LAMB: Look ahead to '92 and beyond. Let's say you're around here through '96. What do you want to accomplish?

PRES. BUSH: A lot of things I want to accomplish. I want to see us have a better infrastructure and we've got to start now on a highway bill. Incidentally, on the highway bill, in March I asked that it would be passed in 100 days. It was a good lesson here. It didn't get passed in 100 days, but we kept on it and we finally got a bill, even though the Congress is controlled by another party. So, I think it set a good example that I can...that some things can happen and there's a lot more that needs to happen. I want to see financial reform, so that we can be more competitive in international markets and our banking system can open up to the American people more. I want to see strong crime legislation to support our law enforcement people. I want to be here when "America 2000" our innovative total reform education package is successful, and it will be. Bi-partisan, not liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat; gets right to the communities; saying: we must revolutionize our schools. I want to see us win the fight against narcotics or at least be so far along the road that no new generations of kids are going to find...find sucker in the use of these deadly narcotics. There is so much left to do. And on the international scene I'd like to be sure that in the last four years, that we continue to handle the emerging democracies...the aspirations of the emerging democracies with sensitivity, with understanding. 'Cause we're the leader; we are the undisputed leader of the free world and I can say to the American people right now that their kids have every chance to grow up in a much more peaceful world than they would've at the beginning of this year, at the beginning of this year. Because, you see, I think what our kids did in Desert Storm facilitated our bringing about a peace conference on the Middle East. I don't believe it would have happened if it hadn't have been for Desert Storm.

LAMB: We just completed a series of programs with your Education Secretary, Lamar Alexander, Governor Romer and others on "America 2000". One of the questions I ask everybody I could, is 'did you have a favorite teacher' in their life? Or teachers. Did you?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I had several. Of course I was kind of . . . I'm not sure I was the world's most brilliant student. I love sports. I loved . . . I think of a guy named Frank DeClemetti who was a teacher, but also a coach where I went to school at high school level. I think of Dr. Northrop, who taught philosophy at Yale; sounds a little heavy for me these days, but he was a stimulating teacher. I think back to the grade school level to a Scotchman named Mr. Hector McBaine Heart or a shop teacher who's still alive in Maine at 91 named Arthur Grant. These names, you know, I can just hear them in the classroom. Just as clearly as when I was ten years or twenty years old.

LAMB: What made them special?

PRES. BUSH: The ability to interact with the kids, to get the kids to do what they wanted us to do. The projection of enthusiasm for whatever it was -- whether it was sports or Latin. I just keep saying God bless our teachers because they -- it's such a cliche -- but they just have so much influence in shaping lives. So it's just extra spark. I don't know. I guess it might be called the 'X' factor -- George Plimpton would call it the 'X' factor in sports. It's the same thing in teaching. What is that little extra that makes that person a great teacher? The ability to communicate. The ability to make that kid think he's special, and that this teacher cares.

LAMB: Can you remember back, either in your education or in your home where you said, "I want to be president some day?"

PRES. BUSH: No, I really can't. If it were, it wouldn't have been back there, although I suppose like everyone, 'well, what do you want to be?', 'well, a fireman, a policeman, a president' whatever. I suppose somewhere way back then I thought about that, but nothing serious until much, much, much later.

LAMB: Who would you say that influenced you the most in your life?

PRES. BUSH: . . . What individual? Living individual? . . .

LAMB: . . . Individual, or, you go back in history, your own history, and you look for people who made a difference to you . . .

PRES. BUSH: I think in my life, my own dad. I think I've said that before. He was strong, principled man; a man of deep conviction, give us our head .. "You go out and figure it out." . . then always "Do something for someone else." "Put something back." "Give something back to your country." Whether it was in serving in the War in my case, or heading the YMCA, my dad was always, my would have done this. He'd go out to Greenwich and run the little town meeting way back in the late 20's or 30's. So I think for me, and I suppose like a lot of kids today, it's their dad. There are others. I mean I've been inspired by President Eisenhower, for example. Historically by Lincoln. By Teddy Roosevelt. But, um, I'd have to put my own dad down.

LAMB: Going back in your own, again, your career, as to when you started to crystallize the interest in public service? Was that at Yale?

PRES. BUSH: That was early on, yeah. And that again was inculcated by family. Sometimes it's ridiculed in a sense, by some today, you know, old school. But this concept of one American helping another, something that De Toqueville noticed when he wrote these

famous papers about our country, still valid. We call it points of light. It's inspiring. And I grew up in a family where we were taught to try to help others. And so I did get interested back in college days, or even school days, I just can . . service drive to gather the clothes to help those who were cold and that kind of thing. Food at Thanksgiving. And seems small, but it's a part of this. I hope it's a part of my children. I think it is. I know it is. And I feel confident it will be a part of theirs. But we're like every other family in this country in that regard.

LAMB: Did you ever say, "When I get to be president some day,I'm gonna model my presidency off of someone else?"

