

Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
Gerald Warren
Interviewed by
Richard Norton Smith
August 26, 2010

Smith: It seems to me you're in a virtually unique position in a lot of ways. One of the themes that we've been exploring in all of this is the challenge that Ford confronted being thrust into the presidency with no transition - couldn't even acknowledge the possibility. And, among other things, having to mesh, for lack of a better word, an existing White House staff with this "to be determined" group of outsiders. Let me give you a metaphor. We've been told by a number of folks who were there that on the morning of August 9th, after the swearing in, there was a receiving line and a reception. And pretty universally, you could see the Nixon people just kind of peel off.

Warren: I was one of those.

Smith: Which would be perfectly understandable.

Warren: I was standing there with Al and I said I didn't want to go in. First, I loved Gerald Ford, but I didn't want to go in. I was feeling so down and so beaten. I said to Al, "You know, I've had my picture taken with the President Ford." And he said, "So have I." So, I left. I don't know whether he did, but I did. My wife was there and I was going to see her back to the car and I did. And I go back to my office and I'm told that Gerald Ford wants me to stay on. I mean, it was so unexpected.

Smith: Really?

Warren: Yeah. So unexpected and such a nice thing. There was a David Broder column that I recommend to you - it was within a week or ten days of the resignation - where he said, "There are a few people in the Nixon administration that Gerald Ford could use and would be good and should not be tarred with any other brush." And I was among those as was Bill Timmons, Ken Cole, there were six or seven and you know he talked to Ford. I think he talked to Ford, because Ford had asked those folks to stay. What David was doing was telling certain people in Mr. Ford's camp who were

angry at the Nixon folks 'lay off these guys.' And they did. It was wonderful.

Smith: Let's back up. Tell us how you got to where you were in August of 1974.

Warren: Well, I was city editor of the *San Diego Union Tribune*. I was directing the political coverage, so I'd seen them at the convention in '60 and then I saw them when they came through in '62 running for governor – Haldeman, Ziegler, and a few others. So, the problem was Herb Klein. What to do with Herb. Herb did not want to be press secretary again. He was the vice president's press secretary. He'd risen above that. So, he devised this director of communications office, which they accepted and they quickly then named Ron press secretary. But they looked at the staff. They said, "There's no one on this staff that has any experience in the news business. Someone told them that, they didn't recognize it themselves. So, Bob started casting out a rather large net and he called a mutual friend in Los Angeles, Cliff Miller. Do you know Cliff?"

Smith: I know the name.

Warren: He was very useful to Haldeman in many ways. He called him and he was very calm. He was very knowledgeable and had been of great use to Bob over the years. So, Bob called Cliff and said, "We need somebody fast." This was in December. "We need somebody with news experience who will fit in" with everything that connotes. Cliff understood and he said, "How about Jerry Warren?" Cliff and I were pretty close. So, he thought about it and Ziegler called me and asked me if I can come to the Pierre. This was the week before Christmas. Ron wanted me there the next day. So, I said, "Sure, I'll come and talk." I talked to my boss and they said, "Go ahead." I went out there and Ron told me - and now that Herb's gone, I can talk about this. I wouldn't have done it if Herb were still alive. Ron and I were having lunch at the Pierre (we had to wait two hours and I was starving), and he said, "This is what the job is" and he described it. "If you take it, will you be loyal to me or to Herb Klein?" I said, "Well, if you hire me, I'm loyal to you."

Smith: This was Ziegler?

Warren: Yeah. "I report to you. You hire me, Herb doesn't." Herb had said, "I'm not going to take anybody from the *Union Tribune* because the bosses were worried that he would take three or four or five people. There were some that, I think, he wanted to take. So, Ziegler said, "Fine." And we talked about a lot of things, background, how I'd come up to (by that time it was) Assistant Managing Editor at the *Union*. And he says, "Okay, you're hired. I'm going to go announce it this afternoon." I said, "No, you can't do that. I have to talk to my wife. I have to talk to my bosses." He says, "Well, get on the phone because I'm going to announce it this afternoon." So, I did.

Smith: Did that give you pause at all about 'Boy, what have I got myself into?'

Warren: It did, but it also said – and it sounds very self-centered – it also said 'This guy needs help and there needs to be some moderation of some (columnists) in that office.' And I tried to do that. So, I called all of the pertinent people. My wife and I had a house in La Jolla; we'd just bought a house, an old famous house in San Diego from an estate sale, so we have these two houses. So I said, "Phenie, you're going to have to sell two houses and pack up and be out here whenever you can be." So, I went back, said my goodbyes to the paper, packed up, and reported on the 22nd of January. They asked me to come to the inaugural event and I said, "No, I wasn't on the campaign. That wouldn't be right." So, I stayed away from that and went in the next day. And that's how it happened.

Smith: Was Klein frustrated in his position?

Warren: He never showed that. I think he was. As it developed and as it went on, he generated his activity himself and he was not a part of the 7:00 meeting folks. I think he undoubtedly resented that.

Smith: You wonder about the old Nixon hands. Rex Scouten said something fascinating. Rex, who was the soul of discretion, appropriately given the positions that he's held, but when he was a Secret Service agent in the 50s, he traveled extensively with the vice president and became a virtual member of

the family. The family actually had a room for him in California. I mean, they became that close. But he said something fascinating and he implied more than he expressed. He said the Nixon he knew in the 50s was very different than the Nixon he knew in the White House. He said more than once - a wonderful non sequitur - on an airplane, Nixon would start pounding his fists against the armrests and say, "I'm not tough enough. I've got to make myself tougher."

Warren: That is the secret. If you read his books, that comes through. This guy wasn't tough enough. That guy was tough enough. And it is amazing, because I have tried to research his feelings about me and I think I have it crystallized and I'm not sure I want to talk about it on the camera, but that's an essential part of it. Rex, bless his heart, before the Fords moved in and after the Nixons left, I asked Rex if I could have a tour of the family quarters. He said, "Sure." So, we spent two or three hours and he's telling stories. It was just wonderful. I really liked him a lot.

Smith: And he clearly felt very close to them.

Warren: He was very loyal. He was.

Smith: I'm jumping around here, but there's so much to cover. I've always felt that Mrs. Nixon didn't get the recognition she deserved. Was she shy? It's interesting, because when I asked Susan Porter-Rose that yesterday - not to answer my own question - but the word we finally settled on instead of shy was 'self-effacing.' Which is different.

Warren: That's a good word.

