

White House Interview Program

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INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS GRISCOM

INTERVIEWER: Martha Kumar
[Disc 1 of 1]

MK: Here's some stuff about the project here: sort of a one-page summary and then the two parts of the interview program, which is what we'll be discussing, the seven White House offices, and then one that deals with the appointment process.

TG: Right.

MK: A website, the walk-through; supporting institutions including Powell-Tate. Those are your handouts.

So the ground rules are: everything is on the record, unless you want to take something on background, off the record. That's fine. Ultimately the interviews will go into the presidential library system and I think the way it will work—I'm dealing with Sharon Fawcett about it—is it will go into a library, whatever library you want it to go in. There will be quotes used starting in April, because we're going to release what we call "Standards of a Successful Start," things that are associated with a successful transition. Then the interviews themselves are going to be given to people who are coming into the White House, but I think they will be more generally released. It wouldn't be generally released until after the inauguration. The one thing we want to avoid is having anything come out, that's going to haunt anybody in some way, before an election. That is definitely not something we want to do. So our overall goal here is to provide an institutional memory for our seven White House offices.

We're doing both transition and governing. Even though you were not there during the [Ronald] Reagan transition—

TG: We did a transition though—

MK: You did a transition.

TG: That's correct.

MK: Can you tell me the nature of a transition mid-administration? What's it like and how does it differ from your observations of what a transition is like when people come in after the campaign?

TG: Well, I think the transition, when you're in the middle of an administration, is you've an established policy, established people, and an organization to implement those policies. One of the most telling concerns on the minds of the people who are currently in a job is, "Will I have a job tomorrow?" I think there's a recognition that a chief of staff is—and I'll use business terms; I think it's appropriate—like the COO [chief operating officer] of a corporation. Therefore, you expect that the COO puts in place a structure that supports the way that they look at how a program should be managed and run. Therefore, if you were part of the team with the previous chief of staff, does your role continue? You do anticipate

there will be changes; otherwise there would have been no reason to select a new chief of staff. So the first thing is, a lot of people taking their eye off the ball. What is not necessarily appreciated is that a White House still runs, regardless of a staff transition. It runs twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. So, even though you may have a significant change at the top, with a new chief of staff coming in, there are still functions that an Administration has to perform. And, therefore, you have to come in very quickly and encourage people to continue doing their job, at the [same] time that you are sorting through how you're going to basically adopt a staff that supports not only the president but also a new chief of staff, and how they operate. Everybody is different; everybody has different styles. Some people are going to manage more hands-on; some people are going to be a little looser in the way they manage.

MK: What are some of the choices when a chief comes in? What are some of the choices of both style and focus?

TG: We looked at several different versions of how you could organize a staff. One of them is the wheel-and-spoke type model where there's a chief of staff—I talk about that because I think a chief of staff, understanding the relationship with the president, sits at the focal point. One way to do it is you have the chief of staff in the center, and everything reports out, like spokes. Another way is to delineate responsibilities. This is where we ended up. In this case, Senator [Howard] Baker was like the counselor to the President. He was the person who was there to provide that support and counsel. You then had to be focused on both near-term events, and longer-term [events]. So we set up in functional ways like that. A counselor is short-term, long-term. So it was more of a grid system, like that.

I would say there are two primary areas that you have to look at very early on. And they're still talked about in a mid-term transition. One is, what are the policy and goals that have been established? How do you support those? You're not coming in to rechart a course in this case. You're trying to look at a program that has been put together, that has been developed with legislation in Congress, and agencies working on it. How do you continue supporting that? And the second part is, how to get a White House structure organized that supports both the policy goals and actual implementation of those goals. That's really what a White House staff is about, the implementation part of a president's program. That's why I say you have to take into account not only how a president wants to manage, but also, how that chief of staff interfaces with the president, and how that chief of staff manages, as well.

And to me, there are two models. One is very hands-on and one is a little more delegated-type responsibility.

MK: Can you discuss the differences between hands-on and delegated? What Senator Baker chose and how it was implemented?

TG: Well, a hands-on approach is where there's what I would call one major choke point. That choke point is: everything flows through the chief of staff's office. Nothing gets through and into the president without a chief of staff having reviewed it, signed off on it. You're a much stronger traffic cop to limit access to the president. It is a very, very hands-on coordination that everything flows through one office. The more delegated—and part of the benefit I guess that I had—with having worked with Senator Baker for roughly eight years prior to that—was knowing how he functioned as a senator. That style was more of what I would call “responsibility and accountability.” He'd give you a lot of responsibility as long as you were accountable and kept him informed, knowing that the White House support system was set up to complement that. Senator Baker's style, interestingly, was very

much like President Reagan's, which was also one of delegation, but it meant what was termed as, Senator Baker's "no surprise rule," meaning, "I don't want to wake up and read something in the *Washington Post* that I wasn't at least aware of earlier." You keep him apprised of what's going on, but you bring people in that can execute their job and give them latitude to execute.

Whether you are focused on the President's travel schedule and events that stem from it, ways to package the message, that was one functional area; and you would have a staff meeting every morning. That was set on a routine basis, with a similar smaller session late in the day, so you could anticipate the next day's activities. But that was the check-off point where everybody knew what was going on. And you had an idea: "Here's the next three months," for example, "of what we're looking at doing." "What kind of policy and message [do] you want to develop?" And it worked. Again, knowing Senator Baker, and the way that he operated, that was the appropriate way to set up the staff. There was a knowledge base but a lot of assigned responsibility to key staff people.

MK: In the two models, are the functions the same, and the work is distributed differently? Does the one model of the chief himself being the one that everything goes through functionally—you can't do some things that you could do in a model where power is dispersed, the responsibility is dispersed?

TG: Probably, what changes in the two models is what I would call levels of authority. If you have one where everything is the spoke-and-hub type approach, you probably have the same titles as you would find in most White Houses, but you are probably going to find a staff that is more focused on supporting the chief of staff. You might have a couple of senior aides, [who] sort of ring around the chief of staff, the reports come in that way and then those people have authority going straight back here in to that chief of staff.

MK: That would be the Jim Baker model?

TG: Yes. Probably closer.

MK: And he even said he [inaudible].

TG: With Senator Baker, we had it set up, it was understood the role that he came in to perform. There was a White House that had to be managed. There were key aides, but they were not people assigned directly to the chief of staff's staff. You had a deputy chief of staff and then I basically had the communications planning role. Out of that, everything flowed in through those two channels. Then you had the NSC [National Security Council] come in this way. But I think it's fair to say that Don Regan probably did more of the hub-and-spoke type model, because he had more identified aides, who were really part of his staff, than out in functional areas within a White House staff.

