheduling and everything.

Smith: Was the president made aware of that fact?

Cheney: I think he was aware of it, because what I did, I came up with a concept and then Rumsfeld sold it to him – that the president needed a private office. He really didn't want to go traipsing over to OEOB like Nixon did all the time to his private office. What he needed was that office where Hartmann was. That needed to be the president's private office, so we set it up that way. We had the president, as I recall, tell Hartmann - because he wouldn't take it from anybody else - tell Hartmann, "Bob, you're out." And moved him down the hall and he got the office that I had when I was the vice president. I just left here. It's the office that eventually went to Mondale, but ever since, it's been the vice president's. Nice office. Bryce Harlow used to have it.

But the fact was, that let us gain control of the paper flow and the scheduling in and out, and the president understood what we were doing. But it was a graceful way to manipulate the process, to cut Hartmann out. I think Hartmann figured out he'd gotten screwed, too. But there wasn't anything he could do about it, because the president was the one that said, "Bob, this is how it's going to be."

Smith: That's a huge question. Let me go back, because on the 9th of August – I realize you weren't there, but we talked to people who were in the East Room, who have vivid recollections of both Ford people and Nixon people. That once the ceremony ended, there was a receiving line, and then there was a reception in the State Dining Room. And, with very few exceptions, you could see the Nixon people sort of peel off and go back to their offices. Which, in a lot of ways, you could understand. But that raises the larger issue of how difficult was it to integrate existing staff? What was the president's attitude?

For example, Don Rumsfeld said he urged him early on to make changes in the Cabinet and staff. The sense we get is that he was reluctant - certainly he

was reluctant to tar folks with the Watergate brush simply because they had worked in the Nixon White House. How did you handle all of that during those first few months?

Cheney: My feeling was, we had two conflicting objectives and we had to satisfy both. One was, we had to convince the American people that this was a new day in the White House, the old crowd was gone. The folks that brought you Watergate and the cover up and all of that, they're toast. They are no longer running the show. Secondly, you had to convey to the world out there that this was a place...that the changes that had occurred didn't signify any change in fundamental U.S. policies, especially in the world, internationally.

You had these conflicting pressures for continuity and change. And it shows up in things like the president's directive to the transition team that first day, "Go deal with the domestic side of the business. Give me recommendations, Cabinet and OMB, and so forth. Don't touch national security. Stay out of Defense, CIA, State Department. Henry's got both the State Department job and the NSC job." That held for about fourteen months. Of course, when we came around later, we changed it.

Another important problem here was that Ford did not have a staff that could move in and take over the White House. It wasn't like he'd been out running a major national campaign for president, and he wins the election, and you've got a couple of months to put your people in place, and you've got a huge contingency out there of folks who want to come in and take jobs. You've got a guy who's been a Congressman from the Fifth District of Michigan, and the Republican Leader in the House, which - those aren't big management jobs. And he's been operating with his old friends, Phil Buchen, who was his law partner from 1940 Michigan, and Hartmann had been with him forever as a speechwriter. And it wasn't what you would call a dynamic set of people that he moved in with.

Then you still had Al Haig around in that first month. Nobody was in a position, nor was anybody charged with the responsibilities to fix it up, clean it up, to say, "You're in, you're out," and put together a good organization. One of the things that Rumsfeld and I did, I think we brought some order to

that process. We did make some Cabinet changes. For example, the president wanted to bring in Bill Coleman to be Secretary of Transportation.

Smith: Had he known Coleman?

Cheney: He'd known Coleman and liked him. And, of course, I think this was the second time there was an African-American Cabinet member. We had a problem though, because Claude Brinegar was Nixon's Transportation Secretary and he didn't want to leave. And he agreed only to leave if we would first fire Alexander Butterfield, who was running the FAA, part of DOT - a lot of bad blood between Brinegar and Butterfield.

Smith: Because of Butterfield's role?

Cheney: Butterfield was the guy who revealed the existence of the taping system. You were going to get your fingers burned if you do anything with Butterfield. I got the job of firing Alex Butterfield, which I did. Called him in and told him he was through. And then Brinegar quietly left, as he said he would, and we brought in Bill Coleman. Bill got to be transportation secretary. So there was stuff going on.

The thing that Don and I did was, we staffed up with some people from outside, but we kept some key people that had been working for Nixon that weren't tainted by Watergate, hadn't been involved in any way. People like Jerry Jones, who became our chief scheduler. We brought in Bill Walker to run the personnel shop. We kept Red Cavaney, who ran the advance operation. Terry O'Donnell had come on board earlier as the president's aide - we kept him. Brought in Jim Cavanaugh from Domestic Council, he'd been working up there and he became one of my deputies. Mike Duvall, who was a Nixon advance man. He'd worked in the White House going back to '67 or '68. He'd even been there under Johnson. And so we used some of those talented folks.

But you had to have a new - how to make the trains run on time. We had other situations: Dave Gergen. Gergen was in the speech shop and he got into a big fight with Hartmann and Hartmann fired him. So I got Gergen a job over at Treasury, working on Bill Simon's stuff. And then when Don left and I

took over as Chief of Staff, I brought Gergen back and put him on my staff, and he was our secret speechwriter.

Smith: One hears stories that the speech operation needed help. That it was often late, often disorganized, and infrequently attuned to the fact that it existed for one purpose only: which was to make the president sound and look good. And yet Ford sort of put up with it. There was the famous State of the Union address, I guess, where...

Cheney: Dual competing drafts of the State of the Union – oh, yeah. I was afraid you were going to bring that up. The speechwriting thing was a hell of a problem. The normal temptation is to think that you make a policy decision, and then you write a speech to explain the policy. That's not the way it works all the time. Lots of times, it's the process of having to write the speech that drives policy. You don't get the decisions made on policy until you know you're going to have to give a speech. You have the State of the Union address in a couple of weeks and you've got to resolve all these issues so you can announce the policy at State of the Union time.

To the extent that speeches drive the policy process, they've somehow got to relate to the policy process and there has to be interaction there. And, as I say, Hartmann just refused to do that. Ford never would fire Hartmann. I made an effort at one point to get him to appoint Bob as an ambassador. To get him out of town. And he wouldn't do it. He wouldn't do it. He knew Bob was a problem.

We had a situation for a while there when I brought Gergen back in to write speeches. Of course, I'm really treading on toes here. You've got Hartmann over there with a speech shop and doing his thing, and I've got Gergen, who's not a part of the speech process. But what would happen was, I'd go down at night and the president would give me the latest draft that he'd gotten from Hartmann on a speech. I would take it, I'd have Gergen rework it and rewrite it. I'd take it and give it back to the president. The president would give it to Hartmann, as though it were the president's own words. Hartmann would accept that. We went through these travails. I'd say on the time we had competing drafts of the State of the Union speech, as I recall, I was

commuting back and forth to Baltimore. Because this is the TOYM Awards - the Chamber of Commerce gave every year - picked ten outstanding young men in America. It was a big deal, and I got picked that year, and Bill Bradley did and David Boren from Oklahoma. We were having this big weekend over in Baltimore and I'm commuting back and forth to attend these sessions where we're duking it out with these competing drafts for the State of the Union speech.

It was a real problem, but basically because the president tolerated it. In Hartmann's defense, Bob wrote some of Ford's better work. But he was very hard to deal with. We had other little tidbits. This isn't going to come out. Bob's dead now, I suppose, I can talk about some of it. I can remember being in Vladivostok and my room was right across the hall from Bob's and I happened to be there at my door one morning, getting ready to leave and Bob put down his suitcase outside the door for the baggage car. It was full of bottles. I guess he was a heavy drinker. You could just hear them rattling in there. It sounded like somebody was dumping out the garbage at the bar after a bad night.

We once traveled all day long on Air Force One. I got back fairly late in the day to Andrews, and got on the helicopter. Bob was booked on the helicopter to fly into the South Lawn with the president and myself and a few others. We got on the helicopter - there's no Hartmann. We wait a couple of minutes. Still no Hartmann. So I sent somebody back to check, and Bob's passed out on Air Force One. The president waited and waited, and finally we had to leave him and take off. It was that kind of behavior that just was beyond the pale.

The stewards used to keep score. He never knew this, but they'd keep track of how many drinks they served him. He was a big martini man. I'd frequently, at the end of one of these counts, I'd just get a piece of paper with a little number on it, and that was Hartmann's consumption for that day. It was big time.

Smith: And Ford tolerated it?

Cheney: Ford tolerated it.

Smith: Throughout his presidency?

Cheney: Yeah.

Smith: One way of looking at the Ford presidency is he is someone who really did grow into the executive role over time.

Cheney: He did.

Smith: But that did not preclude...

Cheney: It wasn't perfect. There were natural tensions. Hell, there are in every White House. Each one is different. But what I've learned now, I've worked in – I guess we've had five Republican presidents since Eisenhower and I've worked for four of them. The fifth, I've worked very closely with, was the Reagan years and I was part of the House Republican leadership. Each one of them is unique. We, as political scientists, we're trained to find those common themes and threads and institutional propositions that apply across all administrations. The thing that I'm absolutely impressed with, after all these years, is each one of them is really unique, and really reflects the personality of the guy in the Oval Office and how he got there – the kinds of problems he faced. Now, the president was willing to make some other changes. We had patches there where he made some really big changes.

One other Hartmann story and then I'll quit. During the campaign in '76 he had Pat Butler working for him, who later went to work for the *Washington Post*. Pat's a good guy. There was a dust up on Air Force One and Pat had written, at my request - we decided we quickly needed a statement on some foreign policy issue - so I got Pat working on it. The president could get off at the next stop and issue a statement. Then, when Hartmann found out that Butler had written something at my direction, and he hadn't been in the loop, he fired him on Air Force One. So I brought Pat up and I said, "Okay, you're hired. Now you're working for me." So, it was those kind of situations. You had people around Ford, like any president does, who are loyal to him and who stick with him, and he doesn't like the idea of getting rid of those people.

