

Timothy Naftali

Hi, I'm Tim Naftali. I'm Director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum. I'm here today in Salt Lake City with Mr. Jon M. Huntsman for the Richard Nixon Oral History Program. It's March 10, 2008. Mr. Huntsman, thank you very much for joining us.

Jon Huntsman

Thank you.

Timothy Naftali

Tell me, tell us, how you came to join the Nixon administration.

Jon Huntsman

Well -- -- I was asked in 1969 by Fred Malek, who was brought on board in 1969 as a young member of the HEW team, which was part of Nixon's team and headed up by Robert Finch at the time. I was asked by Mr. Malek, who happened to be my same age and same class and we've, in a sense, become very dear friends in these intervening years. I was asked if I would take a position in the Department of Health Education and Welfare. The reason that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under Nixon, under President Nixon, asked me was that President Nixon sent out questionnaires around America, or his staff had when he was first elected, to identify the top young CEOs in America, and I was young CEO of a company in California at age 32. And they had sent my name in and believe it or not it had been processed and they'd come back to me and asked if I would be interested in a position with the Nixon administration in 1969 when they were first starting. And I listened to them carefully and then responded with seven children at the time, we later had two more in Washington, a total of nine. But at the time we had seven, and I told them that I wasn't interested in leaving my company as president and CEO and that I could not join them. I wish I could, but I had all these young children.

And a year later, they came back to me, in 1970. Mr. Malek came back to me again and said, "We've just changed secretaries of Health, Education and Welfare." Today, we would know that as Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. They were merged in one group under the Nixon years, known as Health, Education and Welfare or HEW. And Mr. Malek called and said, "We were so impressed a year ago. We were wondering if you've perhaps changed your mind in any way." And I said, "Well things perhaps could be worked out. What did you have in mind as a position?" And he said, "Well we would like to talk to you about the deputy commissioner of education, the number two person in the Department of Education. I said, "Well that's very interesting. My father was a schoolteacher. I've been a businessman, and I don't think I'd offer the education side very much, although I have great respect for that profession. But I would be very happy to come back and interview with you."

So I went back and interviewed with Fred Malek and, of course, at the time, met Patrick Gray, who was later to become the FBI director to succeeding Mr. Hoover. But I got to know Patrick Gray and, of course, became very well acquainted then with Elliot Richardson. But I had only been in office three

days when I went back there, succeeding Robert Finch as secretary and Mr. Richardson, Secretary Richardson, had moved over from deputy secretary of state. And when I met with Elliot Richardson, who later became a very dear, close friend and we've been close friends for 35, 40 years until his passing a few years ago. But at the time, I'd never met him. And after he met me and talked to me and said, "You know, Mr. Huntsman, or Jon" -- he and Fred were in the room -- "although we called you back here for the Department of Education, you would be ideally equipped to be in the Department of Social Services," which is the W end, the welfare end. "And you would oversee welfare, social services, Medicaid, rehabilitation programs for the aging, programs for the youth and the Cuban refugee program. You'd be the chief operating officer nationwide for the program. And you would really see how American taxpayer dollars are spent, and more importantly, help people in welfare conditions and in need -- in cases of need are really helped, and you have a heart that obviously is concerned with people," which, my life has been spent in charitable work and charitable causes other than our businesses that we've built. And I felt very comfortable having Mr. Richardson recognize it, felt great. And when he said that position was available and he'd like me to serve in that position, that it was a Presidential appointee position, I was very excited about it. I went back and visited with my wife and our children, and we agreed to accept the position. So in the summer, in August of 1970, we moved to Washington, D.C., from our home in North Hollywood, California.

Timothy Naftali

Please tell us about some of the challenges you faced in your new job.

Jon Huntsman

Well, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was the ultimate bureaucracy, and I felt that it was my job to try to tame the bureaucracy to the best of my ability. And so we moved in a project called MBO, Management by Objectives. I wanted to find out if the people at HEW, from the secretaries all the way up to the senior officers, understood what their ultimate mission was. What is their objective? Why are they there? What is their mission? At the end of the day, what are they supposed to have done? And I found out that maybe one in four knew what that was and three out of four did not know. So I brought a team from the Wharton School and from Michigan State, a man by the name of Dr. George Odiorne, to help us set up a program at HEW to really understand if the bureaucracy understood why they were even employed. And if not, why are they there? And let's move them out, because we must be more efficient in government. So we set up this government efficiency program, and I thought everybody was doing that. I thought that was the purpose of going back to work for government, was to make it more efficient. And so I jumped right in, young, enthusiastic, excited.

I was 33 at the time, just turned 33, and this program began to take off. And before we knew it, after the first six months of the program, we'd saved about \$100 million by not having as many people there, by letting people retire early, by having people identify the fact that they couldn't identify their job. And therefore they didn't have a job, so why have them? I mean, it wasn't quite as inhuman as it sounds. It's just the way we ran our businesses. Well, the word got back to the White House that we were doing this. And in the meantime, Fred Malek, who had been at the department for HEW, had moved to the White House in a White House position. And a position that opened up in the White House, and Mr. Malek recommended that I be interviewed for the job of staff secretary. He had told Mr. Haldeman, who was chief of staff, that I had done all this work at HEW and, as a result of it, greater efficiencies, and we were spreading it on. I could perhaps carry out the work that the staff secretary, that General

Andrew Goodpaster had started under Eisenhower in the mid-'50s when Eisenhower run the most efficient White House internal organization system brought to bear that they could imagine. General Goodpaster, who was commanding general of NATO, was brought back and was put in as a White House staff secretary to organize the White House in a manner to where the President would know at all times exactly where every piece of paper was going. But every memo was -- the object of every memo, and there'd be a timeframe on everything coming in and out of the President's office. There'd be no guessing. It would be a very rigid organizational system set up, all run through one office.

And so they explained that to me, that this position was available, and Fred Malek called and he said, "In 10 minutes, Bob Haldeman will be calling you. Bob Haldeman's a man of few words." I think that's what he said, something to that effect. "And he probably won't -- there won't be a lot of fluff in this discussion." Ten minutes, right on the dot, Bob Haldeman called. I'd never talked to Bob Haldeman before. I'd never met him before. I didn't know him from Adam. He called and he said, "I understand you're making a lot of waves over at HEW that are positive and that you're an outstanding executive. And if you think you're that good, why don't you come over and interview for the President's staff secretary. We'd like to get to know more about you." And I said, "I'd be very honored, Mr. Haldeman." And he said, "I'll see you there in 15 minutes." I said, "It takes me 20 minutes to drive over there." By then the phone had hung up, and he didn't hear me say anything about the 20 minutes. And so I got over there as fast as I could, and he kept me waiting about an hour and a half. Part of that is just to see, you know, how you handle the situation. I knew that I was, you were on stage the minute I walked into the West Wing waiting room. I didn't know how to get into the White House because they had security clearance, and I didn't have my driver's license with me that day. So I had to show them my American Express card, and it worked. And they let me right through. So I sat in the West Wing waiting room and waited, and finally, Alexander Butterfield, who was the deputy to Haldeman, came out and greeted me for a few minutes and chatted with me. Mr. Haldeman took about an hour and a half and interviewed me thoroughly, and had several of the other White House staff members interview me. And then the next day, Vice President Spiro Agnew interviewed me. And just about everyone but the President, I think, interviewed me because the White House staff secretary interacts with everybody inside the White House and almost every piece of paper that goes in to the President comes through the staff secretary's office en route to the President and out of the President's office. And it's kind of the action center.

There are three basic secretaries. One's the press secretary for the media relations. One's the appointments secretary for the President's appointments. The most difficult of all -- it was described in the Watergate hearings as an administrative nightmare -- is known as the staff secretary position. That was the position that I, unknowingly, was being interviewed for. And after two days of -- the final question they asked me was, "Are you a full tithing member for your church," which I've never been asked that before. They knew -- Haldeman knew that I was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which is the Mormon church. And he asked if I was a full tithing member. And fortunately, I am. I said, "Yes, I am." And he said, "Good, we don't have to worry about your integrity then, do we?" And I said, "Of course not." So that was my final question before he told me I had the job. And he said, "I want you to start tomorrow." And I said, "I can't start tomorrow, Mr. Haldeman. I've got a big job at HEW. I'm over the 10 regional offices, I'm the chief operating officer of the largest arm of government other than the Defense Department. And I've got appointments in Kansas City tomorrow, where I'm putting in a new regional administrator." And he said, "Fine I'll give you three days, four days, whatever it is. Just go take care of it and then leave it. It will take care of itself as bureaucracies always do," he said. "Get over here as fast as you can." I said, "Well, my wife's expecting a baby any

day. So I'll do the best I can and I'll try to be here in three or four days." He said, "Make it three days." So we decided to make it three days since that what he said.

And I walked into the White House, and there was no one to train me. The fellow who was there had one day left. His name was John Brown, and he was being -- I don't know what was happening, I won't speculate. Let's just say that he didn't do the job the way Mr. Haldeman wanted him to do it. And after he tried to explain in one day the job of the White House staff secretary, and it was more confusing after a day than it had been before I ever came inside the White House. So I took a few weeks to try to understand really what they wanted done, and I asked a lot of questions to Ehrlichman and to Haldeman and to Kissinger and to Chapin, to Ziegler. Everybody I could visit with, I'd say, "I'm very sorry, I'm the new staff secretary. I want to know what you expect." And the most impressive and helpful person of all was Alexander Butterfield. And Alexander and I worked very closely together. And Alex was a liaison in certain ways with me and the President and with Haldeman. There was kind of the three of us that worked as a triangle. And Larry Higby worked as a deputy chief of staff to Haldeman. But he didn't have much to do with what I was doing because we had the flow of paperwork plus all of the White House finances, plus all of the White House perks, plus who was in what offices, plus all the dogs and cats in the White House ended up in the staff secretary's office. It's really a catchall. Today they have either six or seven people doing it. I went back to help the Reagan administration get set up with Craig Fuller and Dick Darman, -- they'd divided it into two pieces, and I helped them get it set up and Dick went later to become head of Office of Management and Budget. But it's a mammoth job. I was just there with one secretary. Later, I got three secretaries, and six months later, they brought in an assistant. But I was working near 16 to 18 hours a day. I think it was probably the most overpowering job in government because everything had to be precise and accurate and official, and there was no time to get broken in. Haldeman didn't have any patience for someone who didn't know 100 percent of the job on day one, including the ingress and egress of everything going to the President. So that was kind of how I got the job.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us, Mr. Huntsman, what the Haldeman system was?