Smith: But, what I didn't really get answered was - and, of course, Susan wasn't around then, but it has been written that the early years in politics was one thing, but that '52 was a searing experience. And she came out of that with a much different attitude about the ugliness of politics that never left her.

Warren: Well, I don't know whether the library has the transcript of Richard Nixon's private farewell to the staff after the public funeral for Pat.

Smith: I was there.

Warren: You were there.

Smith: Yeah.

Warren: Well, he almost told us that she didn't want him to run in '60 or in '68. And she stayed with him and she was loyal and he almost said – I felt this – that he never showed that he had relied on her so much. He never acknowledged publicly her importance to him and, therefore, to the White House.

Smith: Of course, a number of people commented on the fact that, on the morning of August 9th in the farewell, he talked about his mother and his father, but he never talked about Pat.

Warren: No, he didn't.

Smith: And I think his explanation was that he couldn't have gotten through that. Who knows?

Warren: Who knows? Because of my personal experience, I feel that he understood, after the hospital experience with the phlebitis, he understood that there were people that he hadn't really talked to, didn't know anything about. I went to see him and it was right after the *Face the Nation* experience. My friend, George Herman, chose Gene Rishan of UPI, Bob Pierpoint, and one other, whose name might come to me later. I get all made up and I'm sitting there and the lights are on and the cameras on and Pierpoint has the first question. He said, "Jerry, did Richard Nixon break the law?" I said to myself, "Wow. What am I going to do? If I say 'no', this interview is going to just dissolve into screams and if I say 'yes', then I further isolate myself from the Nixon folks." But I said, "Yes, but he has suffered for it. He's been penalized for it and I think the books are complete and even on this," words to that effect. And so, when I went to see President Nixon the first time at Casa Pacifica, Jack Brennan met me and I said, "Jack, does he know about the *Face the Nation* interview?" He says, "Yeah, I told him." And I said, "Well, what did he say?" And Jack said, "Well, he thought about it and thought about it and

then he said, ‘What the hell else could he say?’” which just broke the dam of remorse and all that.

Smith: I’ve often said the most remarkable thing about the Nixon presidency, given his self description as an introvert in an extrovert’s profession, was not how it ended, but that it happened at all.

Warren: If you think about it, on those lines, he overcame so much that would’ve destroyed a lesser man and became president of the United States. And he went into the presidency prepared. David Ignatius said something about our current president right after his election in a column. He said, “He has spent his whole life becoming. Now he has to be.” Well, I think both Nixon and Ford went in fully formed. They didn’t have to grow in the job. In Nixon’s case, he knew what he wanted to do, not just in foreign policy, but in domestic policy. He had some very bright people writing books like *Nixon on the Issues*. So, strategically, he was ready. Mr. Ford was not, but he knew what his job was as president and that was to knit the country back together again.

Smith: Do you have a theory as to what Nixon’s demons were?

Warren: I do. It’s really far-fetched and not accepted by my friends from the Nixon camp. I wrote a piece on it after the Nixon death. Remember, he got back from the service and he was changed as all people are after a war experience and he wanted to run for Congress, but he wanted to prepare himself and he got a scholarship offered to Harvard. His mother said, “Richard, you can’t do that. I have to take your brother to Arizona because he has TB.” Arizona was the only cure in those days. Go to the desert. “If you leave, that leaves your father alone, practically.” See, Ed was so young at that time. So, Richard thought about it and accepted that logic and bowed to his mother’s wishes and went to Whittier and that changed everything. I believe in my heart that some of his anger and paranoia against the establishment – foreign policy establishment, the Eastern theocracy – I believe that would’ve all changed had he studied at Harvard.

Smith: Because he was a closet intellectual, wasn't he?

Warren: Oh, he was brilliant!

Smith: I mean, much more than Kennedy.

Warren: He was brilliant.

Smith: Yeah.

Warren: No question about it. No question about it. And I think, when you have the opportunity to go and then you're stymied, you begin to say, 'Well, they're not so good. West coast is fine. I'm doing well here. And then I'm going to Duke Law School. That's fine. That's recognized.' And so, he built up this belief in him that he doesn't have to come out of the Ivy League. So, I think that's what he took in to the White House and I think that's what festered during the war, especially when the college presidents caved in so many cases. They came down to see the President, but they saw Kissinger instead, the Ivy League presence (Kissinger taught at Harvard). And Kissinger, I shouldn't speak for him, but I heard him say they are cowards and words to that effect. So that fed into it. And then I don't think the President's paranoia would've grown to the extent it did if that hadn't happened, because I think, if he accepted the academic situation for what it is - a group of brilliant people who think differently than I do on some issues, but can be helpful and are important to the country - he could've toned down Henry's anxiety the after Pentagon Papers. Pentagon's papers did not smear him or Kissinger. It turned out to be very valuable, as a matter of fact, to academia, certainly. But they were so worried that more leaks would happen. And that is what gave us the plumbers.

Smith: You know, he was so greatly detached in his analysis of externals. And he obviously wrote with considerable self-knowledge things like *Six Crises* and the like. Do you think he understood the paranoia? Did he acknowledge it or ever try to trace its roots?

Warren: No. No, I think he went to his grave believing we did what we had to do, which is understandable. I started to say earlier that, after his experience in the hospital and after the resignation, he began reaching out and trying to repair the relationship with staff members. I went in to see him on that first visit and we chatted for an hour. His foot was up on the desk and he wanted to know about my family and my kids. Then he said, "You know, we never had a chance to talk in the White House." I know he was doing that with Pat, too, because their relationship was really cemented even more when they were at Casa Pacifica. She loved it there. So, I think he recognized that separation from the personal side of, not only his staff, but his wife.

Smith: Do you remember how you found out about the Watergate break-in?

Warren: We were in Key Biscayne and there was just a little piece in the *Post*, which we got flown to us wherever we were, along with the *Times* and the *Sun* and other papers of note. There was a little piece in the *Post* about the break-in. It was Larry O'Brien's office, so the natural question to us was, does the White House know about this? Is there any Republican effort here? And that's when Ziegler said that it was a two-bit break-in or burglary or something. And we didn't worry about it until we got back, until it started to snowball. Once the snowball started to roll down that mountain, it got bigger and bigger and bigger.

Smith: One of the surreal things about it, looking back, is how long it went on. I mean, can you imagine in today's media climate anything like that lasting two years?

Warren: No. No. The bloggers and all of the talk radio and talk shows, right and left, would've gathered together and would've forced actions a lot quicker, I think. They would've fired up Congress and they wouldn't have been so reasonable, actually.