Smith: That answers one question: I was going to say, was Hartmann quick to fire people?

Cheney: Once he got worked up, he'd pull the trigger on somebody.

Smith: Was the Schlesinger thing destined? Was it just bad chemistry? One senses that Ford resented what he saw as a certain patronizing attitude on the part of a very bright man, who didn't always conceal his IQ.

Cheney: His intelligence. Yeah.

Smith: And, in fact, Ford had spent a lot of years on the House Appropriations Committee. He knew a lot of things that...

Cheney: George Mahon was one of his best friends – the Democratic chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

The Schlesinger thing – it's important – it was bad – and it got worse as we went along. In the end, he addressed it as part of this larger package, when we made a whole series of changes. We replaced the vice president, took away the secretary of state's second hat, as NSC advisor, replaced the CIA director, replaced the secretary of defense, replaced the secretary of commerce - new people throughout. But I think it probably would have happened even if there hadn't been those broader moves – it would be my judgment on it. And the president, I'll always remember that morning, because it's when I took over as chief of staff and Rumsfeld was going to go to Defense, but he hadn't really signed on for that yet.

Smith: He indicates he was reluctant to do it.

Cheney: He was. There'd been a leak on a Saturday night that this shake up was in the works and so we decided we had to accelerate part of it. I got hold of Colby, the CIA director, and Schlesinger of Defense. The night before I worked with Jack Marsh on this and we got word to them that they were to be in the Oval Office the next morning. Colby came in first, and the president picked up his resignation. Colby took it like a man. It was pleasant and he departed.

Smith: And he was offered an ambassadorship or something?

Cheney: I can't remember on Colby. On Schlesinger, I went in before Schlesinger came in. Schlesinger was waiting in the outer office. I went in and said, "Now, Mr. President, have you thought about maybe offering Jim something? Making him an ambassador some place, or at least give him the offer to save face here a bit." And he looked at me and, as he was occasionally got, chewing on his pipe, he got red spots on his cheeks on both sides. That's when you could tell when he was pissed off. And what he said to me was – and he was not a man who ever used a lot of vulgarity – but what he said to me, he said, "Dick, get him in here so I can fire him." So, I did.

Smith: Sounds like that had been welling up for some time.

Cheney: When you say Jerry Ford didn't like to fire people, that's one he enjoyed. I'm a Jim Schlesinger fan, and I like him and I think he's a bright guy and he did good work at DOD. But I think you're right, a big part of the problem was, the president had expressed his dissatisfaction to Schlesinger about how the Defense budget was getting cut, and he wanted Jim to do a better job on the Hill – marshalling support for it. Jim's reaction to that was to hold a press conference criticizing George Mahon, chairman of the Appropriations Committee. Wrong move.

Now, whoever was responsible for those cuts, it wasn't Jerry Ford's bosom buddy, George Mahon, who was a great gentleman, and as I say, one of the longest serving members in Congress, and they had a very close relationship. The other thing that hurt was in the spring of '75, when we had the evacuation of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam war. The North Vietnamese are taking Saigon and we've got people at the embassy getting off and getting on helicopters and so forth. The plan was, as I recall, in the middle of a State dinner for the Dutch, or somebody, that when the word came down from the Pentagon that everybody was out, then we'd go out and announce that we'd completed the evacuation and all the Americans had been safely been able to evacuate the scene. So that word came over and they went out and announced it.

Then we got another call from the Pentagon saying, oops, we screwed up, gentlemen. There are another 50 or 60 Marines still on the ground at the embassy. What they'd done is trigger on the ambassador. The ambassador always said he'd be the last man out. So when he came out, somebody made the mistake of saying, well, everybody's out. But they weren't. The president was embarrassed by that and angry that it wasn't better handled. So there were things like that.

Smith: Sure.

Cheney: I think Kissinger and Schlesinger didn't get along. Henry got a lot of time in the Oval Office with the president and Schlesinger didn't. It was the right thing to do and it had to happen. Sometimes things don't work.

Smith: It will come as no surprise to you, Mel Laird has a ex-post facto theory about how things could have been done better. Of course, he's got his theory about the pardon. He said he told the president, "Don't do anything until I get back," and he was going to put together a bipartisan delegation from both Houses and they would come down and petition the president to do this. The problem - given the political climate of the time - that any trial balloon would have been shot down before it got above the trees. I don't know how you could prepare the country for that news. Now, you're right, you could have waited until after the '74 election. Apparently, Ford was being told by Jaworski or at least Jaworski's representatives that, in fact, it might be two years before there could be a trial. Which, if you factor that in, you can understand why. He's a new president and he sees this dominating his entire term.

Cheney: Yeah, I've talked to him about it over the years. When I went up one of the first things I did after Don and I came back and took over, was, shortly after that he had to go to the Hill to testify before the Judiciary Committee. I went along that day and sat back in the committee room and watched him. I really came to believe that he'd reached the point that this was the right thing to do, and politics never entered into it. If he'd considered the political consequences, or how to do it so that it would be politically less damaging, it would have somehow been out of character with the decision he made and the reason he did it. I think he really did do it based on the notion that the country

didn't need any more of the grief that this all represented. He needed to put Watergate behind him and it was a terrible continuing burden on him and on the presidency, and once he decided to do it, it was like firing Schlesinger, get him in here so I can fire him.

Smith: But I wonder if there is not a certain element of naiveté, because, remember - of course you weren't around - but August 28th was the first press conference. He went there sincerely believing that they were going to talk about Cyprus and Turkey and inflation and everything except what they all wanted to talk about. And he came out of the press conference, I think, angry at himself because he hadn't handled some of the questions very well, and angrier that the press seemed obsessed. I assume all kinds of emotions were boiling at that point. But supposedly that is a turning point in terms of deciding, if not now, when? Isn't it a little naïve on the part of a president to think that...

Cheney: Yeah, but you can _____ on that. It was just a few weeks after the pardon – this is early October. It's the first time I was ever in charge of a presidential trip. We went on a campaign swing through the West. We started in Kansas City with a Lick Your Plate Clean speech. I don't know if you've come across this.

Smith: No.

Cheney: We'd had the Economic Summit earlier. Again, Don and I weren't around, but out of that they'd done a big speech, an economic speech on television. They had more material than they could use, so, they decided to give the second half of the speech in front of the convention of the Future Farmers of America – all the young kids out there in their blue corduroy jackets and the gold symbols on them and so forth. They were having their convention in Kansas City and he went there and gave that speech, and he talked about lick your plate clean – fight inflation and so forth. The Lick Your Plate Clean speech, was the way the staff referred to it.

We went from there on out to California, en route to California, he got word that Nixon was back in the hospital. We were staying at the Century Plaza Hotel. He called me up and said he wanted to go visit Nixon - called me up to

the front of the plane. I argued with him. I said, "Mr. President, here we are, the election is a month out [sic], we've still got all this controversy over the pardon, the last thing we need to do is to go down and meet with Nixon and have that dominate the headlines. It is just going to blow away anything we are going to try accomplish with this trip. We're trying to elect Republicans." And he said, "Damn it, Dick, he's a friend of mine. He's sick. He's a former president of the United States. I want to go see him."

So I scurried around and got helicopters lined up and one landed in Century Plaza parking lot there in Los Angeles the next morning. Got on the helicopter and we flew down and it was Long Beach Naval Hospital or someplace down there. We went in to the hospital and they had the press sort of gathered in this fairly big room, and then Ford had to go through some swinging doors. On the other side of the swinging doors he was greeted by Pat and the girls, and then walked on down to the room that Nixon was in. It's a new wing of the hospital and Nixon was the only patient on the floor. When they got down to the door where he was located, the door was jammed, they could not get it open.

So, you've got the press out there, outside these swinging doors wondering what the hell is going on. You've got the president and Nixon's family standing in the hallway. Nixon's laying there, tubes running in every part of his body. He's pretty sick. They finally got a carpenter up to take the door off the hinges so that they could get in. Nothing works. When it goes bad, it all goes bad.

Smith: A euphemism for the campaign.

Cheney: Right. So we finish there, we went on. We had a campaign in California, and Oregon and Utah. Stopped in Grand Junction, Colorado, where we did the speech – a big rally. They had baseball stands full of people and a flatbed trailer parked across the pitcher's mound. It was homecoming weekend at La Mesa's Junior College there in Grand Junction. So the homecoming queen and all of her attendants were lined up in their finery on the flatbed trailer, and Ford got up and got ready to speak. He looked down the line of young lovelies and walked down and gave every one of them a kiss. Then he went

back to the mike, he got ready to make the speech, looked down the line again, and he went back and did it a second time. Everybody got a second kiss.

We then got on the airplane, flew to Kansas, did a rally for Bob Dole in a terrible thunderstorm. I think when we got all through and looked back on that trip, Dole was about the only guy that got elected. Everybody else went down in flames, Watergate era. *New Yorker* magazine ran a cover of Bozo the Clown above the president. I was convinced when I got back that Rumsfeld was never going to let me out on the road again because nothing worked. It was a dismal kind of experience.

The speech thing entered into that again, with the Lick Your Plate Clean speech kind of thing.

Smith: We've been told that Whip Inflation Now, in fact, was a product of the speech shop.

Cheney: Yeah. And the last day we were there, we'd had a breakfast with the Cabinet upstairs in the residence. After that was over with I walked him back to the West Wing for the last time, said goodbye to the secretary. People are crying and so forth. He went around, once last look around, and then left and went back up to the residence to meet Carter, who was coming down, of course. The crew came in and started stripping the place – the Oval Office – of all his pictures. They opened the drawers in the desk and in one of the drawers – they had drawers on the front of the desk – and one of them held cufflinks and stuff like that. The other one opened up and it was full of Whip Inflation Now buttons that he'd put in there two and half years ago and he was going to pass them out. He never got rid of very many of them. They sat in that drawer all that time.