Jon Huntsman

Well, the Haldeman system centered around pretty much what he testified in the Senate Watergate hearings. And that is that it's a zero -- the White House system operated on a zero defect system. That is to say there could be absolutely no mistakes, zero mistakes, zero defect. There's no such thing in life as zero defect, just for the benefit of anybody that may be watching this in years to come. But Mr. Haldeman felt that if a mistake was made, that that showed that someone wasn't doing their job right, and that there was lack of preparation, I guess. I took it very, very seriously, and I think I was very, very good in my position. I'd been CEO of a company. I'd been executive vice president of another business. I'd worked since I was a young boy at full-time jobs since I was in the sixth grade. I went through the Wharton School of Finance, worked my way through the top business school in America, and I am very serious about business and I think I was a much better businessman than Mr. Haldeman was. And as it turned out, we became interesting friends. It took us years later to become interesting friends. During the time I was at the White House, I did everything he wanted. It was a very, very difficult time in my life. It was impossible to make him happy, and it was impossible for me to stay more than one year. I would have liked to have stayed two or three years. It was a good thing, because of Watergate, that I left when I did because I refused to do certain things that Haldeman had asked me

to do. And I kept my skirts very clean, politically, and I found that the job was very exhilarating in the sense that President Nixon could not get along without the staff secretary. Every paper that he received had gone through my office, and I'd summarized, if it was three or four or five pages, or a hundred pages, I'd summarized everything he read on one piece of paper. If he was to have an interview with anyone, whether it was a three-minute interview or an appointment for an hour or two hours, I would give him talking points. When was the last time he saw that person? What was the history of the person he was meeting with, which he could quickly look in a minute and know all about the person and impress them immensely with his knowledge about them.

But all these things took a lot of time. And you had to go to the right places to find the information. We didn't have computers in those days, so you had to go to people. You had to have a feel for who to go to and what to say and have an enormous amount of friends in the White House, in the Cabinet, and in the Senate and in the House, and his personal friends, the few of them he had, to understand how to make that office really run right. And I found that to be extremely challenging, and it was very gratifying to serve the President. My interactions with the President were considerable. Many of them were, there were many days that I would meet with him on several occasions, and there were some days I wouldn't see him at all. But I always found meeting with the President and working directly with Richard Nixon was a great honor and was always very professional. He was always interested in the children. He was always kind to me. He never lost his temper, even though we moved hundreds, thousands of pieces of paper and had him sign hundreds or thousands of documents. And even though I was with him during times when I knew that he was going through a personal crisis of one kind or another, and a lot of pressure, I found him to be a very remarkable man and a very thoughtful and considerate boss in the sense of understanding that I had a heavy workload, and I wanted to make sure his office ran really well. I'm well organized, and would stay up all night and do whatever was necessary to see that he was well informed and that he was never embarrassed, and that he was well cared for. So that part of it was very enjoyable.

Timothy Naftali

As staff secretary, you had a bird's-eye view of the policy debates, I assume, as you were summarizing these memos that came in. Tell us what you would do to be sure that the President had all sides of an issue before he made a decision.

Jon Huntsman

That was the most difficult part of the job, trying to give the President all the viewpoints in a written paper, where there may be three or four different opinions. And I would try to summarize to the best of capacity intellectually, and it became very wearing. But I must have done it okay. I mean, I would read -- first of all, I didn't take any sides politically. And secondly, I worked so hard and so dedicatedly at this job, I think I truly gave the President every ounce of energy I had. There was no Jon Huntsman on the staff. I was just a robot. I was a human robot doing the best I could to help the President see a clear picture, an objective picture, without taking any positions from any staff members, from any Cabinet members, from the Haldeman-Ehrlichman debates, because Ehrlichman would have some position on domestic affairs and Haldeman would invariably have some opposition to different things like that. But I would try to put down what Ehrlichman's position was, because the paper was from Ehrlichman. And if Haldeman wanted to change it, he could change it before it went into the President. It was up to Haldeman. The same with Kissinger's different reports, they would come through and Al Haig would sign off on them. And then they would come in because Al was Kissinger's

deputy. And then they would come in, and the same with the reports from the Cabinet. And usually, Alex Butterfield would double-check the Cabinet reports.

Alex was the secretary to the Cabinet, so usually, before any reports from John Mitchell or John Connally or any of the Cabinet officers would go in, Butterfield, Alex, would check those over. So many of them would go directly into the President. Some would go to Haldeman, and he would check over them. Some would go to Butterfield. He would double-check them. We almost always have two sets of eyes on things, but I would initiate them and very seldom would anything get changed that I would do, because I was a base case person for the President's position papers. And you just did your very best to read rapidly and put down the key issues. And I would always have it so that he could turn to Page 4, Page 8, Page 10 or Page 12 for more information on issue one, or issue two or issue three, issue four. I try to make it as simplified as possible for the President. And I think in that sense it was as close to the way Andrew Goodpaster had set up the staff functions, because the policy positions were not the critical issues. That was of great concern, but the greatest concern of all to the President was every morning he'd come in with a yellow notebook pad, being a lawyer, and on that pad were written out all the instructions that he'd come up with during the night and early in the morning. And all the ideas, things he had read about from the -- Mort Allin had done in the news release and all the papers he had read, the early morning news release over in the White House residence before he'd come to the Oval Office, which he'd come to at 8:15 in the morning. By 8:15 in the morning, he had read all of the news summaries, started about midnight. He had a complete copy of the news summaries. So naturally, he had read different things in different papers and put it down in his yellow pad. And he did it all by code. You know, he had "H" was Haldeman, as I unfortunately found out. I used "H" once because I thought everybody used their last name, and I didn't know that "H" had already been taken. And Haldeman let me know in very unkind words, about the third day, that "H" was for Haldeman and I'd better not use it anymore, but he didn't say it in that kind of language. So mine was "J." It was J for Jon. Anyway, I would decipher these codes for the President, and this is what really took the time during the day.

I would send out between 18 and 35 memos a day from the President, but they would come from me. And everyone on the White House staff knew that if staff secretary was sending out a request for something, it was never from the staff secretary. It was always from the President. And if they didn't know it, they knew it within 24 hours after they got there. Like when Pete Peterson came on board, I explained to Pete, "Pete, when you get one of these memos, it's not from me." And Malek knew that, and Buchanan knew that, and Ray Price knew that. All of the staff members knew that if Huntsman sent out something, it was to be followed up -- in 48 hours, I had to have a response. If there wasn't response in 48 hours, I would do whatever was humanly necessary to get a response back. Because Haldeman told me that if I didn't have every question answered and responded to and back to the President within 48 hours, most of them in 24 but he allowed a 48 hours in the event some of these guys were traveling overseas or whatever. So I did that and that was really burdensome because sometimes these yellow papers with the President's notes would come in, two or three times a day. And often times, there'd be 25 or 30 requests, each one I'd have to take one sentence and decipher it into a meaningful request. And it may have just been one short, brief note. Z to H, you know, Ziegler to Haldeman. Or it could be C to K, Colson to Kissinger. And then I had to make out what the President -- first I had to try to read his writing, and then make out what he needed and wanted. So I did never think -- I'd never thought what he was trying to, what the policy issue was or what the problem was. Mine was to decipher what it was, be a human robot, as I said, be as smart and as intelligent as I could, get a response, send out a request, get a response, get it back to the President as

quickly as possible. So notwithstanding all the finances, the perks, the preparation of the President for his meetings, and the finances, that was really the number one job of the staff secretary.

Timothy Naftali

Do you remember going to Haldeman and saying, "Does the President really mean to ask for this?" Or did you just take what was on the yellow legal pad?

Jon Huntsman

Oh, I never questioned Haldeman, no, no, I mean, not at that time. He and I had some run-ins at different times that I could tell you about that were very meaningful in my life. But this interview is more on President Nixon. And no, I think I understood my job very clearly was to [unintelligible] the President. And some of these sayings he would have written down out of frustration. He would've read in the press at four in the morning or five in the morning something about some event that had happened in Los Angeles or Fort Worth or Minneapolis. A day later or two days later, when we had the answer in -- or the response in -- may have forgotten about it or it wasn't a big deal. And there were some issues that were very significant policy issues that he really wanted to know the answers and was looking for help and assistance. And so I would staff those very carefully with Ehrlichman or members of the staff and get the best possible input in that I could know of. But I knew I had to move fast and respond to these. So it was, you know, the answers were always what the President wanted to hear, but they were the best you could find from the coding that he had put on there. Because he usually -- the President was very helpful in putting in who he wanted to do, who he wanted to hear from. In other words, whose voice he wanted. He had great respect for certain people and other people he didn't ever put them down at all. Certain Cabinet members I never sent one memo to the whole time I was there, and others he would send memos to several times a day. He liked John Mitchell and he like John Connally, and he liked to hear what they had to say about things. He respected Connally immensely. And where others, many of the domestic secretaries who really had very few memos sent to them by me, they may have been sent to by other staff members on the Domestic Council, but as far as the President's daily requests for information, mine was mostly to White House staff and four or five -- Kissinger was always a very critical part of the team.

Timothy Naftali

Mr. Huntsman, we were talking about a story about the treasurer of the United States.

Jon Huntsman

Well, yes there was an event on one occasion. You have to put yourself in the setting, first of all -- and I'm going to back up. And this will take just a minute, so forgive me. But it was either in June or July -- I believe it was June of 1971 -- that President Nixon decided to go down to his Key Biscayne home. He was going to address, while he was down there, the Miami meeting of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW. And the speechwriters, Ray Price, Pat Buchanan and Bill Safire, were to have a speech ready for him to give to that convention. And my job whenever the President was at Key Biscayne or out in Casa Pacifica in California, or wherever he was, my job was to get out the pouch every day, the mail pouch with all of the instructions and information so the White House kept running. No matter where the President was, he'd see the same thing every day. The name has slipped my mind temporarily, what it was called. It wasn't a mail pouch, but there was a name we had for it. In any

event, I talked to Dwight Chapin and Dwight said, "Jon, you should be aware that the VFW speech is cancelled for the next few days and so you don't need to worry about that one, that talk." So when I sent all of the information down, the reports, the daily reports to the President and any meetings he would have down there and the reports on the background of the people and any policy issues and a brief summary of the policy papers. When I sent that down, I did not send down -- I told the speechwriters, Gergen, David Gergen was secretary to the speechwriters. And I told them they didn't need to do the VFW speech, and if they had it completed, I wouldn't need it because it had been cancelled.

So I sent the material down and Haldeman had indicated that he needed it by 8 p.m. that night. This was on a Friday night, because the speech was to be given on Monday, the following Monday. Well, I didn't put it down there, and the Air Force pouch arrived, and it wasn't in there, so Haldeman called me directly, and he said, "Where's the VFW speech?" And I said, "Well I received a call, Bob, that the speech wouldn't be needed because it had been cancelled." He said, "Did I tell you that?" And I said, "No sir." He said, "Then what the hell are you doing making those decisions? When I tell you we need a speech, we need a speech." And so he ate me out pretty good. And he was very upset and very mean spirited. Because I had, on my own, you know, I had really thought the speech has been cancelled and you didn't need a speech. And I shouldn't be thinking, in other words. And anyway, he got so upset that about 10 minutes later he called me back and said, "I've been thinking about that speech, and I'm really damn mad about it. You should never be making decisions. You don't have that authority to make decisions." And I said, "Well let me tell you something, Mr. Haldeman. Take this job and shove it, will you? I've had enough of you, the way you act, the way you treat people, your indignity to people, the lack of courtesy. I've worked day and night. Nobody else could do it any better. I'm outta here, goodbye." Hung up the phone, gave him one of his own hang-up jobs.

