

JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with
WAYNE L. BERMAN
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Interviewer
Morton Kondracke

JACK KEMP FOUNDATION
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Morton Kondracke: This is a Jack Kemp Oral History Project interview with Wayne Berman, who managed Jack Kemp's 1996 vice presidential campaign. Today is March 21, 2013. We're at Mr. Berman's office in Washington, DC, and I'm Morton Kondracke. Thanks very much for doing this.

Wayne Berman: My pleasure.

Kondracke: You're from Buffalo, so, did you watch Jack Kemp play football when you were a kid?

Berman: I did, yes I did. The very first professional football game my dad ever took me to was a Buffalo Bills game with Jack Kemp, and there was a star running back with Jack called [Charlton C.] Cookie Gilchrist, and Gilchrist set a then AFL [American Football League]—this is in the days when there was an AFL—record that day. I'll never forget that. It was a typically Buffalo very cold day. I saw Jack play football. I went to college at the University of Buffalo. Jack was already in the House by then. That's my very first NFL [National Football League] memory is Jack Kemp and Cookie Gilchrist. Cookie ended up and met a bad place.

Kondracke: Yes. Were there any other great memories that you have of watching Jack Kemp?

Berman: No. I was always a Buffalo Bills fan, still am, so we always used to, you know, Jack would always be on the pre-game show. He was by far the star of the Bills, but my memories of them are pretty vague at this point.

Kondracke: You were a Kemp guy, not a [Daryle] Lamonica guy.

Berman: Exactly. I was a Kemp guy all the way. Well, Kemp was the gritty side of Buffalo. Lamonica was always a guy who had his nails done, I mean he was just too perfect for Buffalo. Jack was, in a funny way for a guy from California, Jack somehow embodied that late sixties-early seventies really gritty down on its luck kind of side of Buffalo.

Kondracke: So when did you actually meet him?

Berman: You know, I met him when I came to Washington to work for David [M.] Abshire at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And Jack came to a conference we had on the energy implications or energy impact on national security. That would have been in 1978 or nine, and that's when I first met him, but I never knew Jack well, which of course made our—you know, we would see each other at Republican events, would say hello in a very nice way. Jack would always try his Yiddish out on me, or any other Jewish person in the room. He was pretty good with Yiddish, he got it right about two out of three. So when he and I met in Russell, Kansas, and got the great [Robert J.] Bob Dole introduction [imitating], "Jack, Berman's going to run the campaign for ya." The look on Jack's face was precious.

Kondracke: It was?

Berman: Sort of like "This stranger, effectively, is going to run my campaign," and Jack had no ability to govern his body language or his facial language at all, and you could just tell his attitude was, "Oh, no he's not."

Kondracke: Of that campaign, what are your standout memories?

Berman: First standout memory was in Russell. There was a kerfuffle because a reporter claimed that he had a story--I want to say it was a *Washington Post* reporter, but I might be getting that wrong—that he had a story about Jack having had a relationship with a female pollster, and so there we are in Bob Dole's house. Scott [W.] Reed and I go in. Mrs. [Joanne M.] Kemp is there, Mrs. [M. Elizabeth] Dole is there, Bob Dole, the whole Dole family, very intimidating, and we kind of pulled Senator Dole and Jack out into the kitchen, and Scott, because I was a total coward, Scott has to say to them, "There's this rumor," and Jack immediately says, "Well that's not true. It's total fabrication." And Dole, and this is one of the few really warm moments I experienced in that campaign between the two of them, Dole says [imitating], "Well, that's good enough for me. Let's get on with it." And Dole just stands up, takes Jack, and they walk out to the front porch with Mrs. Dole and Joanne, and the press is all there, so that was one standout memory. At the convention, the campaign had hired Clark [S.] Judge and [Michael J.] Mike Gerson, who later became famous as George W. Bush's speech writer, at the time was a very young man, to write a speech for Jack, and the first draft of the speech, it was really, it was a workman like thing, but it wasn't Jack at all. No soaring rhetoric, no appeal to the growth side of the Republican Party, the minority outreach piece or any of that, and Jack

