
Interview with Lee Verstandig

The interview was conducted by David Welborn in Washington, DC on August 12, 1994

Audio cassette 83b
INTERVIEW: Lee L. Verstandig

LV: I can't remember the dates when the trip took place, but this was very, very early in advance of the debates in the Senate. And there was a great deal that went on prior to the formal floor debates. There was a fellow who—I can't remember now; I've heard his name recently—but who was the U.S. Ambassador there, who the Carter Administration sort of had up on the Hill and on the ground briefing people. The State Dept. people were very active, and we were very active in those kinds of meetings. Baker, Howard Leavingood, particularly, and a couple of others—Cran Montgomery, as I recall—were involved in those briefings, but also, as you can imagine, trying to kind of discern where other senators were or what their concerns were. Obviously there were a lot of different kinds of concerns, and in the background, you remember, we had Governor Ronald Reagan, who had serious objections, and Paul Laxalt, who was a senator who likewise had objections—but as the debates began to unfold on the floor, and I did a lot of the preparation work and a lot of the backlogging and briefing book stuff, it was interesting to me because it was a trademark that I began to see develop in Howard Baker in foreign policy areas. Now as I recall, beside behind the Environment Committee, Howard, I think at that time was on the Foreign Relations Committee, but I've watched this transpire. Since, with foreign dignitaries he is a terrific listener, and he asks very good questions and, unlike a lot of other staffers, despite the fact that Cran and Howard Leavingood briefed him well, he has his own style of inquiry. And in fact, I do recall a couple of situations where he was very much engaged in asking not where appeared to be, not necessarily questions that he himself needed answers to to make his own decision of what he was doing, but questions that he felt the Senate needed to have answered, in briefings, in meetings in the leadership office, with senators and often with staff, and I recall that he always tried to present these, because some would agree and some would disagree on these issues, that, "Yes, but whether you agree with the question, or whether you agree with the answer we are going to get, we need to have this kind of stuff on the table. We need to—if we're going to make this cake, we need to have all these ingredients, and we need to put them out here and see what they are." I say that because I have been involved in other meetings with other people, and obviously it seems to me it's a pattern of how he operates, and that is it's a leadership quality here, I guess. It's not just questions he has, it's questions that he thinks ought to be raised, and there may be only one senator who might be concerned about that and five that seem to be satisfied. But he wants to make sure that that person gets the kind of answer to at least accept it or put it behind
him. I can visually remember meetings, but I can't give you any particular one where he was doggedly pressing—I mean, there are other people that were particularly concerned on intelligence matters which evolved from the Noriega experience, and military issues which, in terms of the preservation of the Canal—and one of the other things I do recall, and I can't remember whether it was just he, but I know he was a part of it—one of the real questions was, "If you're going to transfer authority of the Canal itself at some future date out there, whatever it is, how do we know those folks can in fact manage it the way we did?" Now that's not to say that we are smarter than they are, but one of the problems that you notice when you visit the Canal is that the equipment, the mules, the ones that pull this ship through, was equipment that was made by whoever it was—Westinghouse—70 years ago. And what has happened is, they had been replaced almost identical to what was there, so the question really is, maintenance of that equipment is very important. And I recall Baker noting that one of the things that he observed was, that kind of equipment, the way in which the equipment was maintained by the United States, and the question is, not only "Can these people maintain it?" but, if they can't, then the value of the Canal is significantly reduced, because if the locks don't work, passage and cargo and stuff is not going to go through." I remember that as one part. The other part I recall is the other question of security, which he was particularly interested in, and how do we provide that kind of assurance without regard to who is the head of state, or something like that? But I can't give you specific instances. I can go back and look at the floor debates, when they really went on debate. Baker was very astute in the management of that, as he was in many things—to try to provide an equitable opportunity for everyone to be heard. They had tremendously long sessions to make sure, again, that everyone had their fill. I think the other point is Baker tried to play a very objective role, because I would suspect and probably felt that he was probably supportive of the Canal, but tried to be unbiased about it in the leadership, given the political identity of this issue that would be in fair amount among conservatives.

DW: Where did Senator Chafee come out in the race for the 1980 Republican presidential nomination? Did he endorse someone early on, or did he remain uncommitted?

LV: Well, he endorsed Howard Baker. In fact, as you may recall, early on, and again, my dates are kind of weak, but I suspect it was in the fall of 1979, we were able to get, initially, Chafee, Danforth and Lugar, I think, were the first three—and there may have been a fourth one—it may have been Al Simpson, and I can't verify it—I know the other three were—to endorse Howard Baker. Chafee was really in the forefront of that effort. He had a lot of
respect for him; he knew my relationship; and also as a more moderate person. Remember, looking back historically, Chafee, as a former governor, a Romney guy, a Nixon kind of guy, a Nelson Rockefeller guy most assuredly, so Chafee was not going to be a Ronald Reagan supporter initially. So Baker fit the kind of philosophic view on issues. So it was very easy for him to do that, once Baker had made the decision. And given Chafee's particularly close relationship with Jack Danforth, but also a very collegial relationship with Dick Lugar because they all came in together, it was very comfortable for those people to endorse him, and they did early on, and we used to have pretty regular meetings with Howard—policy meetings, issue meetings, with both those senators and with some of us very early on in the planning process—in fact I recall one of the people who was quite frustrated about the whole process was Jim Cannon. I suspect he would say this, but as good as we all thought Howard Baker was, he's not too good at management, and he's not too good at organization, and someone's got to do that. And we had I think it was Doug Bailey, but it may have been John Dierdorf—these guys who did a lot of the moderate polling anyhow—and we had a lot of meetings with them, and finally when we set up the organization and we had headquarters back behind the U.S. Post Office or the Union Station in Washington, the organization got going. But in the months before that, kind of thinking about it and trying to posture it among a small cadre, it was not easy. The organization thing was tough, because I think—and probably like Baker in the leadership question—kind of reluctant to do it. Even though we had some senators that were pushing him. I think that's kind of the Baker style when it comes to this kind of thing.

DW: How would you characterize the role that you played in these discussions? You had had a campaign experience yourself, and you had done polling, and so on. Where did you fit in?

LV: Well, I have to tell you that back in 1978, Howard Baker and a few of his staff tried to—and Baker was very good at recruiting senatorial candidates—and I don't remember whether I mentioned this to you last time, but—

DW: We talked about this, yes.