Well, two seconds later, you know, one of his boys, Higby or one of them, you know, he has his little team around him that he always take care of. We were the worker bees, and they were the ones that kind of, you know, kept Haldeman going. But I think it was Higby, he called right back and said, "You know, now don't get excited. Bob's just having a bad day. You know you're doing a great job, and we all support you in everything." I said, "No, Larry, I've really taken all I can take from this guy. I'm only one person. I've got a lovely family at home, and I love the President, but Haldeman makes it very difficult. My job is the worst job in the White House. Nobody would take it. You couldn't do it. Nobody could do it. You know, I'm doing what ten other men ought to be doing." And I said, "By the way, I just took the speech down, gave it to a pilot on Eastern Airlines, and the speech will be down there in two hours. I've got an FBI man waiting to get it, and he'll have it over to the President's desk tonight, two days ahead of time. Just tell Bob it's all done. Even though it missed the Air Force plane, I'm smart enough to know that there are other ways to get it down there. The speech will be there ahead of schedule. So he'll have the speech even though he doesn't have to give it. So it's all taken care of." And he said, "Well just relax, have a good weekend. Have a nice time. The President wants you to have a good time." I said, "Larry the President doesn't know anything about this. It's just another Haldeman type deal."

Anyway, I went home and got a decent night's sleep and came back and thought Bob was just having another bad day as usual. And then, I guess it was the following Tuesday, it was like two days later. Higby came in my office and danced around a little bit. I knew that he had a message from Bob because you kind of read body language, and I wasn't born yesterday. He danced around, he said, "By the way, Bob liked the way you handle that speech. You got it right down there fast, and he wants you to start joining the 10 a.m. meeting group. So you're now part of the senior White House meeting

group in his office every morning at 10. I was already at the 2:00 one that planned for the President for the next day, which is kind of the middle of the road, five or six guys who planned the President's -- in Butterfield's office. But this Haldeman meeting was a pretty senior one. And that's what got me into that meeting, was this little ruckus I'd had with Haldeman. I guess he didn't realize that I had sensitivities. If I left, they would be up the tree a little bit because I was doing an excellent job for them. And I don't mind saying so because you know, I've looked back on staff secretaries before and since then, and I don't think they had one person ever doing the job again. They had three or four.

But then in that meeting with Haldeman, we would have that meeting -- here's the way the meeting would go with Haldeman. He had a desk. His office was fairly Spartan, Haldeman's office. And he of course, had Spiro Agnew's office when he first moved into the White House. The Vice President always had the corner office of the West Wing of the White House. You've got the Oval Office and then you had the secretary office. That is Rose Woods' office. And then a couple of smaller offices in there for appointment secretary and then the assistant, the deputy chief of staff and the chief of staff had the corner office. Well, Agnew was across the street on the second floor. And Haldeman, the first year, had taken, figured out some way to get rid of Spiro Agnew and send him across the street to the EOB, and Haldeman had that corner office. And so we would come in that office about one minute to 10 a.m., and there was John Dean, Chuck Colson, Fred Malek and Dwight Chapin and Ron Ziegler and maybe one or two others, and now, Jon Huntsman. And he would, you know, if there was anybody for a Cabinet officer, you would say either yes or no as if we knew what we were talking about. None of us did. If there was any major White House policy change or alteration to White House rules or regulations or anything that happened out in any of the departments that were, you know, somebody that was in trouble or that had spoken out against the President or said anything negative against the President, you know, we would go out and move them pretty fast. The way it worked is that Haldeman would be sitting at his desk. And his desk was just the opposite as most desks. Instead of facing the person you're talking to, your back is to them. And then everybody sits in a semicircle in front of him and then at exactly 10:00, he spins his chair around and he faces you, and he says, "Begin." The first guy on his right to the last guy in his room, because nobody wants to be the first guy on the right. The first guy on the right has to say, "Pass," or "Not pass." If you say pass, that means you don't have anything to say. Or if you have something intelligent, you can say it. "I think that the secretary of treasury, you know he's made a comment he shouldn't have made." You know, whammo, the guy is in deep trouble or something. Whatever you say, you know, it's repercussions from there. And if there are new positions to come up, Cabinet officers, some sub-Cabinet officers, some ambassadors, although most ambassadors went directly to Pete --

Timothy Naftali

Flanigan.

Jon Huntsman

Flanigan, thank you, Pete Flanigan. And they would bypass his committee. But this was a, this committee, for being composed of young men and Haldeman, was a very powerful -- it was the most powerful committee in Washington. So that's how it worked. So you either pass or you didn't pass and you go around. And sometimes the meetings would last two minutes, sometimes they'd last an hour. And Haldeman would almost end every meeting with pushing the red button, the red light, on his phone, saying, "I'm going in to see the President [unintelligible]." So another reason I know all this stuff is I wrote it all down. I kept an excellent journal the whole time I was in the White House. That's

why I've got a book that I haven't put out yet. I know wherein I speak. Plus I did most of the papers for the President. Those that weren't classified, I kept. And when the President left office and went to Casa Pacifica, I was able to take boxes of papers to help him and Frank --

Timothy Naftali

Gannon.

Jon Huntsman

Gannon -- do the first book. I was able to take several boxes of papers over. So I said to him, "Unclassified papers." If they were classified, confidential or secret or top secret, I obviously didn't disturb those, and several of us had the authority, including myself, to classify documents top secret, secret or confidential. But getting back to the Haldeman meeting, so we'd have these meetings and they were always, in my opinion, I couldn't believe it because, you know, lives were -- I mean, lives could be altered dramatically in 30 seconds. One little word from any one of us about somebody, about a Cabinet office, sub-Cabinet office or a member of the White House staff, or some little event that was occurring. So anyway, we were looking for the treasurer of the United States, and the treasurer's name had come up. And a person had come up to be nominated for treasurer of the United States. Malek, being over personnel, was asked to do some work on it. Haldeman looked at me and said, "Okay, now Jon, you've got a manufacturing plant out in Southern California. I'd like you to, you know, check out -- we know that this person's had some problems with one of the congressmen who's giving this person a bad time for confirmation. He's from Southern California, in the same district where the nominee lived. And we know that that congressman had a business out there as well. And will you get your plant to look and see if there were any undocumented workers from Mexico working in the congressman's office? Because the congressman's been such a pain to, and been so problematical trying to get rid of this person we're nominating as the first Hispanic in Nixon's administration." I think it was for the office of treasurer of the United States. And I said, "Yes sir." So right after the meeting I ran down to my office, called our plant manager and I said, "There's a congressman living in this office. He used to run such and such a plant. Find out from some of our people who work in our plant who speak Spanish, some Hispanic people, if this congressman had anybody, any undocumented workers working for them and then we can get back to this person, because they've tried to indicate that our nominee for treasurer of the United States has done the same thing. And we'd like to think that both parties may have done the same thing. So we'll fight fire with fire."

And then after I asked my manager to do that, I got thinking, "What in the world am I doing? This guy doesn't work for the government. I mean, my manager doesn't -- my plant doesn't work for the government. They shouldn't have anything to do with this, my plant." And so, you know, after I had hung up the phone, I called my manager right back and I said, "Jim" -- his name was Jim Fog -- I said, "Jim, I just asked, made a request, of you to go find out if there are undocumented workers working for this congressional person who's trying to unseat the treasurer of the United States, not unseat, but see that this person's not confirmed." And I said, "Will you forget I ever made the call? Don't do what I asked you to do. Forget I told you to do it. If you've done anything, call and apologize, but don't do what I asked you to do. Haldeman's asked me to do it, and I'm not going to do it. It isn't right. I don't believe in those kind of things." So he said, "Okay, I haven't done anything yet. You just called me five minutes ago, and we haven't had a chance to check out this congressman's background or his plant." So I said, "Great, leave it alone and don't do anything." And so, in our next meeting Haldeman said, "Well, Huntsman, what did you find out?" And I said, "Well I don't find out anything, sir." I said, "We

have no information, no way of knowing and our people are not involved in any way with this, and they have not way of finding out." He didn't drill me any further on it, and I didn't carry it any further.

I let Malek take the heat, because Malek was over personnel, and I don't know how Malek ending up handling the situation. Fred's a very smooth and diplomatic guy and a man I have great admiration for. But Fred and I were probably two guys who saw eye to eye with each other. Anyway I just thought it was a little overbearing to use my personal resources to find out some dirt on somebody else. And I think Haldeman always felt that I was never quite on the inside because I wouldn't do things like that. I just couldn't force myself to violate my moral compass. I said this is right, this isn't part of what the President wants you to do. This is what Haldeman wants you to do. So you know it was clear that he and I were never on the same page as far as being an errand boy for him. I think Larry Higby was. I think Larry would do anything. I think Gordon Strachan probably would do anything. I think there's another guy there who ran around all the time, could never figure out what he did. He was kind of the assistant to the assistant to the chief of staff. I can't remember his name, but he eventually became the staff secretary.

Timothy Naftali

Jerry Jones?

Jon Huntsman

No, no Jerry Jones was a good man. But they were all good people. They were -- Fred Fielding -- and they were all good people. I just had a hard time with Haldeman. It was probably my own fault. But I know I shouldn't -- I just found that -- I just never worked for anybody who -- I'd say good morning to Bob, and he'd never say a word. I'd ask him how his family was, he'd never respond. I'd ask him questions, and he'd never answer. He was always either chewing out or trying to hurt me some way. It was just a very adversarial relationship, and I never figured out, until the day I left, why he was that way. And the day I left, I asked him. And I said -- he called me in and -- if I could use this time to talk about that because --

Timothy Naftali

Please, please.

Jon Huntsman

We could come back and talk more about the President, which I'd like to get into. But when I went to leave after a year, I agreed to stay a minimum of a year and I'd really planned on maybe two or three years. A year to me seemed like ten years, but I lived right up to it, right to the day. And after I'd been there a full year, which seemed like a lot longer because I was there day and night. I knew the system really well, and I knew how to do my work really well. I was getting along with everybody very well by this time, knew everybody's plusses and minuses, little idiosyncrasies and how the game was played. But I went into Bob Haldeman. Bob says, "Can I give you some advice, Jon?" I said, "Please Bob, I'd appreciate it." He said, "Never try to run your business the way I run the White House." I stopped for a few minutes and I said, "Bob, you know, you never need to worry about that, because I never would run a business the way you run the White House. I've found the way you run the White House here is not a way that builds and lifts respect, nor is a way that would in any way permit a business to be

successfully operated." And I think he said, "Well it's interesting you would say that." And I said, "No, it isn't, Bob, you and I've never gotten along. You know that. From day one, you'd never cared for me because I would never do your errands, and I would never carry out things that you wanted me to do if I thought they were wrong. I just wouldn't do them. I wasn't a yes man. I was hired as a professional, and I served you professionally, but I wouldn't go beyond those limits."

And he said, "Well, Jon, I respect you immensely. You're one of the men I respect very, very much here, and you've done such a great job that I want you to know I want you to be a consultant for the President. And we're going to give you a job as a consultant to come in any time you want, keep your White House pass, make recommendations for ambassadors, anything you want, because you've proven all the tests you need to prove." I said, "Bob you don't need to do that. You really -- I mean, it's been my honor to serve the President. He's a great man. I love serving him." But he said, "No, we want to make you a consultant as you leave." So for two more years I stayed on, kind of came back and forth once a month and recommended a number of names for sub-Cabinet people and ambassadors and things like that. It was really interesting when I left that he recognized that he had treated me very unfairly, and he had run the White House in a way that you could never make a business successful.

Timothy Naftali

How did he try to hurt you? You said he had tried to hurt you?