PRES. BUSH: Not really. I don't think so. I don't really think I . . . I think I respected certain components of one's presidency, Lincoln for his fairness, his determination, "I'm gonna preserve the Union," then his equity that came with the freeing of the slaves. That's so big and so strong, that obviously it had to be inspiring. I'd tell you Roosevelt's commitment to the great outdoors, and his kind of zest for life. His kids were around this very lawn out here. We have ours out there now. I mean, there's some examples of that kind. In fact I'm not gonna be driven off the golf course. Didn't effect Ike, and it isn't going to effect me either. I can do two things at once. Mind the country's business and then every once in a while, play golf.

So I, think there's a lot of examples in previous presidencies, pros and cons. I think it was instructive to me to watch the Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon years on Vietnam, because they were faced with extraordinarily difficult problems, in a different war scenario, but I learned from that. Hey,if you're gonna have to fight, don't ask those generals over there across the way over there to go in with their hands tied behind their backs. And damn sure don't ask the men and women in this all volunteer Army to do that, or Navy or Air Force or Marines or Coast Guard. Don't do it to them. So you learn ups and downs from previous presidencies.

I learned a lot from my predecessor, and friend, Ronald Reagan, certain principles . . "I believe in this, I don't believe we ought to have government get bigger." And he stayed with it. He repeated it over and over again and people understood where he was on it. And other points. So it's funny how you look over your shoulder, and get instruction from predecessors.

LAMB: Where do you get your energy?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I'm blessed with good health, and when I had that fibrillation . . . heart fibrillation . . . I couldn't understand it. 'Cause I'd been in great health and I was running. I'll tell you how it worked; I was out running and I felt out of breath, and I said, "strange here, I just started." So I walked a

while and then ran again and I couldn't get going so good, I felt out of breath. So I said call the doctor, get him over to the medical units at Camp David and I'm going to run over there. And I ran over there, which was a few hundred yards, and I was tired, and suddenly discovered that for the first time I had heart fibrillation. Found out what caused it -- thyroid -- and now I'm a hundred percent. And exercise is very important for me. I really respect what Arnold Schwarzenegger's doing in this country, for his Council on Fitness. He's been to 28 states I think it is, taking his message . . . and I live by that code: Stay fit. You've got to be physically fit as well as, hopefully, mentally fit. So I'm blessed with a tremendous amount of energy.

And, I love competitive sports. I can't wait for Christmas day at Camp David to whip up on the Marines up there with my three sons as the Bush wallyball team goes back into action again.

And you may not know it, but you're sitting right across from one half of the White House horseshoe team. Marvin and I won it for the first year, there've been eight, no, no, seven competitions and we've always been crushed, by the housekeepers here, by the nurses last year won it, and this year it was Marvin and George Bush. And don't think that that didn't help me in terms of doing my job. I've been going to school on that ever since our victory. It's gotten less note around here than it should have actually . .

LAMB: Some people think that you're happier at 47% popular than you were at 85% popular because you love the fight.

PRES. BUSH: I like the combat...I'll trade the other. But, look I can't live and die by polls. And when people are out there...look at world economies, look at history. In terms of when things are bad, the president takes the heat, that goes with it. But does the competitive juices get flowing? Sure...and am I ready? Yep. Am I a competitor? You're darn right.

But much more important than the physical make up here is...what can you do to help the country? And I'm just more determined than ever to come back here when Congress gets back and try. I mentioned the transportation bill. I could cite the clean air act. Or I could cite getting decent civil rights legislation. You got to sometimes beat back bad legislation to get good legislation, but you can get something done. And now I'm determined to really try. But in terms of fighting back...you're darn right. I must say I like the combat. I like it and I've been underestimated before and they ought not to underestimate me again because I'm going to take my case out to the American people, get this economy turned around, and I'll be ready.

LAMB: Are you glad that Governor Cuomo is not running?

PRES. BUSH: I haven't thought about it. It's brand new information and what I vowed to do is stay out of that side of the primary. But look, I respect his decision on it. But, I don't think they were going to give him a clean shot anyway up there, I mean roll over and play dead. There's some strong willed individuals in that Democratic race. So, you know, a man makes his own call. If you'd have asked me yesterday if he'll run or not, I probably would have bought on to the conventional wisdom that he might. I have not heard the reasons or anything, but I respect his decision. And, in spite of the fact we yell about each other from time to time, we get along alright.

LAMB: There were some Senators or at least one Senator and a bunch of Congressmen today that came out hard hitting at you about the Japanese--proposed that automobiles be cut by 20% coming into this country. . .