LV: Baker was trying to convince me to run for the Senate. So I think it was time for me to try to put my spin on his future campaign or aspirations. But I was involved in talking about some of the issues, and some of the issues particularly as they might play in New England. And more specifically targeting up, at some point, eventually to New Hampshire. Trying to
look at what are the kinds of issues that New Englanders are responsive to, or those issues and how they relate to what Howard Baker feels. How do we begin to think about those? I guess there were other people that worry about Iowa—I'm not sure that we organizationally got quite that far that we were seriously thinking about it—but really, in terms of knowing New England—having run a bunch of campaigns, I know that I had some sense of how different New England is, even though they tend to be more moderate. New Hampshire certainly isn't. Maine tends to be a little more conservative. How do you look at those issues, and not with a view toward trying to suggest, because I don't think he would, suggest that Baker's views ought to be turned in those directions, but just trying to analyze what's up there? What's it like? What are those constituents looking for? Having done polling before on presidential races, I had a pretty good idea of how to read those areas and, as I think I may have mentioned, when the campaign was organized, one of the things that I did do was plan in advance the first stop of Howard Baker's presidential campaign after he announced over in the Russell Building the first plane trip was a stop in Providence, Rhode Island. Then we went on from there to Maine. And we can get back to that.

DW: Well, we certainly will. In these meetings that you were describing, where would they be held? And how many were attended by Baker personally?

LV: Not a lot. Many of them, early on, before and shortly after, were held in either his office or over in the Dirksen Building. It was one of those kinds of things that we all knew each other so well that, even if you came in to talk about something else—

DW: Yes, I see.

LV: I won't say a lot of these were formally structured. We used to joke. I remember Cannon used to joke about trying to get Howard Baker to focus on these kinds of things, and I think it was Jim—I can't remember, but I remember specifically the comment, "Do you think that when John Kennedy decided to run that he was distracted by his Senate responsibilities, or was he focused on this race, this presidential race?" And one of the issues was that Howard Baker was committed to his leadership role and had a very, very difficult personal time of kind of splitting that. And I remember raising this Kennedy line to him, and I think Cannon was there, and I forgot who else, but Baker's response was, "Well, John Kennedy was elected Senator from Massachusetts. I was not only elected to represent Tennessee, but I have a leadership responsibility to all my colleagues, and that's very, very different." And
he felt very strongly about that. So I think we all had that problem. How are we going to get him to focus—even as we started looking at schedules, travel schedules—even in advance of an announcement. As a campaign, you kind of want to get the prospective candidate out there, see how he does, see what responses there are, see what the fundraising apparatus—what the money people are going to think about your candidate, just as perspiring presidential candidates are doing now—and the problem with doing that is, Howard Baker had a job that was very important, that he was really very reluctant to give up a lot of time for. And I think that—I'm not apologizing for his short candidacy, but I think that made it very difficult for him to do that, to divide those responsibilities.

DW: We talked yesterday to your former colleague in Senator Chafee's office—Bill Roesing.

LV: Oh yeah.

DW: And we will be going back to see him again, because there is still a lot of ground to cover. But I asked him about how he got involved, and he said, in effect, that he got involved a year too late—that is to say, in his view, one of the problems with the campaign was that it was a year late in getting started.

LV: Yes.

DW: He was, as you probably recall, associated with Bailey Dierdorf at that time. And was asked to develop the campaign plan.

LV: Right.

DW: And he was not able, because he was in Spain working on a campaign—

LV: That's right. I remember it now.

DW: Hard duty. Somebody has to do it, I suppose. He was unable to get back and get started until late March of 1979, and was not able to finish the plan until sometime that summer.

DW: And so I can imagine there was some real frustration among those who wanted to get on with it. And the slowness with which things developed.

LV: Yes. I think the point is, and Bill complements that, there was a problem in getting the Senator sufficiently focused to really permit his key people to move forward. You can't just go out there. You've got to make sure that the candidate, the boss, wants you to do certain things. That was difficult, but I think you are right on the campaign plan. Because I think Bill's right—had we had the plans earlier—sufficiently earlier—and I think even Cannon was trying to kind of outline his own kind of plan in the absence of a formal plan, to be able to show the Senator we've got to do these kinds of things. And we all know, having done campaigns for years—with all due respect to Bill, it doesn't take a genius to put a campaign plan together—it takes a very smart person to implement it, because there are always certain things that you have to do. But I think from Howard Baker's perspective, he needed something. He needed a blue-bound book—to kind of push himself to realize that there were things he had to do. I say that because I found the same experience years later when I worked at the White House, in terms of dealing with President Reagan—you really had to have—given their time—you had to have certain things that you had to lay out. And I think that it did hurt the Baker campaign. I think Bill is right on that. He shouldn't apologize for it, but I think it made it difficult, and if we had had a more detailed plan than some people sitting around talking to Howard Baker about what the plan would do, which is one thing—the question really is, can he go home and sit on the sofa and walk through it himself? And I think we just didn't have that.

DW: Once the campaign got organized, and Don Sundquist was the campaign manager, and other positions were filled, were you close enough to the operations of the campaign to get a sense as to how decisions were made? About what to do when to do them?

LV: Well, I've always thought that that was a breakdown in that organization, but having been involved since then in other presidential campaigns, I don't think it's entirely unique to the Baker campaign. Having been a part of the 1980 Reagan campaign in an interesting way, but having been a part of the 1984 Reagan reelection from the White House, and having the responsibilities I had with governors and mayors, so I had sort of a political perspective, I'm not sure that the Baker problem with decision-making, which I think is what you are alluding to, which I think did exist—I mean, we had a lot of horses, a lot of people, a lot of volunteers—but I think, and Don is certainly first-rate and a lot of those other people—
DW: But he was very young.

LV: A lot of the people were very young. Ferdy Windham, who I guess just recently died, I think he did, was young, and there were a lot of—

DW: Mossbacher, Roesing, they were all in their early thirties.

LV: Yes. But I think the other part of this—and I'd be interested in someone like Cannon's observation, because Cannon was certainly 15 years older than the rest of us, I suspect, at least. I always thought that Baker is not a politician who is easily managed, and I mean in a positive sense. I suspect anyone who worked for him, even there now, Triplett will tell you that he kind of knows what he wants to do. And I think that's great, but having worked for people that, on the other hand, knew how to let people kind of manage them in terms of their skill, their organization, I think that he hurt himself, in a sense. And I think that is in a way is hurting President Clinton today. But I think Baker's style is that he is not easily advised or managed. He takes advice, so don't get me wrong on that. But on these kinds of important things about where to travel—not on issues so much—where to travel, when to travel, how much fundraising do I have to do—which as you know is a very burdensome thing—he wasn't jumping at those things. And I understand that. But if he's not jumping at it, it's hard for the staff to schedule those things, and it takes some pretty strong people to pound their fist with a pretty good friend, I think, and be able to say, "Look, Howard. We've got to do these 12 things in the next two weeks or we're done." And I remember going over to that headquarters and afternoons and nights, and the machinery kept going—a lot of things were going—but I'm not sure that we had the finite stuff signed off on. And I think that was part of his style

DW: I had not thought about it in those terms, but it's interesting to contemplate. Thinking back to some of the central characters—with the exception of Don Stansberry, perhaps, I don't know.