hated it, and Jack said to me, "Do you know John [P.] Sears?" And I said "Sure." He said, "Well, I want you and John Sears to work on this speech for me," which really meant he wanted Sears to work on it, so we literally wrote Jack's speech, Sears, me and Jack. That's poor English. Sorry. The three of us sat in Jack's suite at the Marriott Hotel [San Diego, Calif.], writing his speech, and there was a whole group of people who were waiting for Jack to come do speech practice, and we just kept having the advance guy, [Frederick L.] Rick Ahern, say to them in his very Boston accent [imitating], "Jack is on his way," we kept stalling and stalling. And we wrote this speech. I have to say it was a beautiful speech, and Jack delivered it beautifully. He didn't like the beam-splitters, he didn't like the teleprompter, but he delivered it beautifully, and he was very happy with it and very excited about it, and so that was good. That was another great memory. Then we were all on the plane back from the convention, and we stopped in Denver for a rally, and this was Jack's first time to introduce Senator Dole, you know how sometimes the VP candidate. And I said to Jack, "Look, this is like a three or four-minute introduction, and Jack says to me, "Are you kidding? I can't clear my throat in three to four minutes." So Jack gave about a 20-minute introduction of Dole, but he wove in parts of his speech, and you know, no notes, nothing, just Jack. And of course Dole was fidgeting, but everybody else liked it, which wasn't the case with future introductions, by the way, which went on a little too long. And then we went to Buffalo and, of course, for me this was something, because I'd gone to school there, and the event was at a field that was kind of like the practice field, and I was sitting, listening to Jack at this rally—Dole wasn't with us, it was our first independent thing—and looking at the dorm that I had lived in as an undergrad, the Governor's dorm, and you know, to Jack's credit,

when we were done and we were leaving, Jack said, "You know, we should take some time, and you should go over and walk through and find your old room and all that, because you'll remember that you did that." And he said, "We'll just sit around here in a holding room or something like that." That was the wonderful side of Jack, the very human side of Jack. And I did, and so that's why I remembered it. Otherwise I would have been lost in a sea of events. So there was that. The campaign had a lot of interesting, challenging moments. You know Jack was the most inspiring officeholder I ever worked with, and the most frustrating. There were times when Jack would get—and he thought I didn't notice—he was getting these secret faxes from Jude [T.] Wanniski, and the faxes were all full of Jude's crazy fantasies about the gold standard and abandoning Israel. Jude didn't like the Jews, or he didn't like Israel anyway. And occasionally these things, because Jack would read them, they would slip into what he was saying. So there was one time when Jack's doing an interview with a Boston paper, and the press secretary, Alixe Glenn, who's this very diminutive woman, very smart, comes back and says, "Jack just said that Louis Farrakhan [Muhammad, Sr.] was misunderstood, and that you could hate the message but you had to love the messenger, and that his message had bad parts to it, which was the anti-Israel, but it had good parts to it about fatherly and familial responsibility." And I said to her, "He actually said that?" and I thought that she was exaggerating, so she played the tape for me, and he actually said that. So this caused a firestorm, as you might imagine, because Farrakhan—oddly no one else in America shared that view about him other than his own followers—and it was a very tense moment. Jack knew he made a mistake, and one of Jack's flaws was that admitting he made a mistake did not roll off of his tongue. Maybe it did

personally, with his wife and his family, I don't know, but in a campaign context, a professional context, he didn't. And he had to issue an apology, and amazingly four nights later we were scheduled to speak opposite [Albert A. "Al"] Gore [Jr.] to the presidents of Jewish organizations. So the only thing you can say to that is oi vey, right, because this is a bad situation. So Sears gets in the car, and I said to Sears, "You and Jack are going to drive from the rally site to the plane, and I've told the driver to just keep driving. I don't care if you drive to Nebraska," and we were in, I think, Tennessee, "but you've got to get him to agree to apologize." Because he said, "I'm not going to apologize, not going to apologize. Don't even raise it with me." And he and I had a raised voices conversation. So they get out of the car, and

Kondracke: How long did the raised voices conversation last?