Jon Huntsman

I don't think -- I didn't mean he tried to hurt me personally. I just think that he -- I think Haldeman was -- I think Nixon's downfall was because of Bob Haldeman. And I know that others will disagree with that. From where I saw the White House, Haldeman was -- everyone was so frightened of Bob and so intimidated by him and knew that his wrath was so strong if they didn't do anything he asked, whether it was right or wrong, that he would do something to them, whether it was firing them -- that was the easiest thing, was to fire them. Then they're outta there, which was a relief to a lot of people. But I just think, you know, just the atmosphere of having a position, having an office where, you know, it was zero defect. You couldn't make a mistake. There was no room for error. There was no room for apologies. There was no room for slipping and falling and not having something letter perfect, whatever was sent into the President. Every word had to be just itemized and underlined just perfectly right. And I think he recognized that he had ridden me pretty hard. That's what I mean when I said that earlier. I think he knows that he and his henchmen had -- you know it's easy to beat up on a guy who's doing all the work. And down and working day and night and you've got all these guys kind of -- and all my life I've resented it. I mean, it was the worst working environment I had ever seen in my life. It's very easy for me to see how Watergate could take place under that type of corrupt, dishonest atmosphere, because one man was running the show and everybody had to obey or be intimidated. And if you didn't obey, you know, something negative would happen.

And it isn't because I have ill will. I mean, here it's been almost 40 years. I don't carry any ill will. I have love toward all mankind. All I'm saying is that I built the largest business of any person to serve in the Nixon White House. I've had more employees than any person to serve in the Nixon White House. I think I've had more interaction around the world with leaders of other countries. We're in 55 different countries. I stayed with the king of Saudi Arabia last week. And I know most of the world leaders. My son's the governor of our state. I've known most of the leaders since President Nixon. All I can say is

that the atmosphere created by Bob Haldeman was so negative and so creative to doing what he wanted done, in many cases, the wrong thing done.

And the President didn't have any idea, in my opinion, that most of this atmosphere existed. I mean, if he did, then it would have been a surprise to me. My feeling was that Nixon had turned over the reigns of administration to Haldeman and let Haldeman run it the way he wanted to run it. And Haldeman got the results the President wanted, no question about that. The results came in. It was just that the people on the staff who were working, particularly toward the end of the first term and into the beginning of the second term. I think they were so intimidated and I think they were so fearful of anything that could go wrong in the White House that it set a stage that was easy for a problem like the Watergate to get totally out of hand, because you know that everyone was going to lie. They were going to do whatever they can to protect themselves. They're going to tell the juries wrong answers or commit perjury. They're going to do whatever they can to not have to incur the wrath of Haldeman. I mean, you know, I was there. That's my own feelings about it. And so it didn't come as a great surprise that a lot of these great young men were ruined, because they were trained on how to please and pacify an individual who was a complete autocrat and ran the White House in what I thought was a very negative environment, but a zero defect environment. So the President thought everything was going perfectly, and maybe that's the way the President wanted it. I can't make that judgment. All I can judge is what I saw and did.

Timothy Naftali

Did you stay in the 10:00 meeting through --

Jon Huntsman

Yes, I did, through the day I left.

Timothy Naftali

Did you hear Haldeman ask for other kinds of political intelligence?

Jon Huntsman

You know, I may have. I'm sure he did, and I'm sure I heard them. But I, you know, it's been 40 years, 38 years, 37 years ago. And it would be hard for me today to specifically document something that was done in those days, because Haldeman would not let us take notes. The only notes I could take were under the table. I had a little piece of paper. When things would involve me or things I should do, I'd write them down under the table so no one could see, because you were not permitted to take notes on the table. And so I intentionally, and I remember making a note of that in my diary, and I've got it in my book. All my notes were taken under the table so nobody could see I was writing. I'd either write on a piece of paper, or I'd write on my hand what I was supposed to do so I wouldn't forget it. So I can't really say these years later what was done or what wasn't done. All I can say is that I think the men around Haldeman were good, honorable, fine. They were the cream of the crop, really. I remember when, for instance, every year they had the top ten young men in America, and every year Haldeman wanted one of our guys to be one of the top ten. So Ziegler got it one year. Chapin got it one year. My year was between, I think, Malek and me -- I can't remember exactly, but I came in second or third place out of our little group of maybe six or seven. But it was really important to Bob

to have one of the outstanding men of the year be a White House staffer under the age of 35. Were all under the age of 35, 36, 37. We were in our late 20s and early 30s. And so, you know, for a lot of people he was our first boss. To me unfortunately, or fortunately for me, he wasn't my first boss. And I was the only one who hadn't come up through the political system and worked for Bob to get there. I was hired as a professional to try to do a professional job as staff secretary.

Timothy Naftali

Do you recall in June of 1971 after someone had written a memo mocking policy about holidays that - a memo about whether you work on a Federal holiday or not?

Jon Huntsman

Well --

Timothy Naftali

And that Haldeman had an investigation to find out who wrote that.

Jon Huntsman

Kind of, I mean, in another sort of way, I do. Because I do remember on the Fourth of July in 1971 -- strange you would mention this. No one's ever asked me this question. The Fourth of July, it was about 4:00 in the afternoon. It was one of the few times the President called me directly, one of the few times he called my office directly. And he said, "Jon, take the rest of the day off. Tell the staff. Go home with your families. Take the rest of the day off. It's the Fourth of July." And it was sometime between 2:30 and 3:30 in the afternoon -- it wasn't quite as late as 4 -- 2:30 or 3:30 in the afternoon. And I was just shocked because the President called me directly and didn't go through Haldeman. And so I called the other officers and said, "Take the rest of the day off." And that may have been -- that may have something to do with what you asked me. I don't know. But it was a -- I left early that day, left about 4:00 in the afternoon, Fourth of July. And everybody thanked me, and we went home. So it may have gotten people in trouble. I can't quite remember what happened after that, but I'm sure I did the wrong thing. But that was from the President directly.

Timothy Naftali

Well, I don't think he would have complained about that. I think it was a memo around Memorial Day.

Jon Huntsman

Oh, okay.

Timothy Naftali

That he wanted to know who'd written it because it was mocking the White House's policy on Federal holidays.

Jon Huntsman

Well, you know, the staff secretary wrote, as I've got out on my walls and as the National Archives has, the staff secretary really writes most of the President's memos. I mean, Haldeman would write some, you know, if it were really critical to the Cabinet, and Butterfield would write a few. But the staff secretary just writes the slug of them everyday. So the chances are, you know, I may have screwed up on that one. I don't remember. I don't think it was me. I can't imagine doing anything I wasn't told to do. So it may have been somebody else. I just don't remember. But you almost have to understand that, you know, there are those people who weigh these issues and talk about the plusses and minuses of different issues. And most of my papers would go to people, and they would discuss issues and give them back to me. But because I was a collector system, the staff secretary, and a filtering system, it was somewhat difficult to really remember the hundreds of issues that had come up as opposed to the neat, tidy, perfect way they were presented to the President.

Timothy Naftali

Thankfully, we can read those now. I know, you're allowed to pat yourself on the back. We can read those now. Did you know that you were being taped?

Jon Huntsman

In the White House?

Timothy Naftali

Yeah.

Jon Huntsman

No, I did not. I was very offended by it. I found out later that I was.

Timothy Naftali

Because had you known, it might have saved you some work.

Jon Huntsman

No, one of the things that was really interesting is that the President was always... I thought the President was a great man. From him, I learned some very positive things, and one of them is that even though he was a shy man and somewhat lacking in personal friendships, that is, true personal friendships with other men, he was always very kind to my children, and we had eight children, seven when I started. One was born the day I started on the White House, number eight, and then the ninth was born a couple years later. So I had the largest family in the White House, but the President always took time when he was coming from the mansion or from the residence to his office or when he was on his way out to the helicopter, to always come and see the children and either give them a hug or a tie clip or cuff links or sometimes he called Jon Jr. at age ten and Peter -- Jon Jr. is now the governor of the State of Utah and has been an ambassador twice -- he called them into the office and said, "I'm going to have your father stay out. I want to talk to you boys about what the seal means on my rug

here, what the seal of the President of the United States means and how this Oval Office came into being and how long it's been in place." He gave them a history lesson in there that day for maybe 15 minutes and many, many times -- he stopped our young son David when he was three years old, President Nixon did as he was coming over and he was very happy that morning. He had on a dark blue suit, had a polka dot tie on. I had two or three family members with me. He stopped along the way and said, "Jon, now who's this one?" It was young David who was three -- David's been a very successful businessman since then -- and the President said, "David, do you know who I am?" And David said, "Ah, I think you're Santa Claus." He said, "No, try again." "Are you God?" He said, "No, I'm the President of the United States." And David said, "Oh, thank you." You know, I mean, he was on the right track. He knew it was somebody pretty important.

And then, right after the President left office, I mean, we had a lot of personal interviews that were terrific with the children. The President was always great to them. Never once was he rude or have a lack of time or lack of interest. I called Jack Brennan, who was a Marine assistant to the President when he left, and I said, "Jack, the President seems like he's awfully much alone there. What if I brought all the kids over just to say hello to him again?" He said, "Oh, he'd love it." So I put all the kids in the car -- we had all nine of them then -- I put them all in one of these, you know, airport-type vans that had four doors on each side -- drove from Salt Lake City to Casa Pacifica and San Clemente. The President spent maybe two hours with us, and our young son James just happened to have a stuffed animal, it happened to be an elephant, and the President said, "James, come on in here. I want you to see my collection of elephants because I've got them collected from all over the world." Then the President took four or five of these elephants that people had given to him while he was President and said, "James, I want you to have them." And James went out with a whole armful. I've got a display downstairs of elephants that foreign leaders had given the President at different times to represent, you know, the Republican Party. The President gave them to James and James went out with this armful of elephants.

The President was just terrific. I mean, there are just story after story about the family of young children and President Nixon that the press never heard about. I remember one time after I left, I met with Jack Anderson, and I said, "Jack, why don't you do a story about the President and children on "Parade" magazine, because you own "Parade" magazine. You're one of the co-owners. You've written all this negative stuff about him. Why don't you write about -- interview our children. I won't even be there. My wife and I won't even be there. They're just young kids. Ask them what they think about the President of the United States. He's now left office, but ask when he was there and they were there what they think about him." He said, "That's a great idea, Jon. I'd love to do that. That would make a great story." He never did it. No one ever did it. So they never told that side of the President, that he was terrific with kids. He was kind to them. He was gracious to them. He was patient to them. And the last story about children is that at Pat Nixon's funeral -- you know, he called the old staff together after the funeral -- and it was a sad funeral because Pat Nixon was a lovely woman and the people on the staff really admired her and loved her. She was a woman I had great admiration for. She reminded me a little bit of my own mother, who died of cancer. After Pat Nixon's funeral, everyone had left, and the President kind of called the old staff together, and of course, Ehrlichman didn't show up and John Dean didn't show up, Butterfield didn't show up, but most of the others were there.