LV: Maybe, yes.

DW: It doesn't seem like there was anybody in that campaign, or in that organization who was really in a position to forcefully tell Senator Baker to do something that Senator Baker didn't
LV: Well I don't think, Dave, maybe I'm wrong. I don't think there has been—really, I don't think there has been anyone in his political career who's been able to do that. He had a very good relationship with Ron McMahan. And certainly Ron brought Tommy along, and Tommy was certainly a "young kid" at the time, but really developed to be a very skillful person. I wouldn't compare him with Stephanopoulos, but I mean that he was a young guy that had a major role to play. I would never say that Tommy could pound his fist on Howard Baker and get him to do something. I think that McMahan had a better ability to do that. I think Jim Cannon felt he did, but recognized he too had some limitations. So I don't think there was anybody. And Stansberry, yes, Sundquist now—

DW: I agree with you. My impression is that Jim Cannon thought that he could have if he had been placed in a role where it was legitimate for him to do that.

LV: Well, that's, as you've probably heard, that's been an old record with Jim Cannon. Yes, you're absolutely right. The questions of AAs, and chiefs of staff, and leadership, and maybe so. I don't know. I've tried to think back since then, when I worked for Jim Baker, and I worked with Ed Rawlins—and I've worked with Craig Fuller, who is a good friend—I tried to look at these relationships. I don't know whether anyone could do that. I really don't know. Maybe I wish I was 10 or 15 years older at the time. I'm not saying I could, but he's such an extraordinary guy, who as many people would agree today, would have been a creditable president, but you've got to drive these people. And I don't see anyone else driving them.

DW: Sounds like what you're saying is that Senator Baker reserved the right to be his own campaign manager when he wanted to be.

LV: Absolutely right. You have said it very succinctly. And I think many of us would have said that during those months, and agreed, "We're trying, but he wants to be the candidate and the manager." Now that you've said that, I remember that phrase. You know, you throw your hands up and say, "Well, what are you going to do?"

DW: What was that trip north like—I think it was December the 1st, I think he announced the last day of November, in 1979, and then you all took off ending up in Portland. Tell me about that.
LV: Well, I did the first leg. So, as Joy Baker used to joke, "The best part of the Baker campaign was the first leg." And I did not get off because I wanted to get off because I was fearful of the second leg, but I came back and they went on to Portland. But I certainly heard more about the Portland end of it. We were trying to think of, where do you go after the Russell Building announcement, and given New England, and given that New Hampshire is coming up down the road, and given the Rhode Island and Ron McMahan and Tommy Griscom agree, given the Rhode Island media market, which as you know, if you're on the Rhode Island 3-network television stations, you're into Connecticut, you're into Massachusetts, and because you're into Massachusetts, you really are getting into New Hampshire. So, if you're not going to Boston, or you're not going to Hartford, Rhode Island is not a problem. It's not a bad place to be. And since you've got one of your early initial supporters, this also has given Chafee's longstanding credibility as a former governor and senator, this is a pretty good place to be. So Tommy and I went up to do the advance on it, and talked a lot with Ron and the Senator and Jim about this whole thing, and because I had been a Dean at Brown, I initially went to a good friend of mine who was and still is the Vice President for University Relations, who I suspect—you have to understand Rhode Island probably has one of the heaviest Democratic voter registrations in the country—heavily Catholic, heavily union, so we're not talking about political friends, we're just talking about personal friends—and I went and talked to him early on and said we'd like to come up and talk, and I said, "You know, we've got an opportunity--the Senator's going to announce, and we'd like to do some things." So we went up—I forgot how far in advance—but we went up and spent some considerable time with this guy and with the then president, who I knew, and said, "Do you guys object to this?" As you know, from the university side, you've got to be very careful about this kind of thing, and while I don't remember the subject of Baker's speech—the purpose was to give a pretty substantive, not sort of wave your hands kind of thing—and so what we did, was when Howard arrived at the airport, we brought him over to the Alumni Center, I guess we'd call it, there's a building right off the main campus, and had a small meeting kind of, with the president and senior faculty—political science professors and others to meet him—and let him kind of basically outline what he was doing. Met with the press, and then went to what was then and probably still is, the central convocation hall on the campus.

DW: Excuse me, let me interrupt. Was Senator Chafee with Senator Baker, when Senator Baker was doing these things?
LV: Uh, yes. Chafee met him at the center and Chafee escorted him around and did the introductions to the university officials, and some local trustees—and then we went to the convocation center which is called Sayles Hall, named after an old, old former president—it's a sort of Victorian shaped building on the main green, which is right across the street, right across the green from University Hall, which is the original building of the campus, built in 1760, here in the center of this place. And this is a building that has major speeches and stuff like that and is lined with portraits of all of the former presidents for 200 years. So it's rather an impressive setting. And I must tell you, and I'm sure the press clips will report it, it was packed. I can't give you a number, but I would say over 500 people. I don't know what it holds, but there was standing room, and one of the things I remember, and I think I mentioned you need to find, is that the next day there was a photograph on the front page at the fold of the front page of the New York Times of Howard Baker standing out on the steps of Sayles Hall. Couldn't be any more perfect—classic politics—holding a baby. I've never seen Howard Baker hold a baby before or again, but he had a little girl in a hat and bundled up. But the crowds were very good; the press was very responsive; Chafee's role was obviously helpful in getting a sense that, "Here is a kind candidate that we'd accept," and when you look ahead, and when I look back to 1964 convention with Goldwater and how few sort conservative Republicans there are in that state, given the moderates, this is the kind of candidate, as John Chafee clearly knew, would be well received in Rhode Island, probably well received in New England as well. So I went out to the airport and they left in a very euphoric mood. This was a good start. I went back to Washington and later that day got a call from, I think it was Tommy, to say that he didn't quite think that Portland went quite as well. So I'm not privy to the details of why that slipped as it did, but obviously it didn't have the same bang that Providence had, and I don't know why. I'm not trying to take credit for one and not for the other, but he was excited. He was energized. Others had said that, "This is the senator who is reflective of when he gets into a hot campaign in Tennessee, his is how he feels." Very responsive to the press—very articulate. We were all very happy. You couldn't have planned it in the strategic planning book better. It was a good start. And as Joy Baker, as I said, said, "That was the best part of the campaign."