MK: His was pretty much a closed system. In part, what precedes you is going to shape what you do, too. Everybody referred to [Regan's] aides as the mice, and they developed hostility to that kind of system: when you come in you have to have a strong change.

TG: Right. You have the advantage to look at what did not work. You have an opportunity to talk to people who've been there before, and then you never lose sight of the fact that you create a model that supports the president and supports the person he's tapped as his primary aide, who is the chief of staff. If you don't take into account how they want to manage, then the system won't work. If Senator Baker had been what I call a direct, hands-

- on person, for every detail, then I think the model we created would not have worked, because it was one with more delegation built in to it. It was reflective of his career and the way that he had managed his Senate operations. Had we gone the other route, I think it would not have worked because of a logjam, with decisions sitting on one desk. This way, you had a process that allowed decisions to be made, that let the White House operate, but with an informational system that made sure there were connections to everything going on.
- MK: Does coming in mid-administrative, especially in the kinds of circumstances that you all came in, give you a bargaining advantage? So that Senator Baker could say, “If I’m going to come in, there are certain things I’m going to need. I’m going to need Tom Griscom, number one.” He brought in—
- TG: A.B. Culvahouse as his General Counsel.
- MK: That’s right.
- TG: You’re asking somebody to disrupt their current life to come in, and to do something they may not necessarily aspire to do, or have any thought about doing. So I don’t think it’s outside the bounds. I’ll give you one that was talked about, and it was in the communications area. One of the things that the President said was, he had just appointed Marlin Fitzwater a few weeks earlier to be the Press Secretary and he really was uncomfortable making a change—I think he liked Marlin, because Marlin was very good. He said, “I’d like to keep him on.” And Senator Baker said, “That’s fine.” We all knew Marlin.
- There were other people who, I would say, were new in their jobs and there was not the same level of interest in making sure that they stayed with their position. It was, “I want to give you the latitude to do what you need to do.” But there is a level of cooperation that probably is a little more required than at the first of an administration. You’re asking somebody to come in, disrupt what they’ve been doing, step into an environment they had not necessarily thought about wanting to do, and to inherit a set of issues and problems not of their making. Somebody else had his or her hand on the tiller at the time these happened. So there is flexibility. Having said that, I don’t think you’d even, get into the process, somebody that was totally out of sync with the President’s policies; they’d never be offered the job.
- MK: You have a lot less flexibility, then. You have flexibility in shaping organization, but less flexibility in shaping programs because—
- TG: Right. Programs are there; they’re in place. I believe the same thing would apply if it had been the new team coming in between terms, because I think, the first four years, you’ve set in place what this administration is all about. The President just ran for re-election, so you’ve got this compact that people expect. To then come in and do a wholesale change from one four-year term to the next I think has some of the same issues as coming in mid-stream in one of the terms, to try and change it. People had come to identify what this administration represented, what this President was all about, and what they expect this President to achieve. To me, any point after the first couple years—particularly if you get re-elected—the shape of an administration is defined; it’s then what do you do within the four corners of that to bring it to life. Maybe turn it just a little bit here, and there, to start identifying those things that people are going to remember about a particular administration, a particular president.

MK: In assembling a White House staff, and thinking about it, what do you think the functions of a White House staff are? What does an effective White House staff buy a president?

TG: Let me use certain terms, and then I'll define them for you: coordination, cooperation, vision and direction. And I'll take them in reverse order. I think you help a president who has campaigned on a set of issues develop those issues into a vision or mission statement: where are you taking the country? Where does this fit? What is the imprint you're trying to leave? So you're part of that process; you're helping to bring the political objectives into reality. You're transitioning from campaigning to governing. I think that's the important point.

Direction: by that I'm talking about identifying the priorities. What are the things out of that mission statement that you're now going to prioritize, "We're going to do these first. These we're going to put over here. There's some of them we've thought about; we may never get to them." But you then provide a direction as to how you're going to achieve the vision or mission. Then coordination and cooperation means that you have to be effective; you're elected from one political party but you've got to figure out [how] to get the job done, unless you've got super majorities which we have not seen for some time in this country, you have to figure out how to find the right points between a philosophical, many times party-driven initiative versus times when you reach out across party lines. So you develop that type of cooperation with people of different political points of view—sometimes within your party, quite often with people from the other party. At the end of the day you do get measured by your ability to govern, to take your ideas and turn them into actions and goals that people can feel the effect.

Then coordination is: how do you take a bureaucracy that is huge and find the ways that you bring cabinet secretaries to understand the role of a cabinet officer, vis-à-vis the White House? Are the cabinet secretaries going to be left to their own devices, or is the White House going to be a part of that vision, saying, "We're going to drive our policies through the bureaucracy."

Many people, as you know, are career bureaucrats; they've seen presidents come and go. So: how do you build coordination from a White House idea to developing and spreading it out, where a department has to take ownership, and has to put together the implementation? So, those are the four points.

MK: Where does the Cabinet fit in? Can you take an example of a policy, and take it from its initiation in the White House, and then how does it go back and forth with the cabinet officer in that particular area and then down through the bureaucracy.

TG: Probably the best ones that we were dealing with, if you take the Iran-Contra situation, were the issues trying to continue moving the US-Soviet relationship. So you had a fairly defined policy from the previous six years of use of force to try to build, what I would say are, concessions and conciliations. The Star Wars, SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] initiative, the sessions that the President had with [Mikhail] Gorbachev and previous Soviet leaders and then basically the belief that one of the legacies that President Reagan could leave was to try and create the path to bring more stability to the US-Soviet relationship. The Defense Department, the State Department, and the NSC - three agencies, sometimes they get along; sometimes there's tension about whom has the most access to the President. I want to come back to that point, because it was interesting to observe that.

You would have what I call people in the White House, that would be viewed as the keepers of the flame—what is the philosophical underpinning of the President?—but then you'd have policy people outside the White House. The State Department, as the first example: "We've been out there for years on this point trying to build a relationship. We're on the front line. We're the ones that have to walk in and explain to our counterparts in Moscow what's going on here." So there would be a lot of back and forth, not only in terms of whether to have an arms control reduction program, but then the actual words, the toasting, whether Gorbachev could speak before the Congress.

All types of images got wrapped up in a White House trying to develop and shape the direction, but then the State Department would weigh in: "But we're the real people who are out here driving it every day." So it requires sitting down with people in departments and agencies that understand the policies that a president has laid out, but do not necessarily agree totally with the way it might be presented and delivered. There is always a level of tension but, at the end of the day, I think it's understood if a decision has to be made, it is ultimately the president's decision to be made.