PRES. BUSH: Well, you see they know I'm going on a foreign trip. So, that's the oldest game in town, you make a proposal just before that to try to put the president of the opposite party on the spot. Which that won't do. But, my mission is about American jobs. We got a lot...we got other interests with the Japanese, Singaporeans, Koreans, Australians certainly. In terms of security, we are a Pacific power, we are not going to neglect our worldwide responsibilities and they aren't going to neglect theirs. And having said that, this trip, a lot of it is going to be about trade, and we must get them to open up their markets more. So, I've not seen the proposal, I just saw a little snippet on the tape about what these Michigan...most of them are from Michigan I think, and the auto industry is hurting. So, to me, hey, they're doing what they ought to do. If they think protectionism is correct, way to do it, let them say so. I don't, I believe fair trade. But where we both agree...I mean, free trade....but where I think I would agree with the Congressmen is the need for more fair trade--access to foreign market. I might differ with them on how one achieves that objective, because I don't want to go the protectionist route. One thing that saved our country during this period of extraordinary sluggish economy is our export growth. And one way to guarantee that you don't have exports grow is to start protecting yourself at home here. So, we can do it though. We can get more access to the Japanese market for our autos; we can get more access in terms of auto parts. And that I'm determined to do. But it's a different methodology with some of these guys, they say hey, let's assign a quota to it, or let's mandate it through legislation and I think there some pitfalls there.

LAMB: Let me ask you a question that might sound kind of off the mark, probably more than anybody in history, you can come back to your family quarters upstairs and turn on the television and turn on us at night, and, you're there. Everything that you say is now seen by the American people, if they want to see it. What is it like having that there? Where every time you . . . they're always

talking about you, every five minutes -- I know on C-SPAN it's about every five minutes your name comes up . . .

PRES. BUSH: It's not an off the wall question at all. I still think about it. First place, I like informality around this place. I like to tell jokes. I like to laugh with my kids and other guys that work around this place here, and Barbara. And I like to, kind of have a little fun over in the Oval Office, kidding. But I've learned something. I've learned the danger of these long overhead mikes that can overhear you, so that's one point. Be a little discreet in what you say, even when you're in a cafe as I was in Texas. A road cafe there with six workers from a highway project. Somebody's listening. There's a table full of reporters right next there and somebody says "Reporters!" and I said, "I know". I might have been indiscreet before and say something that would have been misinterpreted by the American people. So you gotta be careful.

But the more important point is, I've learned the power of the word of a president. Not maybe necessarily to get something done, but the power of the word.

For example on this economy, at one point I said well, you know, there's people who're hurting, but there are some positive things here. And I didn't . . I must not have been as clear in terms of emphasis as I should have been 'cause they said the president doesn't understand what's happening. He's saying there's no problem. He's saying these are good things. And I think, then I remember another time, I said something on the pessimistic side, and they said, here he's adding to the lack of confidence by talking this way. It was a good lesson for me, but I don't want the lesson to be driven home so much that I am less than frank with the American people,or afraid to say what I think. Bottom line is, I think I'm still sorting out the power of the bully pulpit, that only the president has. I think I'm still trying to understand just how powerful that is.

In terms of the question, another facet of your question is, the criticism -- once in a while the applause -- but the criticism that comes my way from Congress or commentators or editorialists, uh, I'm used to that now. I can't say it doesn't effect me, but I can't go out wringing my hands about the loneliest job in the world, or the please give me a little sympathy, their knocking my brains out. My place is to fight back and say, hey, this goes with the territory. And we're used to it. Our grandchildren will say to me, "Hey, Gampy, you're on television!" "Oh really, I've got my picture on television?" and we'll go rushing in to see it so they'll enjoy it. But it's -- I'm getting used to that part of it, but I'm still sorting out the power of this office. Learning how to do it better, in a sense.

LAMB: When did you make the decision that, when you became president you were going to have all this access to the press and

do you think it was the right thing to do?

PRES. BUSH: Yeah, I think access is good, it lances the sores that build up if you're unavailable; gives them a chance to...you know, through the questions, get off their chest what's there. I think the American people are better informed of the president's views by the access I have to the White House press corps. I eschewed the formal press conference. At the formal press conference, people in your profession, and I say this respectfully, will put on a beautiful red dress or a nice dark suit with a bright red tie, and hold their hands up and get up there and say..."for your information I'd like to ask this question..." you know that's a political statement. Not always, but I mean you're on stage, on camera, on stage, it's more of a show. Then I'll be up there preening in my red tie and my beautiful suit to answer the question knowing it's going into everybody's living room. We've given...I'm not...I don't do that too well I don't think, although we did it once and got away with it alright. But I prefer the give and take of the press room. I'm the guy that's on the camera, which may or may not be good, for the most part, and then the questions come at you...one, two, three; and it's less for..."I'm asking for your information, I'm asking this question;" it's more...hey what's your answer to this? And...people are less apt to make the statement in asking the question is what I'm saying. So, I think it's a good format; maybe we need to combine the two.

LAMB: Running out of time, let me ask you about hunger. Lots of reports coming out about hungry people and I've asked this of a lot of people, including your secretary of agriculture and can't remember what his precise answer was. But do we have a policy in this country or should we, that everybody in this country that lives here should get a meal or meals everyday and a bed to sleep in?

PRES. BUSH: That certainly is the policy but it is not a right, it's not a given...I mean it's not enshrined in the constitution. But certainly it is an objective and it ought to be the same thing in terms of health care. And some would say, well that means the government has to do it all. They'd say that on hunger, they'd say that on health care. And I think it's a combination, of the generosity of communities, of the creativity of states and of the obligation of the federal government--it's a combination.