DW: Well, when you woke up the next Sunday morning and after you had wakened and looked at the newspapers and found out that George Bush had won the straw vote in Portland, when the Baker people were fairly confident that he would win, what was your personal reaction? Do you recall?
LV: Yes. Very disappointed. Maybe I too was too close to this, but very surprised in Maine that Baker didn't do it. I think Bill Cohen had become pretty supportive of us. Whether he had endorsed—

DW: Oh, he had endorsed, and indeed, he was the main person involved in mobilizing support.

LV: And I know Bob Stafford was supportive, from Vermont. We were really surprised. We really thought, going back several months, that we understood New England and that this candidate was a candidate who would indeed be acceptable to New England. And so we really were shocked and kind of surprised that, frankly, where did the Bush campaign come from? How did they register that? And there were some discussions about the straw polling and all that. There are always excuses about why we didn't do well, and—I don't know. I don't know, because it was a different kind of campaign event than Rhode Island. Whether we didn't spend sufficient time there, I know there were people on the ground for Baker that had spent time in advance, but I'm not sure how much time Baker had spent. And having subsequently watched Bush in Iowa and elsewhere, organization is what we need, and I'm not sure we really had the grass roots.

DW: As I understand it, when the Baker plane hit Portland, from the day they arrived, that was the first time he had ever set foot in the State of Maine.

LV: Yes. I think he did.

DW: Personally. Well after Portland, what do you recall your efforts in relation to the campaign being? What was going on—

LV: You'll have to help me. How much time did we have until Baker pulled out? He was on a bunch of ballots.

DW: Yes. Briefly, the highlights were the next major events, after Portland, were the Iowa caucuses, where I think he did a third—came in third.

LV: Yes, yes.
DW: It was Bush, Reagan, Baker.
LV: He spent more time in Iowa.

DW: He spent more time in Iowa. There was a reality check after Portland, coming back to all the questions that Cannon and others raised that—you know, we've got to get this fellow there—and this was the old issue of "Is he a leader of the Republicans or a presidential candidate? Is he the manager or is he the candidate?"

DW: Some effort was expended in Arkansas at about the same time.

LV: Yes. And Florida.

DW: And Florida. And then came New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

LV: Right.

DW: Which really proved to be the end of the campaign.

LV: Right.

DW: He suspended campaigning not too long after New Hampshire. And then endorsed Reagan on the eve of the Pennsylvania primary.

LV: I think that's about right. It was not—down here it was not viewed as a disaster. It was sort of like a football game. You fumble and you lose ground, but you know you've got the skills to win this game. And I think there were disappointments; there was sort of self-analysis of "why didn't we make the straw vote work right?" And I think they really went at it, particularly for Iowa. I think there was a sense that we could recoup this. We all know in hindsight that Iowa is harder to do than anywhere else, and it's, as George Bush found out, you've got to spend a lot of time and a lot of money, meaning time—you've got to put a lot of people on the ground for a long time—but I think the Baker folks felt that they really did have a shot in Iowa. I think they were deeply disappointed that they came in third. I can't recall much of the Arkansas. The Florida one I do remember, because the Bakers had a lot of friends down there, who were basically telling us that he was the right buy there. I'm not sure that was true. I think we were listening to friends as opposed to political realities in
Florida, because I think Reagan certainly had more strength than people realized.

DW: Yes. Do you—you said that at some point you got involved in the Reagan campaign in an interesting kind of way.

LV: Well, I got involved in the spring. The problem is you're working as an AA on the Senate, so you can't very well—unless you want to give up your job, which I didn't want to do—I probably couldn't afford to do—but I got involved about four or five weeks before the convention—maybe six weeks—in trying to rally people on the Hill. As you may recall that is one of the things that Reagan spent some considerable time early on trying to identify supporters—he had Laxalt, he had a lot of other people—so more informally I was trying to do that, and then I was involved at the convention in Detroit, but my real role came after the convention, because I was put in charge of the truth squad—the old Harry Truman concept—and we worked out of the office here, and put together a team of former Nixon-Ford cabinet/sub-cabinet people, but also Hill people. And so part of my responsibility was trying to identify those Hill people that would, on particular issues, be able to be surrogates. And we had, as I recall, two planes—I forgot what they were called—one red, one blue, or something like that—or A and B—but we had two planes that would go out, and we would lay out these schedules of where we would go. They were small jet planes and we had maybe anywhere from four to six or seven VIPs, and part of my job was to have these enormous Reagan briefing books on every issue in the world, and have people at the headquarters on the ground in advance, advance events for us, generally following Carter and Mondale into a particular city. That day or the next day—very close. And while technically kind of presenting the truth to these issues, the purpose was really to try to get media attention to tell our candidate's side of the story on those issues. I had Al Hague, and I had Mel Laird, many times, and Chafee went out a couple of times, and Simpson and a lot of the senators went out—Elizabeth Dole went out, Sawhill, and the fellow who was Treasury Secretary, Ford, I think, from New Jersey, who had about that time had just written a book on international finance or something—I can't—

DW: Simon?

LV: Yes. Bill Simon. Traveled a good bit with us. And we had some pretty good luminaries in the sense that they would attract media attention. So what we would do is we would come in and we would, depending on our schedule, have events or press release conference at the airports. More often than not we would go into the city, have an event, or spend a night and
sit around after dinner and lay out the issues that—you know—Hague would do foreign policy; and so and so would do taxes—and then we would do an event that morning and get on the plane and go to the next stop—and toward the end—we were out about six weeks, every day except flying in on usually Sunday, changing your dirty shirts for a suitcase full of clean shirts, and going back out on Monday morning.

DW: That's very rigorous and demanding.

LV: It was. Well, with Congress being out after the conventions, I had the time to do that. So I was sort of the coordinator of the issues and the staff, and most of the time was on the road because I knew a lot of these people.

DW: Do you recall what role Senator Baker played in the campaign—in the Reagan campaign?

LV: No, I really don't.

DW: I frankly don't either, for some reason or other. I was saying, "What was Baker doing during this period of time?" Were you surprised when the Republicans took the Senate?