I'll give you an example that's been written about before. That is in the speech that President Reagan made at the Brandenburg Gate in Germany. The backdrop was selected clearly as a symbol for the separation between East and West Germany but also the separation of the Soviet Union from the western countries. We put in a line where President Reagan called on Mr. Gorbachev to "...come and tear down this wall..." There was high-level concern in the State Department about that line being delivered, because it would be viewed as an affront to Mr. Gorbachev. There were a lot of discussions, ultimately resolved with a meeting involving Sen. Baker and Secretary [George] Shultz. I was brought into that discussion, because all the communications functions flowed through me.

MK: [Inaudible]

TG: That's right. And the discussion focused on why it was important, why this President was the right president to deliver that line. It was consistent with the direction that had been charted and, as you know, the line was left in and now has been repeated over and over. But it was a real-time example, to see how words on a piece of paper get scrutinized, and a phrase like that is being worked on until the final hours.

MK: Where did it come from?

TG: Where did the line come from?

MK: Yes.

TG: It came out of our shop.

MK: Did it come from a speechwriter putting it in?

TG: Well, it came from taking an advance trip, looking at all the different venues, and then trying to identify key message points to deliver. So we sat down and laid out the plan for that trip. We talked about doing an event at the Brandenburg Gate. Clearly, part of the discussion was going back to the [John F.] Kennedy speech, and looking at some of the things he had said. You were not going to mimic that, but you were going to learn from it, just like I think the current White House has learned some things from what was done in the Reagan administration. It was a lot of brainstorming, trying to find what are the key messages for

the President to deliver. It's evolved from that. We used Brandenburg as more than just a concrete monument but as a symbol for separation, and as an opportunity to do a visual challenge. If we're serious about openness, *glasnost* and *perestroika*, then there's one clear way to show it. That's to come here and tear down this wall. That's how it evolved.

MK: So did the phrase follow the decision to go there?

TG: Yes — you need to get a sense of the trip and the settings. Then, out of that, you sit down and basically pull together a lot of thoughts about each one.

MK: Thinking about the Clinton White House, particularly in the communications area, and the Reagan one, one of the things I wonder is whether one learns from an administration that's of the opposite party. If one can do that? Or rather, there is an effective model of communications. What is similar in the Clinton operation to the Reagan one is the integration and coordination of policy and publicity and politics, putting all of those together and putting them together at the chief of staff level, and then having a daily operation that runs its own course.

Then they've also done something new, which is to create what I call communications clusters, where they target specific things. They bring in people like scandal squad; keep it separate. But I wonder whether it's just that that is an effective way of communicating? Any administration that's going to make it into the second term has to have communications; they're not going to make it if they don't have that. There is one way of doing it, and that is coordinate at the top. But then I think, "Well, they could have learned from [David] Gergen, because he was one element that you could say was in both things." And [John] Podesta has talked about how he learned from Gergen. He talked in terms of turning a story around. He [Podesta] learned how quickly that could be done from him [Gergen]. He said that right before [the Monica] Lewinsky [scandal].

TG: I never bought into the notion that there is a turnkey that you can pick up and do. I think it is so much dependent on the individual who's occupying the Oval Office. The reason certain staff people are there is the President, the one who got elected. We're not elected and I think there is a tendency, or there has been a tendency from time to time, for people to forget the fact that, if it weren't for the person sitting in the Oval Office, none of us would be there. We would not exist. That's the whole point: you are there serving at the pleasure of the President. I think there's a tendency to forget that from time to time.

You need to understand the elected official, the President, and that person may not have the best communications skills. How do you then adapt a communications structure that supports and brings out the best attributes? He may not be a good public speaker, but he's going to have to speak; the President does not live in isolation. So do you highlight more public events or do you find one-on-one sessions? You try to construct a program to show more of a hands-on approach which can potentially give the sense of micromanaging but you have to work through that. It was an ideal situation when we went in from the standpoint that the President understood how to communicate. He could take a piece of paper and make it come to life. This President (Clinton) is very similar. But I would be wary of anybody who said: "This is the snapshot, here it is."

I would hope they would do what we did even though we had a very truncated period of time to get it together. That is, you go out real quick and you talk to a lot of people who have been through this. You try to get the best thinking. You then get a good understanding of the person you serve, how they work, and you match the two together. I

think good communication people are those who understand the person they're working with, how to get their ideas out, rather than, "Here is the model, let me fit this person into the model." If they're not comfortable with it, it will fail. I have a lot of respect for President [George H. W.] Bush. In some cases I think he was forced into a model that was not supportive of the way he communicated. Therefore, there were times that awkwardness came out. And you can look at examples that were widely reported, wherein trying to show he was more connected to the American people, they took him out and had him go shopping. He made the comment about a scanner in a store, "How long have we had these?" Well, right there was a staff failure, because they did not understand the person they served, and how best to put him in an environment. His staff threw him into this "great photo op." They get there and what should have been a good event turned into a negative event.

MK: Do you think the problem there was that the staff was set up in a way that reflected the President, rather than sought to complement him? Say, in Reagan's case, there are things that he did well and things that he didn't do as well. He did what he did well and then other people would be working on other kinds of things. He didn't care a lot about paper flow, and how the whole place worked; he had other people who did that. He felt comfortable with doing that.

In Bush's case, it didn't seem that was the case. He had a staff that reflected the kinds of things he was interested in. He wasn't an effective communicator and he had John Sununu, who wasn't an effective communicator. That function simply was never performed. There was nobody there doing it. One of the things, perhaps, you need to have in a White House staff is complement. You can only carry staff as being a reflection of a president to a certain extent.

TG: You're right. Except, if a president does not want it to happen, it won't happen. What you hope is, you go back and you try to recount how did you get elected in the first place, what got you to this office? Somebody said, "Well, he came out of eight years of President Reagan." But President Bush also had an identity; he ran a race and he won. And part of that was communication. So you want to go back and realize that there has to be a communication component. The ability for a message to get out very quickly today, around the world, is enormous, and it's evolved a lot from the time we were in the White House. So you have to be able to figure how to take advantage of the technology.

In a White House, contrary to what people say, you can manage some of the news. It's much different than on the Hill, because there's a different level of accessibility that the media has, for example. You want to go back and examine the election—what the president ran on.