Smith: That's great.

One quick thing, the selection process. Someone who was very close to him told me they had this discussion. I believe the president called Rockefeller and he'd asked for a day or something to call back, and a conversation took place. This guy went through all the reasons why Rockefeller would be miserable

and unsuccessful, and there's a long list. Finally he [Rockefeller] said, "Look, everything you say is true. But you don't understand, this is my last shot."

And so I think he wasn't totally honest with himself as to why he took it. Yes, he took it because the country was in a crisis and the president asked him, that was all true, but it wasn't the whole truth. And it was almost doomed before it began. You do wonder how deeply the president had thought about it before he did it. It makes a lot of sense on the surface, to give someone who has a global reputation and a lot of good people around him, and appeals to the other part of the party, although he obviously alienated a larger part of the party, and all of that. Rockefeller was led to believe that he would be in domestic policy, like Kissinger was in foreign policy. And that was a mistake, clearly.

Cheney: Interesting. Well, what I remember about him, the selection happened during that period of time which, technically - while we were having the transition - was one of the first things Ford does. There was speculation about George Bush. I got a phone call from Bill Steiger, who was my old boss, lobbying me on behalf of George Bush. They had an organized effort to try to promote Bush for it. And the other guy who was under serious consideration, because Ford told me this himself sometime later, was Rumsfeld. He really had three choices: he had Rumsfeld and Bush, whom he believe represented the future of the party - young guys, dynamic guys that he would have ordinarily picked. But he really felt, as a guy who had been a Congressman from Michigan, and that was it, that he needed somebody of real international stature. And that's why he went with Rockefeller.

I also believe, although I have no evidence to support this, that Henry Kissinger played a major role in all of this. Those first words out of his mouth, when it's first public that he's about to become president of the United States, "I've asked Henry to stay and he's agreed," I think Henry had an important impact on some of these decisions. And, of course, Henry was a Rockefeller protégé.

Smith: True.

Cheney: If we go on and move forward in terms of timing, I became convinced that we could not win the battle against Reagan in '76 - we couldn't capture the nomination with Rockefeller on the ticket – that he was too much baggage. He came from that wing of the party. Ronald Reagan had been the guy that had clear sailing to the nomination in '76 until Nixon resigned, and all of a sudden Ford's on the scene. If we were going to win the nomination and fend off Reagan, we needed to have the ability to create the idea of competition for the vice presidency. We needed to be able to dangle it in front of all those various players out there, which is what we did. The president asked him to get off the ticket, in effect.

Smith: Before that, because Bo Calloway had made some remarks, and Rockefeller went to his grave convinced that Rumsfeld did him in, thought that Calloway was a Rumsfeld person and that all this was orchestrated and so on. Which strikes me as, at the very least an exaggeration. Calloway was pretty much a loose cannon, or was he acting on his own?

Cheney: Well, Calloway was...

Smith: Who was his sponsor?

Cheney: Well, I suppose I was, as much as anybody. When we put together the campaign committee, we got a problem in the sense that we're going to get a challenge from the conservative wing of the party. And we needed to take action that would allow us to help fend that off. If we're going to run a Nelson Rockefeller style of presidential campaign, we'll probably get our butts kicked the same way he did in California in 1964. The Calloway selection, Bo had been a Republican Congressman from Georgia. He was secretary of the Army, as I recall when we moved him in. I eventually had to fire him, he got into this deal with using Army letters to talk about his ski area, or some such thing – somebody else I had to let go.

But it wasn't because he was anti-Rockefeller that he was picked. Any Southern Republican who had a base in the conservative wing of the party would have been anti-Rockefeller. Bo's problem was probably that he talked about it. But I don't remember that being a special problem. I had a terrible

run in with Rockefeller. Rockefeller was convinced I was out to do him in. At the convention in Kansas City, we were slated to - after the president gave his acceptance speech - bring out the vice presidential candidate and raise hands and bring out the families and so forth. And we had a problem, because we had the new vice presidential candidate, Bob Dole, and we had the old vice president, Nelson Rockefeller. And Nelson Rockefeller did not want to go out after Bob Dole. He *was* the vice president of the United States, by God, he was going out. So we had that fight to resolve.

Then he'd given his speech that afternoon to the convention and in the middle of the convention the mike had gone out, the sound system had gone down. He had confronted me underneath the podium during that evening, once we got there. Backed me up against the wall and just laced me from one end to the other. I was totally innocent. I had nothing to do with turning out the sound system. But his conspiratorial mind said, Cheney controls everything, Cheney did it.

Part of the problem that we ran into was really created by Ford and Rockefeller. Now, they got along fine, nominally, but on the one hand, Ford made the decision to give Rockefeller control over the domestic council, but then at the same time, we had enunciated a policy across the administration that there aren't going to be any new starts.

Smith: We've been told that a major factor behind that decision, and when it was announced, was to basically brush back the vice president who had a habit every Thursday of coming into the lunch with the president with a shiny new program with an indeterminate price tag. and with all of the force of his enthusiasm and personality behind it. But it hadn't been cleared up and at some point the president, and I don't know in what words, but made it clear that he'd like to end that.

Cheney: My feeling is, I'd have to go back and maybe check this, but we announced the "No New Starts" because of the economic situation, because we were faced with inflation and recession and so forth. We also had a situation where the Democrats had overwhelmingly controlled the Congress, and it wasn't like we could get anything through, _____ we wouldn't want it anyway.

What we had was a veto strategy in terms of dealing with Congress. We put the No New Starts marker out there for good and legitimate policy reasons. Rockefeller just refused to abide by it. He would come in for these weekly sessions with the president and he always had a new proposal. I'd go down that evening, or sometimes the president would even call me right after Rockefeller left, and I'd go down and he'd hand me the new proposal and he'd say, "Dick, what do we do with this?" And I'd say, "Well, Mr. President, we'll staff it out." And so it would go to OMB and then get fed out through the system, and the answer would always come back, "This is not consistent with our basic fundamental policy," and get shot down. Rockefeller became convinced I was out to do him in. It was another one of the charges against me.

I think Ford felt badly about it, but he wasn't willing to violate the policy until the very end. And you may remember, one of his last official acts was to send up Rockefeller's energy proposal, this monster of a big spending project.

Smith: The Energy Independence Corporation. A hundred billion dollars. For anyone who says Rockefeller moved to the right to chase the caboose... the fact is, he was going to fund it with the same moral obligation bonding that he'd used in New York. He hadn't changed at all, really. The story is, supposedly, that the president, at one point, and I don't know where, but that Bill Simon was arguing, this thing had been discussed in the Cabinet and Simon kept up the argument pretty vociferously.

Cheney: For or against it?

Smith: Against, not surprisingly. And the president said something to the effect that, Bill, we both know Congress is never going to let this go anywhere. But he didn't want to embarrass Nelson. Does that ring a bell at all?

Cheney: Yeah, I think what he did for Rockefeller as he left, he felt that he ought to go out of his way to make it the last message he sent to Congress. It was right towards the end, just before the inauguration, and I really felt that he felt he owed Nelson one; he'd told him no so many times. He also had a lot of sympathy for anybody serving in that job. He hated the job, Ford did. He told

me that on more than one occasion, the nine months he spent as vice president were the worst nine months of his life. He told me that after I got to be vice president.

Smith: Was that because of the unique position that he was in of having to defend Nixon, but not defend him too much. Or is it just endemic to the job?

Cheney: I think it was both. No question, there was a unique set of circumstances. They've got him out on the road, flying around in an old Conair prop job. They don't even give him a jet, doing fundraisers, trying to build support in the party, and Nixon is going down in flames back in Washington. I think that was a terribly frustrating experience. If I'd had to do that as vice president, it would have been a bummer. But I think he also felt, over the years, that it was a nasty job. It was reflected in what he demanded from Reagan in 1980, when they were in Detroit and Reagan is trying to get Ford to go on the ticket, and Ford is saying, "Okay, but I'll only do it if I get control of the National Security Council. I want a major say in OMB, personnel," and he started ticking off all this stuff.

I sat through a session in Detroit because I was a delegate to the convention that year from Wyoming, and there was all of this stuff going on, swirling around Ford. I was not directly involved until I got a call from Howard Baker and John Rhodes from the Senate and House leader. And they asked me to come down to the hotel, the main convention hotel, which I did together with Bob Teeter. They had Bob and I in because they knew we were close to Ford, and they had some major problems with what was going on here. They thought we might be able to come in and shed some light on it, maybe, and bring some sanity to the situation.

Teeter and I sat there and listened to Bill Casey, on behalf of Ronald Reagan, run through this list and we couldn't believe it. They were willing to give him a hell of a lot. Now, fortunately in the end, cooler heads prevailed. I had the feeling that Ford didn't really want the job and one way he could get out of it was ask for the moon, and he did. And the Reagan people figured out you can only have one president at a time. I think he had a mixture of sentiments about the job, about Rockefeller. You will appreciate very much the fact that

Rockefeller stayed true to the cause, even after he'd asked him to get off the ticket.

Smith: He was a good soldier.

Cheney: Delivered the delegates from New York, boy, when we needed them. He could easily have got off the reservation and I always felt, after the fact, Ford sometimes had second thoughts about having pushed Rockefeller out. I think it was the right thing to do.

Smith: That's interesting, because I've seen this, I've talked to him about it, and I've seen it in other interviews he did: Ford could surprise you. He could come to you with a fresh take on a situation that you hadn't thought about, and all of a sudden you thought, well, of course. In some ways maybe it's leapfrogging guilt, because, clearly, the question of whether he [Rockefeller] was pushed or whether he jumped - he was clearly pushed. And I think Ford felt some guilt about that on a personal level. Maybe it's a bit of rationalization, but you know what? It's a damn good one. He said, "I don't think Nelson would have been happy as vice president in a second term," which was clearly...