Berman: Very short period of time, because Jack hated that. He hated that kind of confrontation. And remember, he and I had zero relationship going into this, so it was a bad situation. So Sears basically delivered, I mean Sears gets him, and Jack gets out of the car and he's like [imitates], "Alright, I'm going to read this to you. I want you to be happy with this." And I said, "Well, let's get on the plane and you can read it to me." And he says, "No, no." And on the tarmac he's reading what he's going to say, so I said, "Jack, that's good. Thank you for doing that." I said, "You know, it illuminates your character." Jack was a guy who always used to say to me during this campaign, every other day he would say, "You know, I need a little sugar with my medicine." Jack, if you were going to give him bad news or tell him something, you had to kind of give him some praise in

there. And that wasn't my default position in life, you know. I was this guy and I'd been working on the Dole campaign, and with Bob Dole there was no sugar in anything. He didn't give any, he didn't demand any. If you had something to tell him you told him, and he'd just be like "waa" and that was it. So that was interesting. The other memory I have is, rolling backwards just a little bit in time—I apologize for doing that—

Kondracke: No, please.

Berman: We were flying back from Buffalo and Jack calls me to the front compartment of the plane and he says, "I've got three things on my mind. First of all the plane says 'Dole for President.' I want it to say 'Dole/Kemp.' Can we get it painted?" And I said, "I have no idea. I can't paint it, but I'll talk to somebody and we'll see." Second thing was that he wanted to make sure that we brought [Edwin J.] Ed Feulner [Jr.] in to run his campaign, and that he had nothing against me, thought I was a fine guy, lovely guy, but that Feulner was his brother and his buddy, and that he would be more comfortable with Feulner. And the third thing was that he didn't like the guy we had doing the advance work, and I said, "Look, you can bring Feulner in. That's certainly your—but the rest of the team is here, and you know, it's a 10-week campaign. You don't have to hire him if you get to be vice president, but you can't replace them, because we just don't have the time to find these people." So we get back to the campaign headquarters and Feulner shows up and I meet with Feulner, and I'm sort of doing a transition, and I get a call from Scott Reed, who's running the campaign for Dole, and he says, "What are you doing?" And I said "I'm meeting with Feulner, he's taking over for me." And

Reed says, "He's taking over for you? Come up here right away," because we were one floor below. So I come upstairs, he grabs me and we go into Dole's office. This is more about Dole than Kemp, but it illuminates a little bit the disconnect between the two of them. So here's the meeting with Dole. [imitating] "Wally"—for some reason Dole called me Wally. I have no idea why. "Wally, Feulner?" I said "Yes, sir." "Feulner's not for Dole. Feulner criticizes Dole. Feulner says Dole's not a conservative. I don't want Feulner around." And then he puts his head down back to the papers on his desk. So Reed and I walk out, and I said to Reed, "Hey, you've got to fix this. This guy's his running mate. I can't go down and tell Kemp that he can't fire me. Of course he can fire me." So Scott calls Jack up to his office and says, "Feulner can be a senior advisor. Wayne's running the campaign. Don't ever make another personnel change without checking with me, and all personnel changes are not approved going forward." And Jack says to Scott, and they had this funny relationship, you know, very fraught emotionally, "I'm not going to take that kind of thing from you. I'm the vice presidential candidate. I was your boss at HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development]." And Scott says, "Well, I'm the several blank-blank-blanks boss here, and I'm just telling you you don't just do these things. You're the running mate, and by the way, Feulner"—and then he goes on with Feulner was a critic of Senator Dole's.

Kondracke: [Malcolm S.] Steve Forbes [Jr.].

Berman: Yes. So that was one memory. [An aside:] We can do this more another time too; I'm happy to do it. Poor Feulner. He shows up, nicest guy in the world. Knows zip about politics. He shows up