Smith: We asked Pat Buchanan that question and he said, "Oh, I didn't read about it. I got a telephone call and as soon as I heard, I knew we were involved." I said, "Really?" Obviously he didn't say who, but he said, "We were getting

mimeographed copies of materials out of Muskies' headquarters on a routine basis."

Warren: And, you know, a few people knew about the plumbers and their gathering in what's now called the Old EOB. One or two people knew that there was some crazy people down there, not the [staff] leadership. The leadership was wonderful.

Smith: Was Colson fingered?

Warren: No.

Smith: No.

Warren: I don't think he was.

Smith: Interesting. Were you surprised to learn about the tapes?

Warren: Yes. Yes, I was and I was not too disturbed when I heard about the tapes. I thought 'Why not tape these things for history? It's a very good idea.' But, I learned that the impact on the personal side of Richard Nixon was going to be very damaging in one way or another. I didn't know how it was going to end.

Smith: I remember President Ford being genuinely shocked, not Casablanca shocked, genuinely shocked at two things. One, that Nixon lied to him, and, two, and I think in this regard you cannot exaggerate the broader cultural impact, was the language on the tapes. How do you quantify the political impact, not of legal/illegal actions, but of public shock at that language in the Oval Office?

Warren: Well, you can't, actually. It's clear that the language bothered him. I remember something Henry said at the funeral, that Gerald Ford had small town values and that's so true. I mean, they're the same values that he had in Michigan, they just were there. He was who he was.

Smith: Let me ask you. This goes right to what you were doing. I've always thought the first press conference of the Ford presidency – I think it's the 27th or 28th of August and Ford, who's been in town for twenty-five years, knows the press corps, but he goes in there having convinced himself that they're going

to want to talk about Cypress and the Middle East and inflation. And, of course, that's not what they wanted to talk about. And I've always believed – I mean, I think the pardon would've come anyway – but if you're looking for a tipping point, Ford came out of that press conference unhappy with himself and the situation. And I think maybe it brought home to him in a way that nothing else had 'it's going to be like this.'

Warren: I've not heard that formulation, but I certainly agree with it. I think he was shocked at the animosity underlying the questions, some bitterness.

Smith: I assume he was prepared. I mean, was there preparation for that press conference?

Warren: At that point, I was not active in preparing him for anything. I was first there just to be help terHorst and talk to Jerry before the briefings and help him come up with positions after we had been told what the president thought. So, I did that for awhile and then I went on vacation and Jerry resigned and the pardon came just as I got back from vacation. Then, I was moved into Klein's office and I was the Director of Communications without portfolio, which was fine. Then I began to do the press conference preparation, but not at first.

Smith: Maybe you could help us. Of course, terHorst is gone, but a number of people have suggested that there was more to his decision than just moral outrage. That that was genuine, certainly not faked, but that he had also, in the course of a month, concluded that this job was not for him, that it was overwhelming. And this afforded an opportunity to walk away.

Warren: Yeah. Well, see, he was a newspaper columnist and they have different schedules than the reporters who have to be at the White House all day. So, he didn't have that pace, that rhythm. I know the job was tiring. I saw him fall asleep in the barber chair, which is understandable. He wasn't prepared for that. But there's one other thing. He was lied to, not by the president, but by someone close to the president. And those things entered into it as well. I think he wanted out and this was the portal. But, as you say, that pardon was the occasion.

- Smith: It's interesting, because Ford's explanation after the fact, which is revealing, is that he couldn't tell terHorst in advance, at least he didn't feel he could. And he couldn't lie to terHorst. So, they were both in some ways impossible positions.
- Warren: I wish some of the top staff had understood that position and had been able to say to Jerry, "Look, this is a very delicate situation. Off the record, you must know that whatever is said from the White House can be damaging, so you're walking on eggs and I suggest you just say, 'I really don't know anything about that' and let it go at that." But Jerry didn't want to do that.
- Smith: Mel Laird is a man of a thousand schemes and as many leaks. Bob Dole had a great line. He said, "Mel Laird's a guy who puts poison up the river a mile upstream and then runs into town to rescue everybody."
- Warren: That's wonderful.
- Smith: We had a great session with Mel. He loved Ford, but he's angry with him. Mel Laird believed that he could bring a bipartisan delegation from the Hill down to the Oval Office at the right time and they would, in effect, petition the president to do this. Now, here's my problem. Again, putting yourself in the supercharged atmosphere at that moment—
- Warren: Is this after the resignation?
- Smith: This is after the resignation, but before the pardon. Wouldn't any trial balloon have been shot down before it cleared the trees?
- Warren: He couldn't do that and Ford knew that, I'm sure. There's no way he could do that. It had to come as a complete surprise. You couldn't prepare the American people for that. They had to be shocked, then they had to think about it and Ford had to give them some things to think about. And he did.
- Smith: And take the heat in the process.
- Warren: And take the heat. That's right.

Smith: Haig told us something interesting. We saw Al Haig not long before he died. To be honest with you, there are people who are emphatic and blustery and there are people who are on the verge of senility and it's sometimes hard to tell the difference.

Warren: That's right.

Smith: But Haig was emphatic. First of all, it's very clear that Al Haig and Bob Hartmann were put on this planet to annoy each other to death.

Warren: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Smith: That was part of it. But he insisted that he never listened to the tapes. And it's interesting. Everything keeps coming back to Fred Buzhardt. Buzhardt had been Laird's counsel at the Pentagon. A month after Laird comes back reluctantly to the Nixon White House, Buzhardt tells him, "Be careful what you say because I've been listening to the tapes and the president's in this up to his neck" which then put Laird in a very difficult position.

Warren: Fascinating.

Smith: Then, we talked to Haig and he said, "No, I didn't listen to the tapes. Fred Buzhardt gave me some very good advice, which was, 'Never be alone with a tape.'" And I assume this is post-eighteen and a half minute gap and that sort of thing, I always assumed that Haig had listened to the smoking gun tape.

Warren: I believe him when he says he didn't because I saw his reaction.

Smith: We'll never know, I don't think, exactly what Haig and Ford and Hartmann and all these people were thinking. I've come to the conclusion that it's what wasn't said that's the real story. That politicians have a non-verbal language.

Warren: Oh, yes.

