

Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
Tom Korologos #1
Interviewed by
Richard Norton Smith
May 21, 2009

Smith: First, the obvious question is, when did your paths first cross with Gerald Ford?

Korologos: When I worked on Capitol Hill for Senator Wallace Bennett, I didn't have any dealings with him, but I knew of him. The Senator was a strong pro-defense senator during the Vietnam days and actually before in the '60s. I went to Senator Wallace Bennett in 1962 and I can't remember - what was President Ford at the time?

Smith: Well, at that point he was still just a Congressman from Michigan. I think that was the year, it was '63 when he took on Charlie Hoeven from Iowa for that number three job in the House leadership.

Korologos: Yes, so I just came across him just reading the Capitol Hill gossip sheets, that's about all. But then I really came to know him a lot better and more when I went to the White House on April first, 1971. He was in the leadership at the time and he used to come to leadership meetings. I'll never forget that one picture where it was Mansfield, Ford, Scott, all smoking pipes in the leadership meetings. And they would smoke them right in the meeting and nobody ever said anything. Now, I guess, they'd faint.

We had some dealings with him then and he was a strong supporter and then suddenly Watergate broke out.

Smith: Do you know where you were when you first heard about the break in, or how you first learned about it?

Korologos: I didn't pay attention to it. I don't know that it wasn't a two-bit burglary. It probably was at the beginning, but I have no memory of it. But pretty soon it started getting louder and louder. So it was nothing when it first happened and I can't tell you the exact time that I thought, "Hm, I wonder what this is." But then it started getting louder. So I can't tell you when I first heard.

Smith: Was there a point at which you were beginning to get questions from the Hill, from people like Ford, saying, "My members are wondering what's going on," or a kind of restiveness on the part of the troops?

Korologos: There was some restiveness in my office, especially, because Senator Wallace Bennett's son, Bob Bennett, had bought the Robert R. Mullen Company from Robert R. Mullen, the PR firm that was over on - 17th Street in a fancy office. The Robert R. Mullen Company had PR clients around the world. One of their biggest clients was the CIA. The Mullen Company was a front in its offices around the world for agents to go and be undercover - to show that they didn't work at the embassy. We had a bunch of those in Belgium when I was ambassador there. If I asked, they could tell me, and I didn't ever want to know, but they were there. [They] worked at airlines or worked at restaurants and elsewhere.

One of the characters that worked with Robert R. Mullen was Howard Hunt. Howard Hunt was an employee, in effect, of Bob Bennett's and so we got a little bit into that when Howard Hunt started appearing and Bob Bennett being associates with a CIA agent. So it kind of got bigger and bigger when the Watergate committees and all those started appearing and people started interviewing and started asking questions.

Bob and I used to talk all the time about what's going on. He came to me with tales of how now they have invented - that bottle cap there on the Coke - a microphone that is that big, and you can put it under a desk and people can hear you talk. And he said that's probably what they were trying to do. He insisted he didn't know anything about the break in. I remember during our White House days that Charles Colson was the political genius and guru that Nixon and everybody liked, and he was the savior of all. My assistant at the White House in those days was Wally Johnson who came over from Justice. We only had two. The White House Senate liaison job is a 1.5 person job. Now they've got twenty. So I also was a terrible leader because I never gave Wally anything good to do. I took all the good stuff and gave him the dredges. And he still complains about it.

But Wally became close to Colson, and they used to have these round-and-round meetings on Watergate. Once or twice I went over to Wally or Colson or somebody, and I said, "Hey, what the hell is going on here? This is terrible, we've got to stop this. What is happening?" And they used to say don't worry about it.

I remember going home to Utah to campaign for Senator Wallace Bennett, Bob Bennett's father. I was with the Senator for nine years, and every two years we'd go to Utah and campaign – either for him or the House race or to help the governor or somebody. I was the Library of Congress, in effect, because I had all the data. I used to take huge crates of information about Utah and all the candidates would come to me and say, "What's this about? What does this mean?" So I had the background, as it were. I'd dig through a file, because somewhere along the way we'd done it before.

And people would always talk about, "What's this Watergate stuff? What's going on?" And the thing that drove me, and even I used to tell my wife and neighbors, "Nixon and Mitchell are too smart. They did not have anything to do with this. It was a bunch of rogue guys trying to figure out something."

The other thing that was funny – I don't know if it's funny – when the campaign began - Mitchell came to my office in the White House one morning. He was the attorney general, the closest guy in the world to the president, and he came over to see me! It was before the '72 election campaign. [He] closed the door. I was shaking, I didn't even know he knew me. And he came in and he sat down and he said, "You're one of the few people in the building who has been through political campaigns." And I had...every two years since '60, I'd done something in campaigns.

"We want you to come to the Committee to Re-elect, and be the "opposition person." In other words, we want you to put on a campaign - I suppose we knew it was going to be McGovern that early - like they are going to run against Nixon. Because you know what's going to come up. So you be the opponent. You be the guy, when we do things, we want you to be the guy – the response person. I want you to be the mock responder."

I remember saying, “Mr. Mitchell, that’s an honor to have you ask me to do that. Frankly, my strength with the president is my relationship with the Southern Democrats, and the other Democrats on the Hill.” At the time we were in the middle of the Vietnam War, we were in the middle of all kinds of bills and things, which needed Democrats to pass, we only had thirty-five or forty Republicans, whatever the number was. And so I had to go find conservative Democrats from the South, who are all today Republican, and get them to vote for our bills, especially on those Nixon really cared about - which was the war and national security.

You could tell when Nixon didn’t give a damn about things by how fast he used to give the State of the Union address on the domestic issues. [fast, garbled words]. It’s like those fast talkers you hear on the radio, and then he’d get to national security and the Russians and the Chinese, and defense and Vietnam and he’d now slow down [speaking slowly] and emphasize and work on his themes. Somebody else had written that domestic portion and you could tell he didn’t much care.

So, I said, “My strength in helping the president is with the southern and conservative Democrats who give us all their support – the patriots. And if I go to that campaign, I am suddenly tainted as a partisan running against them.” Case in point: I had taken Senator Jim Allen a strong supporter in to see President Nixon. Well, Senator Allen had some Cotton Queen he wanted to bring in. We had Congressional half-hours when we used to schedule members to spend two minutes with the president with their queen or with their whatever.

And so I brought Jim Allen down with somebody, and we did our photograph and Nixon held me back and said, “Tom, just a minute. Jim, Jim, hang on here.” And he looked at me and he said, “Jim Allen is a supporter of ours. Jim, I want to thank you for the support you’ve given me. I know about how you are doing,” and he turned to me and he said, “Now, Korologos, you listen to me. You tell Dole, I don’t want any Republican running against Tim Allen in Alabama. You got that? You understand that? We don’t want anybody taking on Jim Allen, you hear me?” And I said, “Yes, sir. Yes, sir.”

Smith: And that wasn't just for show?

Korologos: That was not a show. He meant it. So I went back to Dole and sure enough, there wasn't anybody running against Tim Allen. The guy that would run against him would be a conservative Republican from Alabama rather than a liberal. So Nixon didn't want Allen hurt. So, I went to Dole and Dole said, "Holy Cow, okay," or whatever he said.

So the point is, that's my strength with the president. I didn't tell Mitchell that story, but that's what I was alluding to. I said, "I don't see how I can help the president. I can't help the president going to the campaign. You've got other guys, I'm not much of a – I've just been on the fringes of campaigns." He said, "Well, I understand." He left and then after he left I got to shaking, and I said, "My gosh, I have turned down John Mitchell. That's the end of me."

Wally Johnson came in asked, "What was that about?" I told him, and he said, "You turned down Mitchell? You realize what you've just done? You're finished! You might as well go to Salt Lake and open a gas station." I said, "Oh my word." Well, having said that to you, I'm such a loyalist, I would have been in Watergate with a flashlight that night myself, given whatever those guys were doing. So, as luck would have it, I didn't do that and I did survive the campaign.

Smith: Do you think Mitchell took secrets with him to the grave?

Korologos: Oh, I'm sure. Yeah.

Smith: Do we know, even now, who ordered the break in.

Korologos: Well, everybody kind of second guessed it. Have you read that new book by whoever it was – Rosen?

Smith: No.

Korologos: Rosen has a book out on Mitchell that's very good, people tell me. I haven't read it. I think Watergate was an operation run amuck, that ran a little too far, and Mitchell might have said, "Yeah, let's go find out something." And I can see how Nixon, knowing him a little bit, would have yelled, "Why don't we

know what they're up to? Where's McGovern going? See what you can find out about these campaigns – what's his schedule next week?" So they planted guys to get answers and try to get information.

Smith: There is that school of thought that Nixon may have been popping off one day and Haldeman's job, among other things, was to filter those orders. At least the sort of off the wall ones to make sure that they weren't carried out, and that the Colsons and the McGruders of the world didn't have that judgment.

Korologos: I agree.

Smith: And that it could have been something as simple as that.

Korologos: I agree, you're absolutely right.

Well, fast forward, pretty soon Watergate collapsed around our ears. Oh, wait a minute, we've got to go back to Agnew.

Smith: I was going to ask you because we did an interview with Jerry Jones who had a fascinating story – a number of fascinating stories. But one of them was at that point - this was the spring of '73 - Haldeman is still at the White House and Jones is sort of reorganizing the personnel office for Haldeman. He gets a call from Haldeman one day wanting to know how many people worked for the vice president. And Jones does some figuring and it's about fifty. He says, "Fine. I want undated letters of resignation from every one of them."

Korologos: Wow.

Smith: Jones' interpretation, after the fact, is that Haldeman, and presumably the president, knew well before the *Wall Street Journal* story broke that Agnew could have problems. Does that seem possible to you?

Korologos: Yes, except for an ingredient you'd probably have to put in there. I don't think Nixon and the White House guys liked Agnew, period. They put him on just to appease the Rockefellers, the Rockefeller wing. He was Rockefeller's campaign manager, wasn't he?

Smith: Well, he had been a Rockefeller supporter. Then remember, Rockefeller didn't call him the day he announced he wasn't running, so he was humiliated. He went over to Nixon.

Korologos: That's right. So Nixon put him on the ticket, it was a surprise. When everybody says Agnew's the vice president. I said, "Who?" I remember my sister telling me, "He's put a Greek on the ticket!" I said, "Holy Cow! That takes care of that vote." But my point is, there was a leadership meeting one day early on, and Nixon was talking about revenue sharing.

But what happened is, they said, "Here's our revenue sharing plan," and they had the charts and maps and whatever, "and here's what we're going to do." And Agnew said, across the table, "Mr. President, and others, I look around this table, I'm the only governor here." They had the Republican leadership. It may have been bipartisan, it may have been Republican leadership. "I'm the only governor here. I know how states work, I know how that happens, and that isn't going to work and yackedy-yak..." and he dumped on revenue sharing.

Smith: Really?