and he's trying to figure it out, so basically Feulner starts to travel with us, and we're traveling around, and after a couple of weeks Feulner comes to me. We were at a hotel in Jamestown, Pennsylvania, and Feulner comes in and says, "I think my highest and best use is to go back to headquarters and coordinate the policy stuff." It's a campaign. What policy stuff? So I say, "Okay, great. Whatever you want to do, Ed. I'm for you." He was the head of the Heritage Foundation. You know, I'm kind of semi-intimidated intellectually by the guy, so I said, "Okay, sure." So he and Kemp during that couple weeks period had a really scratchy thing. Ed had to go to some big Catholic meeting in Austria and get some award, and he didn't tell Jack. So one morning Jack's like, "Where's Feulner?" And I said, "Well, he went to Austria." It was one of these relationships that was better not working together, I think, because they were very close friends. So I ran the campaign from there. We had a couple of other funny stories. One story, there was a guy working for the campaign, running our research division called Roger [J.] Stone, and at one point I get a call at like four o'clock in the morning on one of those old cell phones, you know, those things that were huge? And it's Scott Reed, and he says, "Listen. There's going to be a story about Roger Stone in the paper today. He apparently was involved in doing something with some, I don't know, sex website, or I can't remember what the heck it was, but it was embarrassing, and so he's quit the campaign, but Jack is going to get asked about it and you need to brief him and Joanne." So, I said, "Okay, what's it in?" He said, "Oh, it's in the *National Enquirer*." So I sent some kid out in wherever the heck we were. Gosh, I think we were in New Mexico, but I'm not sure. I said, "Look, I don't know. You've got to find a National Enquirer at four o'clock in the morning." So this kid finds one, David Albert. I'll never forget this

kid. He's like 4:30 in the morning he finds me a *National Enquirer*, and sure enough, there's the thing of Roger Stone and all this sort of seamy stuff, which is not nice to go into. So I go in and I've got the *National Enquirer*, and I've got to explain, you know I did it at a reasonable hour, to Jack and Joanne what's going on, and this is really embarrassing. So I'm trying just to beat around the bush, and Jack finally says, "Oh, give me the paper," and takes the thing, and he goes over to Joanne and he says, "Look at this. This is unbelievable." And Joanne is like, "Yes, it is unbelievable." And I said, "Well, here's what we're going to do. We're just going to say"—and I give them whatever the line was—and Jack says, "Okay, I've got it," and Joanne says "Yes, it won't come up for me, but if it does I'm ready for it." And, to Jack's credit, this is again the good side of Jack, later in the day he says to me, "You know, I've got to call Roger Stone. I've known him for many years. He worked on my presidential campaign in"—whenever it was—"and I don't like what he was doing here, but, you know, on a human basis I've got to call him." I didn't sit in on the conversation, but he did call him and reach out to him and you know it's another example of Jack being really a mensch, and he just had that real touch. That was the inspiring part of him.

Kondracke: Did Jack regard you as an aide or as a minder, or what was your relationship like with him?

Berman: Very good question, Mort. I would say he did not regard me as an aide or a friend; he regarded me as a spy for Dole, a minder. But eventually, I think—I'm now speaking for someone else, which is something I'm uncomfortable doing, particularly since Jack can't defend himself—but I think Jack came to respect the fact that I had

some pretty good political judgment. I also had a great relationship with Dole, and Dole and Kemp did not communicate much. And so I would get calls from [Michael] Mike Glassner, and Glassner would say, "Senator Dole wants to talk to you." Dole would say [imitating], "I read this thing about Jack talking about"—you know, some issue—"I didn't see that in the briefing." That was Dole's default, was that I didn't see that in the briefing book, which meant that isn't what we think. I'd sort of interdict that, and then when we would try to come together and campaign together once every week, it didn't really work out that much, but when we did, Kemp always wanted to meet alone with Dole, and I can remember in a holding room in a gym one time, we're in the pipe and drape area, and I'm about to walk out, and Dole says [imitating], "Hey, Wally, stick around." And Jack says, "Who's Wally?" [laughs] One time Scott and I were actually on the road together, Scott Reed and I, and he and I are very, very close, and we're on this bus tour in Tennessee. [Andrew] Lamar Alexander [Jr.] is with us, [Donald K.] Don Sundquist is with us, Howard [H.] Baker [Jr.] is with us, and in the front of the bus, Elizabeth Dole, Joanne and Jack are there, and they're reading the Bible and praying, and it was kind of sweet and nice. Scott and I are in the back, and there's like a little door, and we're in this place where there's like a little seating area and a conference table. Senator Dole comes wandering back, and he can't quite manipulate the door closed. He says to me [imitating] , "Hey, Wally, close the door." So he sits down with Scott and I and he says, "What are we talking about?" And so we had to talk to him, and I said, "You know, Senator, they're praying up there, Jack and Joanne and Mrs. Dole," and he says [imitating], "Yeah, there's a lot of praying going on. Dole's had enough praying." That was it. And Jack, later in the day, you know, he was so insecure, Jack, in so