To show you the type of man President Nixon was, you know, everyone was wondering what he would say. I mean, here it had been, what, 25 years since most of the people had seen each other. Several had been to prison, 10 or 11, you know, 30 days or 20 months or whatever, and there Haldeman was, you know, and the President called everyone together, and he said, "I want to tell you

all a story." He said, "You know" -- no one could quite figure this out because it was right after the funeral -- He said, "You know?" He said, "When Tricia and Julie decided they were going to have children, they came to Pat and me" -- you know, it was Pat's funeral so he wanted to tell a story about Pat -- "and they asked, "What do you want the grandchildren to call you?" And Pat says, "Well, why don't you just call me "Ma?" And the two girls said, "That would be great. We'll have the grandchildren just call you Ma." Then they said, "Dad, what should we have the grandkids call you?" And he said, "You can call me anything because I've been called everything!" And everybody just laughed. You know, I mean, it was just perfect Nixonian, and it was just great. Well you know, at that time, there was Bob Haldeman standing next to me, and I put my arm around Bob. I said, "Bob, what are you doing now?" And we had a great talk, and we had a great visit, and then we met several times after that. We developed a very nice relationship, and he asked why I never visited him in prison, and I told him that I never felt close to him in the White House, but I was glad that before he died of cancer that Bob and I had seen each other several times. We showed great respect for one another, and we ended with a very close and fine friendship, and that meant a lot to me. It meant a great deal to me.

Timothy Naftali

Was he reflective in those conversations?

Jon Huntsman

He was. One time, when Gorbachev first came to American in 1989, 1990 in Minneapolis, they invited 40 people to have dinner with General Secretary Gorbachev, then of the Soviet Union, and because we were doing so much work in the Soviet Union as a company -- strangely enough, Bob Haldeman was, too. He was running one of Curt Carlson's hotels. He was a hotel manager, kind of resort-type developer for a man by the name of Curt Carlson, who was one of Nixon's friends who lived in Minneapolis. I had no idea that Haldeman was doing this kind of work. Anyway, we were two of the 40 people invited to the dinner, and we had a two-hour wait before Gorbachev showed up and so Bob and I spent the entire two hours reflecting on the White House. Everything I've told you today on camera, I told him. Everything and he told me his side of things, the pressure he was under and why he wanted a zero-defect system and why he thought it was important that everything be letter perfect and why the staff secretary's job was the most difficult job in the White House -- Butterfield was right when he said it was an administrative nightmare to the Senate Watergate committee. Then he asked why I hadn't visited him in prison, and that was the time he actually asked me that question and we talked about that and I asked him how, you know, upon reflection, what did he think about things. We just had a great visit and, as I mentioned, we had several others after that. I have to say, in all, Bob was a fine man. There are certain times in our life, I guess, that we get carried away by the position we're in, by the power of the moment, and then upon reflection we kind of go back to the normal person we are. In that normal way, he was a fine man.

Timothy Naftali

Did he agree with you when you said that you thought the Watergate was the logical consequence of the kind of system --

Jon Huntsman

I'm not sure that I said that as much as I said that the atmosphere that I felt was created in the meetings that we had were conducive to people maybe not being totally truthful, and I don't remember if Haldeman agreed with me or didn't agree with me. But I've always, anyone I've met since then, including Bob, I've been very free with my own opinion, that I felt that attitude and the atmosphere that was created under Bob's direction led, in many ways to, you know, situations that were ripe for cover-up type events simply because the pressure was too great, you know, too great in the White House there. The pressure was enormous for results, and you combine that with a zero-defect system, and what do you have? You have a system that triggers these types of situations that are unhealthy.

Timothy Naftali

Let's talk some more about the staff secretary period, please. Tell us about your role in the war on cancer.

Jon Huntsman

Well, the President was my hero for a lot of reasons, President Nixon. He really was my hero. I loved the man, and I was honored, every day, to work for him. I would have done so for nothing, and I almost did for nothing. I mean, I could have made ten times more in my work, in my job. But one of the things I really like about President Nixon was he genuinely, I think, felt that we had to declare war on cancer because it was out of control. And I'd shared with him, in one instance, the fact that my mother had died of cancer in 1969. She had breast cancer for five years and had died and what it had meant in my life. The President had a very sensitive side to him. I think he sometimes didn't know how to express it well but he -- I'm just backtracking a little bit -- but during the time when he gave out the posthumous medals, he said to the staff, "Don't ever let me do that again because I can't cry in public." I mean, his heart was very big, and it just broke his heart to give out these Medals of Honor posthumously because it just was emotionally too much for him. I sensed the same thing in cancer and when he declared that war on cancer. He signed the proclamation as I recall on August 1, 1971 -- I may be a few days off on that going from memory -- but I had the privilege to take it to his office and then keep the pen that he signed when he signed it. There were a lot of people standing around when he signed it and there were several pens given out as there usually are at a signing ceremony, but I believe it was a billion dollars, the first billion dollars for a war on cancer. He had declared that, and it meant a lot to me, and I kept one of the pens that he had used to sign that proclamation.

Timothy Naftali

Do you remember why he chose to use the metaphor "war on cancer"?

Jon Huntsman

I think he thought it was a war because, at that particular time, cancer was taking about one out of four lives. Today it's taking one out of two men and one out of three women. It's increased substantially since then, but I think we were in a war in Vietnam, and we had to fight it like a war. I think, in the terminology of the day, that war meant we had to give it everything we had. We had to fight it, you know, on the seas, in the air, on the land -- we had to fight it with any means we had. I think considering the fact that, you know, we were just winding down a horrifyingly long, terrible,

tragic war, that he couldn't have picked a better adjective to describe what he wanted to do in the fight against cancer than declare war on it.

Timothy Naftali

Can you tell us what you recall, if anything, about how the administration set its new economic policy in the summer of '71 in Camp David?

Jon Huntsman

I remember the Camp David retreat, and I remember the staff going to Camp David, but I really could not recall off-hand any of the specifics on the domestic positions taken at that time. Again, I was more of a mechanic, and the issues per se were not ones that I remember because I had some days 20 or 30 at a time hit me, and my job was to get them from point A to point B and move as fast as I could to keep the staff organized as opposed to a policy person. I was absolutely not a policy person.

Timothy Naftali

Well, you did talk about how you acquired a sense of the pluses and minuses of some of the characters in the White House and the Cabinet, so let me ask you about some of the personalities. Tell us a little bit about John Connally. What was it like working with him?

Jon Huntsman

Well, I think John Connally was -- he was, again, bigger than life to the President. He was regarded by President Nixon as someone who President Nixon would like to be like. He clearly placed him on a pedestal, higher than any other human being that I remember during my service there as far as respect and admiration. He thought John Connally was -- you know, how he talked, what he said, how he carried himself, how he conducted himself -- President Nixon was very respectful of that and somewhat envied by it, I would say. But he gave him -- he had complete accessibility, in and out of the oval office. There weren't many people who did, but John Connally was one who did.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about George Shultz. What do you remember of him?

Jon Huntsman

George was fairly quiet in those days. This was the time that he moved the senior White House staff to the Office of Management and Budget, before Secretary Shultz got involved in foreign affairs. He was more of a -- I want to say, you know, a general auditor. He had very sound judgment. He was a man of great character, great integrity, great honesty. He was one of the guys, you know, who wore the white hats and whenever people wanted to know a true, honest position on an issue, George Shultz was always a safe bet because he would always tell you exactly what his position was, and he'd thought it out well. He'd read it well. He had done his homework, and he left an impression of a man of extreme intelligence and knowledge and thoroughness. I had great respect for George Shultz.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about Elliot Richardson.

Jon Huntsman

Elliot Richardson was an unusual man. He was the best doodler, probably one of the world's great doodlers and so through every meeting he would always be doodling. In the first Christmas cards over the years, he would send out some of the doodles that he'd done in different meetings. Some of them would be White House meetings, others would be, you know, when he had his own staff there. Elliot Richardson was a complicated man because he was very, very bright, very knowledgeable, but he had a warm personality to him, and when he was being considered as Vice President in 1976 -- it's when Rockefeller was chosen -- '76, he was staying in our house here in Salt Lake City, and he would come out to visit with us and stay with us. Television had said there are five men under consideration. Elliot Richardson was one. We got the word while he was out here that Rockefeller was going to be the choice. But I loved Elliot Richardson. He was a professional bird watcher, and so when he left our home after visiting us, I gave him a book on birds. In his home he had a multitude of birds. And he went out in our back yard here in Salt Lake City and looked up and saw the eagles flying. He gave me a great lesson on how many time an eagle has to flap their wings per hour versus cruising time per hour, and he had it all figured out, right down to the minute as far as the work an eagle does vis-à-vis the distance an eagle travels. But Elliot Richardson, I would say, again, was -- he always loved the fact that I was in the White House because he was at HEW and if he needed anything special, bills or appropriations or anything done -- not appropriations, but any special requests from the White House -- or anything done that he knew needed to get to the President, he'd call me and say, "Jon, you know, you were part of my staff at HEW. Will you be sure the President sees" -- A, B, C or D. I'd slip it in the middle of the pack, and it would usually make its way in through Haldeman, if Haldeman happened to review it. Oftentimes, Haldeman didn't review it at all, and they'd go right in to the President from my office, but I'd always do what Elliot asked because usually it was something that needed to be done and something the President needed to see. Again, the White House staff secretary had great flexibility on what the President would see and not see. But I had great respect for Elliot Richardson.

Timothy Naftali

Was there a system by which you could determine whether Haldeman reviewed a packet before it went to the President?

Jon Huntsman

No, no, I think part of it was Haldeman's decision on that day if he wanted to see things. Part of it would be that Larry Higby would whip through things maybe quickly before they went into the President, and he may pick out some things and give them to Haldeman. I mean, it was a little bit mysterious. You never really knew on what days or under what conditions would Haldeman see the papers and under what conditions would Higby see the papers if he did, in fact, see them. Higby didn't see them that often or if Butterfield may or may not see the papers. They always liked to have two sets of eyes see anything that would go into the White House. I would never know who would see them. I would know -- see them when they would come back. They would be marked up, and I could tell by some of the markings if somebody had seen them or not, but there were many days, you know -- most of the days -- there were no markings.

Timothy Naftali

Give us a sense, please, of the bureaucratic geography. Where did you send these papers? Where would they go from your desk?

Jon Huntsman

Well, they would come to my desk from the President's, kind of -- Butterfield would go in first thing in the morning. His office which was Haldeman's former office right adjacent to the Oval Office which, today, is part of the Oval Office. That used to be Butterfield's office and when Butterfield would leave on vacation or leave or take off, I would sit in that office. It's the one right adjacent. There's a little doorway and a bathroom and it goes right into the Oval Office. So, traditionally, Butterfield would have come in in the morning and picked up the papers that were there and then any memos that were coming back from the White House staff would come directly into me instead of the President's office. I'd always go to the staff secretary. Anything from the Cabinet would be gathered up, and that would be brought directly to the staff secretary's office. Anything from the President would usually go through Butterfield, who was kind of the President's personal assistant. That would be a better definition for him than deputy White House chief of staff, would be the President's personal assistant because he would be there for dinners and develop lists for who came to what events, and Alex did a great job. Alex was, again, a man I had a lot of respect for. I think he worked long hours. I think Alex was a perfectionist and a professional and really gave it all he had. I know that he and Bob did the best they could to keep peace even though they went to UCLA together and were old classmates from years gone by. Alex was a pleasure to work with and did a great job.

Timothy Naftali

And after something, after you did a memo or you summarized memos, where did you send them? Did they go to Haldeman's office or did they...