Korologos: Well, that was the end. They went to him, Bryce Harlow told me one time, they went to him and told him, "Never say another word in a leadership meeting again." He was to come to those meetings and never say another word. He was petrified and he got scared away by that. The other thing that I know firsthand, that I was there and I did it. One day there was speculation about what's Nixon going to do on television tonight. What's happening? My gosh, he asked for prime time, big secret. It was the China thing. And so, they said to me to go to the Hill and tell our leaders to be sure and watch TV tonight, and be sure to tell Goldwater, Dominic, and others. And the House guys were to tell – people like Walter Judd and other China hands.

Anyway, they went to tell the equivalent Goldwater-Dominics who had the China syndrome in their heads. And I was to tell Agnew, who was presiding over the Senate that day for some reason to tell him to be sure and watch television that night. "I've been told to tell you," I'd known him fairly well. In

fact, I was helping a couple of guys in an Agnew for president drive – there was a little campaign going around with Walt Moat and some of those guys to make Agnew president. And I even went to a Greek thing in New York. I remember speaking in Greek about Agnew at a big Greek Church function thing, and I said, “I bring you greetings from the president,” and then I said in Greek, “and by golly, by the next time I’m here I’ll bring you greetings from a Greek President,” and I spoke in Greek.

Well, so, Agnew and I were pretty close – I knew him fairly well, and I said, “I’ve been told to tell you to be sure to watch TV tonight.” He said, “What’s happening?” He asked me what’s going on. I said, “Damned if I know, but here’s who I’m talking to, so it’s got to be something with China.” Goldwater, Dominic, Walter Judd in the House, and the foreign relations guys – it’s got to be some China thing. He said, “Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

Well, and then we got to chatting and Agnew was visibly unhappy that he had been cut out. He told me how, apparently after the Cabinet Room incident, he had been told by Haldeman, and Bryce had sort of confirmed it, he wasn’t ever to talk – well, it was kind of dumb to dump on the president’s plan. But God damn it, somebody should have told him, here’s what we’re doing. Send a briefing paper around. He was the number two guy in the U.S. You ought to tell him what we’re doing, at least with that revenue sharing thing. So nobody told him anything again. And he was worried that they were going to do some violent thing to him. So he was not an insider.

Then he was chased out by the scandal. I was on the Hill when he sent his resignation to the Secretary of State and to the secretary of the Senate because of his job at the Senate.

Well, pretty soon, we were trying to find a new vice president. They started this process of “who shall it be?” And they had – I don’t know if Timmons or I did it – have you talked to Timmons about all this?

Smith: No, not yet. We wanted to get you first. We want to get to him.

Korologos: Timmons or somebody had me go around, I guess orders from the president and others, to get suggestions from Senators on who should be vice president.

I have in my gut the absolute incontrovertible view that he wanted John Connally. Loved him. Connally used to come back and forth to the White House from Treasury.

Smith: Was it Connally's kind of brass-plated assurance that appealed to Nixon? What Nixon didn't have himself.

Korologos: Successful. Yeah.

Smith: He completed Nixon.

Korologos: Completed Nixon. He loved him. I remember the first – I was down in the White House sharing an office with Ken Belieu, I was talking on the phone to my friend Ralph Mecham who was at the University of Utah. He brought me to Senator Wallace Bennett's office and then left. I asked him one time, "What did you show in your administration? I passed Truth in Lending and got rid of this one secretary we all disliked." He sent me a telegram back and said, "I hired Korologos and got rid of myself."

And so Ralph and I were good buddies. I was bullshitting with him on the phone, and I heard this, "Agh, what's going on here?" I turned around and there is Nixon in my office in the East Wing. And I said, "Ralph, the president just came into my office." And he said, "Yeah, Tom." Later he said, "I think I heard him." So we hung up and Nixon was in there yakking away, on his way over across the street to see Connally at the Treasury. He kind of wandered around to go see Connally. He loved Connally and he wanted to make Connally vice president. I'm convinced Rumors and things circulated that Connally was going to be on the list. So I went around Capitol Hill to get letters – I remember Senator Scott gathered the letters in his office in a stack this high. I don't know how many there were, it was a four or five inch stack of letters from Senators with suggestions. I remember running into Senator Robert Byrd in the hall. And he said, "Tom, what's going on?" And I said, "Well, I was a liaison," and Byrd was good to me and I was good to Byrd. Byrd was good to Nixon because Byrd thought Nixon was the best president since Truman. I can tell you stories about that. Do you want me to tell you a Byrd story, too?

Smith: Sure.

Korologos: One time Byrd had a judge in West Virginia that he wanted to put on the bench. He sent the name down and he was unqualified, said the Justice Department, turned down by Mitchell. I went to Nixon and we were seeking votes in support of the Vietnam war, God – once a week there was an end the war vote. And Nixon would say, “Don’t let them vote on Friday, we can’t have it Friday,” and I couldn’t figure out what the hell that meant. But Kissinger and Le Doc Tho were cutting deals in Paris, and Nixon knew that if we voted, it would undercut Henry’s posture over there.

So I’d go to Byrd and he’d delay it for us. Byrd was stronger for us than Mansfield, who was his leader. And so Nixon said to me, “You tell the Justice Department right now we’ll put that judge in there, right now. You understand that?” One finger again. [tapping] So the judge got in there. So Byrd thought Nixon and I were doing it. Byrd actually thought Nixon was considering him for the Supreme Court when we went through a new justice of the week thing with Haynesworth/Carswell, and all that. And he actually thought about it and I don’t know if Nixon did or not, but we didn’t ever disabuse Byrd. And Byrd was very loyal and supportive. And so Byrd did a lot for us.

I’m really fast forwarding now – Nixon is now former president in New York, Senator Lawton Chiles of Florida had an amendment to an Appropriations Bill to ban pensions and security for former presidents funding for offices or whatever it was. All former presidents. Well, there happened to be one living former president, you know – maybe I’m wrong on that.

Smith: You’re right.

Korologos: Was Nixon the only living former president when Ford was president?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: Who was the former president?

Smith: LBJ had died.

Korologos: So Nixon called me and he said, "I'm going to fax you something," this was before emails, "you take a look at this, and what can we do about it?" I took a look. It was a House-passed appropriation bill and also in it was a Senate-passed appropriation bill that was not in conference. I said, "Mr. President, it's in both bills. I don't know what we can do about it." He said, "Well, see what you can do. Talk to Byrd." So I went to Byrd and showed it to him and I said, "Senator, look at this." He looked at it and didn't say word. He looked at it and he nodded, and – fast forward again – a week later, it disappeared out of both bills – after it passed both the Senate and the House.

I called Nixon and I said, "You need to call Byrd," and thank him. Also, every time Byrd cast a tenth thousandth vote, the five thousandth straight day, the twenty-fifth year, the fortieth anniversary of his wife, pick all that stuff, I would call Nixon and say, "Call Byrd." I often would call Nixon and say, "Here are the five guys running for leader on the Republican side, or the five guys running for leader on the Democrat side and I'll call you with the results." Thus the first phone Byrd would get was from Nixon.

Byrd was going to Russia one time. He gave a speech on this after Dole had put together a 25th anniversary, or 20th or 15th or something of the swearing in of Nixon at the capitol steps. Nixon came to it in the LBJ Room and Byrd stood up and said, "I want to tell you a story. I was going to Russia one day, and I needed background, and I want you to know that I called President Ford to say what advice do you have for me for my trip to Russia. He'd been there. And, you know, President Ford gave me a little bit of something. And I called President Carter and I got a little more. And then I called President – who's next? Somebody – then I called President Nixon and he gave me the most succinct one, two, you tell Gorbachev, one, two, three, four, five, just because there's a new president doesn't mean this or that. And he said I was writing notes so fast, I thought that he knew I was going to call him. I thought he knew about my calls." Well, Nixon got up a little while later and said, "Bob, I gave up bugging people a long time ago, so I didn't know you were going to call me about." Laughter in the room.

So the point is, Byrd was very close to Nixon. Byrd said to me, getting back to my original story, “Tom, I hear that Connally is on the list.” And he pointed to the Senate door as we were standing there by the Ohio clock, and he said, “Tom, if he names Connally to be the vice president.” Under the Constitutional amendment requiring confirmation by the Senate and the House for the new vice president in the event of vacancy - he said, “Tom, there will be blood coming out underneath that door, if he names Connally to be vice president. You just pass that on.” And I said, “Yes, sir.” So I took my stack of letters, took them down to Timmons, and I said to Timmons, “You’d better tell somebody what Byrd just told me.” And he said, “Whew, Holy Cow.” And I guess he told somebody and Nixon knew, politically, that Connally could not fly.

Smith: There is a story, which may not have happened, but some variation of it I think happened. Where supposedly Nixon - I think he actually had Rockefeller in the office, this was after Ford’s confirmation - and Nixon says, “Can you imagine Jerry Ford sitting in this chair?” And whether exactly that happened or not, there is a sense that Nixon looked on Ford as his insurance against being impeached, which was a total misreading of the situation. The fact that he might not have seen Jerry Ford in that chair, didn’t alter the fact that Congress was perfectly comfortable with the idea of Jerry Ford in that chair.

Korologos: Okay, I saw and heard – that the story was loose in the land, except a couple of incidents that I had firsthand may add to it. Nixon was so fixated on Cooper, Church, and Mansfield and bringing the Vietnam troops home, and also bringing the troops home from Europe and Asia, shutting NATO down, all those amendments and he really was in on that. He cared. He cared about that all the time. He never asked me anything about any of the other stuff. One day there was a particular vote coming up and we were in the leadership meeting in the Cabinet Room. And Nixon was sitting right here where I am, Jerry Ford is on his right, Hugh Scott is on his left and I’m sitting right here behind him. Scott said, “Ah, Mr. President, oh gee whiz, I don’t know. Gosh, it’s tough. Golly, how are we going to do this?”

The White House forever suspected Scott of leaking stuff to columnist Jack Anderson because he would take notes on the little pads that were about this big and you'd hear (tearing sound) and he'd give them to Jack Anderson. And every time Jack Anderson wrote a column it was how great Scott was, and it protected Scott from negative columns. So, they suspected Scott of leaking. So Nixon didn't like him at all at the beginning, so he was sitting like this, and he said, "Well, okay Hugh, I understand. I understand, Hugh," put his hand on his shoulder, turned around in the great big chair, pulled the chair, moved it up, and went like this...and turned his back on Scott. "Hugh, I understand the problem, yeah, I understand." And he started talking to President Ford about the problems and the issues. You know, here's Hugh Scott sitting there and Nixon is turning around just sticking it up Hugh Scott's rear end every time he had a chance of getting Leader Ford to help him with one of the "end the war" issues. And so my point is, that puts a little chink in the business of Nixon didn't like Ford.