I want to go back to what we were talking about a minute ago. If your long suit is not as a great communicator, then you have to build the right infrastructure to be able to get your message out. You can't ignore it. I agree with you. I think when you set up the media to be your enemy, you are apt to fail. If you think about this administration, this President [Clinton] is very good, but they have been very critical of the media; that they've [i.e., the media] constantly been on them and have done more negative coverage on this White House than any in the past. I doubt that, but I have not done any research to determine the validity of that statement. But they've been able to get out and establish the issue base and have a Congress controlled by the other party running to their tune. I doubt if you would find any president who said, "I have this great affection for the news media." They understand there's an adversarial relationship. Some people take that and realize it is part of performing

- the job. Others say, “I want to push them over here.” If you do that, you have isolated a key element that today I think is an important part of being a president: the communications side. That’s where I think it’s changed: being able to know how to effectively get your message out. It’s not as much techniques as it is understanding how you want to communicate and then how you adapt that piece, just like when you put together your White House staff or your cabinet secretaries. You understand what you’re trying to accomplish, and you find the right person for it. I think the communications piece needs to be looked at the same way.
- MK: Hasn’t it always been that presidents have had to communicate with the public, and that the news media was going to be an important ingredient? Right from George Washington, when he wanted to let people know he wasn’t going to run for a third term, and gave his Farewell Address, that farewell address was given to an editor; it was not delivered before the Congress.
- TG: Right.
- MK: So he knew how to get that out.
- TG: I think the challenge, when you look at someone like George Washington, is that the reach that a presidential utterance has is faster and the impact more immediate. Does it still perform the same function? Yes. Somebody who understands the communications side of the White House knows how to go out and work with the media, not use them, work with them. You can put out trial balloons to see how the public is going to react, how somebody on the Hill is going to react, before putting the President out front. I would hope that what has evolved—it’s sort of a CEO analogy—is a better realization that anybody in the White House can be quoted, but when the president speaks there is nobody else.
- So you want to be very selective and very thoughtful when you put the president out, when he says something. That’s why unnamed White House aides, a chief of staff, a cabinet secretary, are all at least one step removed. When you get to the president, it should be important enough that you want that imprint.
- MK: That seems to be something this White House has learned pretty well.
- TG: They do a very good job of it.
- MK: And having a sense of how news organizations work, and what the changes have been with cable.
- TG: You identified something earlier, and I think you’re exactly right. They’ve built two modifications on what’s been done previously. One is taking a difficult White House situation, and setting it up so it functions almost as an independent element. When we were dealing with Iran-Contra, it was part of our continued responsibility every day to manage a White House and it was an energy-sapping experience. On the one hand, you knew you had this problem to deal with that, if not handled right, would affect everything else. But you still had a White House to run. I think the ability to take a situation like that, and isolate it so it gets handled, gets managed, but does not dominate every other initiative of the White House, is one thing.

- Second is their ability to set up war rooms on an issue, and to really get in there when an issue is getting ready to move, to take hold of it and drive it. I think they've done an excellent job of that.
- MK: One of the things it allows them to do, by creating these clusters, like say during the campaign, when they took an issue of crime, they could bring Dick Morris in to identify [that] crime was a good issue. Mark Penn would do the polling. Then they had Don Baer, who was on the inside, writing a speech, or Michael Waldman. They'd have Rahm Emanuel setting up the event; Bruce Reed finding the policy note. So you had all these different people that could come together and work on just this one thing. There's no distinction between inside and outside. It's a very efficient and quick use of people.
- TG: It is. I want to go back to the war room because it is like a mini-campaign, to focus on issues that crop up, that are outside the game plan, to be able to step in real quick and almost surgically take hold of it and flip it. That to me is a technique that this White House has developed and developed very well.
- MK: Can you think of anything in particular that they've been good on, that they've used that with?
- TG: Well, I think they've used it in cases to cut their losses. Contrary to what people may think, as long as the Lewinsky matter went on, and while they were separated from it in the White House, they had a team of people who were working every day on it. While there was a lot of distraction, there were still other things that had to be done. I'm trying to think of other things. It almost seems like every time you turn around they had created a war room on a particular issue and they were just able to capture it.
- MK: Well, they had a scandal squad that had started earlier, even before the—
- TG: That's correct. When the government was shut down, they took an issue that should have had as much of a negative rub-off on the White House as the Hill, and they turned it into a [Newt] Gingrich issue, and a Gingrich issue that just didn't go away. And it is not because the facts were any different than before the government shut down, they just surgically took it apart and found that two or three core issues. Each issue has a constituency that can be targeted. They're an important voting group. Not only do they get them speaking out, but they also are building votes for Democrats. The message: we didn't want to shut down the government; it was the Republicans; they did it. They developed that issue and they took it. There is just as much blame to go around concerning a government shutdown. But they really took that and did a very good job of turning it, so at the end of the day, the people blamed the Republicans and the President is portrayed as trying to figure out how to keep the government running. It was simply a strategy to focus on turning this issue.
- And it should have been known by now, they're good at it; they've mastered the technique. When you are battling the Congress, this is the place where a White House has an advantage if they understand how to use it. You have 535 individuals; you don't have a majority of Republicans that can stand in lockstep, because of the way the Congress has evolved. So you've got one place – the White House - that when it speaks, if it's done right, can demand attention, versus 535 people trying to figure their way through this, a speaker or majority leader saying something and then finding that, "...half my caucus isn't with me." The White House can bring precision to the message. Today, I think it's much harder for leadership in Congress to respond, or develop that same precision of message.

MK: The Republicans have seemed to give them a lot of space to develop their messages themselves, without the Republicans having a component. For example, when Congress goes out of session, these guys just take to the airwaves and just have one thing after another. Like the buildup to the State of the Union, they've done a fantastic job of that. But part of that is that Congress is out of town, and there's nobody responding to anything they say.

TG: That is correct. Those are some of the trappings, that people don't focus on, that do come with the White House. If you handle it right, you can capture the stage and you can set the agenda. You're right. It is harder for the Congress to react and respond. You can go out in the Rose Garden on any given day and you can take some event that was put on the calendar and turn it into a policy event at the drop of a hat. All of a sudden you're out there and you're recognizing the Future Farmers of America in the Rose Garden. So you say your prepared remarks, then all of a sudden you drop in a paragraph or two that [is] a very focused-type message and, boom, it gets covered.

I'll give you one example we did. We went out on the road with President Reagan, when the Iran-Contra was still going on. Part of it was to demonstrate that he was not going to be stopped in his tracks, that he could govern, not the picture of [Richard] Nixon sitting there watching TV during Watergate. So we did a small-town caravan in Wisconsin and Michigan. It was just a car-stop tour, going into local Rotary clubs, Kiwanis clubs, places like that. We had one line in a speech in which the President said, "I'm not a potted plant." That was the line. "I'm not just sitting in one place in Washington, DC. I'm out here. I've still got things to do." So he delivered it at one event; one of the network correspondents was off doing something else, and missed it. He came up and said, "I understand this is the line of the day. I need it for tonight. I'm in trouble." So he asked, "Could you do it again?" So we went to the next stop and just dropped the line into the speech. "Ronald Reagan is out today asserting that he is still in charge," then you cut away and the President is talking: "I am not a potted plant." There are some people who say that is not very presidential; it may not be, but it sure got the message across, and put the words behind the image. You have the President, like, campaigning in small towns in the Midwest: "I'm out here. I've still got things to get done; I'm not going to be captured by all the stuff going on in Washington." It can be done; it can be done effectively.