Cheney: Clearly the case.

Smith: Absolutely. So I think then he convinced himself that he was doing Nelson a favor by...

That weekend, when the story began to leak, and one of the problems with Rockefeller was he went up to Pocantico for weekends. He wasn't a part-time vice president, but Happy was up there with the kids, and he would go up there on the weekends. So, anyway, he's up there that weekend, and on Sunday he's playing golf with Laurance, and the phone call comes, calling from the White House, that this is leaking. The person who took the call to him told me he wouldn't take the call. And he was finally asked, point blank by this individual, "Are you telling me you won't take a call from the President of the United States?" And he said, "That's exactly what I'm telling you," and he played golf.

Cheney: I never heard that.

- Smith: He was angry. His anger lasted about – and there is only one other person who ever saw him angry, Mac Mathias.
- Cheney: At that incident?
- Smith: At that incident. And right at that time when Mathias was trying to say something consoling and... Rockefeller, who was also not one for vulgar language, Rockefeller says to Mathias, “Who wants to hang around with those shits, anyway?” And it was in the heat of the moment, but he delivered New York and played a significant role in delivering Pennsylvania.
- Cheney: Well, after we fired Schlesinger and Colby that morning, then we got on the airplane and flew to Jacksonville, Florida for a summit with Sadat. As we were landing in Jacksonville, he called me up to the cabin again and told me to get on the phone and get Rumsfeld’s commitment to serve as secretary of defense because Rumsfeld wasn’t on board yet for that. All of a sudden that morning I’d started as Rumsfeld’s deputy, and by noon, or whatever it is, I’m acting on behalf of the president, trying to get Rumsfeld to go to the Cabinet job. Then I think we came back that night and then on Monday, I believe, is when he had Rockefeller in, and formalized the process.
- Smith: He brought the letter, I think, at that point, that he had drafted over the weekend.
- Cheney: And, as I say, I still believe the vice presidency played a crucial role in that nomination fight in ’76. With Reagan, it led Reagan to go with the Schweiker ploy, which hurt him badly. That’s what gave us the Mississippi delegation. I don’t think that would have ever happened if we’d been running with Rockefeller as our running mate.
- Smith: Let me ask you, I’ve been told you can tell us better than anyone else, tell us about Clarke Reed and Mississippi. Mr. Reed has a reputation of someone who can be bought, but doesn’t always stay bought. What transpired? Was the Schweiker thing, in fact, just what he needed to do what he was already inclined to do?

Cheney: No. Clarke was, of course, a long time Republican chairman in Mississippi. He'd been a Nixon man. By this time in '76, Reagan was running flat out out there. We're winning Florida and New Hampshire. He's winning North Carolina and Texas and so forth.

Mississippi has got the unit rule. They've got thirty delegates, but they've got thirty alternates as well, and what they do, they all take half a vote and all vote together and whichever candidate got a majority of the votes, then all thirty delegate votes went there. So you could have a delegation that was split 31-29, counting the delegates and the alternates, and whoever got the thirty-one would get the full delegate support. So, it was unique that way.

There was a hell of a contest. Reed was nominally neutral as the party chairman. Billy Munger was the Reagan chairman. I'd go on down to Mississippi to meet with the delegation because we were doing everything we could to round up uncommitted delegates, and that was obviously one of the key targets. I met with Clarke and a lot of the delegates he had together for a delegation meeting. I think it was in Jackson that weekend. Then I got on the airplane and flew back to Washington.

When I got off the airplane, I heard that Reagan had announced that Schweiker was going to be his running mate in this effort to reach out to the left. And it was clearly aimed at trying to shake the Pennsylvania delegation. I went to the White House, I got hold of Drew Lewis, who was our chairman in Pennsylvania, and who clearly the Reagan people were working hard. Drew, to his credit, said, "Tell the president I'm with him. There's nothing to worry about in Pennsylvania. It's solid, it doesn't matter what he does with Schweiker. We're Ford people."

Then I had the president call Clarke Reed. Clarke was pissed at Reagan and what he'd done picking Schweiker. And in the anger of the moment, he committed to Ford, and that created some real tensions inside the Mississippi delegation. I think if it hadn't been for the Schweiker ploy, he would never have had the incentive. He might have well have stayed neutral until things sorted out and they got down to the convention.

The actual vote was cast at the convention, in a delegation meeting, when we won the vote. But I'm going to say; once Clarke committed, he stayed committed. I think it tore him up. Years after that I'd see him occasionally and dealt with him some. We really put him through the wringer. He wished to hell he'd never had to go through that process. I don't think he was looking for an out so much as he reacted with a flash of anger at the Reagan ploy on Schweiker, and the president called him at exactly the right time and put the arm on him and got him to commit.

Smith: It's interesting. Stu Spencer – we spent six hours with Stu Spencer...

Cheney: Did you?

Smith: Oh, gosh, great stuff.

Cheney: Stu's full of good stuff.

Smith: He talked about Reagan and it's fascinating listening to a pro dissect the opposition. He said Reagan is someone who, if you throw him off his rhythm - he's a rhythm candidate, he says - you throw him off his rhythm, it takes him almost a week to get back. And the ad about Governor Reagan couldn't start a war – apparently Reagan was so angry he punched a hole through the plane wall. Suffice to say he was off his rhythm.

Cheney: I never heard that.

Smith: But listening to Spencer talk about it - he was ecstatic with, I guess it was Sears, who decided to make it a procedural fight at the convention.

Cheney: Yeah. 16-C.

Smith: Because, of course, Stu believed you needed an *emotional* issue, and foreign policy was that issue. I guess Henry wasn't happy about it, but by ceding the platform, you in effect, nailed down the nomination. Does that ring a bell?

Cheney: Yeah. Again I come back to the idea, the reason they tried 16-C, and I think John Sears was the guru behind a lot of this, is because of the opening for vice president, and to try to get Ford to designate who his running mate was. Once they got in trouble with Schweiker, then you could change 16-C and force

Ford to do what Reagan had done when he picked Schweiker, and pick somebody, and that was going to piss off somebody in the party. So it was not an unreasonable choice, but, in effect, it was forced by the fact that there was a vacancy in the vice presidency, not on a decision that had been made seven months before. And once we won on 16-C, we were focused on that, we thought that that's the key fight. And it was.

What followed after that, after the rules were adopted that night was the platform fight, and Jesse Helms had gathered together this foreign policy plank for the platform that was beautifully done. It was tough, didn't name Henry by name, but you knew who that querulous bastard was who was leading Ford astray, and who was for détente, and all of these various and sundry issues. It led to a great meeting we had up in Ford's suite at the hotel. Kissinger was there and Rockefeller, Korologos and Timmons. I'm sure Stu was probably there, and the president.

Rockefeller and Kissinger are arguing vociferously that we have to defeat that platform plank. They want us to go war, go to the mattresses, kill this plank, and our thinking, looking at it, this is late at night, we've already won on 16-C, our people are in bars all over Kansas City thinking we won the fight. We'll never get them back. If you go to a vote on this, we're going to lose. And that will undo all the good we did with the rules fight, and could, in fact, reverse the whole dynamic of the convention. Then Henry threatened to quit. He said, "If you don't go down and fight this fight and beat this on the floor, I'm going to quit." And that's when Tom Korologos piped up and he said, "For Christ's sake, Henry, if you're going to quit, do it now. We need the votes." A memorable, memorable moment.

Smith: Doesn't that sound like Tom?

Cheney: It sounds exactly like him.

Smith: Was Ford just kind of observing all of this?

Cheney: Oh yeah. As I recall, he was sitting there observing all of this. But he made the decision. He backed those of us who didn't want to go have this fight. And so, what we did when they brought the plank up, we just agreed to it. There

was never a vote on it. And it was exactly the right thing to do. That was the end of the rebellion. We'd won the key fight, and we went on about our business.

Smith: Stu, by the way, tells a story, so I'll give you an opportunity to tell me whether he's telling it accurately or not. It's a wonderful story, but only half of the story has ever been in print – it's the second half involving you that makes the story so great. Stu was not thrilled with the way things were going, and it was the end of a long week. He did say one of the frustrations he had originally on the job was that he spent half his time fending off all Ford's buddies on Capitol Hill who would come to him to tell him what was wrong. He went in and told the president, in no uncertain terms, and it stopped.

So, anyway, he's there and he's trying to think of a euphemism, because he had these numbers – the president would go out and loved to campaign, and he had these not very good speeches from the speech shop, and his numbers would go down. He couldn't come up with a euphemism, so finally he says, "Look, Mr. President, you're a great president, but you're a fucking lousy campaigner." Now the only other person in the room was you. First of all, what other president could you say it to? Which is revealing in and of itself. But the great story is the sequel, because, when Germond-Witcover's book comes out the story is there. And as Stu tells the story, he called you, very upset, going on and on and on, and you let him kind of rumble, run down. And finally you said, "Stu, there was a third person in that room." And it never occurred to Stu that the president might have told the story himself. Which is a great story.

Cheney: No, I remember, it was when we took in the campaign plan. I'd had Stu and Foster Chanock and Mike Duvall, guys who worked for me, pulling together the fall campaign plan, and this is, I think, before the convention. Stu and I took it into the Oval Office, and what I remember was the president saying, "What's this?" And Stu was looking at him and saying, "Mr. President, this says you are a lousy fucking campaigner." That's the language he used. And the president sort of reared back. He wouldn't take that off just anybody, but

he would take that off Stu. And, as you say, he's one of the few people that the president would listen to that and respond to it.

Smith: There's also the funny story, I think it's in one of these interviews that Brokaw did, I think it was with you. Where the dinner for Queen Elizabeth - if Her Majesty had looked at the guest list - she would have been astonished at how many delegates and uncommitted delegates and wives were attending this state dinner.