Jon Huntsman

My memos would all go... Boy, I'm pretty sure they would all go back to Butterfield, and then how they got to Haldeman, I don't know, whether Haldeman came in or Higby once or twice a day. Because sometimes memos were just going constantly from my office out, and I would never send anything directly into the President unless I took it to him personally. That was always with the permission of Haldeman. But everything that I sent would go through Butterfield, and Butterfield would usually glance at everything. He was usually the last eyeball to see anything where the President would see it, and there were times that Haldeman or Higby might take a look at it -- Haldeman -- I don't know that Higby ever did. But it depends on the event. If it was a very major event, if it was a major interview with a chief head of state or, you know, somebody who was a Cabinet officer who was in trouble or something, and we were preparing the President, Haldeman would get involved in those. He'd pull those particular ones out. The day-to-day routine answers for the President, I don't think Haldeman changed or altered much of that at all. I think he would look for the things that were more of the high potential media problem issues and take those out of the stack.

Timothy Naftali

You made mention getting the yellow legal pads from the President.

Jon Huntsman

Yeah.

Timothy Naftali

Did you get the dictations, too?

Jon Huntsman

I think the dictations were almost all to Rose Woods. See, she did his personal letters, and I did all of the -- anything dealing with the Office of the President was the staff secretary, but all of the personal letters were through Rose Woods, even if it was a personal letter on White House stationary, obviously. Rose did that, and so she and I worked closely together. We had a very good rapport. She was an untouchable. I mean, she and Haldeman never talked to each other because they were in different camps, and she wouldn't tolerate him. So she just did her thing with the President at least while I was there. They may have changed afterwards. I doubt it, but they may have. As I recall, when you say the President's dictation, that would be to Rose Woods. As I remember, that would go to Rose Woods.

Timothy Naftali

But then she'd type out -- sometimes he had instructions and they would come to you as memos then, I guess.

Jon Huntsman

You know, you may be right. I just -- yeah, there were so many different types of things that would end up on my desk and over the years, I'm just trying to recall -- the yellow pads were important things. News summaries were really important. Though any piece of paper that he received that had a notation on it to do anything would come back to me. I don't recall him dictating something and saying, you know, "Find out about this or that." He usually would just scribble it out or write it out, or Haldeman would come and say find out about this or that and then I'd put that in the line up, put that in the queue. And I'd have a system where if it wasn't in to me in 24 hours, I'd send out one notice, and if it wasn't in by 48 hours, I blew all the whistles apart. I mean, it was a fail proof system. I mean, it was very, very well run. You know, you'd send something out and it had to be in. You give them one notice and then two notices, and that was it. How things would come in to me would be in such a multitude of ways that it's hard for me to remember the different ways that they'd come in from the Oval Office.

Timothy Naftali

And when did they stop coming? When would they stop coming in to you? When did you go home?

Jon Huntsman

I averaged going home at 9:30 or 10 every night. I was there between 7 and 7:30 every morning. And I worked Saturdays and Sundays. I had a few Sundays off when the President would go to San Clemente, but not many. You know, there were always things you had to do that you couldn't do because of the rush of events and to be sure the President was well briefed and well prepared. But, you know, there were a lot of really nice times. I remember when Bob took his staff out, Haldeman, on the Sequoia. He wanted to say thank you. Alex Butterfield and I -- Alex would occupy the office right next to the President -- staff secretary -- it's starting to come back -- I'd always be in Alex's office taking up my papers. That's what I did. I'd take them up to Alex's office, drop them off there, and then he'd take them in to the President. Sometimes I'd go in with him, and sometimes I wouldn't. It's starting to kind of come back with me now as I read these things. One time Alex said, "You know, Jon? It would really be nice if the President was in a suit other than blue for a news conference." And so he and I strategized about that for a while, and I can't remember who we suggested it to -- Manuel Sanchez, maybe Manolo --

Timothy Naftali

Manolo

Jon Huntsman

Manolo Sanchez. Could have been Manolo who was always with us who was a great guy. But somebody that we suggested it to and the President showed up in a gray suit, and we were all cheering because, you know, we were all hoping we'd get rid of that dark blue suit, and he'd look years younger, and we'd clean out Alex's office and that's where we'd have the news release. Then during the weeks when Alex would be gone, I was in that office. It was really an honor to sit in that office next to the President's. I didn't know in those days that that's where the taping system was activated. It was in the upper part of the closet of that office and, you know, you were being taped and everyone was being taped. Oh, I meant to tell you about one taping situation that was kind of interesting. I'd just given the President a copy of The Book of Mormon, which is my faith, my religion. The President had been in to thank Karen and the children for all the long hours I'd worked and the fact that I hadn't been home on most weekends. As I said, he was always very sensitive to the children, and I was very grateful for it and the children were, and they have great memories of the President. I've got a picture and it's on the wall right outside there. He was reading this one section of The Book of Mormon, which is a history of the American continent going back from 400 B.C. to 600 A.D. It's just kind of like the Bible. It's just a history of the early inhabitants of North America. I'd shown him a little passage in there, and he had read it to the children and, you know, they were kind of running around -- some were listening and some were running around.

Anyway, about two years later, in 1974 or 5, during the Watergate proceedings, right after they released the first batch of tapes -- that may have been '77 or '78 instead of '76. Anyway, I received a call about six in the morning and this lady said, "Are you Mr. Huntsman?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I have to tell you a funny story. I said, "Yes?" She said, "You know, you had taken your family in to meet with the President and he'd read out of The Book of Mormon to your children, and we have that on tape, because everything was being taped. He was so great, and he had his pictures taken, gave gifts to all your kids, told them how much he appreciated their father's hard work and the kids all just loved it. As soon as you left, in came Chuck Colson and John Ehrlichman to talk about some events leading up to

Watergate and here it is, the same sequence of events within minutes of each other," and I thought oh my gosh. And she said, "I just wanted to call and let you know how the President would go from one extreme to another extreme, and you were one extreme." But it was kind of an interesting phone call. I just want to read this thing, forgive me for reading it, but I've entitled it "Jumping Ship," and this is entitled as follows. It's my autobiography, and I wrote it almost 20 years ago. It says, "If I didn't already possess sufficient trepidation about West Wing hi-jinx, a sumptuous dinner cruise on the Potomac River aboard the Presidential yacht cinched it. Sitting with people who two weeks prior, investigations would later reveal, had engineered a break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, I was informed by their boss, White House Chief of Staff, H.R. Haldeman, that I needed to become one of the boys. It was surreal.

With the President out of the country, Haldeman invited members of his super staff and their spouses to join Jo and him aboard the opulent Sequoia. Alex Butterfield and his wife picked Karen and me up for the drive to the Potomac dock. Also invited were the Dwight Chapins, the Ron Zieglers and the Chuck Colsons. Recently divorced John Dean came along. And an elegant affair it was. The finest of wines, Presidential china and a baked Alaska for dessert. Haldeman was at his charming best, graciously turning from one couple to the next, he gushed with complementary remarks. When he came to the Huntsmans, there were the usual friendly jests about the size of our family. 'What are we going to do about Jonny, who works all day and doesn't play,' he inquired of the others. 'Do you think there's any way we can get Huntsman out of his office to socialize with the rest of us?'" This was from Haldeman. "It was a joke, and yet it wasn't a joke. He made light of my propensity of keeping a nose to the grindstone, but he was also sending me a message. He'd been trying to pull me into his inner circle. That was why I'd been invited to join his super staff. Other than sitting in that group, I had not taken the bait." Anyway, I went on and talked about... "I wondered as I nibbled at the baked Alaska why I didn't socialize with these people. I did not deeply dislike any of them, not even Haldeman. We were family of sorts, but I wasn't like any of them. At the end of the day, I just didn't want to play with these guys. At Wharton, I tried to adapt my life to those around me, and it was a big mistake. My lifestyle simply was not in synch with those around the table that night. There was a gap, a deep and profound philosophical division between them and Karen and me." Anyway, just a little bit of history.

Timothy Naftali

Thank you. Now, did you sense at these meetings in the morning the tension that the whole Pentagon Papers issue had created in the White House?

Jon Huntsman

Well, obviously yes. I mean, the Pentagon Papers created a tension that rippled through the White House in a way where everyone was suspect. I mean, the very thought that someone could give "The New York Times" top-secret, classified information rattled everyone, everyone, to the point where, you know, you begin to suspect even your own secretaries were spies. I mean, everyone thought that everyone else was a spy, so it created an atmosphere of great distrust for maybe two weeks, three weeks, but it was a very prominent, substantial, critical and kind of threatening time. And Ellsberg hadn't realized the shock waves that the White House staff went through when they heard what had happened because there was such great suspect. There was suspect anyway just because of the atmosphere that Haldeman created. Everyone was suspect, and now we know that we were all being taped and, I mean, there was even greater suspect if we had known what was going on. But it was a

difficult time during that period, and I just remember that I would never leave the White House for lunch. I would never leave for dinner. I was just there.

Timothy Naftali

Did you know anything about what Bud Krogh was up to?

Jon Huntsman

Well -- -- I kind of did in retrospect, because I put the pieces together probably about the time that "The New York Times" and some of the others did, but the only real tip-off I had as to what was going on with Watergate -- there was only one tip-off that I had while I was there because you have to remember, I left in February 1972, just before things really got hot. Chuck Colson brought over to my office two men, one was named Howard Hunt and the other, Gordon Liddy -- Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt -- and he said, "Jon, I've got two members of my staff and I need offices for them." I said, "Chuck, you're out of money. You don't have money. You've used all the money and all the offices. We have nothing in our budget left for you, and I can't approve offices for these folks." And he said, "Well, they're just going to be consultants." I said, "Chuck, you can't have them. We don't have money in the fund for your office," because each office had a certain fund, part of the White House fund was allocated to each person's office. And I said, "Moreover, we don't have any offices for them." Because the offices were all used up, except over in the East Executive Office Building across the street from Pennsylvania Avenue. Then when I went back as a consultant a year later, you know, I was taken to their offices, shown the double doors taken to the basement. I was shocked. These were done during the time I was there, and somebody had been doing them. Here I was over offices. I had no way of knowing. Nobody had ever told me. Nobody had ever suggested what was going on and when I saw it I was just absolutely shocked. So that's the only thing I ever knew about any of the secretive things that, you know, you could smell a little here and there but, you know, nothing really. It was a shock.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about working with Henry Kissinger.

Jon Huntsman

Well Kissinger was a perfectionist, brilliant man, isolationist --

Timothy Naftali

Isolationist?