MK: When you were building the legacy campaign, because you started the legacy campaign for Reagan, did you go back to [James] Hagerty and his legacy campaign for [Dwight D.] Eisenhower?

TG: I went back and read—

MK: His memoranda?

TG: —a lot of things. I started by asking people, "Those of you who were there in the first days of the Reagan administration, I want to see the documents you put together, because you defined what this presidency was all about." So I started that way, and working back. But the first thing we had to do—we were always suspect, because we were not identified as true believers—was what were those defining points. I talked to Jody Powell; so you get the benefit of his perspective of the [Jimmy] Carter administration, what they had put in place. A person needs to understand that moment in time that you've got when you're occupying a certain office in a White House. You stop for a minute and reflect, "There have been many people who came before me and many people who will come after me. I've got an opportunity to maybe leave an imprint where somebody years from now will look at

something that we did.” But don’t think you’re inventing or creating the first snapshot of this. Many people have been here dealing with and thinking about these issues. If you’re smart enough, you go back and you look at them; you basically sort through ideas and you update them, in some cases. But it’s important to learn. You need to be a good reader, a good listener, interested in history, reaching out and opening your mind and acknowledging, “This is a listening session. Here’s what I’m trying to do. Help me.” One of the things I did was have an informal group that I would talk to every week, just to make sure you don’t lose perspective.

MK: Who were they?

TG: I’m not going to go into that level of detail.

MK: Can you tell me what positions they had occupied?

TG: Some of them had been press secretaries. Some of them were reporters. Some of them were policy people. They were both Republicans and Democrats.

MK: Tell me about the sessions, what you’d talk about. Did you get together as a group or did you just touch base with the individuals?

TG: I never put the whole group together. A lot of times, because of the press of business, they were telephone conversations. Sometimes, you could sneak away for a little bit during lunch and catch up. But they were not formal sessions; they were more informal give-and-take. They worked because it was all kept private. This was not trying to say, “Look who I can talk to,” or somebody on the outside saying, “Well, they’re asking my advice....” I think that was important. It was really designed to understand what-we’re-doing-right; what-we’re-doing-wrong. That’s how they always started.

The first piece of advice most of them gave—and they were right—is, “You will come in there with your breath taken away, when you look at the magnitude of what you have to deal with. And you come in from the outside, and you’re not tainted by the White House, but within a short period of time you’ll get consumed. What you’ll find is that your ability to carve out any time to think and look ahead will go away.” Sure enough, that’s what happened. You get so consumed by the day-to-day management, that you stop and want to know where you are, how you are doing and what you are missing?

MK: So, in a sense what you’re doing is—you’re not just looking ahead, you’re looking backward.

TG: Yes. Because, if you made a mistake here, it’s going to manifest itself going forward. If I made a mistake here, I’ve got to find a place to try and correct it, if I can. The monitoring is easy: tell me what’s going on politically? What are you hearing? What are our friends saying? What are our critics saying about us? Sometimes, believe it or not, the critics were not in the other party, they were with the same party. They were people with a more philosophical point of view. You needed information. What I would do, even if it was only for fifteen minutes, was stop and think a little bit right there.

Then you’d come back and deal with them. I had a lot of discussions, as you would expect, during Iran-Contra. There was advice given that you’d say, “Thank you, but I just can’t do that.” But you wanted to hear what was on somebody’s mind. But it didn’t take away the fact that, in the final analysis you’re inside and they’re not. You can get the best advice and you should do that. You should never isolate yourself. I also believe you should never

- isolate yourself politically, because there are a lot of smart Republicans and smart Democrats out there. You can reach out and get information. But then you ultimately have to make the recommendation and live with the decision.
- MK: Do you think your ability to look backwards, to bring such a group together, depends in part on having been in Washington and having the connections to start off with? One of the things that happens in a White House staff, and looking at their development over time, is the preponderance of people coming in are campaign people.
- TG: Right.
- MK: And then, Washington people get layered in or brought into the mix. Then you go to a deputies model as a third one. When you bring in Washington people, one of the things that they bring with them are the contacts they have, the knowledge they have, but also their own legitimacy. That was certainly true with you all. It was very important for Reagan to have somebody who was regarded as a very solid, legitimate person.
- TG: And an insider. We did talk earlier about transitioning from the role of being a campaigner to governing. It is a huge transition. Some people can do it; some people cannot. And I think you have to have a mixture, because part of the campaign—even if you have a president in a second term who cannot run again—it is still the most powerful position politically in the country.
- So you never want to lose sight of the politics. I think where this administration started off rocky was the health care plan which was more of a policy wonk issue and ignoring the fact that it's also a political issue. You've got to sell it. You want to understand how you took an issue and sold it from a campaign standpoint. So I think you have to blend the two together. You want the firm footing for historical purposes of the policy people and those who claim to protect the presidency which is important. But then you also want to bring in the political viewpoint—this element that drives you to go out and sell it. The way you sell an issue quite often is the way you sold yourself. How do people perceive you? How do they want to hear from you? You never want to lose that perspective.
- I think this administration started off rocky and I think Jody Powell would acknowledge that there was a group of people who worked for President Carter but were ignored. You don't come to Washington and say, "We don't need any of these people. We're going to run it like a governor of a state." You've got to stretch yourself much larger because now you're like a governor of fifty states or governor of the world, however you want to look at it. Be careful that you don't get isolated and all you're running is an extended campaign. You've got the campaign people, but now you've got to put the policy people together because now you've got to govern. Governing is different than just running a campaign.
- MK: That's one thing I really want to dig into, the differences between campaigning and governing. There are some thoughts within political science and other disciplines as well that the two have become the same. It's not a view that personally I share. I think there's a great deal of difference between campaigning and governing. Bringing campaign techniques into a White House is different than simply campaigning.
- TG: Right. I agree with you. I'll give you an example of where I think we took a campaign technique and brought it into a fairly standard policy event – the last State of the Union. President Reagan went to deliver it, and wanted to remind people that the Congress was not performing well. They had just passed this huge appropriations bill, a continuing resolution

to fund the government. It was not the way anybody should run their business, much less the business of the United States. So we went out and measured the actual bill, weighed it and reconstructed it. You may know this but, before the president delivers the State of the Union, the advance people go up and do a sight review.

They wanted to look at the area where the President would be and that there was enough space to set up something. The congressional staff weren't sure what was going to happen. We brought in this whole mass of papers. The President reached down and picked it up—he had rehearsed this—and dropped it. It made this huge thud in the House chamber; you could hear it. When he dropped it—you could not plan this but it was why he was good and why this President is good—he got a paper cut when he dropped it. People saw his reaction. People understand paper cuts. So it brought another element in to it. The whole thing was using a campaign technique. And he described how heavy it was, [and] the size of it. Then he delivered the political message but it was also a policy message. That's where you're right.