But clearly, you can't have on your conscience the thought that one American goes to bed without food, or without shelter, or without medical attention. Where you get into an argument is: who's responsibility...how do you see that those bad things don't happen to people. And of course you go through history and regrettably there have always been homeless, there always have been those hungry, even in affluent countries like ours; and it is a tragedy, and yes I am very much concerned about it.

LAMB: What do you do when you have time...where the cameras aren't around and you're not out playing golf? Do you ever take a day where you just plop down and say I'm not going to do anything today?

PRES. BUSH: No. Too...too hyper.

LAMB: Do you read?

PRES. BUSH: Play horseshoes. You didn't see...I won the...(laughter)...no but, no, I got to exercise.

LAMB: Do you read?

PRES. BUSH: I read. I read a bunch of books. I whipped it out for...a magazine asked me this the other day, and I whipped it out and I've read, oh, about, I think twelve books since March I think it is. But easy reading...Dan Jenkins and other relaxed treatises, you know detective stories or something like that. I read a ton of official papers, the economy, growth, agricultural policy, health care...

LAMB: Do you watch television?

PRES. BUSH: Watch quite a bit. I watch the news, and I don't like to tell you this because you'll think I'm into some weird TV freak here, but...I have a set upstairs that has five screens on it. And I can sit on my desk and whip...just punch a button, if I see one off on the corner that moves in to the middle screen, the other one goes to the side, then I can run up and down the dial. So...and you can record all four going at once while you're watching. I don't quite know how to do that yet. But I cite this because Barbara accuses me of being too much...not too much, but plugged into TV too often, put it that way.

Love sports, though. You asked how I relax? Love to watch a football game. We watched my friend Ivan Lendl lose in a five setter to Chang I think it was last weekend--and I find that relaxing. Take a rest to relax; read some to relax. We watch movies, I love watching movies. And at Camp David we're spoiled 'cause they send us all the good ones. We have a movie theater right down this hall here--and bring the kids, and family and friends over to do that. I think like any other American family...love fishing, that's real relaxing for me--real relaxing. But I think competitive sports still...tennis and golf and once again horseshoes--these are the things I really like. And it's the way I relax. My body feels better and my mind is clear. I still run two miles, three days a week usually--not very fast, but I do it. And all of that comes together and gives you a normal life.

LAMB: We're out of time. I just want to invite you when you

have time to come talk to our callers. You came to us in 1983 and the callers were able to call up and talk to you and that's something we do best...

PRES. BUSH: Well you do it well. And I say this not just 'cause you and I are eyeball to eyeball, but I do watch it. I can't say that I see it every night or everyday what you're doing but...I think C-SPAN -- probably get in trouble with others -- but I think you perform a wonderful service because of the substance. Because of the seriousness of the presentations, and I salute you for that. And I wish you and everybody clued in there to a very Happy Holiday, and Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year. I expect we're going to have one...I know we're going to have a good family Christmas.

LAMB: Thanks for the time.

PRES. BUSH: Not at all.

- TRANSCRIPT -

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH

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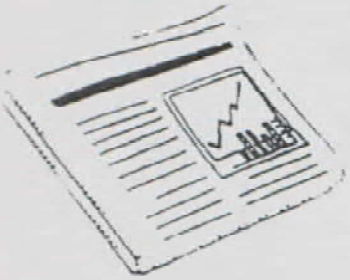

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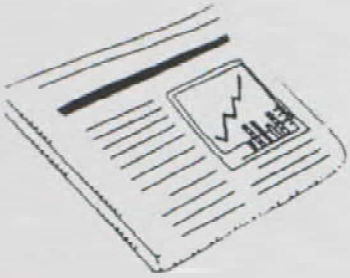

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TRANSCRIPT
C-SPAN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH

BRIAN LAMB, C-SPAN: Mr. President, 1991, what did you think of the year?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Up and down, it started with trauma, to go or not to go, in terms of the use of military force in Kuwait, the Persian Gulf area, in order to kick Saddam Hussein out, and so that started with tension and shortly thereafter, fantastic conclusion to that war. And then a long, kind of slow, sluggish economy that hurt a lot of people and ended . . .oh, and of course, inside of that, the change, the coup in the Soviet Union this summer. And then all the changes in the republics, fascinating, guaranteeing, I think, a more peaceful world for our kids to grow up in. All positive in that sense. The emergence of Democracy strengthening up Eastern Europe and all, but nevertheless, all the time the agony of a very slow economy at home that hurt a lot of people. So it was a year of mixed emotions, and ending with good news today on the economic front, but still, with a very sluggish economy, good news in the sense that the Fed has lowered the rates to almost historic lows, which should have a stimulative effect on the economy.

So, its been a year of up and down. On a personal side, of course, great happiness for me and Barbara, sadness in that our house got clobbered, but when I look at that and think of some of the hardship of the American people and I can say we've been very lucky.