Cheney: Yeah. About half the Wyoming delegation to the national convention was there that night. I mean, these people had never seen... they were wearing their boots, and white tie - it's a special occasion.

No, the story I love about uncommitted delegates, I don't know whether we've ever talked about it or not, was, as we went through this process, uncommitted delegates became like gold. We'd do anything to get your hands on an uncommitted delegate. We had this woman from Brooklyn who would announce she was for Reagan, and then she would announce she was for Ford, and so forth. Finally, we got hold of her, and I asked her, "What do we have to do to get you to commit to the president?" She said, well, she wanted to bring her family down, and have them meet with the president in the Oval Office. So, she did, and on the appointed day they showed up in the West Wing lobby - the scruffiest bunch of people you ever saw in your life. We took them in and shoved them into the Oval Office. I didn't even go in, I couldn't stand to watch. They came out about thirty minutes later, the president made the sale, and she committed, and she stayed right with us.

Then the dinner for the Queen. With the Bicentennial year we had all that good stuff to use. We finally get down shortly before the convention, and the Fords are in bed late at night upstairs in the residence. In those days Pennsylvania Avenue was open and a guy jumped that fence off Pennsylvania Avenue and headed towards the White House carrying a long length of something in his hands. The executive protective guy was out there and hollered at him to stop. He didn't stop. Fired a warning shot and told him to stop. He didn't stop, he kept coming. So the guy did the only thing he could,

he took aim and shot him and dropped him right there on the North Lawn of the White House.

All hell breaks loose. I mean there are sirens going everywhere, police cars. The guy who did the shooting had only been on the force about six months and he was really shaken up by it, so they got him down in the Secret Service command post underneath the West Wing. Then all of a sudden, this happens sometimes - a situation like that - it got very quiet for just a moment and one of the older agents leaning over against the wall announced, he said, "Gentlemen, if that fellow we just shot was an uncommitted delegate, we're in deep shit." It's a true story, actually. So the uncommitted delegate stuff was very important.

Smith: Was the White House slow, originally, to recognize either the inevitability of the Reagan challenge, or the seriousness of the threat that he posed?

Cheney: I think that there was a hope that there would be a way to get Reagan not to run. We had Tom Reed, who was secretary of the Air Force, who had been, I think, Reagan's national committeeman from California for a long time. He was fairly close to the operation. We worked through Tom to try to feed back into the Reagan organization to find out what was going on. We talked to him about Cabinet jobs - if we could get him into the Cabinet - make him part of the Ford team. We even tried that.

Stu, when he signed on, of course, was very important because he knew the Reagan operation better than anybody else. I think Stu always took it seriously. I certainly did. We didn't have a lot of time. By the time the president gets sworn in, in August of '74 - by the summer of '75 we're going flat out getting organized. Then of course the campaign really kicks off in the New Hampshire primary in February.

Smith: Mrs. Ford, and her relationship with the campaign: there is this storyline that certainly some of the things she said, most famously the *Sixty Minutes* interview, produced at least, an initial wave from some, of outrage - succeeded, as time went by, perhaps to the surprise of many in the White House, with poll ratings that were much higher than her husband's. Although,

presumably, not among those who were going to vote for Ronald Reagan anyway. How much of an issue was that? How did you deal with it?

Cheney: Well, I didn't think it was much of an issue. I have a recollection, I can't remember where it comes from, but of talking to the president about it. Raising it with the president that Mrs. Ford was out doing *Sixty Minutes*, did he know where she was? And him saying, "Look guys, you want to get her to do something else? You go talk to her, because I can't." I think many of us saw it, it certainly eventually got to the point where we saw this is Betty Ford, and she's the real deal, and I didn't see this as having that big an impact, negatively, politically. People weren't going to vote or not vote for Jerry Ford based on Betty. Also, she'd been through the cancer stuff. I know that was hard.

Smith: In the realm of euphemisms, was there an awareness that she had a problem at that point?

Cheney: No.

Smith: No.

Cheney: No, I mean, I dealt with her a lot, I dealt with the East Wing a lot. I spent a lot of time with the president. There were staff problems in the East Wing, there always are. You bring in a woman who's been the wife of a Congressman and all of a sudden she's got a staff and social secretary and everything.

There was the night we were in Germany on a formal visit, staying in an old castle. I got called about midnight by the president to come on down to his room. I went down and there was he and Mrs. Ford in their pajamas and robes and they wanted me to immediately fire the social secretary.

Smith: I bet Nancy really...

Cheney: Nancy Lammerding or something like that.

Smith: She's gone now, bless her soul, but what a piece of work.

Cheney: I talked them out of it and said, "Let me wait until we get back to Washington." We were right smack dab in the middle of this big trip, I think

we were coming out of Helsinki, or going to Helsinki, and said, "Here in the middle of the night I fire the social secretary and it's going to top tomorrow's lead. We're not going to get what we need out of it." So they agreed that I could do it when I got back, but I had to do it.

And then we had been through the bit with the Korean, Park-sung, whoever...

Smith: There was Nancy Howe.

Cheney: Nancy Howe and her husband committed suicide or something? So there were management problems over there. At one point the president told me that he'd sent Rick Sardo(?) over to clean things up in the East Wing. Rick was a Marine colonel who was one of the military aides, one of the senior guys in the military office. Rough, tough Marine, twenty years in the corps, or something like that. About two weeks later I walked into my office one morning and there is Rick Sardo. He is a basket case. He's been over there and they've worked him over and given him the East Wing treatment over there and that was one Marine that had taken all he could. We sent him back to the Pentagon. He wasn't up to the task. Those were tough assignments.

Smith: I just finished doing an oral history project for the White House Historical Association in which we interviewed all the surviving White House social secretaries, who are a fascinating group of people. You really can trace the evolution of a lot of things. But, clearly, one of the things that emerges is the use of state dinners and other devices for political ends. We talked a little bit about that in terms of '76. How were East and West Wing relations coordinated? Whether or not it was social times, but speeches, or travel - how did that work?

Cheney: I'm trying to remember. When we would put together the guest list for state dinners, and we had a whole bunch of them...

Smith: Because of the Bicentennial you had an unusual number.

Cheney: Because of the Bicentennial. And when the Queen came, we had to accommodate more people, so we set up a tent in the Rose Garden, and Bob Hope was there. These were great events. Everybody wanted to come. It

generated a problem with the Cabinet because Bill Simon thought he ought to be included in every state dinner, and Bill didn't take no for an answer. The president had established a policy, aside from Henry, the secretary of state, that we were going to rotate Cabinet members to these deals. So Simon raised all kinds of hell, but we stuck with it, wouldn't let him go in.

These were sought after invitations, and I think Maria Downs became the social secretary, and she was somebody who was very easy to work with. She was very close to my secretary, Kathy Embody(?), they knew each other. I still hear from Maria to this day. We could work through Maria with just about anything we wanted. These guest lists would be put together and there would be recommendations that would come in from various places. The Fords enjoyed doing it and I'd say we did more, probably that summer, than we did the entire years of the Bush administration.

Smith: But your impression was that Mrs. Ford enjoyed her job as First Lady.

Cheney: Yeah, I thought she did. And, as I say, I was unaware that she had any problem. If there was a problem there, it wasn't obvious at the time.

Smith: Mentioning Bill Simon. One of the really defining things about the Ford presidency, first of all, is the caliber of the Cabinet, and the people around him. But, secondly, his degree of comfort with strong, sometimes contentious, egos, and how he used the Cabinet and advisors. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Cheney: Yeah, he was, there was no question, he was comfortable with strong people, and with debate, discussion about the issues and so forth. He enjoyed that. We'd have a tough economic issue to decide and we'd get the economic policy council, or whatever we called it, get them together in the Cabinet room and there would be a big debate. He usually would not make a decision there, he'd end up back in his office and he relied on a few key people lots of times.

In the economic arena it would be Greenspan, maybe Jim Lynn. Sometimes Arthur Burns. But lots of times he'd say, "Get Alan over here," and we'd get Greenspan in and then the two of them would sit down and talk about the

bigger meeting. Everybody got a chance to be heard in the bigger meeting, but he'd sit down and have that close relationship with somebody he really trusted. And Greenspan is about as good as you could get in the economic arena.

Smith: Alan Greenspan tells a wonderful story about one day he went over. Simon and Arthur Burns were discussing Simon's idea to sell some of the gold reserves and they got into it. I mean, really got into it. Ford listened to this whole thing and then, ten minutes later, Greenspan's phone rang, "Come on over." And he walks into the Oval Office, and Ford says, "What the hell was that all about?"

Cheney: Yeah, he would do that. But one of the things I was always struck by, and I think the president appreciated this, too - in his later years we talked about on more than one occasion, the extent to which people who were important in later administrations, sort of got their break, or were an important part of his administration. We used to see in our annual dinner - I probably attended there on more than one occasion - where he had people like Jim Baker, who's our campaign chairman who ends up, obviously as Bush's campaign chairman and secretary of treasury. Secretary of State Rumsfeld, two tours as secretary of defense, myself, Scowcroft. You could look at the first Bush administration and a lot of what you got there were people that were trained by Jerry Ford. He had some great people that agreed to sign on for him, and then served in later administrations.

Smith: I have to ask you, because the one sort of down side of that - it must have been really awkward for him and Paul O'Neill, in the later Bush administration. Was that ever discussed?

Cheney: He never talked to me about Paul afterwards. We all had a fondness and affection for Paul. And I'm partly responsible for what happened to Paul because I recommended him to the president to be secretary of the treasury. A lot of other people supported it - George Schultz, Greenspan and so forth. But I got him down to meet with President Bush, and Bush really liked him, and we went through that whole exercise and got him on board as secretary of the treasury, and then it didn't work. And I'm the guy who had to call him and

tell him that it wasn't working and the president wanted to make a change. Paul was fantastic in the role he was in, in the Ford administration. He was the deputy director of OMB. You could have had anybody to be director of OMB and Paul was the go-to guy, career guy, came up through the ranks, and one of the best I've ever seen on the Federal budget.