Smith: Or didn't see him, maybe didn't take him seriously, maybe condescended, is the word. They clearly were friends. They'd been allies. But Ford was put - once he became vice president - Ford's in a very awkward position. There must have been people - well, we've talked to a number of people who said, there were folks in the Nixon White House, not surprisingly, who wondered how come he's out of town all this time. Why isn't he here? Sort of defending us - it was a very awkward position that he was in.

Korologos: It was awkward as hell.

Smith: The Admiral Stockdale defense. You will have a chance to look over the transcript.

Korologos: Can I take anything out?

Smith: You can put any restrictions on it you want. And none of it will be released before 2013 at the earliest. It will go to the Ford Library. Yeah, you'll have an opportunity to review all of this and do whatever you want.

- Korologos: Because I've done an oral history at the Senate for the Senate historians. I don't know how deep I got on a lot of this, but I said everything up there because they are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.
- Smith: And it's important that you also know, by the way – this is not today the property of the Ford Library. It is the property of the Ford Foundation. And they are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.
- Korologos: Why? Why are they exempt?
- Smith: It is a private foundation, it's not a government agency.
- Korologos: Oh, yeah. I see.
- Smith: So the point is, we're collecting all these – the assumption being, at some point, they will be deposited at the Ford Library, and then they become, if you will, public property. But even there, anyone can put restrictions on it, whatever they want.
- Korologos: My restrictions at the Senate, I don't know, I signed some letter ten years after I die...well, like my Reagan-Bush recollections. After those guys are gone, it doesn't matter.
- Smith: Once you look over the transcript, you can put whatever restrictions on it you want.
- Korologos: Okay. Where was I?
- Smith: Well, we were talking about the awkward position that Ford was in as vice president.
- Korologos: Okay, so I guess there were questions of where he was. There is loose in the land, that, look, how did Ford get to be leader?
- Smith: No, the first one was Charlie Hoeven, and then it was Charlie Halleck.
- Korologos: Charlie Halleck. And who was behind all this? Les Arends, Griffin, Ford, Laird – Laird who creates a – he's like that guy in Peanuts with the cloud, he collects dust no matter what he's doing.

Smith: Bob Dole had a great line. He said, "Laird always struck me as a guy who put the poison in the river a mile up, and then runs into town to save everyone."

Korologos: Okay, the great conspirator. And that led to the theory that there was a coup, that Ford and those guys were staging a coup against Nixon throughout the whole thing. And I heard it more than once in the White House; at the mess, at sessions, and so on. So onward. So Nixon and Ford were buddies and what have you, I brought the letters down, people were recommending guys all over creation, off the wall stuff. I never looked at the letters, but I gave them to Timmons.

Pretty soon rumors were flying over who was going to be vice president and we went to a White House event. There is another thing I should mention during all this. Hugh Scott had got it into his head, and I don't know where or how he did, but Nixon would not pick Scott or Ford. Have you heard that?

Smith: I remember vaguely Scott saying that and it seemed like an odd thing to say.

Korologos: It was an odd thing to say. And he had it that it wasn't going to be Ford or it wasn't going to be Scott. And it could have been Nixon and his good old Nixon conspiring or some way of putting Scott off so he doesn't start a campaign or something. So we're down there and I remember – nobody knew who it was going to be – and Scott kept saying, and others kept saying, look for the wife, look for wives. And we looked around and there were no wives that we knew. Soon Nixon started talking and he started talking and Max Friedersdorf was sitting next to me – have you talked to Max?

Smith: Yes.

Korologos: He said, "God, it's going to be Jerry!" I said, "God, you're right!" And so it was Jerry - out come Jerry and Betty. At which point they did whatever they did and then I got involved in the confirmation – both the House and Senate. Went to the House first, didn't it?

Smith: Yeah. He was the most investigated man in American history. They couldn't find anything.

Korologos: There was one thing in the hearing on some loan. Do you remember that?

Smith: Yeah, vaguely.

Korologos: Some loan thing he had done and how did he get it. It came up in his hearing, and he answered it well. Of course, the lawyers and Hartmann and all those guys were around and did a lot of the confirmation.

Smith: I take it that confirmation was a lot easier than Rockefeller's.

Korologos: Yeah, I think you're right. I remember a lot of people saying, for the first time I'm a Democrat and I'm voting for a Republican that's likely to be president. We went through Watergate, too, don't forget.

Smith: When you got Ford confirmed, did you think you were working with the next president? Or was there a sense that Nixon could somehow tough this out. The tapes hadn't come out...

Korologos: Tough it out. No, I didn't think Nixon would quit. In fact, he was very close to Senator Stennis and we'd bring Stennis down a lot and Stennis would say, "Ah, Mr. President, you've got to stick this out. You ain't going to quit here. You gotta continue to be president." "John, don't worry about that. No, never!" And I believed him. And I think he had it in his head never. Then we went through the agony of once a week some new screwball thing would come up on a Friday – everything happened on Friday – the eighteen minute gap happened on Friday, the smoking gun tape happened on Friday, everything happened...

Smith: Do you have a theory about the eighteen and a half minute gap?

Korologos: No, except there must have been something on it. Somebody erased it. I don't know what was in it.

Smith: We talked to Mel Laird, who said when he came back into the White House, within less than a month, he got a call from Fred Buzhardt. Buzhardt had been his counsel over at the Pentagon. And so he called Laird in the nature of warning him. "Listen, I've been listening to these tapes and Nixon's in this up to his neck, so be careful." And Haig subsequently told us, I always assumed that Haig at least listened to the smoking gun tape and Haig denies it. He said

“Fred Buzhardt gave me some very good advice,” which was, “Never be alone in a room with a tape.”

Can you think of a time, a specific event that convinced you that maybe this wasn't going to be successful? That maybe this presidency was going to end prematurely?

Korologos: I was a hold out, and my first indication of that was the Friday – the day they released the smoking gun tape.

Smith: Oh, basically, it was telling the CIA or the FBI – having one of them tell the other to stay out of the investigation.

Korologos: Well, it was worse than that. It was we can raise money to quiet them down – something worse wasn't it?

Smith: I think we're talking two separate tapes.

Korologos: Well, what prompted Scott and Rhodes and Goldwater to come down?

Smith: Alright, that's the “smoking gun” tape, the June 24th tape. It's obstruction of justice.

Korologos: Well, what happened on that is, I was going around – I have a paper and I was going to give it to the Nixon Library. It had a vote count on it as to who was still with us. Before that thing came out, I had thirty-five, forty votes, solid, on impeachment. We could beat it in the Senate. Because the Southerners were with us, all those old Bulls that we had been working with, and the Republicans were fairly good, except some of the liberals. We had thirty – forty, we could have beat it. Then that thing came out and I started nosing around again and even guys like Russell Long said, “God damn, Tom, even the rats are leaving the sinking ship.” Because Long was one of our supporters and Herman Talmadge was a supporter because of what happened to his dad when they threw him out of the Georgia thing. Bennett, Cotton, Curtis.

Another item comes to mind involving Rabbi Korff [who] had organized a star spangled banner sing in the Rotunda of the Capitol. I was talking to one of the cops who said they were instructed by the chief to go arrest the rabbi

for disrupting. And he said, "I'm not fixing to arrest anybody singing *The Star Spangled Banner* in the Capitol of America. They can fire me!" Well, anyway, all that was going on right in the middle of all this. Anyway I started making vote counts and found we're down to about six or eight. I've got the names on a piece of paper. There was Bennett, Cotton, Curtis, Eastland. Eastland would have never voted to impeach. Eastland got pissed off at Nixon, "@\$#%, I'm not going to vote for him anymore." I said, "What's the matter with you?" He said, "Well, he fouled up the soybean subsidy." I said, "Mr. Chairman, what are you talking about?" "Well, look, he did this to soybeans and he shouldn't have done this!" And that's going to make you vote to impeach the president? Well, we had a little chortle.

But there were about six that hung tough. And I went down and told Timmons that I think we're down to about six or eight. Because I was under the impression, from Haig and Lehman and others – are you going to interview John Lehman? You might should.

Smith: No, I haven't, but that's a great idea.

Korologos: He was close to Jerry, close to Haig.

Smith: Oh, Jerry Jones.

Korologos: John Lehman was close to Jerry Ford.

Smith: Really?

Korologos: I think so.

Smith: Okay, that's great.

Korologos: Anyway, we were down to six or eight, and it was not looking good at all, and it prompted him to say in his speech, "I have lost my political base," which is what he said in that meeting when we had them all down to the Cabinet Room to tell everybody it's all over and he was going to resign tonight, and what have you. At which, they told me to invite the leaders, including Senator Griffin. I recall during impeachment we were hustling impeachment votes – I was talking to Cotton, I was talking to our guys, shoring up all the base vote.

There were only two Congressional Affairs persons in the history of the United States ever counted impeachment up to that time – me and the guy that did Andrew Johnson’s and he’s dead. I used to say that. I used to say that a lot. I said, “Let me tell you something Senator,” just in a jocular way, as only Korologos can get away with, “the last guys who voted with impeachment are dead. You saw what happened to them.” And ho ho ho. So I’d say that to these guys and pretty soon we had lost our political base. I remember we invited people down to the day, or whatever day it was that he announced that he was going to resign that night. We had a leadership meeting in the Cabinet Room. So I invited Griffin, during the time of all and he said to me, and to Wally, “Hey, fellas, look, I’m Senate whip,” and we used to do whip counts together. We’d counted things together all the time in his whip office. “It would be wiser for you not to come to this office during impeachment counts because I don’t how....this is a big Senate issue.” So we started hanging out in the vice president’s office. In other words, he didn’t want us around helping Nixon. Put that down as another conspiracy theory episode.

So Nixon set it. They all come down. Griffin said, “Jeez, if he wants me down there, I guess I’ll come,” implying that Nixon might have known what Griffin was up to. And sure enough, they all came, sat around the Cabinet table and Nixon said what he said. I remember well, he got out of his chair. He almost broke down in tears. And he pulled his big chair back like this, this side – I was sitting right there – and he got up and he stumbled, and I went and grabbed him so he wouldn’t fall down. He turned around and went out behind the chair like that, and left the room and said, “Well, tonight I’m going to be on television.” And that was the last we saw of him until he went into the East Room the next day that was where he put on his glasses, the first time I’d ever seen him in glasses, and said goodbye and went to the plane and went like that and that was it.

Smith: Were there tears in that room?

Korologos: Oh, God, tears like crazy. It was awful. Okay, now let me tell you the rest of what happened to me. So Nixon was gone, in the plane, just terrible. Down the carpet, in the helicopter, off he goes. Resignation effective noon, and noon

was coming while Nixon is in mid air over Iowa or someplace, and now Warren Burger, on the spot, swears in Jerry Ford.

Smith: Yeah, the 9th of August.

Korologos: When did Nixon leave?

Smith: He left that morning. At noon, Ford is sworn in.

Korologos: Okay, so we're now swearing in Jerry Ford, President Jerry Ford. Well, let me say some other stuff about Vice President Ford, can I go back? How much time have we got?

Erik: Seven minutes.