I think an administration that runs only a four-year political campaign will not succeed, because there is a policy element that you have to build on. If you're communicating right, you're always campaigning but you're establishing policies – not like Lamar Alexander running for president for six years out in Iowa. That's been an ongoing campaign, and he's out there just meeting and greeting, a lot of in and out, but it's devoid of a lot of substance. A campaign does not deliver a lot of substance. It delivers ideas, gives a snapshot of the candidate, but a White House, if it's going to be successful, brings the substance into that campaign-type image building.

MK: Most people seem to bring in a good number of their campaign people with them, and there's a momentum that builds in that direction. Can you give me some arguments for and against doing that?

TG: Sure.

MK: What kind of people are there?

TG: The reason you would do it is, you become very comfortable with these people. They know you; they know you well. And I would argue it's the reason when Senator Baker was in the White House there was a core group of us that went in with him. We know him; we've worked with him. He trusts us; he trusts our judgment. We can anticipate how he thinks. Sometimes people may find that kind of scary but that's part of it. If you're able to anticipate, then you can move things along. It develops a comfort factor.

Again, it's not that much different than when a new CEO comes into a corporation. Quite often, they have people they have worked with in the past that they bring with them. I think that's because it does provide some consistency in execution. People who know how an individual works and thinks and communicates. But you don't fill all your roles with them, because they are not necessarily going to be the only people that should be the thinkers. And that's not to mean you don't have people in campaigns who are good thinkers, but you don't necessarily have people who are spending their time figuring out, "What our budget policy ought to be for the next four years. How are we going to stimulate the economy?" They know how to help that policy-person create an information format for a president or as a chief of staff. Whether to have a memo that is multi-pages or an executive summary and a little backup.

There were things you learned. It came from the First Lady – if you send up a document to the President, he will read all of it. He was an avid reader; he was a speed-reader. And he did. Things would come back with dog-ears halfway, two-thirds of the way through. Then you realized, “Okay, a lot of this stuff was in there because somebody decided to give him every piece of background, rather than important pieces. If he needs more, he will ask.” So you had to skinny that down. That’s why I do think you bring people with you who have had the campaign experience. They understand how you got there, how to digest information, what are the core set of values that you want to deliver. And there’s a comfort level that’s important. You walk into this office that you aspire to achieve—you get it—and then you understand how huge it really is.

In the discussion, I’ve already talked about why you don’t want everybody to come out of a campaign. Some people love campaigns. They want to campaign twenty-four hours a day. You now have to get in a position where you have to deliver on the expectations. You have to manage expectations. If you’re not thinking that way, if you’re constantly looking for the next sound bite from a campaign standpoint, you’re not going to be able to put the foundation there that allows you to build the legacy. What is it you want to leave behind? There is a substance piece. I’ve been a campaign person. It’s not that campaign people don’t have substance, but they’re not thinking longer term. For example, let me use national health care. They’re thinking about health care as a political issue, as a wedge issue, which is very different from figuring out whether it will work and its impact.

MK: How do you graft those people on? Can you do it in a couple of ways? Can you identify or can people in your campaign identify what kind of people are going to be needed for governing, and bring them into the campaign in some way?

TG: Sometimes you can. But quite often, some of the people you bring into the campaign are not going to be the right people when you actually have to govern. One, because they may not have the time to do it. They may not be able to walk away from their current position. But you also then want some of the seasoning that does come from having been around the block a couple times. Most of the ideas that come up, with a few exceptions, are not going to be totally new ideas. It’s going to be dusting off and repackaging them. The big policy issues have been around for some time; you’re just trying to put your own imprint on them. Therefore, you have to make sure that you have the full knowledge of what’s come before.

As we talked earlier, from the communications standpoint and the policy side, too, if you know coming in that you’re going to do a major reform of the tax policy, you need to understand where the tripwires are because a lot of people have gone through this in the past. Are you going to go for a huge opportunity or are you going to go for incremental changes? I think it depends on the time and the individual. President Reagan was able in those first couple of years to fundamentally change tax policies and spending policies. These are issues he campaigned on; people believed that he could make a difference. They were behind him. I don’t think President Bush would have been successful in biting off those two huge policy chunks, that President Reagan took charge of, because there was a different set of dynamics.

MK: You mean the economy?

TG: No.

MK: Or the people?

TG: Yes. The force driving it. People elected this President to do it. To wrestle with Speaker O’Neill, who was a powerful political figure, and to be able to capture Democrats who supported the old system. To be able to pull Democrats off from the Speaker was an amazing political feat. When the opportunity comes, you want to take advantage of it, but also you want to be careful you don’t misread the opportunity. Because, then you fail.

MK: Do you think, if you have people who are seasoned in Washington politics, with a memory, that you bring in that memory when you bring in Washington—

TG: You bring it in and you complement the political side. That’s why I think a good White House puts the two pieces together. You never lose sight of the fact that this is politics but it is also now policy. You don’t want either one totally removed. You want to figure out how they work off each other.

MK: It seems to be hard, though, to bring Washington people in.

TG: It is. There’s a lot of resentment, because you weren’t there from the beginning, you weren’t there in the trenches. It’s like a spoils system. “I was there; I picked President Clinton as my candidate; you went with other candidates. So I should have control to some extent.”

But to govern—I hope one of the key parts here is to understand that a transition after a presidential election that stays in Little Rock, is why, I think, they started off rocky. You can have your base there, but you really should have been in Washington, because now you need a broader perspective. You’re moving out of the campaign into the policy side; you need the benefit of Washington experience; people who can put their hands around the scope of what you can achieve, taking little bites.

Don’t bite off something too large: “I’m going to go out and change the world,” because the world may not have given you the mandate, America may not have given the mandate to make fundamental changes. There may still be changes around the edges. You gain that perspective by stepping out of the environment you’ve lived in for the last eighteen to twenty-four months, and into the environment you’re moving into, which is different.

MK: It seems to be a very hard step to take.

TG: It is.

MK: How do people do it?

TG: I think we’re still learning.

MK: Certainly Clinton did not do it.