Smith: Although Ford was slow on the uptake, I think, when he first met with Haig. At least that's the impression left by the Hartmann intervention, and then Bryce Harlow and those folks—

Warren: I can't add to that, but I can certainly argue with it from a sense standpoint. I think you're on to something with that theory. I remember after Ron said to the staff that the President was going to go on the air that night and resign, after a day of back and forth and back and forth, I went by Steve Bull's office. And there was the Vice President sitting in there. I don't know why I did it, but I went in there and said, "How are you, Mr. Vice President?" He said, "I'm fine." He said, "You're looking fit." And I said, "So are you, Mr. Vice President." And that was it. I knew what he was going to be told and he did, too. He had to have felt it.

Smith: Can you imagine putting yourself in Ford's shoes during that almost year when – talk about being on a tightrope – I mean, clearly your job is to defend the president, but at some point, as this evolves, defending the president reaches the point where it may undercut your own integrity and certainly complicate your life, if in fact you succeed to the presidency. But you can never acknowledge the possibility. I'm trying to get a sense of what the attitude was in the Nixon White House, and particularly among the hardcore defenders towards the job the vice president was doing. He was out of town an awful lot. There's always going to be resentment of the vice president, whoever it is, not being sufficiently loyal.

Warren: The staff.

Smith: At the staff level.

Warren: Lay it on the staff.

Smith: Well, was there a consensus at all?

Warren: I never heard it discussed in the press office by Ron or anyone else. And, you know, I wasn't in those meetings with Ron and Haldeman before Haldeman resigned, so I don't know what went on in there. I do know that there was a resentment with the staff. I mean, Hartmann did not just have Al Haig. There were a number of people who shook their heads, and there were others that came with Ford who were not equipped. You know, you said something much earlier in this interview about the old Nixon hands. Well, there were

old Ford hands, too. And, on both sides, they didn't fit in that White House in those circumstances. They weren't equipped and something had to be done and ultimately was.

Smith: I assume in Hartmann's case, there's a very thin line between protective and possessive. Bob probably incorporated both.

Warren: Well, that's right. And I think on the Nixon side, I think Rose Mary had the same feeling, that balance. But Hartmann seemed to put it in a personal way, too.

Smith: It wasn't just Haig.

Warren: No, it was Buchanan, it was Ziegler, and it was all of those people who were noticed and visible. All of the suspects were Deep Throat. But, you know, Mr. Ford probably felt the same way I did. I don't know what's going on. I have a terrible feeling about it. I have a sense of doom. But my job is to represent the President. And, so, at that time, considering the integrity aspect, I made the decision. Well, it was when Ron could no longer brief, they put me in the job without the title. I made a decision, I'm going to approach this as a personal problem for Richard Nixon and not as a problem for the office of the White House or the Constitution or anything else. This is his personal problem and he is the only one who can speak for himself.

Smith: We did a long and fascinating interview with Jerry Jones. And a couple things popped out. I'd be interested in your comment. One was when the Court came down with its unanimous decision on the tapes. The initial reaction in San Clemente – and I assume he meant Ziegler, and whether Ziegler was anticipating his boss or, in effect, speaking for his boss is not clear – but the initial question was: can we defy the Court?

Warren: Yeah. Those bastards. Yeah, that's what was said. And Sinclair was there. When it got into the Supreme Court, James St. Clair came into the White House counsel's office and was, I thought, kind of a moderating person. And when it got into the Supreme Court, we were out in San Clemente—

I've got to tell a story that's off the subject, sadly. He's [St. Clair] briefing and then I brief after him and, in the back - I'm in the Surf & Sand Hotel - the cigarette in the cigarette holder and a beer and a cap on is Hunter Thompson. He had a photographer with him. The photographer was - I'll think of her name. She was the most famous photographer in America for awhile. He put his hand up and he said, "Forget about the God damn tapes. I want to know about the clot." And he was onto something. He was onto the sense that Richard Nixon was near death, because the clot could go up to the heart and he could die. I said, "Well, we've said everything we want to say on that." And he persisted. Of course, when the President went into the hospital in Long Beach, I got a call from the Philippines and it was Hunter Thompson and he said, "I told you so!" And then he called me when he got fired from *Rolling Stone* and he called me for money and I didn't help him, but that's beside the point.

Smith: Was there a bunker mentality at that point?

Warren: Bunker mentality with the Congress, less so with the Supreme Court. I think then the mood began to change a little bit. One way or another, this is it.

Smith: Was there a sense that the tapes were the whole game at that point?

Warren: In some minds, yes, and certainly mine. I had never heard any of the tapes. I'd seen some of those transcripts, of course, the redacted transcripts. One of my jobs was to read proof on all the transcripts. When the President made a speech, the transcript would come to us and it was old mimeographed stuff in those days. And I would read proof and then the court reporters would change it if it needed changing. So, many times, I had to listen to the conversation to see who was speaking because they often put the wrong name on it. So, I found that I was sort of an expert on Dean's voice, Haldeman's voice, and Ehrlichman's voice. So, Ron sent me to the EOB in a locked room and someone gave me the June 23rd tape and I listened to it while I read proof of the transcript and I almost died. It was like a sledgehammer blow in the stomach. And I think to a certain extent, that's the reaction that Al had as well. Now, we'll never know whether he'd seen it before or not. He certainly

was in a position to. But I tend to think he hadn't. There was a point when each of us in those positions had to say, "Do I want to stay here or not?" before the smoking gun when there was still some question. And each of us, I think, came to the conclusion that, "No, I signed on to be loyal to the Constitution and this man represents that, so as long as he's there, I've got to do my job." I think Buchanan had the same sense and some of the others who were speechwriters and writing speeches defending the President. So, it was very depressing time toward the end. Very depressing.

Smith: The night of the resignation speech, he famously wanted no one around. Did you see him at all that day or the next morning in the East Room?

Warren: I did not see him that day. (I was in the East Room for his farewell speech.)

Smith: We talked to people who were in the meetings (both representatives of the House and Senate). Well, Bill Timmons, who set up that meeting with the loyalists. And it was obviously a very emotional one for everyone involved.

Warren: There is a picture in the archives of those folks coming out of the West Wing and it's taken from up above and you see the sea of reporters and photographers, hundreds of them, and I'm in there. Ron says, "You take them out and you introduce them." So, I did. I was walking next to John Rhodes, Barry, Timmons, and - who was that attorney? My memory fails _____. And I introduced them and it was just so awkward because the one thing that Ziegler had said was, "You cannot mention the word 'resignation.' You cannot do that." And they said they didn't do it. So it wasn't mentioned, but everyone around got that sense. And there were just hundreds of reporters and technicians and photographers there. There were hundreds of people outside the fence that'd been there for a day or so, ever since the Supreme Court decision. And that night was the same thing (The night of the resignation speech).