many ways, comes up to me and says, you know, "Why doesn't Dole want to visit with me and be with me? What is it? What's the secret?" And Jack really believed—because he would ask me that from time to time, and again I wasn't an intimate of his at all, quite the contrary—Jack believed there was a secret to unlocking a relationship with people, because he really was an optimist about that. And the last story I'll tell you. The most interesting time I really saw the inside of Jack's emotional connection to policy was, we had Dennis Prager, who's a friend of Jack's, on the plane and he traveled with us for a day. And Prager and Jack got into this incredible debate and discussion about the U.S., our role in the world, and how you project power. I always thought of Jack as a guy, tax-cutting, enterprise zones, and all of that, but Jack really held his own with a guy whose whole business was being in the business of opinion and knowing about these issues, and who had quite a profile on national security-related matters, particularly related to Israel. And I remember that very well, all these years later, because I remember being so impressed with Jack's command of the emotional language of policy. Not the details, the emotional language of policy, and thinking "That's what a presidential candidate has to have." At that point I really thought—I knew we were going to lose in '96, it wasn't like, you know, we were biting our nails wondering what the outcome was going to be—but I really thought Jack would run in 2000, and I remember that very moment of the campaign was the time when it clicked with me that this guy really understood the emotional language of politics and policy and where those, where that intersected, and how you communicate that, and, "Gee, he would be an impressive candidate."

Kondracke: Would you have been for him?

Berman: You know, I would have been for him, I would have been for him. I think the truth is that Jack earned my loyalty and affection as well as my anger, and inspired my—he's probably the only person I ever actively thought about killing.

Kondracke: Why?

Berman: Because, you know Jack would, again, there were the moments like with Prager, or calling Roger, or telling me to go to the dorm, and then there were these moments of incredible 'I'm the quarterback' petulance.

Kondracke: Over what?

Berman: Always over little things. "I don't want to do the third event. Let's put that one off." Just very schedule-sensitive. Or things like, he said to me one time, there was a particular young guy, I don't want to hurt anybody so I'd rather not mention the guy's name, who really wanted to come on the plane, who had worked for Jack, who's now a very prominent lobbyist here in Washington. And the guy kept calling Jack, and Jack didn't call him back. So finally Jack said to me, "Would you call this guy and put him off?" And I knew the guy vaguely, and so I called him and I jollied him along, gave him the usual political baloney, pat on the back stuff, and it was funny, because the guy said to me, "I appreciate the fact that you're doing this, but really Jack just doesn't want me on the plane, isn't that right?" And I said, "Oh, I think that's an overstatement, but, you know, he's under a lot of pressure, blah-blah-blah." But that made we realize that Jack had this

sort of, everybody around him who'd known him a long time knew that he didn't like confrontation but he had this kind of thing of "put the guy off." Why put him off? Just let him come on the plane. We had John Mackey on the plane, we had that guy that was the professional wrestler, who'd been a football player, I've forgotten his name, a huge giant of a man, some lineman in the NFL, friend of Kemp's. I mean it was like a traveling circus. Rick Ahearn once referred to it as "Jack Kemp and the Rainbow Tour." And Jack loved, if you were black, Hispanic, or Jewish, Jack loved that, loved it. Because he related to the underdog, and he thought everybody that was a racial minority or a religious minority was an underdog. He didn't think I was an underdog, but everybody else. It was pretty interesting.

Kondracke: Tell me about on-message, off-message. How did it get decided what he was going to do, where he was going to go, what he was going to say?

Berman: I decided where we were going to go in consultation with Scott and a fellow named Paul [J.] Manafort, who was kind of running our overall scheduling. And as it became clear that we were a little bit shy of challenging an electoral college majority against President [William J. "Bill"] Clinton and the greatest economic expansion in the history of the world, Manafort's game was let's go try to use Jack to help the Party, help pick up House seats, Senate seats, whatever we can do to do that. So we worked out a very detailed schedule, and Manafort had places he wanted us to go, we had places we wanted to go, we created two schedules. One we sent to Manafort and we told him this is where we're going, and then our real schedule, which is where we went. And the only thing—Jack insisted on a few things.