LAMB: Were you surprised at anything about yourself during the year?

PRES. BUSH: Oh, no, I'm old enough to be not surprised by myself anymore. 67 -- I've been around the track for a while. . . .

LAMB: What do you think of this job?

PRES. BUSH: . . . I think I'm a better, I hope I'm a better president at the end of what I think most would concede is a very difficult year, because I . . . get tested by fire and, I think that, hope that makes you a better person.

LAMB: What do you think of this job?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I must tell ya, I like it. I still get the same emotional feeling when I walk into the Oval Office as I did when I first maybe peeked my head in as a tourist to the White House. And I go to work over there early; walk out that door over there and get to work at seven in the morning. I work long hours. I'm blessed with good health. I forgot to mention the up and down on the health front there last spring. I'm blessed with good health and so, I find the job tremendously challenging. I can't tell you that it's not without some baggage, I mean, trying to cope

with this economy is extraordinarily difficult. I'm determined to succeed, but, I learned firsthand in 1991, that the buck does stop there on that desk--and properly so. It's only the president who can commit forces and it is the president who must bear his share of the responsibility when things aren't going well on the economy. So, I have a kind of a tranquil approach. Determination is greater than ever. But, I'm not out looking for sympathy or anything, there. I feel too privileged to be president.

LAMB: As you know, our audience looks at a lot of other governments. We televise the British House of Commons every week...

PRES. BUSH: And, it's very good, too, I might add. And, I count my blessings that we have the presidential system and not a parliamentary system.

LAMB: That's what I wanted to ask you about. We saw Mr. Kaifu go very quickly...

PRES. BUSH: Yes.

LAMB: ...Mrs. Thatcher go very quickly, and others. What do you think of our system, compared to the parliamentary system?

PRES. BUSH: I think it's a good, stable system. And, you know, dealer's choice. Let them choose what they want for their system, I'm not going to criticize the British or the Australians or anybody else. But, we've got a stable system, in the sense of presidential leadership, continuity, and I wouldn't trade it at all. Besides that, I count my blessings for the fact I don't have to go into that pit that John Major stands in, nose-to-nose with the opposition, all yelling at each other. He and I have talked about that, incidentally. I think he does very, very well. But I think that's for him, not for me.

LAMB: There are a couple of your opposition members up on Capitol Hill who have a bill in to create a Question Time to bring Administration people up there. What's wrong with that?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I think they're up there all the time. I wish I had the exact figure to tell your listeners of how many treks to Capitol Hill is made by Administration spokesmen. Very candidly, they overdo it. Several committees doing the same kind of hearings, so that the Congressman who wants to get his or her name in the paper can get it in by calling up witnesses -- it goes on all the time. But the idea that they want to change the Constitution to drag some Secretary into the well of the House to go through questioning, I don't think that makes much sense. As I say, I think we've got a good stable system now and we're very responsive to the legitimate inquiries from Congress.

LAMB: Look ahead to '92 and beyond. Let's say you're around here through '96. What do you want to accomplish?

PRES. BUSH: A lot of things I want to accomplish. I want to see us have a better infrastructure and we've got to start now on a highway bill. Incidentally, on the highway bill, in March I asked that it would be passed in 100 days. It was a good lesson here. It didn't get passed in 100 days, but we kept on it and we finally got a bill, even though the Congress is controlled by another party. So, I think it set a good example that I can...that some things can happen and there's a lot more that needs to happen. I want to see financial reform, so that we can be more competitive in international markets and our banking system can open up to the American people more. I want to see strong crime legislation to support our law enforcement people. I want to be here when "America 2000" our innovative total reform education package is successful, and it will be. Bi-partisan, not liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat; gets right to the communities; saying: we must revolutionize our schools. I want to see us win the fight against narcotics or at least be so far along the road that no new generations of kids are going to find...find sucker in the use of these deadly narcotics. There is so much left to do. And on the international scene I'd like to be sure that in the last four years, that we continue to handle the emerging democracies...the aspirations of the emerging democracies with sensitivity, with understanding. 'Cause we're the leader; we are the undisputed leader of the free world and I can say to the American people right now that their kids have every chance to grow up in a much more peaceful world than they would've at the beginning of this year, at the beginning of this year. Because, you see, I think what our kids did in Desert Storm facilitated our bringing about a peace conference on the Middle East. I don't believe it would have happened if it hadn't have been for Desert Storm.

LAMB: We just completed a series of programs with your Education Secretary, Lamar Alexander, Governor Romer and others on "America 2000". One of the questions I ask everybody I could, is 'did you have a favorite teacher' in their life? Or teachers. Did you?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I had several. Of course I was kind of . . . I'm not sure I was the world's most brilliant student. I love sports. I loved . . . I think of a guy named Frank DeClemetti who was a teacher, but also a coach where I went to school at high school level. I think of Dr. Northrop, who taught philosophy at Yale; sounds a little heavy for me these days, but he was a stimulating teacher. I think back to the grade school level to a Scotchman named Mr. Hector McBaine Heart or a shop teacher who's still alive in Maine at 91 named Arthur Grant. These names, you know, I can just hear them in the classroom. Just as clearly as when I was ten years or twenty years old.