Smith: We've got another tape, or we could always come back and do more later.

Korologos: Well, I'm in the middle of a project downstairs that's making me a little nervous.

Smith: Let's just finish this tape and then we'll schedule another time.

Korologos: Okay. Well, before that, Jerry is now vice president. They finally put a gym together about this size of this room over in the EOB and I go over there all the time and take some steam and jump up and down like a workout. Vice President Ford was there all the time – used to bullshit with him all the time. Became fairly close to him on Senate stuff and brought him up to the Senate a lot, he presided. I can't tell you of any close tie votes – the darn thing was, we'd bring the vice president up to break a tie and the damn vote would be eighty to twenty, and yeah, good count, Tom." So, we hit it off pretty good and so fast forward. Now Jerry Ford is president of the United States. Before that we had said we're going to bring leaders down to meet the new president right after the Nixon helicopter left. So we're now in the Blue Room – is that the middle room?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: We're now in the Blue Room, and I'm standing there talking to President Ford like I'm talking to you. Behind President Ford, now president five minutes, are the leaders Mansfield, Scott, and others.

Smith: Carl Albert.

Korologos: Carl Albert. I've got to go back and tell another Scott story. Scott and some of his staff bitched to me, "What is this stuff when Jerry became vice president that wasn't going to be Scott or Ford," I said, "I don't know where that came from. One of the problems with Nixon and leaders and even your leader, Scott, and all of them is – you know what happens? They get in meetings and talk like Casey Stengel. Nobody knows what the hell they are talking about or what they mean. And guys like us have to interpret it. So you can take any interpretation out of that you want. That's what I think happened to Scott." He took some long convoluted conversation, interpreted it into that it wasn't going to be Scott or – because Scott was pissed that it was Ford. A little bit, but it could have been him. And a little bit that he thought that Nixon didn't tell him.

So, we're now – God, I'm mixing up sixteen stories at once – so now, I'm talking to President Ford, and over there are the leaders, twenty-five yards away waiting to come and shake hands with him. Mansfield's the first in line. And I said, "We've got the leaders down to come through a receiving line, now Mr. President. Mr. President, congratulations. We've got the leaders now to go through a receiving line and to say to you good luck or whatever it is to say. You know them better than I do." And he said to me, "Tom, I want you to know you are the only Senate creature I have around here." Creature. "And don't you let anybody talk you into leaving. I don't know the Senate. I was there for a little while as vice president, but you understand that, you will be my Senate guide, my Senate liaison."

To my knowledge, he didn't talk or see anybody between the time of the swearing in and the time he walked to the Blue Room, I was the first person President Gerald R. Ford of Michigan hired in his White House. So now I've got a job. Hell, I didn't know – I had two kids, I didn't know what was going

to happen. Everybody is going down the dumps. I'm in there bawling five minutes ago as Nixon leaves, and now I'm elated.

Smith: We were told by more than one person, that you could watch – everyone was invited down for a reception or whatever in the State Dining Room, and you could watch the Nixon people just peel away.

Korologos: That's right. They peeled away.

Smith: Which is understandable.

Korologos: Yup. And the reception occurred and they peeled away. Later I went to the White House mess and the Nixon guys were in there daubing down in their soup, with their heads bowed, and I said one of the most obnoxious things in the history of the United States, in a loud voice, "You Nixon guys are in a heap of trouble. The president just hired me." Isn't that terrible?

Smith: That's a fantastic ending.

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Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
Tom Korologos #2
Interviewed by
Richard Norton Smith
October 30, 2009

Smith: You warned Ford about not going to a party.

Korologos: Rumsfeld was involved in this, but my version of it is that President Ford and I were taking some steam together over in the EOB, putting on our black ties to go to a birthday party for Tip O'Neill? Tungsun Park was giving at the Georgetown Club.

Smith: Ford had become President at this time?

Korologos: Ford was President.

Smith: Okay.

Korologos: Ford was President. So, we're in there getting ready, washing our hands and face and the phone rang and the President went to the phone and said, "Oh, yeah...yeah...yeah," and came back and said, "We're not going." I said, "We're not going? Why not?" He said, "Because that was Tip and he said I shouldn't go and he'll tell me why later," or something. He didn't quite say why.

Smith: A little mysterious?

Korologos: Mysterious. So, I think, "Geez, thank goodness I get to go home." Come to find out a short time later, Park got indicted for whatever he got indicted for. And, I'll be darned, Tip O'Neill showed you what kind of a guy he was and what kind of a town we lived in in those days. He tipped off the President not to go to this party to protect the President and his friend, Jerry Ford. And I put that in my head as an example of what was then and what is now. Because the difference that has happened and the comity in those days.

Smith: It's a great story. Can you expound at all on the Ford-O'Neill relationship because it seems to have been pretty close?

Korologos: Golly, Richard, I have no personal – see, I did the Senate --

Smith: Of course he'd been in the House all those years. Did he have any friends in the Senate?

Korologos: Who?

Smith: Ford. Were there people in the Senate who he knew?

Korologos: Hardly. They could've been some of the appropriators when he was on those conferences and he was on Appropriations and it could've been – he was vice president for how long?

Smith: About nine months?

Korologos: You could barely make way to make friends in nine months, but he was close to Senator Griffin from Michigan. And I can't remember specifically any other personal friends he had in the Senate. If I saw a list, I could probably come up with somebody, but I don't know.

Smith: That went on for a long time.

Korologos: Quite a bit.

Smith: Did you ever think you were going to lose or that he would withdraw?

Korologos: No.

Smith: No?

Korologos: I don't know why I had said that so fast, but I never think I'm ever going to lose. Maybe that's what's wrong. But, no, I have no reaction to, as I remembered in that thing we did last time, there were other names that were considered before President Ford was nominated for vice president. Nixon considered, but I don't have any knowledge of other names that President Ford considered for vice president.

Smith: The best evidence is that he also looked at George Bush and he looked at Don Rumsfeld at the time that he nominated Rockefeller. And his view was that, while both Bush and Rumsfeld in effect represented the future of the party,

Rockefeller's experience, his international credibility, his reputation for attracting talented people, all of that recommended him. And given the unique set of circumstances that Ford found himself in, he went with Rockefeller. And I think Bryce Harlow was recommending Rockefeller and I think Mel Laird was as well.

Korologos: Did Baker's name ever come up? Howard?

Smith: That's interesting. I don't think it did at that time. It did at the '76 convention in a major way, a serious way. But once Rockefeller was off the ticket at the '76 convention, Baker was one of a handful of people who were seriously considered. Now, you stayed at the White House for how long after Ford becomes President?

Korologos: I guess it was a year. When did Ford become President?

Smith: He became President in August of '74.

Korologos: Golly, then we left in January or February of '75. Yeah, so we stayed six months.

Smith: What were the issues? What were the kinds of things you were dealing with during those six months?

Korologos: I'd have to look at some dates. There were things in the Appropriations committee. The President is now President and one of the first things that we did was to bring in chairmen to meet the new President. Of course he knew them, shaking his hand and talking to them, but there were some issues they had to sit down and talk to the committee chairmen about and others. Things were moving. There was a tax bill. And one of the memories that I have that was quite remarkable was we brought Senator Long Finance Committee chairman down because there was a tax bill – there's always a tax bill – and I went up to him and he said the same thing to me then that he later said to President Reagan, fast forward however many years. I went to him and I said, "We're putting a program together to have President Ford meet you and others to come down and discuss issues kicking around." And I don't know what prompted me to say it, but I said, "Make a list and come on down and

talk to him.” And Russell Long said, “Tom, I never make lists.” I said, “Why not?” He said, “Lists have ends to them.” And the funniest thing in the world is, when I took Long down to see President Reagan, he said the same thing. I had forgotten it and it reminded me.

So we brought Senator Long down and it was President Ford Senator Long and myself in the Oval Office. And Long was the kind of a guy that kept moving his chair closer to the President. And the President was sitting there where presidents sit and Long was in the chair on his left and I was in the chair on the right taking notes. And I kept trying to take notes so I could write the report for the historians and Long’s chair kept moving, kept moving closer and closer to President Ford. And it was a great big chair. I mean, it was not just a little chair, it was a serious chair.

And pretty soon I looked up and he has moved that chair a good eight or ten feet to President Ford and I’m not sure, but I think President Ford’s chair had also moved – it was on wheels, Long’s wasn’t – and his chair had also moved closer to Long. Pretty soon Long’s got his knee on Ford telling him what we’re going to do. “Here’s what I’m going to do”, “We need to do this on the tax bill”, and he’s banging on President Ford’s knee. “Here’s what you need to do”, “Here’s what you’re going to have to do”. And President Ford was nodding and nodding and I say to you that I got very nervous that here’s this new President, been President now a very short time, a week maybe, and Russell Long is in there being Russell Long, as only the chairman of the Finance committee can be, beating up on the President, telling the President what he was going to do, and what we were going to have in the next tax bill.

And I had to come to the experience with Nixon when we had the mental attitude of “Up Congress” and here’s President Ford who is a creature of the Congress, down here willing and ready to talk and do whatever needed to be done to solve whatever the issue of the day was. And I got a little nervous that maybe word’s going to spread on how Long went down there and got what he wanted out of Ford, by golly. And my attitude has been and is that I was on the Hill for nine years and in the Executive Branch for five and I’m sorry, Hill, I’m an Executive Branch creature. Congresses do two things best:

nothing and overreact and sometimes both at the same time. And I'm a strong Executive Branch person and this bothered me.

The President, right after that session, went to, I don't know where it was, somewhere in the Caribbean, the Virgin Islands, as I recall. A G8 or G20 or whatever those things would've been in the Caribbean. And off he went and, they came back from that and he wanted to see Long again. And it had only been two or three weeks after we'd seen Long, so we put together the briefing papers I brought Long back down. And I'm here to tell you that in that short period of time, Jerry Ford had become President. He was telling Long what he, Jerry Ford, wanted to do. And Long was backing down. "Now, Russell, here's what we're going to do" and "Here's what I want to happen on this." And I was so impressed and I came away buoyed up by, "Hey, this guy's going to be alright." And it was a remarkable story that I saw before my eyes.

Smith: There are those who believe, whatever they think about him personally, politically, subsequently, who nevertheless believed that Don Rumsfeld played a very significant role in in effect coaching Ford, teaching him the difference between Capitol Hill and the executive position.

Korologos: I'm not surprised. Yes, that doesn't surprise me and thank God because that was a good lesson. I didn't know that Don had done that. Have you interviewed Don?

Smith: Yes. He also says, by the way, that he believes that the President made a mistake in waiting as long as he did to make some of the significant changes in the cabinet and that he strongly urged him earlier rather than later to, in a very substantive and symbolic way, make it clear to the American people that this was a different administration even if that meant clearing out people who had done nothing wrong.

