JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

[J. DAVID] DAVE HOPPE

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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 David Hoppe, who was Jack Kemp's chief of staff from 1984-1988. Today is January 17, 2012: we're at the offices of Minority Whip John Kyle in the U.S. Senate in the U.S. Capitol, and I am Morton Kondracke. You became Jack Kemp's chief of staff in October 1984, but when did you actually first meet him?

Dave Hoppe: I first met him shortly after I came to the Hill, because his offices were down the hallway from the Republican Study Committee, which is where I worked, and [Randal C.] Randy Teague, who was his chief of staff at that time, worked a lot with [Edwin J.] Ed Feulner [Jr.], who was the head of the Study Committee, on a number of projects, but obviously the tax ideas were just taking form then. I started in January of 1976, to work for the Study Committee, and they were just starting to put together some of the tax ideas of that time. Because the offices were literally right down the hall from ours, maybe four doors, I had occasion to meet him, both as a staff member at the Republican Study Committee and later on as a staff member for then-Congressman [C. Trent] Lott. I worked with Jack's staff and Jack from time to time. I think the first meeting we ever had that was a substantive meeting together was one in the summer of '78, when we were working on Humphrey-Hawkins [Full Employment Act of 1978].

Kondracke: Explain what that was.

Hoppe: It was a bill to say that basically, to order the Fed to look at unemployment as well as monetary policy and use unemployment as one of the key levers on which to judge how to gauge monetary policy as opposed to just looking at the amount of money, interest rates, etc.

So what Jack decided to do was start pushing for House votes on tax policy, saying that this was an important part as well. Not that the Feds shouldn't look at tax policy, but that tax policy was critical to growth and to keeping unemployment low while having high growth. Because there was a feeling that there was a trade-off between unemployment and growth. The Phillips Curve, I think I'm expressing that, if not exactly correctly, at least the gist of it. We had a core group of people from Jack's office, from the Study Committee and from some of the other offices, who worked together to develop amendments, and we'd have meetings from time to time in Jack's office. That was the first time I remember sitting down with him personally in a meeting.

Kondracke: So then you left Kemp's staff—I just want to get the timeframes here—in September of '88. What did you do after that?

Hoppe: I went in September '88 to join the Heritage Foundation as vice president for government affairs. The Heritage board met I guess quarterly, and I had come on literally about a week after that quarterly board meeting, which took place in early September. Because of the position I had the board had to vote on my being hired to this position by the Heritage Foundation, and it was really, for all intents and purposes, a formality. If that's who they wanted, nobody's going to say, "Gee, Ed, we don't want your choice for this." So on the day in December that the board approved the decision, I went to Ed and told him that I had been approached by [Daniel R.] Dan Coats, who had been named to finish out the term that [James Danforth] Dan Quayle was serving in the United States Senate because Quayle had been elected vice president. That I'd been approached by Senator Coats, or

Congressman Coats—he wasn't sworn in yet at that point—to run his Senate office, and I had said yes. Ed was not a happy person at this. Ed hired me on the Hill in 1976. He was running the Study Committee and he'd hired me. I worked for two and a half years while he was there. Then he went to the Heritage Foundation. Once again, Ed just thought that was a little sudden for me to be leaving Heritage after three months. And indeed it was sudden and indeed it was unfair. The reason it happened is because Dan Coats had been a staff member for Dan Quayle when he [Quayle] was in the House. My wife [Karen Hoppe] worked for Dan Quayle when he was in the House. Dan Quayle's chief of staff in the House was an older gentleman, great guy, who just didn't want to travel. He wasn't going to fly out to Fort Wayne. So my wife did those. She was the one who ended up, when they had to have a staff person flying out there, who did it. So she had known Dan Coats, who was the district rep for Congressman Quayle at that time, very well. We'd known them as friends. When Congressman Quayle ran for the Senate and was elected, Dan Coats ran for the House and was elected to succeed Quayle in that seat. So Karen and I, my wife Karen and I, had known Dan and Marsha [Coats] as peers before he was ever elected to the House. And she worked, in fact, to help set up his office for the first two months or so that he was in office and then our first child was born shortly after that. We knew the Coats very well on a personal basis as well as on a professional basis, so when he called and said, "I'd really like you to do this; I'm going to have to have two elections in four years and that's a tough situation. I know you've worked and done these things. I think you can do this." I said, "Are you asking me as a friend or are you asking me as an employee?" He said, I'm asking you as a friend." I said, "As a friend I'll say yes." Financially it was not—I was better off at

Heritage. But he was a friend; he thought I could be useful, and you do things for your friends. Now Ed thought I did something against him as a friend. It was not a fun couple of days. And Ed had every right to be unhappy, but he did alright as well, because I think Margo [D.] Carlisle ended up going there after that and that's a step up.