It was an eerie feeling. I was in my office and somebody that I didn't know came into my office to watch on my three little Sony television sets. She was in there and she was a rather attractive woman. I didn't know who she was.

And somebody stopped outside and took a picture through the window and it was an AP guy. I saw him later on and I said, "I'd really prefer that picture not run because I don't know who that woman is. I don't know how I'd explain it to my wife, for one thing." And they understood, so they didn't put it out on the wire. But, after having the blow of listening to this thing and putting out the transcript and watching the reaction and, in the meetings at the press office where the girls were so emotional and some were crying, I started to cry in my little office. Saul Pett came in and he was going to do the overall feature for AP. He's (was) a brilliant writer, and he talked to me a while in a consoling way. He mentioned that in his long, long piece that he wrote, which was pretty good. But it was happening to him [President Nixon] and it was happening to us individually at the same time.

Smith: And the next morning in the East Room must've been excruciating.

Warren: Oh, it was. I controlled myself in there, but I was so empathetic with him. I knew how difficult it was. He put glasses on in public [for the first time]. He was near tears.

Smith: And he must have been just physically exhausted as well.

Warren: Oh, of course. I know he had been up quite late the night before the speech. That's the night he met with Kissinger, I think, late at night. Yeah, I don't think he slept much.

Smith: I don't want to get bogged down in all this, but there's certainly been a debate over the final days and the portrait of him that has passed into history is that someone out of control, drinking to excess and all of that.

Warren: I don't buy the last part. Richard Nixon could not drink to excess. He couldn't hold it.

Smith: One drink was excess.

Warren: One and a half of those martinis were enough. Then he became jovial. And now, of course, in this experience, I don't think he was drinking at all because he had some serious thinking to do. He very well may have talked to

portraits. I've talked to some portraits in the White House, you know. What would you do? Have you ever seen anything like this? And I don't think I was crazy. I was depressed, but I don't think I was crazy.

I don't remember when it was, but we went to Pocantico Hills and I was there to help set up the thing and we chose the gym. There was a building that was entirely devoted to recreation for children.

Smith: The Playhouse.

Warren: The Playhouse, exactly.

Smith: \$500,000 structure.

Warren: The squash courts, tennis courts, basketball courts. So, we chose one of those as the thing and I saw where they lived and what gave them the entitlement feeling that a couple of them had. Laurence didn't have that, I don't think. Laurence was different and really good. But that was an amazing house. My visual memory of Nelson Rockefeller is wherever he was, he was smiling and he brought warmth into the room and he would look at you and recognize you and say, "Hiya, fella!" And then he'd go someplace else and say, "Hiya, fella!" Whether man or woman, it'd be, "Hiya, fella!" He was the only politician I've ever known that didn't try to remember names. Unbelievable.

Smith: When he was chosen as vice president, it's easy in retrospect to say this just never was going to work - this is a very odd choice given the dynamics even then of the Party. The only thing that makes sense is what Ford said. That Ford was secure enough in himself to pick someone who had more of everything, and that Rockefeller filled in the gaps. He had a reputation for surrounding himself with talented people. He had a global network. And in some corners at least, his selection would be very reassuring.

Warren: Well, I thought it would be. I thought it was a good choice, because I thought it would reassure the moderate Left of the Party and maybe bring them together. Ford could maybe do that because he was a pacifier for his people and when he spoke to publishers, I could just see them warming to him. He

wanted to bring people together. He knew the country was divided and he couldn't do anything about the political divide except to be polite as he always was and to meet with them. But he thought he could bring the Party together.

Smith: It's interesting. For someone who I always said was the least self-dramatizing of men - to the point where I really think it hurt him politically - those first few days he understood that symbolism was substance. To bring in the Congressional Black Caucus and George Meany and ERA supporters; I mean, people who had not been in the White House.

Warren: No, I thought that was brilliant because he really had the sense of healing the wounds and sewing up the seam.

Smith: Can a president be too nice?

Warren: Yeah. He could allow his staff to do some pretty stupid things. That's where he's too nice. He was a lot like Eisenhower except in one way. When they took crazy ideas to Eisenhower and told him, "You have to do this" - Andy Goodpastor told this at the Chief of Staff thing I helped put together in San Diego, he said, "People would rush in and say, 'You've got to sign this right now!' And Eisenhower would say, 'Boys,' because they were all men, 'let's don't be in a hurry to make our mistakes.'" And that's what Gerald Ford needed when someone brought up the WIN button.

Smith: Which I think came out of the speechwriting operation.

Warren: I did, too. Oh, yeah, absolutely. And, you know, Seidman, for all his brilliance might have thought it was a good idea, but I'll never know whose idea it was. And then, the other thing that I think he was a victim in was that whole segment around the Polish democracy issue. We knew what he was saying. You know what he was saying. He was saying the Poles in their hearts are not under the thumb of the Soviet Union, they are free in their hearts.

Smith: And, of course, he'd been there. And Romania.

- Warren: And you go there and you see the crowds and they love America and he's America to them and they sing to him. And he hears stories about the churches. The Communist Party could not close the churches in the old town of Warsaw. Couldn't do it. So, that's what he was thinking.
- Smith: But the stubbornness with which he refused to back off.
- Warren: And the slowness of his staff, Henry in particular, to tell him the damage that can be done. It reminded me of a Nixon thing. Nixon spoke to a law enforcement group in Denver at the time that Manson and his team were in jail and going through the courts and they were not found guilty yet. But Nixon said, "Manson's guilty." And, of course, that's the banner headline. But he was standing next to John Mitchell and Ziegler and they could have caught him as he left and said, "You've got to change that because that's up to the courts." And then Nixon could've come back and done it, but, no, they were afraid to do that for some reason. So, we had to fight that battle as Nessen had to fight the Polish battle for some time.
- Smith: Is it fair to say, at least broadly speaking, that one way of looking at the Ford trajectory is as someone who is thrust into this office, very much a man of the Hill, who has to not necessarily unlearn that skill set, but has to learn a whole new skill set. Has to learn, first of all, what it means to be an executive and, secondly, what it means to be the president. He said the great frustration in '76 was that he felt he'd just mastered the job when he lost it. Again, I'm not looking for compliments here, but would you buy the argument that, over those two plus years he learned to be president?
- Warren: I do. I think he felt that his work across the aisle as Minority Leader and his friendship with the people on the Hill would carry through and he found quickly that it didn't. There's a story that I heard him tell – you may have heard it, too – about a prominent senator who I will not name coming to see Gerald Ford at Ford's request. I don't remember what the issue was, but it was a foreign policy issue, defense issue. And Ford really worked on it. He said, "This is really good for the country and you're key here. You really have to go for this" And the guy said, "Okay, Mr. President. I'll do that."