LV: Yes.

DW: Where were you on election night, by the way?

LV: Well, part of the election night I was at Howard Baker's office. What had happened, David, is—and again, this is Howard Baker—but back about—I don't remember; I'd have to go look—six weeks before the election, sometime like now, September—Howard Baker had this notion as minority leader that—I guess he had been kind of frustrated by some of the parliamentary tactics and skills of probably Byrd, which are rather extraordinary—and he decided that he wanted to have some research done on Senate rules and procedures, as if to say, having been minority leader for a couple of years, "There's got to be some ways we can tackle this guy." You've got to understand it's like Senator East became a real expert—Senator, like Byrd but not quite as good as Byrd, but he thought that he needed to know these rules better than he did, the minority leadership role. So he selected three people—and I was going to look up the third one for you—to be a little committee. One was me, one was Marty Gold, who worked for Mark Hatfield, and the other woman, whose name has
slipped me and I'll get it for you, worked for Senator Jim McClure, was his AA—

DW: Margot Carla?

LV: Margot, because she's now with Thad. And the three of us met—thank you—but the three of us met—Margot and I were just talking about that a couple months ago—pretty regularly, going through Senate procedures, as I think probably the only non-lawyer of the three, it was more difficult for me to understand some of these things, but we assiduously went through and studied these things with the view of trying to figure out, "Are there any holes here that we can play on?" The reason I tell that story is election night my wife and I were up in the minority leader's office, in there watching the TV—

DW: Was this kind of a party, by invitation, or—

LV: I can't recall. I can't recall. I remember my wife having worked on the House side. I can't remember the sequence of events. I think the sequence was that we went to Baker's office first, and then went to the Washington Hilton or whatever it was that was the Reagan headquarters, but I can't remember whether it was by invitation or what—but anyhow, I do remember being in there and I must tell you it wasn't a wall-to-wall crowd, so I suspect it probably was somehow—but I remember very vividly looking at the returns and the projections, and Baker coming over to me and putting his arm around me and saying, "Remember that little study I wanted you three to do? I hope by tomorrow or at least the next day you'll get that ready and take a look at it from the perspective of the majority, not the minority." So he wanted to understand the minority because he wanted to play a more active role as a minority leader, but he turned it around the other way and said, "Let's take another look at that." And the next day we did kind of regroup and say, "Baker wants us, and he has a different need for this now than he did three months ago."

DW: On election night, or the day after, what were you thinking in terms of the implications of this for your own career?

LV: Oh. I don't know. I think I told you before that back in 1974, the Ford White House had approached me to come down. And I guess as a kind of political historian, I guess I realized that this might be an opportunity for me to serve in the executive branch. But in conversations that I had with a couple of people, one Jim Cannon, and subsequently Howard Baker, a number of people said, "You know, you've got good relationships, you
understand policy, you understand the process here. You really ought to think about doing something in the executive branch other than in the Senate." And Baker really was one of those that encouraged me. Another guy that was very encouraging to me was Bill Timmons, who is an old friend, who was Nixon's Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, and a friend of Bill Brock's. And Baker was one of those, I remember, saying, "We've got a very important task to do. We've got some great people coming in here. But we've got some real challenges and opportunities, but we haven't had this before, and we're going to need some people that understand the process, and particularly can help them, meaning the Reagan people, understand what we can do for them, here." You know, his view was "we're going to do what we can. But how to get it done, which is clearly a problem that the Carter people had in their legislative relations, and frankly, to some extent a problem, to a less extent the Bush people had, but certainly the Clinton people are having. Baker understood that. So he was one of those who really encouraged me—I know he did more than encourage me—to consider doing legislative affairs work in the administration for one of the departments. The reason I say I know he did more than that, I can't find it, but I have somewhere a letter from Howard Baker to Max Friedersdorf, who was in the transition, and who later was Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, basically saying, "Here's a great candidate that you guys ought to look at. He's had good experience. We trust him, blah, blah, blah." And so subsequently, I was interviewed and considered by, I think, five or six cabinet secretaries—Secretary Pierce at HUD, Dick Schweikert at HHS, Bill Casey at CIA because I had some intelligence background, Cap Weinberger and Drew Lewis. And as you know, I subsequently went to work with Drew Lewis, and I know that Howard Baker, I know that Paul Laxalt, I know that Bob Dole, Bob Michael, a lot of people were very supportive of me for the kinds of reasons that Howard was. You know, we really need someone that—not that there weren't other people around—that understands us and this process, that we have some confidence and that will have access to us to be able to move this agenda. So I went to Transportation Department largely because I interviewed with Drew twice; he had been the deputy campaign manager for Reagan, and didn't know Washington at all, and I vividly remember him calling me up one afternoon in Senator Chafee's office saying, "I'd like to make you an offer. I'd like to come on to be what was called the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs and Transportation." And I had several other outstanding interviews, so I said to Drew Lewis, "Drew, I'd like to think about that." As we all kind of hope in the best possible worlds to have some choice, and Drew Lewis said, "I'll hold." Which is a wonderful and totally, in hindsight, told me a great deal about this man—and he later said to me when I joked to him about that, I said, "I guess I'll
take this," he said, "Let me tell you. I had talked to Dick Schweikert. I had talked to Bill
Casey. I talked to a lot of guys. I talked to Baker. I knew a lot of guys wanted you. I
wasn't going to let you go around and call up and say, 'Hey, Drew Lewis just offered me a
job. What are you guys going to do?'" But that tells us a little about him and frankly, the
relationship that Drew and I subsequently had with Howard Baker, which is very important.

**DW:** Do you have any impressions as to the relationship between Howard Baker and Max
Friedersdorf, when Max was staff director of the conference in the Policy Committee?

**LV:** Not much. I knew Max vaguely. I thought that committee was very important. I think it
played—that kind of committee goes up and down in terms of its importance. I think right
now the House Republicans have had a pretty good policy operation. He really did some
very, very important things for Republicans, as many of those Republican senators looked at
national issues, not only as they impacted the Senate, but also as they impacted the
presidential campaign. That may not have been its intent, but they really cranked out some
very good policy considerations on issues that were not necessarily priorities of some
senators because of their committee responsibility or something. So I had some dealing
with Max and his shop; I had a lot of respect for what they were doing.

**DW:** Before we get too far into the Reagan years, let me at this point just ask you to comment
generally on Senator Baker as minority leader and his performance in that position.