Jon Huntsman

Isolationist in the sense of the White House staff. He was his own guy, and not many people on the staff dared tread into his office. He was so bright and so able in dealing with foreign policy. Al Haig was there. Al came as a colonel. Then he got his one star, and we celebrated it. Then he got two stars. Then he went right up to four stars. I remember getting the letter from Kissinger to the President recommending him for four stars. They jumped him over -- you can look at the history books -- but

271, 269 other officers. I remember what Kissinger put down on Al Haig's resume. It has fitness report, and it had 4.0, and it had a line that had different things, you know, where it had 3.8 or 4.0 or 3.5 out of 4 being the highest. And it listed all of these qualities, and Haig had just put a line through all of them, 4.0 for all of them, and then put at the bottom, "This man should be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." I thought it was great because Al was my White House tennis partner. We were great buddies and great friends. I loved Al. He worked day and night, just like I did. He did for Kissinger a lot of what I did. When I said that Kissinger was untouchable, Kissinger had complete access to the President's office. Haldeman never could keep him away. I mean, when Kissinger wanted to go in, he'd go in. He was the only one on the White House staff who had that access. John Connally had it and John Mitchell had it, but inside the White House, the only person other than Haldeman who had it was Kissinger. Ehrlichman never had it, but Kissinger did have it. Kissinger was a wonderful man, he was bright, he was articulate, he was a workaholic. Some days he'd be there three days, three nights without sleep. I'll never forget his kindness to my son, Jon Jr. I'm sure Dr. Kissinger's forgotten this, but Jon Jr., who's now governor of our state, was 10 years old. I was working there, it was the weekend, late Saturday and, as usual, General Haig and I were the only two there working. I went up to help Al get Dr. Kissinger ready for a trip, and I had Jon Jr. there because I'd have the children come and spend Saturday afternoons and Sunday with me in my office. The Secret Service later told us they could find them all around the South Lawn of the White House because they were monitored, and they could always watch the kids so they wouldn't lose any of them. But on this particular day, Al had finished getting all the papers ready for Dr. Kissinger, he was walking out of the West Wing the basement door -- we had the parking stalls in between the West Wing and the Old Executive Office Building -- getting into his Chrysler New Yorker, black Chrysler New Yorker, and as he was walking down, little Jon Jr. was there with me, age 10, and I said, "Dr. Kissinger, do you mind if Jon Jr. carries your bag for you?" He said, "Oh no, Jon. That would be great. That would be great. Here you go, Jon," he said, "Carry my bag for me." And so the two of them walk down there together and, Al and I followed them. Kissinger got in his black New Yorker, Chrysler, with a driver, and just as he was getting in, little Jon Jr. said, "Where are you going, Dr. Kissinger?" Dr. Kissinger looked at him and said, "Don't tell anybody. I'm going to Peking." That was the first I knew, the first I knew. The first the world knew. Really, I mean, it was top-secret sensitive. Here this little 10-year-old boy who'd carried his briefcase down with these papers -- later my son was to become U.S. ambassador to Singapore, speak fluent Chinese because of Dr. Kissinger's huge impact on him, because he'd go in Dr. Kissinger's office when he was gone and see all of his books on Chinese, and he speaks it fluently, as do two of our sons who were there in the White House, mostly because of Dr. Kissinger, their great admiration for him.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about Chuck Colson.

Jon Huntsman

Chuck was an ex-Marine and was very obedient to Haldeman and a terrific guy. Chuck was a gracious personality, but he was an extreme loyalist to the President and Chuck was on one side -- when I arrived, Chuck was on one end of the OEOP and Herb Klein was on the other end, and they were both in kind of communications. And during the time I was there, Chuck's role expanded dramatically and Herb's declined. Herb was a very fine man, very soft-spoken man, professional journalist, but he couldn't quite -- Colson was much more of a warrior. You know, it was really important to Chuck to become a senior member of the President's staff and have the President's ear, which he eventually got. But I watched very carefully as his staff increased and Klein's decreased to the point where Herb left.

Herb, as I said, was a fine man, and Chuck, I always thought, was a fine man, too. I had a great respect for Chuck Colson. He worked hard. He was there day and night. He was always trying to protect the President. He was trying to get a one-upmanship on any of the President's opponents, but that was his job. He was assigned by Haldeman to do a lot of the, you know, undercover work, investigation work and things, memos, that if we had to find out information on something or somebody or somewhere, Colson's staff would usually do it. So he was kind of the go-to man for inquiries that would surround oh, mysterious or unknowledgeable or unknown events or personalities.

Timothy Naftali

John Ehrlichman?

Jon Huntsman

John Ehrlichman was a great gentleman. He was a scholar and a gentleman. I have a lot of respect for John. He was totally opposite to Bob Haldeman. I don't know why they ever put them together as the Ehrlichman-Haldeman-Kissinger German team. I'd never seen three more different men in all my life. I worked with Ehrlichman almost every day on position papers, and things coming and going to the President would go through my office. I'd succeeded a man named John Brown, who was only there a few months because he had succeeded a man by the name of Kenneth Cole, and Kenneth had gone from staff secretary to be deputy domestic affairs advisor. He was Ehrlichman's deputy. And Kenneth Cole was a very bright, capable, able man, and I always liked Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman was always gracious and kind, spoke, inquired about the family. He was a fine man to work with, and I was always sorry to see John get involved in Watergate, because I think, had he had his way, that there would have been no Watergate, no problems. But again, I'm just speculating. I just had a lot of respect for Ehrlichman. I respected his knowledge and his hard work and tenacity and capabilities, felt that he was a very imminently well-qualified individual.

Timothy Naftali

When you took a job as staff secretary, you started a study of the size of White House staffs going back to Roosevelt.

Jon Huntsman

Right, that's correct.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about that please.

Jon Huntsman

Well, I did the staff because Haldeman was never happy with the size of the staff. We were always too big. I did the staff and concluded that we had 540 -- and I'm going from memory almost 40 years later -- but concluded that we had 540 people on our staff. But other staffs were -- this included the extended office of the President. You're talking about the office of former Presidents. You're talking about the Office of Research and Development. I mean, things that really -- they never see the

President. But, you know, when you get to the immediate Office of the President, there were five assistants and eleven special assistants to the President. That's a pretty small staff that we had, really. But I whacked it down a few more. Haldeman wanted it whacked down, and we cut it down a few more. The problem with the White House staffs that I did on this historical study is that, starting with Roosevelt's era, you could say to another division of government -- let's say it's the Interior Department or the Treasury Department -- I need three people for a period of six months or twelve months. I forget the name we had for these folks, but they --

Timothy Naftali

Detailees.

Jon Huntsman

Detailees, thank you. They're detailees, and so they would count against White House staff, and some of them would work there for years, really, for years and they're detailees. So the size of the White House staff was never, ever accurate. It was always a made up number to the press because of the detailees. And we did that with Nixon. We had detailees come in -- I brought some in from HEW at times because I was overwhelmed. I needed some extra secretaries. I only had one and I needed three because I had so many things. I kept three full-time secretaries going day and night. So I had to bring them in, and they were detailed. That's what they were, detailed, and they were called detailees from different departments, but I think we cut it down to about the lowest level we could at that point at 540, and that was, as I said, only 11 assistants and six -- I mean six assistants and eleven special assistants.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about meeting Dick Cheney, please.

Jon Huntsman

Well, Dick was brought in by Rummy, Don Rumsfeld. Don was a very dear friend of mine. Don was counselor to the President. And Don was a terrific person. He had been in Congress and had run the Office of Economic Opportunity, OEO, and when they disbanded OEO, Rummy came over to the White House, and they didn't quite have anything for Rummy to do, I mean, of substance. And Haldeman didn't particularly get along with Rummy very well. I think they were competitors because he knew that Rummy had all of the traits to be chief of staff, and Rummy could have done that very well. And so, there was a little bit of tension always between Rumsfeld and Haldeman. So Rumsfeld was put up on the second floor of the West Wing, and you know, George Shultz was up there and Bob Finch was eventually put up there. There's some interesting personalities on that second floor. Some of them had real jobs, and some of them didn't. But Rumsfeld was assigned special projects at the White House, and he was particularly good at liaising back to Congress because he'd served in Congress from Illinois. He wanted to bring an assistant on board, but there wasn't any room for him. So he brought this young assistant on board, and I can't remember whether I told him or whether years later Don and I talked about this and he reminded me of it, but there was no space for Cheney. There was no space in the West Wing, and I don't believe there was space in the EOB, but they found a little broom closet, a little room for Cheney, and he became a deputy to Don. Everybody wondered why he was a deputy because they didn't quite know what Don, himself, did. Because you had the main White

House staff, that is domestic affairs, foreign affairs with Kissinger, you had the political with McGregor -- I may be saying that wrong -- the political liaison office with the Congress -- Clark MacGregor's office.

Timothy Naftali

Clark MacGregor.

Jon Huntsman

You had the communications office with Klein and Colson and personnel with Malek. I mean, everybody kind of had a job. Then all of a sudden, you had Bob Finch, who was the President's old buddy from California, and Don Rumsfeld up here in the office, and then Rummy got an assistant. So no one was really quite sure what to do because Rummy had kind of the run of the place, and Haldeman didn't really have control over him because the President was the one that brought him in directly from OEO. And there were these two or three people where Haldeman didn't have control over them, where the White House staff kind of operated around those other people, and so Cheney was the one Rummy brought in and then, of course, you've interviewed Cheney and Rummy. Dick was a very, very bright and able person and became a very dear friend to me. After I left, he invited me back when he was chief of staff to Ford. We had lunch in his office. We've been great friends for almost 40 years. But it was hard to remember very much about Dick because Rummy wasn't a high visibility person when he was in the White House. He was kind of a special projects person and, as I say, he wasn't in the Haldeman loop.

Timothy Naftali

But you saw Cheney. I mean, you became friends with him.

Jon Huntsman

I became friends with Cheney, yes. Became friends with Cheney -- it was just two young guys, neither one of whom knew why they were there. Everyone was a friend to me because I could get them into the White House mess. I could clear them for a parking spot. I could determine if they got to ride in one of our New Yorkers, our Chrysler New Yorkers. I could determine, you know, where they were housed, what office they were in. I was huge. I mean, I would clear it with Bob Haldeman, but after awhile he said, "Jon, go ahead. You've got good judgment, you go ahead." He would check off when I would change their salaries or something. He would check it off and see it was okay. But toward the end, the year I was there, the last few months, Haldeman had really given me quite a bit of authority in those perks. You know, if anybody wanted to get in the White House mess, I had to put them on the list. There were just a lot of things. I didn't realize going in that the White House staff secretary was as key a position as it was. I was very naïve about it and didn't have any sense of realizing that it was kind of the central point of the White House of the flow of goods and services and memos to the President, but also of perks. Anyway, it was a great opportunity to get to know people like Dick Cheney.

Timothy Naftali

But as you told us, Haldeman could also give people offices, like Liddy and Hunt, without you knowing.

Jon Huntsman

I guess so. They got 'em. [Laughter] I mean, I just was flabbergasted. I had charts in my office of every office, square footage, who was in it, what we did, you know, the EOB, the East Executive Office Building -- the old, the new -- the West Wing, the East Wing. I mean, I had every square foot of my office. I knew everybody's salary, I mean, their allowed amount, what they spent for each person, what they were allowed to spend, what their space was, who had what perks. I had it all down. Beats me how these guys got in, I mean, but Colson had cut a deal, I guess, with Haldeman to bring in Hunt and Liddy and get the funding from some other special fund that I'd never seen it before and then build this office. It was incredible. It had two doors, one went out and one went in. When -- David Young took me over and showed it to me. David was with National Security Council, a wonderful young man. He took me over after I left and showed me that, and I said it was unbelievable. I didn't even know they built it and I knew everything that went on over there.

Timothy Naftali

Because Young had been in that office, with Krogh.

Jon Huntsman

I guess.

Timothy Naftali

That was the Plumbers' office.

Jon Huntsman

Yes, the Plumbers' office. He wanted to show me the Plumbers' office. That's the first I'd seen it was after I'd left the White House staff. He showed me the offices in a place and I was over the offices. I was supposed to know these things, and I didn't see it until I left my position, and I was so glad I hadn't seen it.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us where Len Garment fit in.