I knew him also because we were both CEOs together. When he was running ALCOA, I was running Halliburton, and I felt badly about the way it came out. In the end, there were a couple of problems. One was that Paul didn't tend to be a macro guy in terms of economic policy. He was more like a budget officer or a CFO. And the other problem was that the administration, Bush administration, the administration I was part of, didn't, especially in the early years, effectively use Cabinet members in key policy decisions.

Economic policy would get made by a group of guys in the White House, but the secretary of the treasury wouldn't even be in the meeting. I think that was frustrating for Paul, too. It was one of those things that was a great idea, everybody thought it was a great choice; turned out not to be, and it wasn't all Paul's fault.

Smith: You can notice, too, Ford's affinity for O'Neill in those OMB days, the fact that Ford was the last president who could get up and actually introduce his own Federal budget. Which, when you stop to think about it, is pretty mindboggling.

Cheney: Oh, yeah. That was a great event that day, and it was a deliberate effort on our part to knock down that whole notion that Ford wasn't up to the task. Lyndon Johnson had said he'd played football without his helmet, or some such thing.

Smith: Describe Ford's intelligence.

Cheney: He was very, very comfortable with intellectual arguments, with bright people. We had some great sessions up in the solarium that Bob Golden organized, where we'd bring in outside experts in various subjects and sit around on a Saturday morning and talk about complicated questions - immigration patterns into the U.S. - interesting stuff. He was never intimidated by a guy like Henry Kissinger, obviously one of the brightest

people that ever served in those posts. He had a great ability, I always felt, to get along with foreign leaders. I know some of those relationships lasted a lifetime.

Smith: You think of people like a Jim Callaghan, who was an old Socialist (Labor), and Helmut Schmidt, and Giscard, who's not the warmest personality in the world. And yet the one thing they agreed on was they all held Ford in enormous regard.

Cheney: And for years they would all come to this summer deal we did, and still are doing, out in Beaver Creek. There was stuff he knew. He could tell you how many park rangers there were in the National Park Service in 1954. He knew that stuff. And he was, of all the presidents I worked with, he was, without question, the best prepared on the budget of any of them. On the day that we had him brief the press corps, that was I guess, the first time since Harry Truman, when the budget was much smaller, that the president had gone out and done the briefing himself. Usually it was the Cabinet and OMB director.

I remember we had all of them arrayed on the stage up there that day, but the president did the brief over in the State Department auditorium. And it was a great performance. It really helped us put to rest this whole notion that was out there that Ford was a bumbler, stumbler kind of a guy. He got a raw deal from the press in many respects. Here was this guy who was a great athlete, football player, skier, and the press would run over and over and over again footage of him falling on the ski slopes or slipping on the stairs coming out of the plane.

Smith: Did it hurt him? I know he never publicly let on.

Cheney: He never let on publicly that it did. It made me angry. I can't believe it didn't, but he'd tell jokes about it. Go do the show with Chevy Chase. Now, having been vice president for the last eight years, you get to be a punching bag for the Jay Leno's and David Letterman's of the world, it goes with the turf. I happened to be watching Jay Leno last night and now he's doing to Biden what he used to do to me. The vice president is a standing joke. But the president, it bothered me when they did it to him. Partly because I thought it

was such a distortion of who the guy really was, and partly because it was a problem for us in terms of trying to manage the campaign and his poll ratings, and everything else. And then we get into something like the Polish question in the second foreign policy debate.

Smith: You take the words right out of my mouth, because clearly he was very, very stubborn about it. You were clearly making headway in that campaign. People forget how far behind you were at the outset, and you were really making it up. There was a consensus that you won the first debate, and then I guess, I think was before the second debate that Carter had his famous *Playboy* interview that further slowed his momentum.

Cheney: Lust in his heart.

Smith: Yeah, exactly. And then you get this, the Polish question. And they did give him an opportunity in the course of the debate to...

Cheney: Max Frankel came back and asked him a second time. No, I was with him that night in the Green Room before he went on, and then sat and watched it by myself in his Green Room while he was out on the stage. Saw him make that mistake: "Poland is not dominated by the Soviet Union." Frankel had been trying to get at the, or Ford thought Frankel was asking about the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine. I don't know if you know about the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine. Helmut Sonnenfeldt and the State Department had been over and briefed our ambassadors in Europe and the argument about the doc was it supposedly involved our recognition of some sort of legitimacy of the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

Ford was primed to shoot down the notion that that was administration policy. He misunderstood, I think, the question. But what he'd pulled up was an answer that he'd been primed to give on the Sonnenfeldt doc. Basically, it came out that Poland is not dominated by the Soviet Union. And then Frankel came back and he repeated it. After it was over with I rode with him in the car back to the house where he was staying in San Francisco. I think Henry called him in the car or something and praised his performance. So I dropped him off for the night, then I went down to the St. Francis Hotel, where Stu and I

and Scowcroft were supposed to go brief our press corps – give them the spin. I can remember walking up on the stage and Lou Cannon, from the *Post*, hollered at me from the back of the room. He said, “Hey, Cheney, how many Soviet divisions are there in Poland?” and it was downhill from there.

The next day we flew down to Southern California. I went up and talked to him in the cabin of Air Force One, said I really thought this was out of hand. Carter was having a field day, the press was going bananas, we’re getting phone calls from the Washington office saying what the hell are you guys doing out there? I said to the president that we need to go down and make it clear that you understand that Poland is still under Soviet purview. And he threw me out. So I got Stu and took Stu back up, and he threw both of us out.

We landed in California, we went through the day and finally we got him to – it was at breakfast the next morning with businessmen or something, as I recall – and he was primed to stand up and say that Poland is not dominated or whatever, to give the correct answer. And he did, but then he adlibbed something on the end of it, “if they are,” or something like that. Well, the press went bananas again. We finally got in the Valley someplace there doing a rally in front of a courthouse. I was over with the press and they were just having a field day.

So when the rally was over with, the president got finished speaking, we took him back into the mayor’s office in the courthouse. Stu was with me. Sat him down and said, “Mr. President, this is just killing us. You’ve got to go out and explain that you understand who the hell is running Poland at this point.” I said, “I want to call the press bus around, pull them over here in the parking lot and we’ll hold an impromptu press conference. You can go out and do your mea culpa.” He said, “Okay, damn it, I’ll do it.” So, we waited a couple of minutes, got the press all lined up, and then we got ready to go and I was walking behind him as we went out and I said to him one last time, I said, “Now, Mr. President, you have fixed in your mind what it is you’re going to say?” And he spun around on his heels, jabbed his finger in my chest, and said, “Poland is *not* dominated by the Soviet Union!” and then laughed like

hell, went out and delivered his lines the way he was supposed to and that was the end of the story.

But he had a sense of humor about himself under those difficult circumstances. He didn't like having to apologize, he was very stubborn. Stu, he'd be around over in the corner laughing his fool head off, watching all this back and forth.

There is a picture, a favorite news story in Kansas City. This is the morning that Ford has announced that Bob Dole is going to be his running mate. He and Dole came up with this scheme that we're going to go to Russell, Kansas the next day and do a big rally. I'm appalled. Everybody is strung out, we'd been working this convention, we'd been in this huge fight, we finally won, and I said, "Mr. President, this is going to be the first stop of the whole campaign. It's got to go well. We cannot have a train wreck out there. There isn't even an airport in Russell, Kansas." We're going to go in fifty miles away. I said, "Where in the hell am I supposed to get advance men. What are we going to do about a crowd and so forth."

Dole was there listening to all of this back and forth, and Stu was, too. I think I've got a picture of it. They are watching me argue with the President and he finally got to the point where he said, "Damn it, Dick, do it." So I said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President." We had people on buses and we were trekking them into Russell, Kansas, and went all night and bought radio announcements all over the western half of Kansas. We just really busted our butts trying to raise a crowd in this little Podunk town where Dole is from.

The next day we're flying in by helicopter to Russell, Kansas, and there is a humongous crowd. I mean, there are people everywhere. Those advance guys did a great job. And the president reached over and tapped me and said, "See, Dick, I told you we'd get a crowd."

Smith: One last Kansas City question. To this day, there is still debate over whether the Reagan camp made it a condition of their meeting after the nomination that Reagan not be asked to be on the ticket. And my understanding is that that is, in fact, the case. But there is some effort, I think, to suggest wiggle

room after the fact. Some people around Reagan, not necessarily Reagan himself, and we talked about this a little bit with Stu, suggesting why didn't you ask Reagan? If you'd asked him, he would have said yes, and all of this. What is your recollection of that?

Cheney: Well, by the time we got to Kansas City the relationship between Reagan and Ford was strained, to put it mildly. I don't think Ford – Ford found it difficult to accept the proposition that Reagan had actually challenged a sitting Republican president for the nomination. He didn't like it, he didn't like Reagan. Before we went to Kansas City I'd done a poll - I had Teeter do a poll, about twelve candidates for vice presidents. Ford had asked me to run the search. We had Ann Armstrong on there, we had John Connally on there, and Dole and Baker and all the usual suspects. And I'd also had Bob do questions on Reagan. And what it showed, overwhelmingly, was that the best choice you could make was Reagan. That's what the data showed.

I took it up to Camp David. I don't remember whether Stu was there or not, Teeter was, and briefed Ford on the data on Reagan and tried to make a pitch that he really ought to consider Reagan for his running mate. He didn't want to hear it. The relationship at that point was, as I say, severely strained and he made it very clear that he didn't want to hear anymore talk about Reagan for vice president. This is before the convention. Got to the convention and I'd worked a deal with John Sears that whoever won the nomination fight would go to the hotel room of the loser that night and we'd have a unity meeting, bind up the wounds of the party, for the sake of the press and so forth.