And he gets in his car and he goes up to the Hill, he gets out in front of his office building and the photographers are there. And he told the reporters, well, the _____, “I can’t support that bill.” And Mr. Ford called him and he [the Senator] said, “You know, I just didn’t have the strength to do that.”

It was very disappointing to him [Mr. Ford], because he had learned on the Hill that your word is your bond and he had grown up with that. That’s one of the small town values that he grew up with. If you say you’re going to do it, you do it, no matter how it cost you. And he did. And he lived that. So, that was a great disappointment to him. As president, he did not have the influence over leaders in the House and Senate that he did when he was in Congress. And I think that was a great shock to him.

Smith: Of course, you have the Watergate Babies in ’74. I think the issue was decontrol of natural gas prices, and he had been duking it out over energy policy. At length, he got a handshake deal with Mansfield and Albert and they came back a week later and said, “I’m sorry. We can’t sell this to our membership.”

Warren: I’m sure that’s true.

Smith: Which, again, tells you, on top of everything else that he inherited, now he’s in this period when multiple rugs are being pulled out from under him.

Warren: Yeah, exactly. He learned that he had to speak to a different audience to move the country. He couldn’t speak to the leadership in that way anymore. And I think the WIN button was a part of the prior Hill-type mentality. That’s something the Republicans would do. They would show for the cameras a WIN button and he didn’t sense at that time that that wouldn’t work in the White House and it wouldn’t work with the American people. So, he had to learn how to use the power that goes with that office in a way to affect the American people.

Smith: It has been said by more than one whatever one thinks of Rumsfeld, that Rumsfeld in many ways was a very skillful tutor.

- Warren: I think he did a brilliant job as chief of staff. Brilliant. He handled some of the personalities and he wasn't a tough guy. He was firm with these folks, but he did it and he got the job done and he took over. He closed the door to the Oval Office.
- Smith: The spokes of the wheel came off.
- Warren: The spokes of the wheel came off. That's right. And the man I replaced as director of communications was one of the last to go and it was rather difficult, but Rumsfeld did it. I think he was a brilliant chief of staff for Gerald Ford. He told a story at this chiefs of staff event that we put together at the University of California in San Diego. He was in the room with Gerald Ford when the – what was the name of the ship?
- Smith: *Mayaguez*.
- Warren: The *Mayaguez* event. And he said the President of the United States was talking directly to the skipper of the *Mayaguez*. Now, that had never been done before and I'm sure it hasn't been done since, but that was a brave thing to do. And I know Rumsfeld had a hand in that to set up that communications link and it was good.
- Smith: In the immediate aftermath of the pardon, it has been suggested that there were people on the Hill who were publicly outraged and condemning the president's action, but who sent back channel messages to the effect that, you know, "You got us off the hook" or "Thanks for doing it."
- Warren: I would believe that. I don't know that to be true, but I would believe that.
- Smith: And then he goes out to California, right before the election, and everyone says, "Whatever you do, don't visit Nixon." And he visits Nixon.
- Warren: Of course, he did. He was moved by something inside that had very little to do with the political machinations. That's where the small town values come in.

Smith: The other side of that coin...we talked to Benton Becker. Ford was vice president when Earl Warren died. And Benton, who was politically to the left of Ford, had said, "You know, Mr. Vice President, it might be a nice gesture for you to go up to the Court and pay your respects." And Ford thought for a minute and said, "Well, I don't think the White House would be very happy." And that's where it was left. Becker learns later on, independently, that Ford had in fact gone up to the Court, placed a wreath in front of the casket. And sure enough, Nixon said some snide thing to him afterward.

Warren: I'm sure he was ticked off.

Smith: But Earl Warren, of course, had been chairman of the Warren Commission. So there was a personal connection there.

Warren: There was a connection. You know, speaking of the '76 campaign and all, I think he was on to something with the economy. Ford was onto something with energy, and this was stuff that originated in the Nixon domestic council.

Smith: Deregulation.

Warren: Yes. And, so, a rather striking idea he was leaning toward was a gasoline tax, I think. Of course, that went by the wayside when Ronald Reagan rode out of the Right and challenged him.

Smith: Were they slow to take seriously a) the prospect of Reagan actually running and b) just how formidable an opponent Reagan might be.

Warren: I don't know. I was away by that time. But I sensed they were. Somebody asked Jimmy Carter recently, "You're very friendly with Gerald Ford. How did that come about?" And Carter said, "Well, we were both beaten by Ronald Reagan."

Smith: I've often thought that that was a factor.

Warren: Oh, it was. No question.

Smith: And that they both resented the fact.

- Warren: They resented the fact that he would not campaign, wouldn't do anything. And then sort of was in the opposition. Had he campaigned for Gerald Ford, he'd be president. We would not have had Carter. We'd have had some solutions to the energy situation that we would still be feeling, I think. It's just too bad.
- Smith: Did you ever see Ford's temper?
- Warren: No.
- Smith: The fall of Saigon, what was the mood like in and around the White House? Because, apparently, Kissinger was still trying to go down with all flags flying and get Congress to appropriate funds and all that.
- Warren: The general feeling throughout my level in the White House – and, by that time, I was going to the seven o'clock meetings – was it was a Congress's fault. That had Congress given the money that was necessary, that would not have happened. We were winning although people thought we were not. And Congress pulled the rug out. So, there was great bitterness at that point. They felt the dignity of the country had been tarnished because of Congress messing around in foreign policy too deeply. I mean, they had a role, they have to recognize that role.
- Smith: At one point, he's out in California, the timing could not have been worse. He was playing golf. Obviously the collapse was several weeks in the making. But it was becoming clear that Vietnam was collapsing. There's that bizarre chase across the tarmac with Helen Thomas and others in full pursuit with microphones stuck in the president's face. And he just didn't want to address what was going on.
- Warren: No, and he didn't want to talk to the press anyway. His orders always were to keep the press away. Remember the famous incident in New Orleans when he pushed Ziegler?
- Smith: Now, that's Nixon we're talking about.
- Warren: Oh, the Ford chase.