**LV:** Well, I think he was extraordinarily fair, and I say that because I realize that the definition of
the leadership is that you gotta' be. But I suspect others that have had that job have been
rather impatient with the various elements of the party. You have to be fair to the Jesse
Helmses and the John Chafees and the—I mean you can spread it out. I always thought on
bills, in the Carter years with the nominations where, one of the cards always is you can
hold up nominations and stuff. I always thought that Baker was eminently fair in terms of,
while he may not have agreed, he respected the institution and the process, and he wanted to
give people their opportunity to express opposition. He was extraordinary at bring people
together to talk about something. And talk about it not because he was trying to understand
it, as much as understand how to move this thing. He really was quite a compromiser. He
really knew how not only to embrace these people—and I would be surprised if you found
very many senators or former staffs that didn't agree with that—he went out of his way. I
can't compare him to Griffin or Bob Dole, but I think he went out of his way to try to be fair.
He certainly tried to provide time for people. He was always available—not just in the Cloak Room for a brief chat or off the floor. He saw this job as a business. He would sit down with a senator. Or if I called up and said, "You know, the senator of one of the staff's got a problem on something and you really ought to talk to the senator," it wasn't that Howard would pull John Chafee on the floor and say, "I understand. Lee tells me." They would go sit down. This was serious enough that it was personal. And many, many times it was the principles. It was Baker and the other senator, or senators. And I think Cannon would tell you that. There were places where some of us played parts, but Baker felt that, like himself, he wanted to hear from these principles; he wanted to hear what their problems were. If they were political problems, he wanted to hear that. If there were others of us who could follow up and better explain that and understand how that vote or that issue impacted, we could do that. But he took a very personal interest in getting that intelligence himself.

DW: Going back to the Department of Transportation, talk just a little bit about how you organized your operation to conduct Senate liaison in particular.

LV: Let me preface that by one thing, David, and I think Howard Baker would agree. I think a lot of other people would agree. Many people agree. The tenure that Drew Lewis and I had at Transportation, and the relationship that we had probably was the most successful congressional relations of any department or agency in the last 20 years. Most people will tell you that. There was an unusual situation. And part of the reason for that was Drew Lewis. Here's a businessman that was a politician. As you may know, he once ran for governor, unsuccessfully, in 1974, in Pennsylvania. Comes to be a Cabinet Secretary; puts his team together very quickly. Drew Lewis had, looking at the Clinton years, Drew Lewis had all of his confirmable appointments to the Senate confirmed within six weeks of the inauguration. We hit the ground running. Drew Lewis knew nothing about the Hill. He knew some senators and congressmen, but he didn't know how it operated. Which he always used to tell me, that's why I hired you. But one of the interesting things about Drew as a business, he said, "Look, I'm going to run this department like a business. Whether we call you the sales guy or whatever it is, that's your business. You tell me what you want me to do with regard to the Congress and legislation, in terms of moving it. You're in charge of that. I don't understand it." This is very unusual because a lot of my colleagues since have all talked about how successful or not successful cabinet people have been. And I think it relates in part to the Howard Baker story. Because what we did is that I basically ran the legislative—well, it was called governmental affairs, which was really not only legislative
affairs but inter-governmental affairs and the consumer issues which were not insignificant—but Drew Lewis' view of management was that Lee was in charge of this with the staff. I had eight political persons below me, responsible for each of the areas of transportation. Federal aviation, highways, railroads, coast guard, whatever you want. And the way Drew operated was, "You tell me when I should go to the Hill to see the congressmen and senators. You set up the appointments, when I have to testify. If you tell me I need to, as I would, go up and do courtesy calls with congressmen and senators before, and talk with staff and others on issues, he never, never questioned it. There was never any time when he said, "I don't want to do that. I got to go to the White House." If I would go into his office and say, "Drew, we've got to go see the chairman of the Transportation Committee, he would say to his secretary, "Get the driver. Lee and I are going to the Hill." I say all that because it comes back to talking a little about the Senate side. The way we were organized was that, we were not organized as many departments. Many executive departments are organized by Senate and House, and sometimes broken down by states. I organized this department simply congressionally. Because I had seven what they call 'modes' of these various program areas, and had a political person, plus in each of those modes there was an administrator—politically appointed administrator—federal aviation, federal highway, urban mass transit, coast guard, railroad—and the way Drew and I set this up, and it was not easy at first, my congressional relations people worked in my office, who reported to me, who reported to the Secretary, but they were to be the eyes and ears of each of the administrators in those program areas, though they weren't housed in those parts of the department. This became very difficult at first, because as you can imagine, historically around here, what happens is, career people develop relationships on the Hill, particularly with staff, and they do whatever they need to do. What we instituted was a system whereby everything reported on up to the Secretary. And there were three of us, basically, who were the troika underneath the Secretary—the press secretary for Drew Lewis, the legislative person, and the general counsel. So we kind of knew what we needed to do and we would carry it out. I say that to you because, looking at other issues and looking at other—particularly issues in the Transportation Dept.—one of the reasons I think we were successful is, we were able to manage, not just one team in the House and another team in the Senate, but when issues came to conference between the House and Senate, or when we needed to work with the White House—Friedersdorf’s staff, which was divided by House and Senate—we had people that knew the issues on either side of the Hill. And consequently, for example with confirmations. We went through them very, very quickly. Got these people in place and in record time. And we began to move on legislation with
three months of being there. And we did a new airport and airways development bill; we did highway transportation; we did seat belt legislation; we did federal railroad legislation, eventually dealing with the problems with Amtrak and later with the sale of Conrail to the private sector. But we had a litany of legislative initiatives, to the extent that the White House, and having been there in a different way, the White House basically let us do our agenda. President's agenda, but whenever I had relations with Max Friedersdorf or Bee Oglesby, or Ken Duversteenn, and here was basically, "Just to touch base. If you need help, call us." And we just did our thing. Having said that, Howard Baker, dealing with the White House legislative office, and with, to whatever extent, departments and agencies, his staff principally dealt with the White House. And I may have been in a rather unique position, given my relationships. I dealt with Baker and his people from Transportation, as you see. And the best example of all, but just to highlight it, is when we put together the 1982—what was then called the 1982 Gasoline Tax—which was the first federal tax on gas in 40 years, which produced a lot of problems because Ronald Regan is opposed to raising taxes. The way we developed that strategy is, Drew Lewis decided it was his job to sell the President, the White House, and OMB, and it was my job to sell the Congress. And it was not easy. But what we did, because I went back with a staff and did some research on Ronald Reagan as governor, and we learned that one of the things that Reagan believed in was 'user fees.' He believed that you can tax people if they benefit by the need of that particular—and so we devised a user fee strategy, which basically said that the reason we were going to increase the Federal Gas Tax, first by 4¢, was because the tax will go toward providing more money for roads and bridges and highways that people use. And the tax comes from a gasoline tax that is associated with what those users have to use on those roads. We later added to that 1¢ for mass transit, which was a very controversial issue. In part because it focused urban city needs for those vs. the Pete Domenicis of the world who say, "We don't have mass transit in New Mexico." But having said that, we sold this to the White House. We spent a lot of time, not only with the relevant committees, but very early on I spent time, and then with Drew spent time, laying this out to Howard Baker as the majority leader because we did, obviously at that point, have the endorsement of the Administration for this legislation. But because it had not been done before, because it was a tax, because Ronald Reagan didn't believe in taxes, I was particularly sensitive that we were throwing a ball to the new majority leader who was trying to support the new President on some issues that could be difficult to sell. So given my relationship, I decided that I better make sure that my friend Howard Baker knew what we were doing, and I say that to you because as we moved through committees, to go to the floor on these bills, and
we had a lot of problems. We had, in between all that, as you may recall, in the spring of 1981, we had the Air Traffic Controller strike, which was another area in which Howard Baker played a very interesting role. But we had some good legislation, but we had a railroad strike, which we averted; we had Air Traffic Controllers, so we didn't have some easy issues before we got to the Gas Tax. But I tell you that one because I think it illustrates the point. In putting together a strategic plan for that, we worked with every committee that had jurisdiction, from authorizing an appropriation, Finance, Ways and Means, the Environment Public Works Committee which had public works jurisdiction over it, to the Banking Committee which had mass transit jurisdiction, to the House side. And in doing so, one of the things that we did is we had tremendous regular meetings with various constituencies. The unions, the bus manufacturers, the road builders, the whatever you name it--asphalt people--and we tried, where we looked at those constituents and we related those constituents to senators and congressmen who were important to help us and in the end enact us. And on one of the things, for example, that I found, one of the things is we had laid out figures in, say, the State of Tennessee. How much money does the State of Tennessee get for highway construction, bridge construction. What are the road conditions in Tennessee? What are the bridge conditions in Tennessee? What kind of funds are needed, if not in mass transit, bus transit in Knoxville? Or Memphis? So that we could make a case to that senator and staff about why we needed this, but also important, that senator and staff could make that case for us to those constituencies in those states, to say why this was important. And we did that throughout the country. And throughout the Congress. And the one aside I would tell you quickly is, Drew Lewis and I went to the House of Representatives the night the bill was to go to the House floor. At my urging went to visit the speaker, Tip O'Neill, about 10:45. Drew Lewis is a guy that goes to bed at 10:00 o'clock. Let alone not want to be up on the Congress floors in the evening. And we went in and met with him and the speaker gestated with his cigar, and talked about the spill, and we knew there was a lot of controversy on this, and we thought we had it. The point of the story was that the next day a friend of mine, who was a lobbyist at the time, called me up and is a friend of the speaker's, and said, "I just had breakfast with the speaker, and he said, 'I have never in my years in the House of Representatives had a cabinet secretary and that white-haired guy come up at 10:45 at night before the bill came to the floor and briefed me on it before the bill came for a vote.'" In the Senate side we had done a lot of that with Howard. We had had a lot of quiet meetings in Howard's office about this and particularly about strategy of moving the bill to the floor. When we moved the bill to the floor in November, in 1982—
DW: Let me ask you at that point—after the groundwork was laid, did the legislation move through committee in the Senate relatively smoothly?