Korologos: It was. It was a new administration. He was right. Another time I remember prior to this trip and when I saw this metamorphosis occur, there were two or three things happened. I know the Nixon advance guys and the Nixon schedulers were still around – Mike Duvall and a bunch of them. And they wanted to look at the President's schedule and what he may have committed

to as Vice President. Well, that secretary that President Ford had, who's a nice little lady who's name I don't remember, --

Smith: Mildred Leonard?

Korologos: Yes, exactly. Brought in a calendar like I have on my desk with flipping dates and times and places, but penciled in this, this, and this and this. And they were aghast that this was so elementary scheduling rather than going through the process and what's in it for the President and why and wherefore and vet the audience and so on.

Smith: Is it the difference between how a congressman would handle his schedule?

Korologos: Amen. Absolutely. And they found things that he had committed, fundraiser in Michigan, a Rotary speech in Toledo. And they would go, "But what is this?" "Well, I don't remember but they must have told somebody to go there and give this speech." So they were running around trying to get a handle on that because he's now President. And the other thing that happened that was remarkable is that he was a former congressman and I walked by the Oval Office one time and I looked in there and there were two or three guys with their legs draped over the handles of the couches, standing there talking or sitting, and the President was at his desk and it was a congressman's office again. And I thought, "My goodness has this place changed." And I almost went in, but I didn't out of fear and a little more remembering the Nixon thing when the place was as quiet as a church and I didn't have any reason to go in, but people wandered in and out of there.

Smith: That's fascinating because it was in those first few months that he had what had come to be known as the spokes in the wheel organization. And indeed Rumsfeld made it a condition of his coming back that they would get rid of that. That was very much how a congressional office functioned.

Korologos: That's right. I was on the Hill nine years. I know what that means.

Smith: Why would it not work in the presidency?

Korologos: You have to have a much more discipline. You have to have, I hate to say this, but presidents say things and do things that have impact. Congress

doesn't have impact. Congressmen and senators can say things morning, noon, and night and they do not have an impact on the market, the international exchanges, war, peace, foreign affairs, trade. Presidents go "Boo" and the repercussions world-wide are enormous. Congressmen go "Boo" and who gives a rat's ass? So, what you have is the transformation from a congressional person to an executive branch person where comments and decisions matter and we're seeing that today with some of the Obama stuff. Those guys still think they're in the House poking around, but they're probably going to get better. I guess they all do. I should tell you another thing. I have no memory of it. It got into a Cheney book that somebody wrote here a year ago. Who wrote the Cheney book? It was a favorable book.

Smith: Steven Hays?

Korologos: Could've been.

Smith: Conservative?

Korologos: Yeah, I think it was unauthorized. Well, Joulwan, George Joulwan, later NATO commander, was Haig's deputy at the NSC. And Haig stayed as Chief of Staff for awhile and Cheney -- what was Cheney in those days?

Smith: He would've been Rumsfeld's deputy.

Korologos: Okay. I can't remember exactly what it said or what happened, but it's in Cheney's book and it must have happened but I have zero memory of it. I sent a piece of paper to Joulwan that Cheney was doing something with President Ford that I thought was kind of strange. And I sent Joulwan a piece of paper that said it was on the President's schedule that day with a circle around the Cheney thing that said "Can you believe this shit?" Well, fast forward twenty years, Cheney's book comes out and it's in there. Korologos said about Cheney and I went to him at something and said, "What the hell was that all about?" And he said, "Yeah, you did that." And I said, "No, I did not." I said, "No, I went to Joulwan and he said he has no memory of it." And he said, "What are you talking about? I know I saw the piece of paper."

So I started an argument with him about whatever this thing was and we had a good laugh, I hope.

Smith: How would you differ in terms of Rumsfeld's style of running the place and Cheney's? We've talked to a number of people who have indicated they thought that there was a clear difference in style.

Korologos: Oh yeah, Rumsfeld was a master sergeant, I mean, by the numbers. Remind me to tell you something about Cheney and Kissinger, would you?

Smith: Sure.

Korologos: Yeah, Cheney was a good leader, but Rumsfeld was a drill sergeant. "One, two, three..." And he was that way in Defense when I worked for him. He was that way at Searle. And that was Rumsfeld being Rumsfeld. He's that way today. Ask my wife. He was on the Kellogg board with her. And people to this day, Gordon Gund who was on the Kellogg board with him and I've been with Rumsfeld when Gordon and all of them talked about, "Old Rumsfeld never changes, does he?"

But Cheney was more quiet, steady, never raised his voice, but important, you knew what he was doing. My one memorable thing that comes back to me about that is that Senator Eastland, chairman of the Judiciary committee, had prevailed upon us during the Nixon years to get him a plane for the Special Air Mission over at Andrews to go to Mississippi a lot. And Eastland being Eastland, chairman of the committee, used to confirm all of the judges and all of the Supremes and we had made it a policy of Eastland gets anything he wants. So he came to me one Friday and he said, "I need a plane." So I came down and went to the military office and said, "We need a plane for Eastland. The usual." Well, President Ford is now President. Cheney is in there. When did Rummy leave the White House?

Smith: Well, remember, it was the end of the year massacre, end of '75, when Rockefeller is dumped and Schlesinger is replaced by Rumsfeld and Cheney becomes Chief of Staff? End of '75.

Korologos: So it'd only been three or four months from August.

Smith: And that's '74. This is a year later.

Korologos: Okay, then for some reason Cheney was the guy I talked to that this piece of paper ended up with and he said he called me in and said, "What's this?" And I said, "It's a plane for Eastland?" And he said, "Do we do this all the time?" I said, "Yep, we do this all the time. He's chairman of the committee." He said, "Good grief" or something. He was puzzled and amazed by it. There was a guy that ran the military office, Sergeant Gulley, that wrote a book on all this, too. And Rumsfeld asked me about the book sometime later. "Did you read it?" I said, "Yeah, I sure did. There's sure a lot of fiction and a lot of revisionist history in there to make this guy look good." And Don said the same thing that a lot of that stuff was self-serving.

Smith: For example, Dorothy Dowton, the President's personal secretary, chose her words carefully, but indicated that Rumsfeld had tried to replace her. And by contrast when Cheney took over, people felt –

Korologos: Comfortable.

Smith: Yeah. Not relaxed. No one is ever relaxed

Korologos: That's Rumsfeld. I'm not surprised.

Smith: Tell us about Ed Levi, because there's a classic example of when a President begins to remake the cabinet. Presumably, as with the later nomination of John Paul Stevens, with this kind of necessity to go outside the usual political bounds. The Justice Department is super-sensitive and it's, fairly or not, perceived to have been at the heart of the problems during the Nixon presidency. So you have to find someone cleaner than a hound's tooth, to use Ike's phrase, and he comes up with Ed Levi. I think it was in place of Bill Saxbe?

Korologos: Okay, it was.

Smith: Now, did Saxbe decide on his own to leave?

Korologos: I don't know.

Smith: Okay.

Korologos: But Saxbe, the contrast that you mentioned was remarkable. Saxbe was from Ohio and chewed tobacco and had a jar like you put jelly in, underneath the front seat of his car. I used to ride back and forth to the Hill with him. And every once in awhile, he'd pull this jar out and pop the tobacco juice into the jar. It was swirling around in there. But he's a great guy. I liked him, but then suddenly Levi appears with a bow tie from the University of Chicago, this brilliant legal mind that could quote law to you from the beginning, but he didn't know anything about politics. And the rumor was that he came from Chicago, Rumsfeld - Chicago, "Ah ha!" So somehow or other that Rumsfeld must have found Levi and put him in there.

So suddenly it's time for Levi to be confirmed and word is announced and they did it wrong as I remember. They did not go to the chairman first, that was one of the first appointments that they made, I think. And they didn't go to the committee chairman and they didn't tell me or I would've said, "Let me tip off Hruska and Eastland and other leaders" like you do any time and then announce it. Tell them at ten o'clock in the morning and announce it at noon. Didn't happen. So they announced it and Hruska and Eastland were taken aback when people started doing research on him and found out he was from Chicago. He was liberal. He was for something or other. He could've been for something very liberal that I have no memory of what it was except somebody discovered that he had gotten in trouble for bugging a jury. And, my goodness, it was kind of funny, but the Republicans who had a reputation for bugging everybody – remember Nixon, Kissinger - you know. And now they're raising hell because Levi had bugged a jury.

So, come to find out it was when he was a Dean of the University of Chicago Law School. Brilliant, one of the best of the nation. And he had a class or something on the psychology of juries. I'm making that up because I think that's what it sort of was. And they were trying to find out what goes on in a jury room. And he indeed put a bug in a moot court class jury room. The story they told me when it came out was that it was a moot court class jury in the school. That they had a moot court trial and indeed had a jury and indeed put them in a room to decide on the case and they bugged the room to see what thought processes went through a juror's mind as he deliberated. Well,

Eastland and Hruska were now madder than hell and I've got to bring them down to see President Ford.

Smith: And their anger is rooted in the fact that they weren't tipped off.

Korologos: That was the root of it. And when that happens, you can find out a hundred reasons why you don't like him, but if they'd have known about it, they would've "Hmm, we'll take a look at him" and it wouldn't have been – but that annoyed them from the start. And then the bugging thing came out and then his record came out and then he wore a bow tie. Eastland even mentioned he wore a bowtie. He told me, "Who's this bowtie?" So, we brought him down and we're waiting there in that room where the secretaries are, not the Roosevelt Room, to go in there -- and what was President Ford's daughter's name?

Smith: Susan.

Korologos: And Susan had the big red lab in there. The dog's name was -

Smith: Liberty.

Korologos: So Liberty is down there sniffing Eastland's crotch and Eastland's getting nervous, probably had a few pops, both of them. God, I said to myself, "What else can go wrong?" And Eastland's trying to shoo the dog away and I'm trying to shoo the dog away and finally Liberty goes away and we go inside and they have not sat down yet or anything and Eastland said to President Ford, "This is a terrible appointment." And Hruska said, "I agree with Jim, Mr. President. This is a terrible appointment." And I thought, "Oh my word, how bad this has gotten." We sat down and they talked it over and the President was persuasive, made his case. He did quiet them all down. They were silent.

Smith: Did he apologize for not telling -?

Korologos: Oh yeah. "We mishandled that." I took a little blame for that, but I didn't know either. We told them, "You should've known sooner" and "We've learned." And "Let me tell you about this business of what his record is and who he is" and they had cited all this brilliant stuff that Levi had done and

also the issue of bugging the jury and what that was about and so on. And they kind of went away mollified and alright. And I kind of said, “Whew, I think we’ve dodged one.” But then it came time for Levi to get confirmed and they had not met Levi yet. So it came time for me to take Levi up to meet Hruska and Eastland, so we arranged a breakfast up in the Senate Dining Room. And we went in and sat down and Eastland looked at the bowtie and he kept staring at this bowtie. And I didn’t recognize it at the time, but later he had mentioned that “that fellow wearing a bowtie”. And I thought, “Oh God” and we’re not going to change his bowtie. That would’ve been confirmation conversion. So we sat down to breakfast and Eastland ordered for all of us, me and Levi and Hruska and Eastland. Is Levi still alive?