- Smith: Yes, during April of '75 when Vietnam was collapsing and there was this seriocomic run across the tarmac, with pictures of Helen Thomas and others in full pursuit. I mean, it was un-presidential.
- Warren: It was, but he didn't know what else to do, I would guess. I wasn't on that flight. But I would guess that he, you know 'What do I do now? I'm not in a weak position, but I'm going to talk to some people before I can talk to the press.'
- Smith: Is that a metaphor in some ways for the first few months of his presidency?
- Warren: No, because he was so strong on certain things. He knew what he had to do to bring the country together, take care of the Nixon situation, and take the heat for that. But, in other things, he - in what we're talking about earlier - the movement of the country toward his position, he was still learning that. And I personally think at that time, he also blamed the Congress and he'd been part of it.
- Smith: Two quick things around that. This is so typical of Ford - if you'd just taken office under the circumstances he had and if you decided you wanted to undertake an amnesty program for Vietnam draft dodgers, you wouldn't get in a plane and fly to the VFW convention to announce it. You know, you'd put out a press release on Friday afternoon when you were up in Camp David. But he did that. And I've always believed that that and the pardon should be seen as pieces of the same puzzle.
- Warren: I do, too. I think he felt on the amnesty thing that he had to go to people who would be opposed and that he had to tell them why it was good for the country. And he had to go with his hat on, or whatever it was, and be one of them and tell them why. I always thought that was very strong. Very strong.
- Smith: Jack Marsh told us a great story, which again illustrates the difference between the press then and now. The day before they went to Chicago, he walks into the Oval Office and said, "Mr. President, we've got some bad news." He'd gotten a lot of bad news, so, "What now?" It turned out Steve had not registered for the draft on his eighteenth birthday. And he said Ford

looked like he was gobsmacked. He just put his head in his hands. Well, before the day was over, they got General Hershey or whoever, they got it taken care of and the press never found out. But, can you imagine in today's media climate – talk about overshadowing the real story.

Warren: I have thought often about how the situation would've been so much worse with today's media climate and environment.

Smith: And then, after the fall of Saigon, when he got angry, remember when Congress wanted to pull the plug on money for resettling the refugees? Maybe that's when he begins to learn about the power and the advocacy of the job. Because he put together this crazy quilt coalition and went to the country and basically shamed the Congress into restoring funds and bringing out about 100,000 in the first wave. I thought it was very moving when he died, the pieces in the press about the people who'd been part of that exodus, and who looked at him as their rescuer.

Warren: That's interesting. You know, that really makes sense. His inclination was not to avoid the press. His inclination was to talk to them, show them he understood. As you know, he made very good friends in the press corps. Very good friends.

Smith: And unusual people. I was surprised that John Osborne was kind of an admirer. That's surprising on the surface.

Warren: It is. Dick Growald was one of his favorites. Dick was a UPI reporter famed for his gustatorial achievements. And he got into a couple of jobs that he didn't like, press handler for a big corporation. And then he went up to Sacramento. He was hired by my organization to run the paper we were trying to start in Sacramento. Well, he hated that. So, he called me and he called Pete Kaye and he said, "Get me out of this. I can't do this." So, we brought him down and gave him a job of putting some understanding in our coverage of the North County, which was our target circulation area. And it was clear that he wasn't the old Dick Growald. He was failing, but he had it, he had it.

But he did crazy things. But Gerald Ford checked with him from time to time and before he died, he was leaving, he was going to live in New England with his brother so his brother could take care of him. And we had a little party for him, a going away party, and Gerald Ford came over from Palm Springs. And he really showed his warmth and his understanding of the press and the guys that come to the dinner every year know that, they feel that.

Smith: When did you leave?

Warren: I left in August of '75.

Smith: Before the assassination attempts.

Warren: I didn't want to go through another campaign and I had this job offer that I couldn't turn down. And I went with his blessing and good feelings. Had a nice chat and the obligatory walk along the colonnade between the West Wing and the house. How many pictures were taken with presidents walking on that?

Smith: By that time, did he seem comfortable there?

Warren: Yes, he did. And he was jovial. There's one anecdote that I love. He had a meeting of the top economic people, political people, and legislative people. The issue was going off the gold standard. A big issue. So, there was one man who should've been speaking up who was quiet. And so the President finally said, "Mr. Ash, what do you think about this?" And Mr. Ash [Roy Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget] said, "Mr. President, I have to recuse myself from this conversation. I own the biggest gold mine in North America." And Gerald Ford laughed. He thought that was wonderful.

Smith: He had a sense of humor.

Warren: Yeah, he did.

Smith: Did you have much contact with Mrs. Ford?

Warren: More than I thought I was going to.

- Smith: For example, at the time of the breast cancer surgery, that must've posed a unique kind of challenge.
- Warren: Well, it did. When Nessen said, "She's going to come over to the press corps and talk about this." I said, "Well, we'd better think about that." Nessen said, "It's too late. She's coming." And, boy, did she make a name for herself in that press conference that she possibly hadn't had before. She'd gone through the conquering of alcohol and openness about that and pills and now she's talking about something that most women don't want anybody to know about. And it was very moving and it really moved the press corps. I thought that was one of the bravest things I'd ever seen a First Lady do. She had grit and determination.
- Smith: Were you aware of what euphemistically was referred to as her 'problem' while you were in the White House? Was that something that people talked about?
- Warren: Early on, I was. It was a problem that certain people were concerned about would become known and how would we handle it. And she handled it. Bless her heart.
- Smith: But, of course, that was after they left. I mean, did it cause problems?
- Warren: No.
- Smith: No.
- Warren: No, because she was very careful, very careful. Talk about First Ladies being careful - I rode the helicopter once with President and Mrs. Nixon to the airport from some event in the country. I got up early and Pat was in there with curtains drawn, smoking. And there were some in the press who suspected this, but no one wrote about her smoking and I think there were some that might've suspected the alcohol problem, but they so admired Mrs. Ford. And rightly so.
- Smith: And the kids? Were they around much? Susan was, of course.