LV: Yes. Yes. We had some problems—

DW: Sure. You would expect to.

LV: One of them was with the new senator from New York, Mr. D'Amato. Who I did not know at the time, who came off the floor one morning while I was in the Vice President's receiving area, off the Senate floor, and some page said, "Senator D'Amato would like to see you, and he would like to meet you in front of the John F. Kennedy Room." So I went over to the John F. Kennedy Room near the elevators, and D'Amato came over, and I didn't know him, and he pointed his index finger in my chest and pounded me, and said, "Are you Verstandig?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "God damn it. Why are you opposed to operating subsidies for mass transit in this bill?" And I said, "Senator, we are opposed to it because the President of the United States and the Secretary of Transportation are opposed to it." And he said, "Don't you realize I am from New York, and I have major transit interests," and I remember the Senator picked me up by the lapels and pushed me up against the column, and as he let me down, I said, "Senator, I recall that you ran on the conservative party ticket in New York and the Republican party ticket, and we had both a conservative and a Republican President who really believes that operating subsidies are a waste of money, that is a bad practice, and we're trying to do away with this in this legislation." I say that to you because subsequently, D'Amato and I became good friends because someone was able to tell him what he didn't want to hear. But that was one of the few problems we had. But the real problem we had in this bill, and I think it's a benchmark in Howard Baker's leadership, is that in December, the bill was on the floor, and several conservative Republicans, whose names unfortunately slipped me, Senator East being one of them I remember, filibustered this bill. And having passed it in the House, having thought this was good, we were very concerned about this major piece of legislation. But I remember sitting in Howard's back room in the Leadership Office and talking to him and Cannon, saying, "I have another concern about this. If this filibuster succeeds, it has a significant impact on the leaderships of Howard Baker as a Republican, on a Republican piece of legislation which is strongly supported by the President of the United States." And obviously, and this was 1982, and Baker concurred in that and basically said, "What do we do?" and I remember the
filibuster went on for about four days, around the clock. And I, with some difficulty, had Drew Lewis sitting with me in the gallery, watching these senators oppose us, but I remember a Saturday morning when it had gone for three or four days, and in the back room, and Baker saying, "Have you guys called the White House on this?" And of course we had had this great track record of not needing the White House for anything we had done in the last 18 months. So I called up and talked to Duverstein and talked to Max Friedersdorf, and basically they said, "Well, you guys know how to do this. If we can help you, but I'm not sure what we can do." So I came back and reported to Baker and he said, "Well, where's Drew?" and I got Drew in Georgetown, taking a walk with his wife that Saturday morning, and Drew comes up to the Capitol to see Baker, and calls me on the way and says, "I've got a pair of slacks and a sweater on. Is that all right to see the majority leader?" and I said, "He doesn't care what you've got on. We just need to talk. This is serious." And he came up and we talked, and at that point, Howard asked about what we can do—we've got these people—we've talked to them—they are just using this as a vehicle, and it was Baker who suggested that we probably, at some point, now, needed to talk to the President of the United States. That this is really serious, and was implying that he couldn't think of any other things, himself, to do, and we were all kind of sympathetic that we didn't want to lose this. And in the back room, the Secretary Lewis called the President at Camp David, and we got on the phone and talked about this, and it wasn't that the President could do a lot, except that Baker's view was, if he could get the president engaged, it would give him something to talk to the filibuster folks about, which turned out to be helpful. It didn't solve the problem, but about 3:40 in the morning of that Saturday morning, on a procedural motion, we defeated the filibuster. Really, frankly I forgot whether it was—it may have been Ruffin—but the point of this whole story is that this was really kind of a—it could have been on any issue, but it was important to Baker to show his leadership, particularly because conservatives were blocking something which the Administration wanted, but he was unable to sort of break it. We tried everything we could.