Smith: No, he died several years ago.

Korologos: The waitress lady came over and he said, “The usual for all of us.” So, I didn’t know what we were going to get, so here came bacon, scrambled eggs and grits and toast. And she put it down in front of us and Levi looked at this breakfast and I looked at it and I knew immediately it was grits and he kept eating all around it. And Eastland pulls out the Worcestershire sauce and he pours it on his and Hruska’s and mine and Levi’s. Now we’re sitting here with grits and Worcestershire sauce and I’m not sure Levi had ever seen grits, let alone eaten them, let alone eaten them with Worcestershire sauce on them. So, somehow or other, Hruska and Eastland were distracted by somebody who came to tell them about something on the floor and I knew Levi was frowning and he said, “What’s that?” And I said, “It’s grits.” And I mumbled, “You want to get confirmed, you’d better eat them.” And that poor guy nibbled on them as did I. But we got him through and that was in the days when it was easier to get people confirmed than it is today. I didn’t handle any other confirmations, I don’t think. Were there others?

Smith: Yeah, well, let’s see. I think they probably tended to come in after you left.

Korologos: When did we do Kissinger?

Smith: Because, again, it was Rumsfeld who himself only came on board I guess in December full-time. Had urged the President to sort of clean house

immediately and instead it was sort of staggered. You know, people like Bill Coleman and Carla Hills and other folks came on later in '75.

Korologos: I don't remember that. Henry stayed on, didn't he?

Smith: Yes.

Korologos: Now, I'm not clear in my own head. Did Henry have to be reconfirmed?

Smith: No.

Korologos: No, neither did Gates last time, did he?

Smith: No. Now, let me ask you because maybe it's an urban legend and maybe it's not...when the pardon took place, members of both houses rushed to the cameras that day to publically make their displeasure known. But that supposedly, behind the scenes, there were calls, some of them were actually sort of privately telling Ford, "You did the right thing."

Korologos: "Atta boy." When did the pardon occur?

Smith: One month into the presidency. It was September of '74. Does any of that ring a bell with you?

Korologos: Yeah, because what happened on the pardon was, and there was a photograph of it, we're all called in to Timmons' office and it was Hartmann and Ford and Timmons and me and Haig. We're standing around and Timmons was on the phone, phoning people on the Hill and phoning around and Haig and the President were listening and they gave me a couple of assignments to go talk about the pardon and I remember I was elated, personally. I recognized immediately what a nightmare we would've had. Good for him. And then everybody fainted, the *New York Times* and all of them says it's a terrible thing, and it cost the President the presidency I'm sure, with a lot of votes the way they played it. Today, he's like Harry Truman who was a great hero and we found out for doing this, but yes, I think there was some calls and some "Whew, we don't have to go through that." Remember Congress' Law, Congresses does two things: nothing and overreact. And there was an example. There were pleas to do nothing and they were overreacting at the

same time that they did not have to go through the agony of the trial of a President. I can't tell you names of who might've called, but Timmons might know. Clark MacGregor died, didn't he?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: He might've known. Too many guys have died. You're too late.

Smith: Let me ask you a generic question the Levi thing brings to mind. You have vast experience in this area. How impressed or persuaded are members of the Congress by sheer brilliance/credentials? If you bring a candidate to them who anyone outside would recognize as eminently qualified, is that enough?

Korologos: No, it's just part of the equation.

Smith: What else does it take?

Korologos: Well, if you're Secretary of the Interior, you'd better be from the West, you'd better wear a cowboy hat, you'd better know what grazing rights are and if you're going to be Secretary of Agriculture, you'd better know the price of soybeans last week. And if you're going to be Attorney General, look at the Attorneys General we've nominated. Was Saxbe a brilliant scholar? No. Was Meese a brilliant scholar? No. Who else is over there? Holder had a record as a U.S. attorney or whatever Holder was. Was Bobby Kennedy a brilliant scholar? No.

Smith: Before I forget, what was your impression of Elliot Richardson?

Korologos: He was a sophisticated, used to talk in sentences written in paragraphs when sentences would do, good guy. I knew him fairly well. We got him confirmed. That was Rumsfeld's Attorney General of the week. That was another time. Who appointed Richardson? Nixon?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: Well, they appointed Richardson as Attorney General and for some reason I got in the car with Eastland to go to the Hill after Nixon told him it was Richardson or somebody told him it was Richardson. And I'm in the car with Eastland going to the Hill and there's Elliott Richardson walking back to the

Justice Department on the street, on Pennsylvania Avenue. And I said to Eastland, "There is Elliot Richardson, the Attorney General. Should we give him a ride?" And he said, "No, drive on." So we drove on. He wouldn't give Richardson a ride. I find that the funniest thing in the world.

Smith: When the whole Saturday Night Massacre took place, do we even now understand? I mean, we've talked to a number of people and it seems so convoluted as to whether Richardson in fact had given the President his word in terms of removing Archibald Cox, whether the White House believed in fact that Elliot was on board and Richardson subsequently - for whatever reason - changed his mind? Do you have any sense of what transpired?

Korologos: No, except that Richardson wasn't a political person. That's perfectly understandable what Richardson did. He was not a Rumsfeld; he was not a Washington insider that knew.

Smith: And he was certainly not a Nixon man.

Korologos: Yeah, he was not a Rahm Emanuel. He's an intellectual. He's a Levi. Nice guy, smart, brilliant, could recite Homer to you. Is that what you really want as your Attorney General?

Smith: Yeah. Tell us about Earl Butz.

Korologos: Earl Butz had a joke a minute. A funny guy. A great guy. That got him in trouble for telling an off-color story, wasn't it?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: He was confirmed for agriculture secretary that somebody, John Whitaker, I guess, found him, wherever he was. We got him through and Senator Miller of Iowa voted against him for some reason. Iowa, a big farm state. It was a remarkable thing that a farm state Senator Miller would vote against Butz. The story - that Butz tells that Miller came down there one time asking for this and this and this and this and this for Iowa and Iowa that and Iowa this and Iowa that in a long meeting - Miller never was one to be reticent - or went on forever. He talked forever and demanded all these things for Iowa farmers. At which point, Earl Butz got out of his chair, walked around in back of the

desk or the wall where the vote count long sheet was with the senators names, every name on it on how they voted. I don't know if it was the original, it could've been. I got the original on my confirmation. It's kind of fun to hang. My wife Ann has hers as Secretary of Labor.

As Butz tells this story, he went down this list and says, "Here it is, 'Miller – Nay'. And what do you want to talk about Jack?" And that's an impressive story. But Butz was a good Secretary of Agriculture because he told it like it was, he was blunt, he didn't mince any words, he knew the stuff, I don't know what his background was, but he knew what he was talking about. He was the combination politician, the smart guy, Mr. Congeniality. I went dove hunting with him one time in Virginia somewhere. I went with Admiral Zumwalt in Zumwalt's Defense Department car and Butz was already there. Butz said, "I've already shot my dove for the day." He had been on some talk show, it was on a Sunday, where they were talking about the Vietnam war, so he was politically into everything that went on.

Smith: During those six months when you were there, I know no openings came up on the court until later when Justice Douglas resigned, but were there any advance discussions? Any attempt to sort of take stock of where the court was? Or was it more reactive?

Korologos: Not to my knowledge.

Smith: Were there ever any overall discussions about replacing members of the cabinet or was that again done on an individualized basis?

Korologos: Not to my knowledge. I didn't get involved in any of that. There were rumors all over the place of why people survived.

Smith: Did you sense the Ford-Schlesinger non-relationship?

Korologos: Schlesinger's a hard guy to - I mean, he was kind of a mean-spirited guy on some days. And I didn't sense any - they were two different kinds of people, I felt and I don't know what their personal relationships were.

Smith: One senses that Ford thought Schlesinger condescended.

Korologos: Yeah, that. You bet.

Smith: That kind of, almost a caricature of the professorial manner, suggesting that Ford who'd, after all, been on the Armed Forces committee all those years and knew a lot about the subject, was somehow not up to Schlesinger's intellectual level.

Korologos: There was a little of that. You could tell. Even today, Schlesinger's being Schlesinger. It's like Rumsfeld's being Rumsfeld. Yeah, I can believe that.

Smith: When you decided to leave in six months or whatever, what prompted that?

Korologos: Well, Timmons and I, and Stan Abner who was counsel in OMB, were fixing to leave after a while. We had been in the White House now *four plus* years and we wanted to open a lobby firm and do some things called "Lobbyists Unlimited." There were tax firms, there were trade firms, there were other firms. We wanted to do it all and take clients and look at the issues that come up. Everything. All of us do everything. So we went into sessions and meetings. What are we going to do? What are we going to call this? We kicked around titles. We kicked around pieces of paper to make a brochure. And we had let it be known that we wanted to go and one of the ulterior motives was we wanted to stay with President Ford for as long as we could to get through the Watergate syndrome.

Smith: That's fine. Now, you came back to work on the '76 convention.

Korologos: Let me tell you one more Ford story.

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: There was a bill kicking around, a treaty that we wanted. The State Department wanted, NSC wanted, I've long since forgotten what it was. All the NSC guys and state guys, "Oh my gosh, we've got to talk Chairman Sparkman about this." And I couldn't find Sparkman, or something came up, and it became crucial to get it done before some recess, so the President let me in his office. I'd see him in the halls and we'd talk. And he asked me, "What's the story on that treaty?" And I said, "We have a mess on our hands and I can't get hold of Sparkman." He said, "Call him." So the President and

I walked into the Oval Office and the phones over there in the corner and I picked up the phone and the operator came immediately and I said, "Hi." And she said, "Mr. President?" And I said, "No, it's Tom Korologos." I thought she was going to call the cops. And she said, "What can I do for you?" And I said, "The President would like to speak to Senator Sparkman" and "Here's his number" and sure enough Sparkman came on and I said, "Mr. Chairman, hang on, here's the President."

The President talked to him and I headed straight to the Hill afterward and Sparkman had it done. And, in fact, Sparkman got in trouble with Byrd over this thing because he went out on the floor and I had cleared the bill with the Republicans, on Foreign Relations at the time. And I said, "Hey, we really need this and the President has talked to Sparkman and he said fine." So Sparkman went out and asked unanimous consent and voice-voted the treaty. Bang. Done. Well, Byrd came out, heard this on the speaker thing and he said, "We can't do that. We've got to have a vote. This is a treaty. This is important. You can't do this on your own." And chewed everybody out. And Sparkman and whoever the Republican was said, "Let's vote." And they voted and bang. Passed it. Again. And the President, being from Congress and knew Congress, picked up the phone and, "Hi, John." And I'm not sure whether John said, "Hi, Jerry." But that was the relationship that he had. You know, don't forget something: President's bring in the job they had before. You know, President Ford was a Congress creature for twenty-five years and he knew what made them work. Carter was a nuclear physicist. What do they do? They have to touch everything. They assign the tennis courts and parking places.