TG: All of a sudden you’re sitting back and saying—as he said, “I’m the Comeback Kid. Nobody thought I could get here to begin with, and now here I am and here are the people who brought me.” And this is where a broad staff matters—and it’s difficult. You say, “I was out there sweating, running around, not getting enough sleep, not getting paid that much, to get a person elected. Now, it’s my time to get the rewards!” It is hard to allow some gray-hair elder statesman to take your place. You’ve got to find how you balance that. That’s what you run into. You run a campaign and you get all these volunteers across the country and every one of them thinking, you owe me a job. The answer is no, there are not enough jobs, in the first place, to go around. I can’t tell you the magic answer, because you are

talking about people who believe they know better than anybody else what got this person to the White House; so now why do they need somebody in Washington telling them to do it this way or that way? They're part of the problem. It's a blending; it's a blending.

MK: Do you think part of it could be having a planning operation that starts very early, that starts on personnel to begin with identifying people in Washington that might be able to fit in and then, perhaps, have some role for them during the campaign? It seemed to me Stu Spencer had that sense about Jim Baker and brought him into the debate so that, when Baker came into the Reagan White House as Chief of Staff, he wasn't just totally—

TG: Right. Well, that helps, if you can get in there. There is really a point, too—. I think what you're leading to is: there's a difference in running a primary campaign, and a general election campaign as well. The first is where you start taking small steps—at this point you are dealing just within your party structure; now you're dealing with the whole American public. Therefore, you have got to expand. Then you bring in new people to give a broader reach. Then they get integrated. I just think if you're not careful, there is such a level of resentment—it's human nature. "I was there and you were not. It's my time to get rewarded. You're not smart enough. If you had been, you would have been on board early." There's a large part of that. I can say this now, as I turn fifty: there is a generational perspective in a campaign:

"I may look young; I may be young in age. But I'm pretty smart; I've been around the track. Why do I need somebody who's forty, fifty years old coming in here? They don't understand my generation. Here's what we were doing. We were reaching out and setting the stage for the next millennium; these are old, dated people who have been here before and they're part of the problem. You went out and tilted with the windmill and you won. Why do you need those people now?"

That's the hardest part of stepping back and appreciating the fact that you can—you should learn every day and you should learn from strong, sage counsel that's out there. How many presidents are going to deal with that, and say, "Why do I have to reconcile this?" Why should they? A lot of them are not good personnel people; they don't like to have to make those choices.

MK: Really, by their nature, presidents are politicians, and politicians want to please people.

TG: And they compromise all the time.

MK: Yes.

TG: You're in here. I'll tell you what you want to hear, because then I can go over here and tell somebody something else; the likelihood that you ever connect the dots is pretty slim.

MK: Well, Clinton is a master at that. But if you have a personnel operation that's up and running early, one of the things that perhaps it can do is satisfy people that they are going to be remembered afterwards, that you're going to have a political memory, a family memory in the sense of the political family memory that's put in.

TG: Right.

MK: For example, in the Bush White House, Ron Kaufman was in the Personnel Office so that people can make sure that in some way they're going to be taken care of, so they have less

resentment for people coming in. But it does seem to be a big problem of how you make that transition.

TG: It is a huge problem. It is a real struggle to realize that you want to maintain a good knowledge, and focus on what got you here. At the same time, you want to bring in people that will get you to the next stage, people who understand how the process works. It's quite interesting to watch this. If you have people running against Congress, that's a potential problem. Whoever gets elected comes in and then all of a sudden, you have to govern; you've got to work with Congress. If you can override them, that's fine, but now you're going to have to step in and figure out how you make this system work for you. Then you're going to have people from the campaign saying, "We can't do that. We ran against the Congress. We ran against Washington." Fine. Then move the White House to some place else. Don't leave it sitting here in the nation's capital.

That was great campaign rhetoric; understand what it meant. It didn't mean that you could not reside in Washington, DC, and you couldn't figure out how to make the process work. You provide the catalyst. That's really what you were campaigning on: that all the answers weren't here, and all the people up here running it weren't able to make it work right. You're bringing a new set of ideas. If you come in with the notion, having campaigned against Washington, and Washington is irrelevant, you may as well not unpack your bags because you're not going to succeed at all.

You will be forced into a governing mode. I would also add to your list: how to take political messages from Ames, Iowa, or Concord, New Hampshire, and say, "How do I marry my campaign messages with how I would govern? Have I given any thought to that?" I'm campaigning against Washington; I'm campaigning against the Congress. A great rhetorical statement. Now, if I get elected, how does that work? Am I going to be captured by these Washington people? It would really be important to sit down and think about the campaign rhetoric and how would you translate it into governing.

MK: I think among the things that we'll talk about in Standards of a Successful Start are the ways in which, in a campaign, one needs to avoid making blanket statements like, "...ours will be the most ethical administration."

TG: Yes. I always believe you leave a back door. You never speak in absolutes because you always get in trouble. People do not think in absolutes. There are a lot of gray areas. So you're right: when you say, "No way will I raise taxes," that may be what you want to say, but you don't know what happens, looking ahead. Situations may change and all of a sudden you are faced with a decision that—when you said that statement it was great; it got you great coverage—you wish you could take it back. It's not trying to come across wishy-washy or having no principles but, it's giving yourself a little bit of cushion if you have to readjust to changing situations.

MK: Something that's just haunted Democrats is that each Democrat that has come in—without having come in through assassination or something like that—as a challenger, each one of them has said they will cut the White House staff and they have cut it by 25 per cent. It's haunted them all. Kennedy did it. Then Carter said it and Clinton said it. It was a problem, particularly for Carter and Clinton, but it seemed to be one that they did it to themselves in the campaign.

TG: Yes. So you ask, what did you learn from this? Well, the media brings it out, because someone else is trying to get a leverage point. Perhaps you can come back and say, "I'm not

going to get locked into a cut of 5, 10, or 25 percent. What I'm going to tell you is I will have the best government to do what we have to get done, what we've been elected to do, period." Left that way, you haven't said you won't do it. The media will come back and say, "Well, what does that mean? Are you going to cut it 25 per cent?" "What it means is I'm going to make sure that the people that we have are the right people, the right number of people, with the right focus to achieve the goals that we are talking about."

Now, if I'm candidate X over here I don't like that, because I think for some reason I can draw a point of distinction, because I'm going to cut it 25 per cent. You've got to determine, "How big an issue is it?" But a lot of times, people think that's a throwaway line. But then get elected and somebody holds it up and says, "Wait a minute. On June 6, 1999, you said you were going to cut the White House staff 25 per cent. When is this going to happen?" That's when the campaign side and the governing side start conflicting. You would like for somebody to think, "Before I utter that response on the campaign trail, what happens if I get there and have to implement it. Can I? Have I tied my hands?"

MK: What kind of person, then, do you have to have in the campaign, early on? Those kinds of things get you through the primary.

TG: Oh, yes. You're exactly right. You would hope that if it is a candidate who is serious—and I think we can say that not everybody who gets into a presidential race can be viewed as a serious candidate; they're in there for particular reasons—but you would like to draw on a broad spectrum of people, including a couple of advisers that clearly have Washington governing experience. Who? It can be people off the Hill. You just want to understand how things work, how the system works.