LAMB: What made them special?

PRES. BUSH: The ability to interact with the kids, to get the kids to do what they wanted us to do. The projection of enthusiasm for whatever it was -- whether it was sports or Latin. I just keep saying God bless our teachers because they -- it's such a cliche -- but they just have so much influence in shaping lives. So it's just extra spark. I don't know. I guess it might be called the 'X' factor -- George Plimpton would call it the 'X' factor in sports. It's the same thing in teaching. What is that little extra that makes that person a great teacher? The ability to communicate. The ability to make that kid think he's special, and that this teacher cares.

LAMB: Can you remember back, either in your education or in your home where you said, "I want to be president some day?"

PRES. BUSH: No, I really can't. If it were, it wouldn't have been back there, although I suppose like everyone, 'well, what do you want to be?', 'well, a fireman, a policeman, a president' whatever. I suppose somewhere way back then I thought about that, but nothing serious until much, much, much later.

LAMB: Who would you say that influenced you the most in your life?

PRES. BUSH: . . . What individual? Living individual? . . .

LAMB: . . . Individual, or, you go back in history, your own history, and you look for people who made a difference to you . . .

PRES. BUSH: I think in my life, my own dad. I think I've said that before. He was strong, principled man; a man of deep conviction, give us our head .. "You go out and figure it out." . . then always "Do something for someone else." "Put something back." "Give something back to your country." Whether it was in serving in the War in my case, or heading the YMCA, my dad was always, my would have done this. He'd go out to Greenwich and run the little town meeting way back in the late 20's or 30's. So I think for me, and I suppose like a lot of kids today, it's their dad. There are others. I mean I've been inspired by President Eisenhower, for example. Historically by Lincoln. By Teddy Roosevelt. But, um, I'd have to put my own dad down.

LAMB: Going back in your own, again, your career, as to when you started to crystallize the interest in public service? Was that at Yale?

PRES. BUSH: That was early on, yeah. And that again was inculcated by family. Sometimes it's ridiculed in a sense, by some today, you know, old school. But this concept of one American helping another, something that De Toqueville noticed when he wrote these

PRES. BUSH: I haven't thought about it. It's brand new information and what I vowed to do is stay out of that side of the primary. But look, I respect his decision on it. But, I don't think they were going to give him a clean shot anyway up there, I mean roll over and play dead. There's some strong willed individuals in that Democratic race. So, you know, a man makes his own call. If you'd have asked me yesterday if he'll run or not, I probably would have bought on to the conventional wisdom that he might. I have not heard the reasons or anything, but I respect his decision. And, in spite of the fact we yell about each other from time to time, we get along alright.

LAMB: There were some Senators or at least one Senator and a bunch of Congressmen today that came out hard hitting at you about the Japanese--proposed that automobiles be cut by 20% coming into this country. . .

PRES. BUSH: Well, you see they know I'm going on a foreign trip. So, that's the oldest game in town, you make a proposal just before that to try to put the president of the opposite party on the spot. Which that won't do. But, my mission is about American jobs. We got a lot...we got other interests with the Japanese, Singaporeans, Koreans, Australians certainly. In terms of security, we are a Pacific power, we are not going to neglect our worldwide responsibilities and they aren't going to neglect theirs. And having said that, this trip, a lot of it is going to be about trade, and we must get them to open up their markets more. So, I've not seen the proposal, I just saw a little snippet on the tape about what these Michigan...most of them are from Michigan I think, and the auto industry is hurting. So, to me, hey, they're doing what they ought to do. If they think protectionism is correct, way to do it, let them say so. I don't, I believe fair trade. But where we both agree...I mean, free trade....but where I think I would agree with the Congressmen is the need for more fair trade--access to foreign market. I might differ with them on how one achieves that objective, because I don't want to go the protectionist route. One thing that saved our country during this period of extraordinary sluggish economy is our export growth. And one way to guarantee that you don't have exports grow is to start protecting yourself at home here. So, we can do it though. We can get more access to the Japanese market for our autos; we can get more access in terms of auto parts. And that I'm determined to do. But it's a different methodology with some of these guys, they say hey, let's assign a quota to it, or let's mandate it through legislation and I think there some pitfalls there.

LAMB: Let me ask you a question that might sound kind of off the mark, probably more than anybody in history, you can come back to your family quarters upstairs and turn on the television and turn on us at night, and, you're there. Everything that you say is now seen by the American people, if they want to see it. What is it like having that there? Where every time you . . . they're always

talking about you, every five minutes -- I know on C-SPAN it's about every five minutes your name comes up . . .