- Warren: Susan was around a lot and I talked to her some. I got to know Jack who ended up in San Diego. A story about Susan that I love: Clem Conger, who was the procurer of historic artifacts for the White House—
- Smith: And something of a landmark in his own right.
- Warren: Yeah. Mr. _____. She [Susan] wanted a brass bed, a four poster brass bed and he couldn't find one. He finally tracked one down in some woman's house in Iowa and he went out there and he talked her into donating that to the White House. So, Susan got her bed. That story came from Rex Scouten and from Clem Conger.
- Smith: You obviously had contact with him after he was out of office.
- Warren: I did.
- Smith: In '80, that crazy momentary flirtation with the vice presidency—
- Warren: Oh, that was so disappointing. It really was. It was so uncharacteristic and he hurt his reputation. It wasn't in a lasting way, but momentarily.
- Smith: It's funny, people forget it was Cronkite who used the phrase 'co-presidency' and Ford, being Ford, just kind of politely—
- Warren: He wouldn't refute Walter.
- Smith: Bill Timmons, being the guy who was in the middle of this, was literally typing up the agreement. And he said, "I will go to my grave knowing there was no co-presidency." I've often wondered if there was an element in Ford - maybe it's a little bit the Eagle Scout, the seeing the good in everyone - but almost an element of passivity.
- Warren: No, I don't think it was passive. I think it stems from something that the minister said at Gerald Ford's funeral, that Gerald Ford lived his life by the two great commandments and by the great commission to love thy neighbor. The commandments are love God and love your neighbor as yourself. And the commission is to go out and love your neighbor. And I think Ford lived by

that. I think the minister was absolutely right and he tended to give the other person the benefit of the doubt, and not to embarrass or refute them.

Smith: That's interesting. I only heard him speak disparagingly about two people and the worst he could come up with was "He's a bad man."

Warren: That's very bad.

Smith: Yeah. One was John Dean and the other was Gordon Liddy.

Warren: Well, that fits.

Smith: Were you surprised by the amount of reaction when he died?

Warren: Yes, I was.

Smith: Because he'd been out of the public eye for quite awhile.

Warren: I was so pleased, but I was surprised. I loved being at that funeral. I was honored to be there and I loved what Brokaw said. I loved what Henry said. It was good. And, you know, I was sitting next to some people who remembered and every one of them said, "He deserves this. We may not have thought of it earlier, but he deserves this." And he does.

Smith: Time was good to Gerald Ford. He lived long enough to know that most people had come around to his viewpoint on the pardon.

Warren: Yeah, that's right.

Smith: And then, of course, the crowning event was the Profiles in Courage award from the Kennedys. He said, "For twenty years, everywhere I go, people ask the same question." He said, "Since that event, they don't ask the question anymore."

Warren: No, that's right. That was the seal of approval. Well, he did grow in retirement. I'm not going to say he mellowed because he was always mellow, I think. But he grew in tolerance of other people and he grew in appreciation for what other people did. The trip over to [say farewell to] Growald was an

example of that. He didn't have to do that, but he wanted to pay respects. He knew Growald was dying.

Smith: I'd love to explore that a bit. In the eulogy that I did in Grand Rapids, I pointed out the fact that most of us tend to get a little more conservative with age. In his case, I don't think it was simply that he stayed where he was while the Party went off to the Right. I've always wondered how much Mrs. Ford was a factor in that. You wonder how much having kids and then grandchildren sort of keeping you in touch was a factor. But it's not just abortion. To this day, he's the only president who signed a petition for gay rights.

Warren: You know, I think you're on to something with Betty's influence, because when Betty built that wonderful recovery center in Palm Desert, that brought them into the recovery world and this fits in the recovery world. Forget politics. Do the right thing. Take the indicated step. And I think that rubbed off on Gerald Ford. I know it did on me.

Smith: You saw all these people in his circle, people of accomplishment, who had this problem. It was seen as a problem rather than a moral failing.

Warren: It was a disease. Clearly. And Betty knew that and Gerald Ford knew that, but there are some principles of recovery which really fit Gerald Ford's template. I know I moved politically after I got back to San Diego. I moved more than my publisher wanted me to move. Certainly more than my Nixon friends wanted me to move. And they think I'm a flaming liberal now. I'm not, but you're right. The Party left me, but I also was moving at the same time. And I think Gerald Ford was, too.

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

Warren: Oh, when was it? No, I don't. I don't. The last time I talked to him was the event for Dick Growald in San Diego. I had seen him at various events, mainly funerals, you know, while he was still alive. And we just sort of said 'hello'.

Smith: How do you think he should be remembered?

Warren: I think he should be remembered, not as a self-effacing man, but as a selfless man. As a man who put integrity before self. And I think integrity was a very strong issue for Gerald Ford. He saw the breakdown in his predecessor's problem and he wanted to show the country that there is another way to govern and that he could do it. And he did it. He had a few blips, but he did it primarily. He will be remembered as a healer and as a man who didn't have a chance to show us everything he had. He didn't do something like Nixon or Clinton, certainly, but he was denied the chance to really show us who he was. And I think people will remember that.

Smith: He said it took him awhile to bounce back from his loss in 76. People who were there told us that for days, maybe weeks, he went around saying, "I can't believe I lost to a peanut farmer."

Warren: Yeah, well, most of us couldn't believe that. But, you know, he could've done things that were safe and appealed to the majority of his Party and perhaps survived. He could've handled the Polish thing differently and that would've helped. But he still would've done the pardon.

Smith: And that brings me to the final thing. The debate has gone on, obviously, for thirty-five years about the political consequences of pardoning Richard Nixon. Imagine the country during those two and a half years if he hadn't pardoned Richard Nixon. [Not!]

Warren: I have imagined that and he certainly did. The country's business would not have been conducted. Certainly wasn't conducted before the pardon. As you pointed out, he went to Congress with all these substantive issues to talk about, to the press, and they didn't want to talk about it. It's similar to my experience that last six months of the Nixon administration. I would go to all the meetings. I would be prepared on everything that was happening and all the major issues. And I would hand out a sheet of paper that told about a major issue and they [the reporters] didn't care. They didn't care. That's the way it would've been, and he couldn't have done anything except try to

answer for his predecessor. Look at how the G.W. Bush situation has affected American politics today. Some Democrats are still running against George Bush. And they would be running against Richard Nixon and they would lump Gerald Ford in with Richard Nixon and they would've missed the opportunity to see a great man [GRF] with great values in the presidency.

Smith: Perfect.

INDEX

F

Ford, Gerald R.

- August 28 press conference, 9–10
- character traits, 29–30
- Nixon, personal relationship with, 22–23
- Nixon pardon, 10–11, 32–33
- remembrance, 32
- swearing in, 1
- as vice president, 12
- vice president, Ford's choice for, 18–19

N

Nixon, Richard

- alcohol, 17–18
- final departure, 5
- personal stories about, 3–4, 6–8
- resignation, 16–17

R

Rockefeller, Nelson

- vice president, 17–18

Rumsfeld, Donald, 21–22

S

Smoking gun tape, 15–16