Smith: Let me ask you. Remember Rockefeller early on got in trouble in the Senate for some rulings from the chair. But ultimately, out of that came the 60-vote rather than the 2/3 necessary for cloture. But he apparently really alienated some of the southern Republicans, especially people like John Tower and others. Did you remember what that was?

Korologos: Yeah, that's been written and you'd better get the details of it if you really want it good from some of the Rockefeller books because it's a technical

thing that I don't want to get wrong. But he did make a ruling on a motion as Vice President without paying attention to the parliamentarian. You must pay attention to the parliamentarian, but a lot of it is at the VP discretion. He made this ruling that, by golly, when you make a ruling in the Senate from the chair, that's it. I mean, it is a real mess to try and undo, even by unanimous consent and somebody objects. It really created a furor and it created a firestorm over his doing that that grew into the consequences that we face today on a lot of issues. But that's too technical for my memory.

Smith: What was your role in the '76 convention?

Korologos: I was at the official proceedings. I was underneath the podium doing official proceedings, orchestrating the speakers and orchestrating the Star-Spangled Banner and the prayers. I used to call them the preachers and patriots. The preachers were the prayer people. The patriots were the Star-Spangled Banner and the colors. And all the parliamentary official proceedings to get a nominee.

Smith: How bitter was that convention?

Korologos: It was fairly bitter because the war was on and Kissinger was there.

Smith: Remember Ford let the Reagan people have the platform on the foreign policy plank - in effect conceded to avoid a fight.

Korologos: Yeah.

Smith: And Kissinger was not happy.

Korologos: Kissinger was unhappy as hell and I got quoted in Cheney's book again, because he must've been standing there and heard me, because Henry came into the hotel where the big rally was to see Ford or somebody and he came to me and he said in a loud voice - it was a plank on Russia and détente and Henry was a détente-nic and the conservatives didn't want anything to do with the Commies, except Henry did. And so he said in a loud voice, "I will resign." See, we were counting votes. There was a key vote going on. And the question was whether Ford was going to get the nomination over the Reaganites.

I'm digressing again. This is fun. I'll never forget. We Ford guys in '76 beat the hell out of Reagan in that convention and I'll be darned, four years later, we Reaganites beat the hell out of Ford for Reagan. We got it good both ways, don't we? So Henry went by and said in a loud voice, "If this plank passes, I will resign." And I said in a loud voice back to him, "Henry, will you do it now and do it loudly? We need the votes." Well, Cheney remembered that and put it in his book and every time he introduces me somewhere, he tells this story about "Korologos tells Kissinger to resign".

In fact, Cheney did it at a Jerry Ford alumni thing when they were honoring Henry up at the Capitol Hill Club and Rummy was there. Cheney stood up and thanked everybody. And Cheney introduced Henry. Cheney went and told this story about Korologos over there and I'm ready to crawl in a hole because Henry was pointing daggers at me and Henry denied it. "Oh, that did not happen." As only Henry would do. Yeah, that was a fairly bitter convention. Is that when Rockefeller ripped the phone out of the wall and held it up high?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: He was raising hell at the convention and you can't have chaos at the conventions when we're running the convention. We had to have the timing right because in those days – the good old days – the nominating speech and the keynote and all of that had to happen at five minutes, thirty seconds after the hour to get them to the TV and we didn't want any alternate things happening to screw up our time. Well, here's Rockefeller holding the phone up, ripped out the phone, saying "they cut my phone off" I'm sitting up there in the box and Senator Tower and Tower said, "We've got to go down there right now. We've got to stop this. Look what's happening." And I said, "You're not going down there. You'll get in a fight." I said, "I'll go" because they could throw me in the river and nobody knows. "I'm going down." So, I get down there and I thought, "How am I going to do this now that I've gotten myself into this job?" I broke my way through the crowd and there's Rockefeller and he knew me and there was – what's the guys name? Canzeri?

Smith: Oh, Joe Canzeri.

Korologos: Joe Canzeri and a lot of those guys were there and I went up to him and said, "Governor, Governor, Tower and the boys are in the back room and want to talk to you. We've got some stuff going on." And he said, "Oh, yeah?" And I said, "Yeah." So, he brought his phone and we went off the floor and I had to pass a lot of people. See, delegates couldn't get to the back rooms where we were. So I had a pass and we got in the back and he said, "Where are they?" And I said, "Well, I guess they disappeared." In the meantime, other things had happened in the convention. I had broken up this big fight that was brewing and I said, "Gee whiz, I'll have to find him." And never came back. Well, Canzeri stopped me a short time later and said, "I saw what you did and don't you ever muscle us again. You muscled Nelson Rockefeller." And I said, "Well, I'm sorry. I couldn't find Tower" crossing my fingers. And he was mad and he saw exactly what I had done and it quieted it down.

Smith: Rockefeller went to his grave convinced that when he got to speak they cut the sound. Did you hear that?

Korologos: Oh, yeah.

Smith: He didn't age well is how I put it.

Korologos: Yeah, good point.

Smith: That was not his finest hour.

Korologos: Well, Rockefeller, too, was a guy who was in charge of everything. I mean, he was the kind of a guy that would go into a convention and redo the hall before the speech that night. And I found that a lot. So, here all of a sudden he's been dumped off the ticket for whatever reason and then they picked Ford and then we were up there -

Smith: Dole.

Korologos: Er, Dole. And we were up there in the hotel and I for the life of me thought it was going to be Howard Baker. Bryce was up there and they were in the meeting and I was in the back and they discussed Howard Baker. The rumors came back that one of the reasons that they didn't pick Baker was that Joy Baker had been an alcoholic and that would've been bad. They decided on

Dole and the reason they decided on Dole was that he was former RNC chairman. He could hit the ground running. Knew the issues. Didn't want to mess around. Had campaigned for everybody in the world. Knew every politician in the country. Very logical and brilliant choice, because I remember during the platform of that year, I went to a platform meeting and I was sitting next to Dole, who was my buddy, and I was pointing at something and somebody took a picture of us and it got on the cover of *Parade* Magazine. And the story in *Parade* was 'Is This the New Vice President?' They'd printed it a couple weeks ahead.

[Tape 2]

Smith: '76 convention, going into that convention?

Korologos: You know who'd be good at that is Timmons.

Smith: Yeah, we talked to him a little about it. But, I mean, was it your sense that it was still up in the air, the outcome of that convention when it began?

Korologos: For Reagan?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: Yeah, you bet. That one vote, remember. What's the guys name from Mississippi?

Smith: Clark Reed.

Korologos: Yeah, Clark Reed.

Smith: Tell us about Clark Reed.

Korologos: Clark Reed screws up every convention I've ever went to just by standing there. The other guy that screwed up every convention I've ever went to and I've been to every one since '72 was Percy. Senator Percy had always had something going and Clark Reed too. He was holding the Mississippi delegation back for whatever the hell reasons and Clark Reed had something going and we didn't know what was going to happen. The Reagan people were hustling around, getting votes, the conservative Ernie Wilkinson, the

delegate from Utah, he was the President of BYO, came to me and said, “Who would make the best President, Ford or Reagan?” And I said, “Ford. Four years from now, come and ask me again.”

Smith: But we’ve been told for example, the thing that really sent Reed into the Ford camp, not that he didn’t try to weasel out later on, was the selection of Schweiker. When Reagan picked Schweiker to be his running mate, it really backfired.

Korologos: Pissed him off. Yeah. I had no idea how that happened, but yes that really was a remarkable – you could feel it. You could smell it in the hall.

Smith: Really?

Korologos: Yeah.

Smith: Was that at all John Sear’s doing?

Korologos: I supposed. Yeah.

Smith: When all these people now talk about Reagan in retrospect and “let Reagan be Reagan”, well, guess what? In 1976, Reagan was going to put Dick Schweiker on his ticket because he wanted to be nominated. What does that tell you about Reagan?

Korologos: You bet, he’s smarter than a lot of people thought.

Smith: And, less ideologically rigid than a lot of people thought.

Korologos: Yeah, that’s right. That’s exactly right.

Smith: When did you see Ford? I mean, was there a moment when you realized you had it won? Because there was that test vote, you know, the procedural vote. Remember when the Reagan people wanted to force Ford to name his Vice President?

Korologos: Yeah, I’ll tell you when I thought we knew he’d won and you’ll have to ask Timmons this, but we all had walkie-talkies and you could hear everything. There was a very quiet moment and I heard Timmons say to Bryce Harlow something about Reagan. I knew it was about Reagan, but he didn’t use the

word. "Has that call been made? And was it positive or negative?" And Bryce said, "Positive" which meant Reagan had agreed to nominate. Is that what happened?

Smith: Now, Reagan agreed to see Ford after the - you know, they'd worked up this deal where the winner would call on the loser, whoever it was.

Korologos: Was that what that was?

Smith: And to this day, people debate over what the ground rules were for the meeting. But I come away from all the conversations we've had absolutely convinced that Reagan in fact, as Cheney has always said, made it very clear that the condition he attached to meeting with Ford was that Ford not ask him about the vice presidency.

Korologos: Yeah, comes back.

Smith: And Ford wasn't particularly eager to have him on the ticket at that point and it's only after the fact that some Reagan people who weren't as plugged in as they thought they were said, "Well, why didn't Ford ask Reagan? He would've accepted."

Korologos: I remember that boiling and bubbling, but I have no specifics.

Smith: Were you involved in the fall campaign?

Korologos: Yes, a little bit. Remind me. That convention was in Detroit?

Smith: No, that was the Kansas City convention. Four years later when Reagan was nominated was in Detroit.

Korologos: That's when Baker and Dole tried to commandeer a police car and the cops wouldn't move so they took a cab to lobby Reagan.

Smith: Tell us about that. This is in '80 for the vice presidency?

Korologos: Yeah. The Reagan thing fell apart. The President Ford, vice president Ford fell apart.

Smith: That's right. Was it ever serious?

Korologos: Yeah, serious as hell! Ask Timmons about that. They burned the typewriter ribbon and they burned all the paper. Meese tells you different stories about what happened. And, oh my God, that was the damnedest thing.

Smith: What's your recollection?

Korologos: My recollection of that is John Marsh went in to Reagan or somebody and said, "Yeah, we'll take the vice presidency if we can have domestic and foreign affairs. Just the two things." Well, somebody got wind of that and Reagan said, "Get me Bush" and they got him Bush. But when that fell apart and I heard about it, I came outside and I ran into Novak and it got in his book, too, and he said, "What's going on?" And I said, "Well, the Ford thing just fell apart." He said, "It did?! No, no, it's happening." I said, "Like hell it's happening." And as he puts it in his book, he was a CNN commentator and he ran around, before cell phones or anything, ran around trying to find a CNN correspondent to get on the air immediately and say the thing's fallen apart. He couldn't find anybody and he got scooped by somebody up in a box. Walter Cronkite scooped him and he mentioned he had one of the biggest scoops of his life "given to me by my good friend Tom Korologos." Holy crap. Well, the Ford thing falls apart and now who's going to be Vice President? Now, Baker and Dole of course were in the running and wanted it in the worst way. They ran out the back of the convention center and saw a sheriff or police car sitting there and they ran in and said, "We are Senator Baker and Senator Dole, take us to the" – what's the name of the hotel, great big tall hotel right on the river where airplanes are flying underneath?