PRES. BUSH: It's not an off the wall question at all. I still think about it. First place, I like informality around this place. I like to tell jokes. I like to laugh with my kids and other guys that work around this place here, and Barbara. And I like to, kind of have a little fun over in the Oval Office, kidding. But I've learned something. I've learned the danger of these long overhead mikes that can overhear you, so that's one point. Be a little discreet in what you say, even when you're in a cafe as I was in Texas. A road cafe there with six workers from a highway project. Somebody's listening. There's a table full of reporters right next there and somebody says "Reporters!" and I said, "I know". I might have been indiscreet before and say something that would have been misinterpreted by the American people. So you gotta be careful.

But the more important point is, I've learned the power of the word of a president. Not maybe necessarily to get something done, but the power of the word.

For example on this economy, at one point I said well, you know, there's people who're hurting, but there are some positive things here. And I didn't . . I must not have been as clear in terms of emphasis as I should have been 'cause they said the president doesn't understand what's happening. He's saying there's no problem. He's saying these are good things. And I think, then I remember another time, I said something on the pessimistic side, and they said, here he's adding to the lack of confidence by talking this way. It was a good lesson for me, but I don't want the lesson to be driven home so much that I am less than frank with the American people,or afraid to say what I think. Bottom line is, I think I'm still sorting out the power of the bully pulpit, that only the president has. I think I'm still trying to understand just how powerful that is.

In terms of the question, another facet of your question is, the criticism -- once in a while the applause -- but the criticism that comes my way from Congress or commentators or editorialists, uh, I'm used to that now. I can't say it doesn't effect me, but I can't go out wringing my hands about the loneliest job in the world, or the please give me a little sympathy, their knocking my brains out. My place is to fight back and say, hey, this goes with the territory. And we're used to it. Our grandchildren will say to me, "Hey, Gampy, you're on television!" "Oh really, I've got my picture on television?" and we'll go rushing in to see it so they'll enjoy it. But it's -- I'm getting used to that part of it, but I'm still sorting out the power of this office. Learning how to do it better, in a sense.

LAMB: When did you make the decision that, when you became president you were going to have all this access to the press and

do you think it was the right thing to do?

PRES. BUSH: Yeah, I think access is good, it lances the sores that build up if you're unavailable; gives them a chance to...you know, through the questions, get off their chest what's there. I think the American people are better informed of the president's views by the access I have to the White House press corps. I eschewed the formal press conference. At the formal press conference, people in your profession, and I say this respectfully, will put on a beautiful red dress or a nice dark suit with a bright red tie, and hold their hands up and get up there and say..."for your information I'd like to ask this question..." you know that's a political statement. Not always, but I mean you're on stage, on camera, on stage, it's more of a show. Then I'll be up there preening in my red tie and my beautiful suit to answer the question knowing it's going into everybody's living room. We've given...I'm not...I don't do that too well I don't think, although we did it once and got away with it alright. But I prefer the give and take of the press room. I'm the guy that's on the camera, which may or may not be good, for the most part, and then the questions come at you...one, two, three; and it's less for..."I'm asking for your information, I'm asking this question;" it's more...hey what's your answer to this? And...people are less apt to make the statement in asking the question is what I'm saying. So, I think it's a good format; maybe we need to combine the two.

LAMB: Running out of time, let me ask you about hunger. Lots of reports coming out about hungry people and I've asked this of a lot of people, including your secretary of agriculture and can't remember what his precise answer was. But do we have a policy in this country or should we, that everybody in this country that lives here should get a meal or meals everyday and a bed to sleep in?

PRES. BUSH: That certainly is the policy but it is not a right, it's not a given...I mean it's not enshrined in the constitution. But certainly it is an objective and it ought to be the same thing in terms of health care. And some would say, well that means the government has to do it all. They'd say that on hunger, they'd say that on health care. And I think it's a combination, of the generosity of communities, of the creativity of states and of the obligation of the federal government--it's a combination.

But clearly, you can't have on your conscience the thought that one American goes to bed without food, or without shelter, or without medical attention. Where you get into an argument is: who's responsibility...how do you see that those bad things don't happen to people. And of course you go through history and regrettably there have always been homeless, there always have been those hungry, even in affluent countries like ours; and it is a tragedy, and yes I am very much concerned about it.

LAMB: What do you do when you have time...where the cameras aren't around and you're not out playing golf? Do you ever take a day where you just plop down and say I'm not going to do anything today?

PRES. BUSH: No. Too...too hyper.

LAMB: Do you read?

PRES. BUSH: Play horseshoes. You didn't see...I won the...(laughter)...no but, no, I got to exercise.

LAMB: Do you read?

PRES. BUSH: I read. I read a bunch of books. I whipped it out for...a magazine asked me this the other day, and I whipped it out and I've read, oh, about, I think twelve books since March I think it is. But easy reading...Dan Jenkins and other relaxed treatises, you know detective stories or something like that. I read a ton of official papers, the economy, growth, agricultural policy, health care...

LAMB: Do you watch television?