The night after we'd won the 16-C fight, and it was clear we were going to win the nomination, I had Bill Timmons contact Sears, and Sears agreed, but he had two conditions. One was that it had to be a one on one meeting, didn't want anybody else in the room except the two of them. And secondly, we had to promise we would not offer the vice presidency. I went back to the president and confirmed to both of those conditions, and then had Bill convey that back to Sears. Now, Sears was the interlocutor, he was the guy, and if he was doing this on his own, and Reagan really was dying to have it, I'd find it really hard to believe.

Ford went in and he had with him a list when he went in to meet with him. I don't remember whether Stu went in or not. He wasn't all that well regarded in the Reagan camp. But Paul Laxalt greeted us as the Reagan guy, then the two of them met and one of the things that came out of that was that Reagan reacted positively to Bob Dole. He was on Ford's list. We had another problem which was about the same time. There was a revolt developing in the ranks of the state chairman, and they really wanted Reagan on the list. We had to find somebody to dampen that down. We had the normal meetings that went on all night as we got advice from people on who ought to be the running mate. Rockefeller and a whole bunch of other people participated. Different groups would come in.

Smith: Was Ann Armstrong seriously considered?

Cheney: She was on the list of people we polled about. She cost us about twelve votes, the simple fact that she was a woman. Twelve percent of the vote.

Smith: Really?

Cheney: Yeah. The country still wasn't in a position where a woman VP was going to work. But anyway, when the president went to bed, there were a lot of people who thought it was going to be Howard Baker. The next morning, I was staying right there on the floor, just a few doors down from him, he called me down. I remember Betty was still in her bathrobe. The president was still getting dressed. He told me, he said, "Dick, I'm going to go with Bob Dole. Get me Dole on the phone." So that's how we ended up going with Dole.

Smith: Did he explain the rationale?

Cheney: Part of it was that it was a way to cap out. First of all, Dole was acceptable to Reagan, which was important. Secondly, it was a way to sort of cap out the movement for Reagan on the floor among the state chairmen, because Dole had been national chairman, Republican national chairman. He was known to everybody and getting out there fast with the Dole announcement was – he would be acceptable. I think those were the main considerations why we went with Dole and why he made that decision. I think he'd seriously entertained

Howard Baker as a possibility, but after a few hours of sleep, that next morning he decided on Bob.

Smith: At the end of the campaign, did you think you had a 50-50 chance, or better than a 50-50 chance?

Cheney: I thought we had a chance. I've always felt very good about the campaign, to this day.

Smith: Mark Shields says it's the best run campaign he's ever seen, and that's coming from...

Cheney: Yeah, he's no fan of mine.

Smith: That's an unusual observation.

Cheney: But he felt good about it because we gave it our absolutely best shot. And it was almost an impossible task from the outset. With Watergate, and never run before, and the standing in the polls, thirty points down, Labor Day behind Carter. But we really felt like we'd put all into it, and it was a great group of guys working the campaign. We loved Jerry Ford and loved working for him. He had people like Spencer and Baker and so forth, and these guys became lifelong friends out of that experience.

Smith: Two quick things at the end. He went home to Grand Rapids and at that point, I guess really lost his voice, or was losing his voice. It's been said that there was a desperate, frantic appeal last minute to go to Ohio, which, of course is where he came in so close. Does that ring a bell at all?

Cheney: I seem to remember campaigning in Ohio. Yeah, he found out about the talking car and he loved it – he'd pop open a roof so he could stand up – and have a microphone there. I rode around for eight years with a talking car and never used it once for talking to people. I remember we'd been driving down the street and you'd see him stopping their cars and start talking to people. They would start running for the exits, they didn't know what the hell was happening. But he loved that.

He got towards the end, he had lost his voice. Ohio was a special problem. We lost Ohio. And we lost it in the southern belt, the Bible Belt. If you go down along the Ohio River, there are a lot of counties down there that are really more southern than they are northeastern industrial. That's where we lost Ohio. We needed one other state. If we got Ohio, I think we needed four more delegates or something like that.

Smith: Would he review, for example, the TV spots and all that? Was he signing off on all of that?

Cheney: I think he signed off on a lot of the spots. I remember we showed him the TV spots, the storyboards, for example, on the concepts.

Smith: And then the Election Eve broadcast, I think it was broadcast from Air Force One, with Pearl Bailey and Joe Garagiola. Those relationships were clearly very special.

Cheney: They were, and we were looking for a way to maximize our impact. When you're thirty points back, you start to do the arithmetic every 24 hours. You've got to persuade another million people or something to shift their loyalties. And we came up with this concept. We had Edith Green, Democrat from Oregon, who was a good friend of his from his House days, Joe Garagiola, who was great, and a couple of other people – especially the two of them. And we would go in and hit a town in the morning and get footage of all of this and then we'd buy a half hour of time on the local channel and have them talk. They'd run footage of what we'd done earlier that day, and then you'd have Ford and Garagiola and so forth doing the whatever it is we were doing. Basically trying to pedal the ticket. And it had some impact. It was a way we could get a larger audience.

The other thing, we were to some extent constrained by the new campaign law. We had to worry about how much we were spending. We actually ended up with some money in the bank when we finished, but we were so concerned about not going over, that that affected it as well, too.

But then at the last, the tail end of the campaign, we went home to Grand Rapids, for that rally down at the old Pantlind Hotel the night before the

election. That worked out. The next day we went and the president voted early in the morning, as I recall, and then we had breakfast at the little restaurant where he always had breakfast on election day. Then went from there to the airport. At the airport there was this beautiful mural that had been painted by the city fathers, I guess, on the wall. Ford got up there and spoke, got very emotional. The whole crowd got emotional. Hell, the press corps is crying. I mean, that's a crusty bunch. It really was a remarkable moment, and it was almost as though that were the climax, not the election that night.

When we got on the airplane and flew from Grand Rapids back to Washington across the eastern half of the country, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. It was one of those beautiful fall days. You know that people who might otherwise stay home were going to be out to vote. We started to get some results in the afternoon, but it wasn't gone by any means. I think we expected that it was going to be hard.

We stayed up until about two o'clock in the morning. Bob and I basically were working out of my office, going up and taking up returns to the president, who was upstairs. He had Jacob Javits with him and I think maybe Garagiola was probably there. We finally decided about two o'clock in the morning to shut it down, that we weren't going to make any statement that night.

Got up the next morning and clearly, we'd lost. He had lost his voice. I can't remember – I think the sequence was: we went into the office, had a picture taken with the family standing behind the desk, and had a statement. The family then went out with the president, into the press room and Betty got up and spoke on behalf of the family because his voice was gone. And then he and I went back to the Oval Office to call Jimmy Carter. He called him from the desk, and I sat over by the fireplace, there was that telephone over there by where the president usually sits. He got Carter on the phone, and could just barely whisper. He introduced me and it was my job to read the concession statement to Jimmy Carter, which I did not enjoy doing, but I did. That was the end. That's how it all wrapped up.

Smith: Who would have imagined that thirty years later you'd be sitting in a pew with the Carters at the funeral.

Cheney: At the funeral – yeah.

Smith: I'll tell you, Rex Scouten, very professional and very discrete, but told one wonderful story about election night. It was around two o'clock in the morning and the president – because he was up there on the second floor with them – and the president is going across the hall, I guess to go to bed. And Rex followed him. He just wanted to say something consoling. He said, "Mr. President, you have spent your entire life in service to this country, in uniform and during the war..."

Smith: The nomination of Justice Stevens – which really does stand out as maybe the last time it was handled that way. Not least of all, as he points out, in his confirmation hearings no one asked him about abortion, which is pretty extraordinary. And I was amazed to find out that he had not been interviewed by the president. How did that come about?

Cheney: In my experience, now, which includes watching the Bork battle back with Reagan, and Scalia, Clarence Thomas. I was with '41 when he announced Clarence Thomas up in Kennebunkport that day. Then in screening candidates for President Bush, I chaired the committee that reviewed everybody's credentials. Stevens was sort of the last of the old process, if you will, way of doing things, in the sense that it was all pretty much turned over to Ed Levi, who was then the attorney general. The bar associations still played an important role in those days. And pretty much what emerged with John Paul Stevens, and I like the guy, I've seen him socially and so forth, and he's really a first class gentleman. He is totally, totally, out there to the left in terms of his views, and I don't know that there is much he has voted for that I would agree with him on. But I think the president was looking for a first class jurist, if I can put it in those terms, and I don't recall that politics entered into it. This was not unique with Ford, it was more the way things worked in those days. And it was before the abortion decisions.

- Smith: I wonder whether, in some ways, if it was almost an extension in some ways of the Levi pick. You had a Justice Department that clearly needed to be cleaned up to be sure that jurisprudence was seen as not tainted by politics or cronyism.
- Cheney: I think there was more the view that there was the law, and judges interpreted the law and made decisions accordingly, and that there wasn't a political dimension to it. And there hadn't been for some time.
- Smith: But that's a lot given his role in the whole Bill Douglas impeachment.
- Cheney: You mean Ford's role.
- Smith: Yeah, Ford's earlier role. I've always wondered whether he regretted it.
- Cheney: My impression of those controversies, though, dealt more with the personal qualities, or flaws, ethical lapses of individuals, and it didn't really have much to do with whether they were conservative or liberal or believed in an expansive view of the Constitution or a strict constructionist view. It just wasn't an issue. Those kinds of considerations weren't a big deal back in the early '70s, until after you got by *Roe v Wade*, and some of those other issues that where, today, you could have the most qualified jurist in the world, but if he's wrong on a couple of those issues, there are elements in the Senate who will never vote for him no matter what.
- Smith: And people do forget, but he introduced Judge Bork at Bork's confirmation hearings.
- Cheney: The president did, yeah. I had forgotten that. One of the interesting things on Stevens – just a little sideline – we'd run into some trouble with the courts on military commissions and so forth, and set up to deal with terrorists after 9/11. But if you go back and look, the military commissions questions came up after World War II – the court ruled at that time that they were okay, and relied on those precedents for what we did this time around. And then the court came back and shot us down. A vote against approving these back in the '40s was Justice Rutledge from, I think, Wisconsin, who voted in the negative, and in the minority, but his view or the view espoused by him was

the one that prevailed in the most recent set of decisions. The guy who was his law clerk, back in the '40s was John Paul Stevens. I've always been intrigued with that. He went from being a clerk in the '40s on the losing side, and then when he was writing the decisions on the majority...interesting tidbit.