Smith: Part of the Renaissance Center.

Korologos: Yeah, one of those where Ford was and Reagan was, I guess. And they couldn't get a car, so they had to take a cab. Went down there to try and lobby for it, but of course by then it was Bush. But that's about all I remember of that one. Where were we before you distracted me?

Smith: Well, about '76, the fall campaign.

- Korologos: Oh, the fall campaign. Yeah, I got involved in that a couple of times. We went out and campaigned. By golly, or was it when he was Vice President? When did Carter get elected?
- Smith: '76.
- Korologos: Why would I have been on Ford's plane?
- Smith: Let me back up. Did the Ford White House wait too long? Did they not take Reagan seriously enough before Reagan actually got into the race? Did they wait too long to crank up their own campaign? And did they make the mistake of not taking Reagan seriously enough as a challenger?
- Korologos: I don't know. I have no knowledge of that. I got in a plane with Ford – was he Vice President or President? Well, we went to Utah campaigning. I came out the door of the plane and Ford walked down the receiving line. There were _____ my brother and my daughter came running to the tarmac and I thought the Secret Service was going to shoot her. And we hugged her and the President met my brother Mike who said, "How do you like your new job?" And that got in the pool report, I saw the pool report that said, "Mike, Tom's brother, asked how you like your new job." And the President said something very good. Then we went to Colorado and campaigned there for Senator Dominick. We went to a ballpark and we're standing on the pitcher's mound and they had a podium – or maybe it was the home plate – but there was a podium there and all the people. And on the plane on the way out there, President Ford had had some pops. Hartmann or one of those guys that was with him, the guy from Utah, whatever that guy's name was that was his buddy from _____, and they had gotten into the back and started drinking. Have you interviewed Terry O'Donnell?
- Smith: Yeah.
- Korologos: Terry will tell you this. We were out in this cowboy place and, the other thing that happened, see, we were somewhere in the ballpark in Colorado Springs or somewhere and we're sitting there at 7,000 feet. I found this out when I got to Colorado myself, you drink a glass of wine when you get off that plane in the new altitude and it's like drinking three. And you'd better be drinking

water and you'd better not be carrying suitcases upstairs even as old as I am. And President Ford had a few pops and he gets out to the stands to talk about Dominick, he's got his speech on the stand and the wind comes up and blows his speech away. And there's paper flying all over hell and Terry O'Donnell and I are picking up pieces of paper and trying to put them back for the President. It was God awful. Somebody, it may have been Cheney or Rumsfeld, raised unshirted hell with those guys in the back room giving the President something to drink and letting him be alone with those guys before an event like this.

Smith: Hartmann really was a polarizing figure in that operation, wasn't he?

Korologos: Yeah. Yeah, he was large and in charge. The other thing that happened on that is, on that same trip – God, I can't remember whether he was vice president or president – on that same trip, we went to Portland which was Kennerly's – have you interviewed Kennerly?

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: That was Kennerly's home port. We went to San Francisco and went to Portland and we go to this hotel and, God dang, it's now eleven o'clock at night which is two o'clock in the morning, East time, and we'd been flying all across country. We'd stopped off in Kansas and here and there and everywhere and we're now in this hotel and everybody's tired as hell. And Kennerly had prevailed on the President to do a function for him with his buddies from Portland. And, honest to God, we're sitting there and there must have been thirty young ladies, good-looking as hell, even in those days, brought in flowers and roses and little tribute things for their buddy Kennerly to stand in the line with the Vice President or what to say 'hi' to him and talk to Kennerly. That occurred shortly after we went to a Portland Trailblazer's basketball game somewhere up there. President Ford and I and a couple of others - the team was on the bench and we were on the next seats over at the basketball game. Then went to Kennerly's thing which is now at 1:30 or 2:00 o'clock in the morning East time and I can't possibly imagine how Kennerly got away with that? So the discipline was not good.

Smith: Yeah.

One last thing. Do you remember where you were on election night in '76, the night of the Ford-Carter election? And did you think by the end of the campaign that as the polls suggested, he just might pull it out?

Korologos: I can't remember where I was. Yes, I thought we could pull it out because to this day – well, shortly after, somehow or other, I remember President Ford saying had they gotten Delaware, they could've won. What did we lose by? Three or four electoral votes?

Smith: A little more than that, but it was close.

Korologos: I don't remember where I was. I can't remember. That's funny. But I thought we could win. Oh my gosh, yes. Shortly after - not shortly after – Nixon, I was on his call list and I became Washington guy for Nixon after his presidency, just being down all the time to see Dole and we did stuff in Dole's back room and did seminars and things. I was at a dinner last night with Linda Robb's husband, Chuck Robb.

Korologos: He reminded me that I had brought Nixon up to the Democratic caucus and he'd given a tour of the world. One time Nixon called me to wish me Merry Christmas - December time - and he said, "How are you doing?" And I said, "I'm very nervous. We've just opened our firm. We're a Republican firm and the Democrats have just won the presidency and I don't know how we're going to be able to survive this." And he said, "Now, you listen to me," he said, "Republican firms flourish in Democrat administrations. When the Republicans are in, Corporate America thinks it has great friends in Washington." He said, "It isn't true, but they think they do, so they think they don't need Washington. So, when the Democrats come in, they come running to Washington to save them from all the evils of the Democrats." And Nixon was right. That's how we broadened our business.

Smith: Did you ever hear Nixon talk about Ford in those later years? Did you get a sense at all?

- Korologos: That's interesting. I was around Nixon a lot. Yes, we were in New York one time and I used to take senators to see him - freshman senators, we'd go to this place and somebody would cook Chinese and Senator Larch Faircloth of North Carolina who was a pig farmer. The group started talking about the Kitchen debate and everything else. I don't know how we got into it but at one point Nixon took umbrage over Ford getting on corporate boards, using the presidency to further his own bottom line. He was not happy at that at all. That's about the only time I recall anything about Ford from Nixon. Did President Ford get on a bunch of corporate boards?
- Smith: He went on several. Yeah. His view, of course, was he had no money when he left Washington and a family provide for. But, yeah, it certainly has come in for criticism.
- Korologos: But did he -
- Smith: But, I mean, Ford was never window dressing. He only went on boards where he was really involved and felt that he could really make a contribution. We've talked to a number of people who served with him on various boards.
- Korologos: Who was President when Nixon died? Carter?
- Smith: Clinton.
- Korologos: Clinton?
- Smith: Yeah.
- Korologos: So Bush had already been President. So he was really furious at Bush also for going around and getting \$1 million honorarium including one in Japan from somebody.
- Smith: Well, Reagan had gotten \$1 million from Japan.
- Korologos: But Nixon had died then.
- Smith: No, because Reagan's out of office in '89.
- Korologos: Oh, yeah.

Smith: See, Reagan left first.

Korologos: See, Nixon took umbrage with Bush and Reagan for the \$1 million honorarium.

Smith: How do you think Ford should be remembered?

Korologos: Well, that pardon thing was the greatest sacrifice that a person could possibly make. It quieted the country down. It did end a long national nightmare and had that not happened, who knows what would've happened. Politically, the precedent of doing in presidents, not only for some high crime and misdemeanor, or whatever Nixon did, but there could've been a political decision, another Andrew Johnson thing. Just because we don't like your policy on Iraq, we're going to impeach you. Boy, I tell you.

Smith: Or because you had an affair with an intern.

Korologos: Or you had an affair with an intern, yeah. I tell you, that was quite remarkable what Ford did and it took a lot of guts. Did you find out in your thing or do I have to read the history about how all that transpired in his head?

Smith: Yeah, I think one thing about Ford is sometimes Ford was perfectly willing to let people think he was more naïve than he was.

Korologos: Yeah, I got that a lot. Yeah, you've broken the code.

Smith: And I think he had a pretty sophisticated grasp of the options. He didn't need Al Haig or anyone else to outline for him what the options were. I think it's interesting that it was Bryce Harlow who he listened to, who said in effect, "You've got to go back to Al Haig and make sure he understands that there's no quid pro quo here, for the record." But I also think that even as that was going on, he had a pretty good grasp of what was in the public interest. I think there were probably some things that he probably took to the grave with him.

Korologos: I agree. You know, you said Bryce. Bryce was a great savior of the presidents. What a historical contribution he has made. But what a shame that we didn't have the Ford presidency another four years.

Smith: Yeah.

Korologos: Golly. I have a theory, I'm semi-religious, that the Constitution was divinely inspired and somebody looks after this place except I get nervous once in awhile depending on the kind of people that get elected. Somehow, we muddle through.

Smith: I don't know if I told you this story already. If I did, stop me. What Rex Scouten said to him on election day? Rex told us a great story. It's about 2:30 in the morning and they're up of course in the family quarters and, you know, it's not over, but it's not looking good. And Ford says, "I'm going to go to bed. We'll know in the morning." It was pretty clear it wasn't going the way they wanted it to go. So, Rex follows him across the hall, wanting to say something consoling. And he says, "You know, Mr. President, who knows what will happen. If you don't make it, it's terribly unfair. No one deserved more..." and such and such. "Maybe you should just look at it this way: You've given your whole life in service to this country, whether it was military during the war, all those years on Capitol Hill and these last incredibly difficult years" and so on and so on. And he says, "Maybe, Mr. President, it's just time for you to take a well-earned rest." And Ford says, "I don't think so." Rex gave it the old college try.

Korologos: Way to go, Rex.

Smith: It's interesting. Ford told people, in the days after, because, you know, he was down, he would say to people, "I can't believe to a peanut farmer."

Korologos: He was right.

Smith: Well, I do think there was some buyer's remorse on that election.

Korologos: One more story. It was time to get Haig confirmed for Secretary of State and the pardon came up. "What was his role in it?" "What did you do?" And we muddled around with all kinds of answers and questions on that. And, to this day, "Was Haig in on a deal?" and "What was happening?" and a lot of questions and answers. I'd have to go back to the hearing to see how he answered it, but Haig was a nervous Nellie on that. Ford gave a reception,

didn't he, when they had that meeting in the East Room where 'our long national nightmare is over'? We met the leaders and everyone went our separate ways and later that night, there was a reception to meet the new president? And I went, of course, I've got a job, you know, Ford just hired me. And I ran into Haig the next day or somewhere and I said, "Where were you last night?" And Haig said, "I don't dance on dead men's graves."

Smith: That says volumes.

Korologos: Yeah.

Smith: That's perfect. Thank you.

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