It was accidental that it was broken, but when it was broken, but—the New York Times has, I think, this picture of Howard Baker and I walking down the hall from the chamber, arm in arm, relieved for a lot of reasons—me because of my department, and he for a lot of other reasons, that this bill was enacted.

DW: So, let me make sure I understand what you've just told me. Baker wanted Lewis to call Reagan, so he could say that the Secretary of Transportation, Drew Lewis, has told me that he has recently talked to the President on this matter.
LV: That we have.

DW: Yes, that we have. And then President Reagan supports this legislation and then use that as a basis for—

LV: For example. I mean just as long as you've said this. I remember talking to Paul Laxalt at some time in this, because Paul and I are good friends, and said, "Paul, if these are kind of your guys, what are we doing?" And Paul and Howard Baker would meet to talk about it, and I know that Paul Laxalt met with some of these and I wish I could remember their names.

DW: Well, it was Helms, East, Humphrey, and Nichols who were the leading—

LV: Yes. Humphrey, I think, is the guy who broke it. But we did all kinds of things like bring US Air pilots because Humphrey was a pilot for US Air, down to the Senate to talk to Humphrey and these other three people and try to break the filibuster. Why this was important. Giving them all kinds of information about how much money and jobs and roads and bridges we were going to have. One of the things I tell you, Dave, is—two things I had done in that campaign, because we got into filibuster, it seemed pretty bad—we were a lame duck session. As you may recall.

DW: Right.

LV: So I had someone design, which I have, a yellow duck with an orange beak, with one of its legs broken. And we all used to wear these, including some of the senators, on the floor, as if to say, "You know, this may be a lame duck, but we've got business to attend to." Another group, the Associated General Contractors, who were supporting us on this bill, I got them to do a pin, about this big, a campaign pin, of an Indian Head nickel, so that when we had votes on this gas tax, this nickel gas tax, we had a lot of senators on the floor, wearing these buttons to show their support. But we had all kinds of things, not only because the bill was important, but because it soon became clear when this filibuster came, that this had other important meanings to the Administration, and particularly to the leadership.
DW: I've forgotten whether it was Humphrey or East—it was one of the two—who inadvertently gave up the floor.

LV: That's right.

DW: And somebody was there, and I still do not know who it was. I guess I should check the record and find out. And seized the moment. Do you remember who it was?

LV: I thought it was—now that you've said that, I remember sitting in the gallery, and I remember East being there. But I thought it was Humphrey.

DW: Well, it could have been.

LV: But I can't remember who. And I also can't remember who did. But that was—Baker was sort of playing a very important role of 'How do we do this' or 'How do you break a filibuster' and you've got to have people constantly, four days in a row.

DW: I assume he had tried everything he could think of to deal with these people, and really was able to get nowhere. Do you have any recollection of what he might have been saying to East and Humphrey and Nichols?

LV: I don't. I vividly remember him parading them into his office in groups and individually, to talk to them. And I vividly remember Paul Laxalt, because I asked him could he help Howard Baker talk to these guys. I don't really recall what the issue was.

DW: They were just against it, I think.

LV: Yes. I think that it was a tax. And when Ronald Reagan called it a 'user fee' in South Carolina, it's a tax.

DW: I have a vague recollection of some negotiations between Senator Baker and Speaker O'Neill. On a tax measure. I'm thinking it was the Gas Tax measure, and the negotiations were over how much would be acceptable. Now I should have looked that up.

LV: How much would be raised?
DW: No, whether it would be 4¢ or 5¢, or 4½¢.

LV: Well, there were a lot of debates on that, early on in the planning process.

DW: And it was being sold. This was in the context of its being sold as an economic stimulus initiative, among other purposes.

LV: And that's why I said to you earlier, we quoted Baker early, early on. Jim Hoard was the Chairman of the House Public Works Committee. A pretty tough old guy. But we had his support on it. We had a lot of good support. We had some residual problems, from the Air Traffic Controller strike—all the pro-union people, particularly Democrats, didn't like what we did. So this was a way to get back. And that's why I told the story of how we really designed the strategy to provide economic impact information to every state, and to every congressional district, to show that this was something that really would benefit by them all.

DW: Was Baker a tough sale on this matter?

LV: No, I don't recall that, no. I don't know why. I think he trusted us. He liked Drew Lewis a lot; he thought Drew was a very savvy guy.

DW: Had he known Lewis before Lewis became Secretary of Transportation?

LV: I don't think so. Of course, one of the other things I will tell you, because someone will tell you, is that one of my responsibilities at Transportation was that, for Drew and I, was to give out grant announcements. One of the things that I imposed in the office, which I did elsewhere after, was there are only two people who give out grants: the Secretary or the Deputy, or the guy that handles legislation. But because in many departments they didn't see it, the program people do. And there is a great deal of patronage and clout that goes with this. And I say that because I was always very sensitive to getting to McMahan or Griscom information on grant announcements to Howard Baker, because I wanted it to be demonstrated back in Tennessee, that when you say the Secretary of Transportation or the Reagan Administration is announcing to the Senator, to make sure that they understood that there was a good relationship here. I did it with everyone. My responsibility was always, I would call, the Secretary or I would call the Republicans, senators or congressmen in those
states, and then I insisted that if they were Democratic congressmen or senators, four hours later we would notify those offices. Because when I was in the Senate, the Carter people didn't tell the Republicans at all, and sometimes, as in many cases, the other parties worked on certain kinds of legislation, airports and roads and stuff, but we had, aside from what I was doing in legislative, we had a regular other reason for sharing your contact with the office there.

DW: I understand. Well, we've been going for an hour and a half, a little bit more. And I'm about out of tape. So what do you say we stop this session here.

LV: Okay.

END OF TAPE