Smith: The fall of Saigon. We talked a little bit about it, but in terms of what that must have been like for Ford. Mel Laird, again, it will come as no surprise, I suppose as the architect of Vietnamization is entitled to think whatever he thinks, and he loves Jerry Ford, but he resents his failure in the spring of 1975 to get Congress to approve whatever it was – 700 million dollars in military aid. And again, it just seems hard to believe in that climate – and the best evidence of that was the moment the city fell they tried to pull the plug on any resettlement funding. Plus there was a debate going on in the White House between Kissinger and some of those, including in the speech shop, who wanted to put this behind us, maybe prematurely. What was your recollection of that?

Cheney: I've talked with Henry about those days, too. It's come up - I've talked with him four or five times a year for the last several years. Kissinger comes to see me and we talk about everything. Lots of times he harks back to those days, the Vietnamization, and so forth. Draws on lessons from that experience in terms of what we were doing. I don't believe he ever felt Ford did anything other than go flat out to try to get the resources that were needed so that the South Vietnamese could stay in and fight.

I guess the thing I felt, what stands out in my mind is the speech at Tulane. This is right after we've finished the evacuation, whatever it is, of our people from the embassy and so forth. It's really close after that. It was a speech the president gave that sort of said that it's over, it's behind us. It's done now, we did that, we're going to move on. I can remember being with him when he did that speech, and there was a great sense of relief because it was a conflict that had dragged on and on and had been extraordinarily expensive - fifty-eight thousand American lives. It was clear we weren't prepared as a nation to do any more than we'd already done. There wasn't the feeling, if there was a

feeling out there that, gee, if we'd just tried harder, we might have prevailed. It was, I think, a national sentiment that was reflected in Ford's view, that I shared, which was, we gave it our best shot, now it's time to move on. I take issue with my friend Mel Laird.

Now, in 1966, this is three years before he becomes secretary of defense, I'm working for the governor of Wisconsin, and late one night Mel is with us. We'd done a fundraiser clear up in northern Wisconsin for the party, and we're flying from there down to O'Hare in a small plane, to get Mel and make it possible for Mel to make a connection back to Washington. There are just the three of us and the pilot. And he was warning Warren Knowles, who was then my boss, to be very, very careful about Vietnam. "Don't get too far out," he said, "They are screwing it up. The administration is messing it up." He said this one is going to go south on them. He was pressing it in his forecast and then he found himself three years later secretary of defense.

I've heard him talk about it in meetings of former secretaries of defense. He refers to it as that damn war. I always felt Mel had a very unpleasant experience. I think he did as good a job as he could, I don't mean to be critical of his performance, but it was a real bummer of a time to be secretary of defense – having to go through all through of that. He did the best he could, but he had a very bad hand to play. But I don't think there was anything Jerry Ford could have done to alter that outcome. I think the die was cast.

Smith: But, by all accounts, Ford was angered by Congress's attempt to shut the door in terms of resettling refugees. And he pretty much put together this kind of crazy quilt coalition, and it was George Meany and the American Jewish Congress and others who finally got some funds out of Congress. One of the really touching things at the time of his death was to read tributes from Vietnamese-Americans, some of whom literally had come in the first wave, who thought of him as their president because he'd rescued them and their families. And the fact that that staircase is in the museum, in spite of Henry Kissinger's thinking...

Cheney: The one up to the helicopter.

- Smith: Oh, yeah. But, again, you wouldn't expect it from Ford. Ford said, "It's part of our history, we can't forget it." But more than that, that staircase is every bit as much a symbol of the desire for freedom as the piece of the Berlin Wall that's out on the front lawn.
- Cheney: Yeah.
- Smith: When you saw him in later years, he obviously was very proud of his alumni. Did you have any discussions about Iraq and Afghanistan?
- Cheney: No. I don't recall any conversations about Iraq or Afghanistan. We used to see him every year at the reunion dinner in Washington. Then we'd do the Beaver Creek thing. I think Lynn and I have only missed one of the Beaver Creek sessions in twenty-five years or whatever it's been. And for several years they had us stay in the house with them there at Beaver Creek. We had our bedroom and they'd always put us there. The last few years, Alan and Andrea would come and they would stay in the house. And I actually swore in Greenspan for his last term as Fed chairman in the living room of the Ford house there in Beaver Creek. The audience was Andrea and Lynn and Jerry and Betty Ford.
- Smith: By all accounts, they were beloved figures in Vail, the Fords.
- Cheney: Absolutely. Yeah, he and I never talked about Iraq or Afghanistan. I don't know what he thought about them. He was careful, he never got involved in sort of commenting upon what the incumbent was doing. We did some special things with him. We had, I think the first year I was vice president we put up a big tent on the lawn and had the big dinner at the vice president's residence.
- Smith: I remember. Happy Rockefeller came back.
- Cheney: Happy Rockefeller was there. We gave her a tour. Then we did it in the Rotunda of the Capitol one year. Did it at the White House one year. I always was involved in arranging those, put them together.
- Smith: He was thrilled, the ninetieth birthday down at the White House. And then, very poignantly, I think it was the last time in Statuary Hall, where I think you

and Secretary Rumsfeld were singled out. I'd written his remarks that night, and I guess afterwards he said, "That's the last time I'm speaking in public."

Cheney: It was hard for him.

Smith: He was angry at himself.

Cheney: It was hard for him. He'd started to show the years by then. But, no, he was great and I always felt that, I hoped, and think it was true, that he was proud of the service I rendered because he got me started. He signed me on that Sunday in the West Wing. I was all of thirty-three years old. A year later he made me chief of staff. We went through a lot of good times together and a lot of hairy times. When I ran for Congress, he came to Wyoming to help. I got him set up with a lecture at the local community college and then he stayed with us at our house in Caspar there. Actually used the bathroom upstairs and the tub overflowed and we got water in my office. We never told him that part of the story.

Smith: He was not a mechanically deft...

Cheney: The curtain wasn't inside the tub or something. And then he went from there up to Jackson and was the keynote speaker at the Republican state convention. This is 1978. I'd worked it out with him that I didn't want him to mention me in his convention speech. We wanted to have all of that be totally nonpartisan. We were refighting the Republican battles of '76, because we had Reaganites and Fordites and so forth in delegation, and he handled it beautifully. It could not have been better. But I think he loved seeing me run for Congress, to say he'd had a lot to do with that.

Smith: Was Congress his first love?

Cheney: I think so. I think he would have loved to have won the presidency again. It just wasn't to be. We gave it our best shot.

You mentioned a minute ago, of finding myself in the pew with Jimmy Carter. I suspect, I don't have any reason to believe this, I know he was heavily involved in planning his funeral, and you may know more about it than I do. I had a phone call from Jack, I guess, asking me if I'd do certain

things, and deliver a eulogy in the Rotunda at the Capitol and that sort of thing. But when I think back on it, the day that he put, well, you spoke that morning, and Rumsfeld and Carter in the church in Grand Rapids. And then we went out at graveside and I'm standing there with Jimmy Carter, and I had the opportunity over the years on more than one occasion to let the president know that I didn't think much of his friend Jimmy Carter. I thought he was a turkey. And I often wonder if he didn't chuckle to himself when he made those arrangements and know exactly what he was doing – that I was going to have to be sharing the day with Jimmy Carter.

Smith: Do you remember the last time you saw him?

Cheney: I remember the last time I talked to him. That was a special moment because I called him and told him we'd been successful in naming the aircraft carrier after him. I got to deliver that message. He obviously was ecstatic with that. But this was towards the end. He was having good days and bad days. But he loved that fact. John Warner had called me. John had been working it on the Hill, and he called me and Jack Marsh had been involved and a bunch of them. They wanted to know if I wanted to call the president and tell him that there was going to be a *USS Gerald R. Ford*. That was the last time I talked with him.

Smith: Was it tough delivering that eulogy in the Rotunda? You did it very well.

Cheney: I loved that speech I made that day, and John McConnell was crucial and instrumental in it. No, I really felt good about being asked. I talked in there about, I remember opening by saying that we had the opportunity, because he was given the gift of a long life, to tell him many times in his presence how much he meant to us and what we thought of him. So I felt very good about doing it, about being asked to do it.

Smith: Plus, you know, poor Lyndon Johnson, who dies two days before a peace treaty is announced. Gerald Ford lived long enough to know that most people had come around to his way of thinking on the pardon – not that he lay awake at night worrying about it. But the amazing thing was the Kennedy Library.

After that he said, “For twenty years everywhere I go, people asked the same question. They don’t ask anymore.”

Cheney: He loved that fact that they gave him that award.

Smith: How do you think he should be remembered?

Cheney: Well, I’m a huge Jerry Ford fan. The opportunity to work with him when I did, under those circumstances, in the aftermath of Watergate, coming in as he did under the twenty-fifth amendment – it’s unique in our history. I think you’ve got to give him enormous credit to some extent for what didn’t happen. For all the train wrecks that were avoided by virtue of him being there and his presence and his willingness, for example, to step up and pardon Nixon, knowing full well the political burden that he’d bear as a result of that. So I give him very high marks.

Smith: Perfect. This is great. Thank you.

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