Jon Huntsman

Len was kind of special interest. Len was an old friend of the President's. There were three or four people who had positions that were not really central to the White House staff. There were these specialists. Len was a specialist. Whether it was personal friends or whether it was the Jewish community or whether it was something that had been Richard Nixon's prior life, Len kind of fit in with several of these categories, where he would handle events or communications or things that fit into this kind of unusual array of the President's previous relationships. So as a result, I didn't work very closely with Len. There wasn't a lot of correspondence going to him. You know, you had the A-team guys that were running the show constantly that were the heart and soul of the President's staff,

and then you had special purpose people, the Finches, the Rumsfelds, the Len Garments and they were always terrific, fine men. I mean, I enjoyed each one of them and got along very well with each one of them. [Break in audio] School class about the same age as mine, and I could only make it about every fourth Sunday because I was at the White House or with the President. Anyway, one day I took over to Jack Anderson, to his home, my Sunday school lesson to teach my class for me because I wasn't going to be -- I knew I was going to be with the President the next week, and I didn't think anything about it. Two or three years after I left, the FBI called me and asked, "What were those special papers you were giving to Jack Anderson." I said, "What special papers?" And they showed me some video that they were taking from a car that was parked outside of his house saying, "Oh, he was given special information from inside the White House, and we suspect it might be you." I said, "That was a Sunday school manual. He was teaching my Sunday school class." I said, "I'd never give anybody anything, ever." So that was an incredible thing because, you know, Jack and I laughed about it for years, but that was the paranoia of the day. It was just everybody was after everybody else. Actually, Jack was a pretty nice guy, and the President was a pretty nice guy, and there were a lot of good people, but there was a lot of hatred back there in those years with the press and the media. I kept my nose out of everything. I just worked. I mean, I was a mechanic. As I said a robot.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about Spiro Agnew.

Jon Huntsman

Spiro --

Timothy Naftali

[Unintelligible] away from him.

Jon Huntsman

Yeah, Spiro Agnew was an anomaly back there. Nobody knew Spiro, and the President didn't like him in meetings, and Haldeman didn't want anything to do with him. You know, when he'd go places, it was just like he didn't exist. I mean, it was just unbelievable. I've never seen anything like it. I thought the Vice President of the United States -- I'd been back with Dick Cheney when Vice President Cheney's been Vice President to President Bush, Dick's had me back to his office. I've seen how a real Vice President works. It's just unbelievable. Agnew had this office on the second floor, and we'd see him maybe once a week at a meeting, and people would wonder, "Why is he here?" Of course, he'd go to national security briefings and things like that, you know, the briefings of those kinds, but around the White House, you wouldn't see him. You wouldn't see him for lunch. His staff was virtually invisible. I remember maybe three memos, maybe four memos, in the entire time I was there one year that went from the President to the Vice President that went through me. Now maybe they went through some other source, they could have done -- that went through the staff secretary, which would have been the logical way. I mean, everybody else, every other Cabinet officer -- I know the Vice President's a step ahead from a Cabinet officer -- every other Cabinet officer, they'd go through a staff secretary. I'd send them out to Connally and to, you know, Richardson, you know, and the other Cabinet officers. There were only four of them I remember ever going to the Vice President.

Timothy Naftali

He worked on Indian policy.

Jon Huntsman

Yeah, Indian policy. He was in the Indian treaty room a lot of the time. You know, he was a good guy. I gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon, too. You know, I got a picture out there with him, and I wanted him to have a copy of it. He wrote me really a nice letter just, you know, ten minutes later, went right into his room and dictated it. I thought, "Now, that's something," because, you know, if you worked for Haldeman, it was really, really hard to get too well acquainted with the people who weren't on his team. Haldeman demanded allegiance in a way I'd never seen before that almost circumvented you from communicating much with those not on the inside White House team. There were clearly the insiders and the outsiders, and the outsiders kind of stayed away. I mean they stayed away from the central part of the White House system under Nixon and let them do their job because it was fast and furious and, as I said, zero defects. Then there were those who enjoyed their jobs, and they were specialists. Dick Moore was another one of those guys. Dick Moore was a person who -- I never quite knew what Dick did. He was just an old friend of the President's and from time to time he'd show up. I'm sure they all did a lot of things, it just wasn't in the flow of the President's office.

Timothy Naftali

Tell us about George Romney.

Jon Huntsman

George was a very dear friend of mine. I was closer to George than any other Cabinet members because I'd known George before I went to Washington. My wife roomed with his daughter in college, and when Romney came in at HUD and I was at HEW, we'd had two or three dinner meetings together. Then when I went to the White House, George Romney called me a couple of times and said, "You know, I haven't met with the President for two or three months," because President Nixon didn't like Cabinet meetings. He had them because he had to have them, but he would communicate with whomever he wanted to communicate with. But to have a full meeting and have the full Cabinet show up and Nixon's -- the way I saw it, the way it was explained to me, the President didn't like that. If he wanted to hear somebody, he'd call him into the office, and there were only a few he cared to hear about. Domestic affairs weren't really on his agenda. You know, Kissinger was the key man. Kissinger ran, you know, the State Department, pretty much the Defense Department and the -- but George Romney used to come over and he'd talk a lot, and he'd visit with me a great deal. From time to time I'd do the same thing with him that I did with -- Secretary Elliot Richardson. I'd take their papers and stuff they really wanted to get into the President. And I knew I shouldn't do it, but I'd slip them in the middle of the stuff going in and they would get in to see the President. Sometimes the other Cabinet officers, you know, sometimes they'd wait months and months and months to get a proposal in or something. I remember one time Haldeman caught me on it. It was recommending a man by the name of Mark Halstead to be ambassador to either Finland or Norway, and he was one of George Romney's friends. I slipped it into the middle of the pack of all this stuff and the President signed all these things. Anyway, Haldeman, a few weeks later, said, "How did we ever get that guy in as an ambassador? How did we ever happen?" I just sat there shaking, you know? But anyway, it got in there.

And Flanigan passed on him, you know, because Flanigan had to check out all the ambassadors. He was a good friend of George Romney's, and I like George Romney a great deal.

Timothy Naftali

After the President left office, when you became interested in Russia, did you talk to former President Nixon about Russia?

Jon Huntsman

No, I always regretted that I didn't visit with him about it because I went over to Russia with Dr. Armand Hammer, and Hammer introduced me to all the top people in Russia, all of the main figures from Gorbachev to the ministers of health and education. He had open houses for me, and we had the first 51-percent owned venture in the Soviet Union and the history of America -- the first American 51-percent owned venture in Moscow with Aeroflot, which was a big airline there in 1988. That was a real break through for America to have more than a 50-50 venture at that time and, since then of course, in Armenia which was then part of the Soviet Union. We've now given over 53 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Armenia, built apartments and schools and done everything to help rebuild their country after the 1988 earthquake.

Timothy Naftali

You were the first private firm to help in Armenia, weren't you?

Jon Huntsman

We were, yes.

Timothy Naftali

Were you asked by President Reagan?

Jon Huntsman

No, no, I just saw it on television one night, and I'd always been fascinated by the Soviet Union, and Yuri Dobrynin had been a dear friend of mine, Yuri and his wife Leanna. Yuri was the ambassador to the United States from the Soviet Union, and I'd met with him before in opening our business in Russia, and Yuri invited me to the Soviet Embassy in Washington. Then when we announced our -- Jack Matlock was the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union from the United States, and when they announced our 51 percent venture at Ambassador Matlock's office in Moscow, Yuri Dobrynin came, who's usually in America. He came to the meeting. That was very touching to me. And because I knew that his wife was Armenian, Yuri Dobrynin and I had been life-long friends. He's come to our home and stayed many times. We've kept our friendship alive to this day. I guess when I heard what had happened in Armenia, part of it was I just wanted to help the country because I knew they needed help. Another part was that Armand Hammer said, "Come on, Jon. Let's go over and help them like we did at Chernobyl." I didn't do much in Chernobyl. He did. But in Armenia, we agreed to each put up a million dollars. You know, here it's been 20 years exactly and I put up 53 million, and Dr. Hammer didn't put up anything. He died in 1992, and I went to his funeral. We had a big ceremony for

him here. But we traveled all over the Soviet Union together, and he told everybody I was going to pick up where he left off, but that didn't quite work out that way.

Timothy Naftali

Well, he must have told you stories about meeting Lenin.

Jon Huntsman

He did. Oh, yeah, he used to just -- I mean, his book was a best selling book on "The New York Times" list. It's called "Hammer." I asked him -- when I first met him, I had lunch with him. His office was on Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood, Los Angeles. You know, Hammer was another guy that nobody in the White House trusted. They didn't quite know what side of the fence he was on. So I had kind of had this background there from being there with, you know, Nixon and Haldeman and Colson and all these guys. I mean, everybody was kind of suspicious of Hammer because he wasn't a real American. He had these contacts with the Soviets, even back in the '70s, which was really during the Cold War era. So here it is, you know, here I am, almost 20 years later, invited to his office for lunch. He has a sign behind his desk that said, "The Golden Rule: He who controls the gold makes the rules." I love that. Anyway, he took me over on Oxy One, and we enjoyed a great relationship together, a great association. He introduced me to many of the great leaders from both Israel and the Soviet Union. He'd tell me some great stories about how he got in the trading business, how Trotsky and Lenin got him into lead and into fur and then he'd send out wheat and bring in certain minerals and ores, even pencils. I mean, it's a great story. He'd always have lamb chops, you know? That was his favorite dinner on Oxy One. But we had some great years together, and it was an honor to be his friend. I know he was a controversial figure, and I know a lot of people didn't trust him, but he taught me a lot, and I've had some great mentors in life. Richard Nixon was one. Armand Hammer was one. Malcolm Forbes was one. There've been several others who I've really loved to glean a bit from each source. You sometimes learn more from people in a negative way. I learned a great deal from Haldeman. He made me a much better businessman. He made me a much better person, Bob did, in a negative way, but you know, I was glad at the end of his life that we became good friends, and I had a lot of respect for Bob. But I learned a great deal from him on what not to do, and I didn't run my office, my life the way he ran the White House.

Timothy Naftali

In your book, you mentioned that you wished Richard Nixon had apologized for Watergate.

Jon Huntsman

Well, if I said that in my book, it's -- -- it's obviously what I thought at the time I wrote the book, and I still think that. I thought Richard Nixon had apologized for Watergate. I mean, in my mind, I thought on the David Frost Show he did apologize, but I may be wrong on that. Again, I just think Nixon had so many opportunities to -- I think President Nixon had a lot of opportunities to rid himself of the people around him. You know, if you could only see yourself the way you really are and when I left, I wanted so much to go in and talk to the President about the way the White House was being run and the lack of trust and the fear that people worked under, the constant sense of surveillance that it seemed like everyone was treating one another and the lack of openness. There wasn't a sense of transparency at all, you know, it just was a muggy type of weather to be working in. I wanted so much

to talk to the President, but I was young and inexperienced. I thought, "What do I know about it? I'm not anyone important. If this is how they want to run it, that'd be great." But I thought Richard Nixon tried in his own way to apologize. If I said he should have s apologized, I probably overly emphasized that too much because I think he did in his own way try hard. I think that I've been very complimentary, in certainly my main book here, very complimentary to President Nixon. You know, I saw him up close and personal and things I saw, I admired immensely.

Timothy Naftali

Mr. Huntsman, thank you for your time today.

Jon Huntsman

Thank you.