There was a Monday night football game. He said [imitating], "I've got to go to this game. [Francis N. "Frank"] Gifford's going to put me on TV." And I, of course, said, "Jack, I think the chances that ABC [American Broadcasting Company] is going to put you on Monday night television when you're running for vice president is zero, but if you want to go to the game, we'll create some kind of a false narrative about why we're going to, and I think it was honestly in California or some other state we were 700 points behind in. So we went to the game, and we didn't tell anybody. Scott was furious with us, because sure enough Kemp was introduced, and there's the usual amount of clapping and booing, and it was San Diego, and Jack had played in San Diego at one point in his career. So that was a fun thing, and you know at that point I figured, listen Jack, one thing about Jack: he worked like a dog when he worked. I mean when he was giving a speech, and he loved the Q & A kind of town hall stuff, he put everything he had into it, and nobody was better. I can remember people asking him a question. He would walk over to them and he would thank them and he would bend down like this and talk to them and make his points with passion. That was the good Jack. And then there was the Jack who decided that Bob Dole's views were interesting, but Jack had his own views and he was going to put those out, so he talked about things like indexing capital gains, which wasn't part of the Dole, Dole had a 15 percent tax cut plan, which was, like any legislative plan, it was full of a bunch of absolutely incomprehensible, indecipherable policy gobbledygook, and Jack, of course looked at it and said, "Well this is around the edges. What we need is—" and so Jack just started advocating. So as far as who decided what Jack said, we gave Jack a lot of talking points, I would say he used, you know, 20 percent of them, and 80 percent he was on

his own. The only time when that was really a problem was in the debate, and, you know, we blew—

Kondracke: Tell me about the debate. Let's talk about that.

Berman: Okay. We blew the debate preparation, and we blew it because—and it was completely my responsibility—I did not discipline Jack. Jack insisted on having, you know, this sort of Kemp fan club band of renowned. [Robert L.] Bob Woodson and all these other guys who were complete jokers. Nice people, I'm sure, and I'm sure they go to church and are nice to children and all that, but I let this big group start dealing with Jack, and that meant that every exit ramp Jack wanted to take intellectually, we took. And then we got down to Florida, and I got rid of most of the hangers-on, but we still had too big a group. But Jack loved the graduate school aspect of sitting around talking policy, and he was fascinated with ideas, so somebody would throw out an idea and Jack would say, he'd massage it, and somebody else would come in, and we had all these guys and we had a TV coach. That poor guy, he was an older fellow, I can't remember his name now.

Kondracke: Buckley.

Berman: Yes.

Kondracke: [Fergus] Reid Buckley.

Berman: Yes. Lovely man. He started to coach Jack and Jack basically said, "I got it down. Don't worry about it." And he turns to

[Fredric J.] Freddie Maas, who was the deputy campaign manager but who basically was the disciplinarian, and he says, "Yes, I don't want to see that guy again. Let's just give him a one-way ticket somewhere." So he was dispatched after a short period of time. We didn't discipline his preparation properly, and that was my responsibility, and so Jack's performance in the debate showed the lack of discipline in the prep. Now we should have known it, because during the prep we did practice debates with Judd [A.] Gregg playing Gore, and Judd had Gore down. And I was pretending to be [James C.] Jim Lehrer, just asking the question, and I mean Judd just eviscerated Jack time after time, and the whole red light-green light thing, Jack obviously hadn't done a lot of driving in his life, because he did not associate the red light with stop. He was like, "Ah, there's a red light. I'm just going to keep talking." And then the night of the debate we were sitting in the anteroom watching it, and at one point, Scott and I are sitting next to each other, there's a little table like this with a telephone. Now the only person who's going to call is Dole. So first two answers Jack's not doing well, and Haley [R.] Barbour says [imitating], "I think we ought to watch the ballgame," and everybody laughs, a little nervously. And then three or four answers in Jack got into the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and he started talking about the IMF and some austerity, I don't remember what it was. And you could see Gore and Lehrer and everybody sort of like, "What?" Phone rings. I look at Scott and I said, "It's for you." So Scott picks up the phone and I hear him say, "Yes, sir, yes, Senator. That's right. Oh, no. I think it's going to get better. You know that was kind of a funny question. Okay, well we'll, okay, yes sir, right-o, okay." Hangs up. Scott says—turns around and he says to the room—"We've got to be prepared for

the spin room," you know, the after-room where you go? Scott and there was a communications guy, a little short fellow.