I think governors are great. I covered a legislature in Tennessee for seven years, and they are like mini-Washingtons to a certain extent; then the comparison ends. There are so many more intricate details, ins and outs, and tradeoffs that you really need to understand. You'll get written about; somebody will create a leak, you'll get an Evans-Novak call about the person who was trying to put the brakes on, and is not the true believer. You've got to have tough-enough skin and feel confident in yourself to deal with this. But you need that; you need that dose of realism.

MK: So, do you think that's part of learning? In your case, when you were in the White House, you had a methodical way of continuing to learn. Did you find that many people did that?

TG: Not enough did. What I found in the White House, the disappointing part, was there were too many people who came in who did not understand political responsibility. All of a sudden they're thrown into a world where a White House operator picks up the phone and calls virtually any place saying, "This is the White House. I've got so-and-so," and people stop what they're doing and they will take the call. You may be talking to the CEO of a major company about something you're working on that you think is the most important thing. You're also doing it because, unfortunately, of ego: "I can get anybody, any time, to talk to me." That to me is one of the big downsides, because an administration is so big you can't monitor all that.

You get that call from the White House, you know it must be important, and you'll take it. And too many people get in there—the White House—it's their first real taste of authority or power—and it goes to their head. Then it gets misused. That's how mistakes happen.

When I left, it was before the term had ended. I had some of my former colleagues call me—we'd moved back to Tennessee—and they asked the question, "How is it?" I said, "Great." They would tell me how much they just admired that we could walk away from this and go back to Tennessee. I said, "Why are you admiring me? You can do the same thing." "No. I don't think I could ever go back." And I'd say, "Okay. That's kind of puzzling." Then as the months go on, President [George H. W.] Bush gets elected. They're all just sitting there thinking, "There's no way the Bush Administration can replace us." It's like they owned the job. I'd get similar phone calls, and they were just trying to figure out how to stay, to glue themselves in their seat. I said, "I made the decision to leave, on my own terms. I had an opportunity I never thought I'd have, to walk in the same corridors where major policy decisions were made, to be part of shaping the American political scene. There are so many people who have gone before and there are going to be many going after me. I did not create my job. I did not create a transition that's new and unique. What I did was learn from others. If I had a chance to make some impact, fine. But I don't own the job." I said, "Have you ever thought about how many people walk around Washington, DC, with these words on their resume, 'Former White House Aide'? There's a ton of them; now you're one of them. It's time to move on, to appreciate the fact that you had an opportunity to do something that very few people in this country ever get to do. But you now move on with your life." It was like having gotten there was so intoxicating that they could never think about doing anything else.

MK: How do you know when it's time to leave?

TG: All I can do is speak for myself. I knew it was time to leave. With any job I've had I go in with a set of goals I want to achieve; they're personal goals. I don't print them or openly discuss them. Senator Baker and I did talk about them. I know what I want to achieve and if I get them done then, at that point I stop and ask myself: "Is there something else now, that is a reason to stay, or is it time to move on?" To date, I have never had a second thought, after achieving what I wanted to do going in, that I said I should stay longer. That's how I do it. But there were specific, personal goals that I had going in to the White House.

MK: What kinds of goals were they?

TG: Well, one of them was to effectively do the transition, to put that together. For Senator Baker, that was going to be the most critical part: if he was going to be successful or not, could you put a functioning staff together? The second was to get through Iran-Contra, without getting the President impeached. Third was to regain the President's political clout, with the measurement being the poll numbers from when we went in to when we came out.

MK: Was the legacy campaign part of your goal?

TG: Yes. But it tied in, particularly to the last goal. To move public approval up meant that you were going back in and reinforcing some of the very fundamental things that he had talked about in the previous six years.

MK: What is White House life like? Is it so difficult on people physically—and what are the difficult parts of it—that it's very different from what comes before and what comes after your service there?

TG: It is much more demanding, meaning that you really are on call and accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. You have no privacy. You do not go hide someplace. The stories about a White House operator tracking you down, even if you haven't told them

where you're going to be, are real, because that's their job. For whatever period of time you're there, if you're in the White House—your time is contingent on White House events, and everything else is secondary. And that's hard. If you're a parent, if you have children, when WHCA [White House Communications Agency] shows up and all of a sudden starts putting White House phones in your house, you get a sense real quick that everything has changed and that there is a new priority in your life. And that factors into some of the goals and things that you set for yourself.

Unless you have dedicated yourself to this as the only thing you want to do, it is mentally and physically demanding on you. When you're in the middle of a scandal, you are making decisions on the run quite often, you hope they're right, but nothing is 100 per cent right. You will make a few miscues here and there. When you sit there and think about it—I'm sure this White House went through it—if I make the wrong call, if I say the wrong thing, if I look the wrong way, what happens if I'm the person who caused the President to be impeached?

There is nothing I have found any place else that comes close to that level of responsibility that you can make a misstatement, you can make a bad judgment on an issue, and it can backfire. When it does, the stakes are real high. I think corporate America has some of the same interactions as a White House. That's what I found when I went onto a corporate job, but there you're not always on call. Something comes up, you deal with it. In the White House, you never get away from it. You're never away from it.

MK: So it has the twin physical demands but also the nature of the decision-making.

TG: Because you never turn it off. You may be relaxing at some place, that beeper goes off, you know what it means, and you know if they've called you, it's because something's happened. They don't call you to say, "Happy Birthday, have a great day!" They call you because something has gone wrong and, "...you need to get down here right now!" If you're out-of-town, a plane will be sent to pick you up. And that's different from working up in the Senate. You work for a member, but you did have some time off—you had recess periods and things like that. While people knew where to find you if something happened, you did take some time off.

MK: Do you find that it affects people's decision-making, hanging around too long, just being there too long?

TG: Yes. But I do think you need people who were there, almost from the beginning, because they understand the fundamentals of what got the president to a certain point. I think part of what happened in the Reagan administration, with the big changeover, is that—and a lot of people that were in there with Don Regan are good friends of mine—you lost that institutional memory, what were the core [policies]. I've spoken before about, "Let Reagan be Reagan." Well, that happened. And the way that he had worked as a governor of California and in the first presidential term, he was being himself.

But they took that phrase literally, to let him manage the place, and that was a lack of understanding. That's not his best strength. We saw the results: it sort of got loose. As I said, we got back where we started this: delegation. There was delegation, and delegation brought responsibility. If all of a sudden you say, "We're going to have the President manage the details. Everything flows to the top." In this White House, I think the answer is yes. This President loves to be in the middle of everything. President Reagan did not.

[End of Disc 1 of 1 and Interview I]