PRES. BUSH: Watch quite a bit. I watch the news, and I don't like to tell you this because you'll think I'm into some weird TV freak here, but...I have a set upstairs that has five screens on it. And I can sit on my desk and whip...just punch a button, if I see one off on the corner that moves in to the middle screen, the other one goes to the side, then I can run up and down the dial. So...and you can record all four going at once while you're watching. I don't quite know how to do that yet. But I cite this because Barbara accuses me of being too much...not too much, but plugged into TV too often, put it that way.

Love sports, though. You asked how I relax? Love to watch a football game. We watched my friend Ivan Lendl lose in a five setter to Chang I think it was last weekend--and I find that relaxing. Take a rest to relax; read some to relax. We watch movies, I love watching movies. And at Camp David we're spoiled 'cause they send us all the good ones. We have a movie theater right down this hall here--and bring the kids, and family and friends over to do that. I think like any other American family...love fishing, that's real relaxing for me--real relaxing. But I think competitive sports still...tennis and golf and once again horseshoes--these are the things I really like. And it's the way I relax. My body feels better and my mind is clear. I still run two miles, three days a week usually--not very fast, but I do it. And all of that comes together and gives you a normal life.

LAMB: We're out of time. I just want to invite you when you

have time to come talk to our callers. You came to us in 1983 and the callers were able to call up and talk to you and that's something we do best...

PRES. BUSH: Well you do it well. And I say this not just 'cause you and I are eyeball to eyeball, but I do watch it. I can't say that I see it every night or everyday what you're doing but...I think C-SPAN -- probably get in trouble with others -- but I think you perform a wonderful service because of the substance. Because of the seriousness of the presentations, and I salute you for that. And I wish you and everybody clued in there to a very Happy Holiday, and Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year. I expect we're going to have one...I know we're going to have a good family Christmas.

LAMB: Thanks for the time.

PRES. BUSH: Not at all.

famous papers about our country, still valid. We call it points of light. It's inspiring. And I grew up in a family where we were taught to try to help others. And so I did get interested back in college days, or even school days, I just can . . service drive to gather the clothes to help those who were cold and that kind of thing. Food at Thanksgiving. And seems small, but it's a part of this. I hope it's a part of my children. I think it is. I know it is. And I feel confident it will be a part of theirs. But we're like every other family in this country in that regard.

LAMB: Did you ever say, "When I get to be president some day,I'm gonna model my presidency off of someone else?"

PRES. BUSH: Not really. I don't think so. I don't really think I . . . I think I respected certain components of one's presidency, Lincoln for his fairness, his determination, "I'm gonna preserve the Union," then his equity that came with the freeing of the slaves. That's so big and so strong, that obviously it had to be inspiring. I'd tell you Roosevelt's commitment to the great outdoors, and his kind of zest for life. His kids were around this very lawn out here. We have ours out there now. I mean, there's some examples of that kind. In fact I'm not gonna be driven off the golf course. Didn't effect Ike, and it isn't going to effect me either. I can do two things at once. Mind the country's business and then every once in a while, play golf.

So I, think there's a lot of examples in previous presidencies, pros and cons. I think it was instructive to me to watch the Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon years on Vietnam, because they were faced with extraordinarily difficult problems, in a different war scenario, but I learned from that. Hey,if you're gonna have to fight, don't ask those generals over there across the way over there to go in with their hands tied behind their backs. And damn sure don't ask the men and women in this all volunteer Army to do that, or Navy or Air Force or Marines or Coast Guard. Don't do it to them. So you learn ups and downs from previous presidencies.

I learned a lot from my predecessor, and friend, Ronald Reagan, certain principles . . "I believe in this, I don't believe we ought to have government get bigger." And he stayed with it. He repeated it over and over again and people understood where he was on it. And other points. So it's funny how you look over your shoulder, and get instruction from predecessors.

LAMB: Where do you get your energy?

PRES. BUSH: Well, I'm blessed with good health, and when I had that fibrillation . . . heart fibrillation . . . I couldn't understand it. 'Cause I'd been in great health and I was running. I'll tell you how it worked; I was out running and I felt out of breath, and I said, "strange here, I just started." So I walked a

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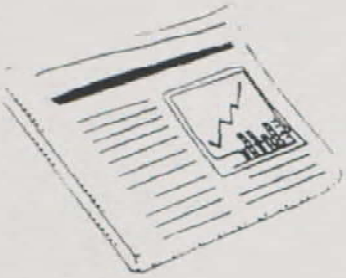

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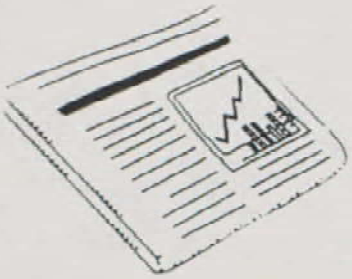

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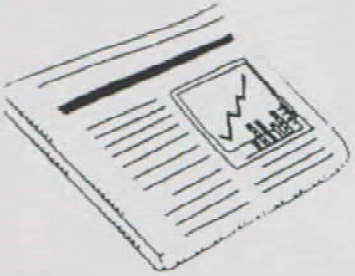

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