Kondracke: John [W.] Buckley.

Berman: Yes, thank you. John Buckley were sort of giving us the spiel about how Jack really did fine, or whatever it was. There was no way to spin your way out of it. It was an absolutely horrible performance. And after the campaign there was an article in the *Post*, I think, and I was quoted saying that, it was an autopsy of the campaign, and I was quoted saying that it was my responsibility, that we did a lousy job on the prep. And this again was the good Jack. He called me up and he said, "That was really, what's the word?" And I said, "I don't know. What word are you looking for?" He said, "The Yiddish word." And I said "Well Jack, you know, there are a lot of Yiddish words. What are you trying to convey?" He said, "That you're a standup guy." So I said 'mensch.' He said [imitating], "Mensch, I love that word mensch. How do you spell that word?" And I said, "I don't know. You know it's Yiddish. I think it's m-e-n"—whatever I said. And he's like [imitating], "That's a great word. We gotta use that word. That's our motto." And I said, "Okay, Jack, it's our motto." And he said, "We've gotta have lunch. Let's have lunch. There's this fish place my buddy owns on K Street. I want you to come and have lunch." I said, "All right. When do you want to do it?" "No, we'll do it right now!" I said, "Jack, it's like 10:30 in the morning. I'll meet you there at noon." So we show up at McCormick & Schmick [seafood restaurant] at noon, and Jack comes in and he says to me, "I drove myself here, and I parked my car in that little side lane. Do you think that's a problem?" I said, "Jack, it's a huge problem. You can't just

leave your car." So I said, "Give me the keys." So I leave Jack. I go get the keys. He had a Lincoln Continental, it's one of these enormous cars. I find a garage, park the car, come back. We sit and have lunch, and Jack is talking, and we're talking about all these different things, and reminiscing and BS-ing, and he and I—again, did not have a close relationship—and he said to me, he thanked me again for saying what I said in the paper, and I said, "Well, you know it wasn't that big of a deal. Let's not gild the lily," and Jack says, "Yes, Mensch, so we're going to be mensches," and he said, "Could we be mensches or menschi?" We got into this whole discussion of what's the plural of mensch. And then I said to him, "Jack, are you going to run for president?" And he said to me, "I don't know. Should I?" And I said, "Look, running for president's a very personal decision, but if you're going to do it, you've got to start thinking about it. You've got to start planning, you can't do it seat of your pants. It's a big undertaking. You probably have to raise \$100 million." Imagine that in those days. And for the Party, I was thinking, because in those days most people still took the matching [Presidential Election Campaign Fund], although Bush changed all that. And Jack went through, and then I'll go and if you want to do another one of these, happy to do it. Jack went through an analysis of each of the possible contenders, and the only thing I remember was thinking to myself, "You know, I agree with everything he's saying about these people." And he talked about Bush and Forbes, and I don't know. There were a bunch of people who ended up not running, who were kind of being rumored about. He even talked about [Richard B.] Dick Cheney, who, I don't know personally how he felt about him, but he wasn't enormously fond of his politics. He didn't believe in intervention. You know Jack didn't like

intervention kind of foreign policy. And so those are the highlights of my memories, and I'm happy to talk to you more about Jack.

Kondracke: Just one final question about this. I was told that Dole never forgave Kemp the debate performance.

Berman: That's true.

Kondracke: What did Dole ever say about it?

Berman: Well, you know everything with Dole is indirection. I've only heard Dole swear twice in his life. One time on a very personal matter, and the other time was talking about Jack's debate performance. He said to me "You know, that was goddamn disappointing." And I've got to say it was a big thing with Dole, and he really kept his distance from Jack after that on the campaign trail.

[end of interview]