Kondracke: What was your relationship with Kemp like after you left his office?

Hoppe: He was fine with it. Jack was encouraging me to go out and look and helped. He talked to the Heritage people on my behalf. He had chosen up or out when he started running for president. He'd made it clear he was not going to run, even though the timing would have worked out for him to get out of the presidential campaign if it didn't succeed, and get back in the House campaign in his old House seat. He had decided, "That's not what I'm going to do. If I don't get the Republican nomination, I'm going to do something else. I don't know what, but I'll do something else."

Kondracke: Did he feel that he'd done all he could as a congressman?

Hoppe: I think he felt that being a congressman with [Ronald W.] Reagan was pretty good because he had the ability, I think, to put some ideas in. I think he felt being a congressman if George [H.W.] Bush were the president would not be as fulfilling, because he was going to be somebody way on the outside. And once again, personally, they had a fine relationship but they were two very different personalities. Whereas I think Reagan's, well, being a quieter personality than Kemp's was, understood Jack's personality and had

seen a lot of people like that, I suspect, in Hollywood you have a lot of people like Jack Kemp. Who are proselytizing what they are after and want to achieve. So I think that was part of it. But also I think he just felt, "I've been here 18 years now. I got two tax bills passed, and not a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I've pretty well done what I can do."

Kondracke: What was your connection with Kemp during his HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] years?

Hoppe: I was working up here the whole time for Dan Coats. From time to time we'd talk but there really wasn't that much. I didn't need to bother him. I mean, he was kind to invite me down for lunch once or twice, but he didn't need any of my advice. He had great staff people. Jack obviously knew what he wanted to do both at HUD and what he wanted the rest of the government to do while he was at HUD, whether he had any power to do it or not. He was not shy about those things.

Kondracke: Did you talk to him about all that stuff?

Hoppe: We maybe discussed it in general terms, but not specifically, no.

Kondracke: And how about in the Empower America days?

Hoppe: Once again, I was working at that time I was working for Senator Lott. I'd talk to him, he'd call up and meet with Trent. I'd sometimes sit in the meeting, sometimes not, depending upon what

they wanted to talk about. So from time to time I talked to him then, but I guess my own feeling was he didn't need me bothering him. He had a lot of things and a lot of people and he certainly didn't need my advice on how to run things. So I mostly left it up to him—if he was interested.

Kondracke: Did you take part in the '96 campaign at all?

Hoppe: No. I was approached by a couple of people when Jack was named as the potential nominee. I had no idea if it was their idea or somebody else's idea. They said, "So, you'll probably be taking a couple of months off now to be with Jack." And I said, "First of all, I'm not sure Senator Lott, who has just become majority leader, wants me to do that. And secondly, I have no idea that Jack wants me to do it. And thirdly, I have no idea that Senator [Robert J.] Dole and the people in his campaign want me to. I had a good relationship with Scott [W.] Reed, but my relationship with certain other people in the Dole hierarchy wasn't nearly as good.

Kondracke: Namely?

Hoppe: Sheila.

Kondracke: Sheila [P.] Burke.

Hoppe: Yes. This is an anecdote about myself, but there's a guy named Doug Badger who worked up here for a long time, then he worked in the White House—he worked at HHS [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services], worked at the White House. He's an

expert on health care affairs, I mean very, very knowledgeable. Technically knowledgeable as well. Doug told me that a friend of his who worked in Dole's office came and said to him, "Boy, Doug. Sheila really hates you. You're just a pain. You are such a pain in the ass. She just really hates you. Well it's nothing like Hoppe. I mean, she doesn't hate anybody as much as she hates Hoppe, but, she really hates you." Sheila and I did not see eye to eye on many things.

Kondracke: She was pretty liberal, wasn't she? Was it ideological?

Hoppe: It was ideological.

Kondracke: Did it have to do with Lott versus Dole?

Hoppe: No. I mean, for her it might have. For me it didn't. For me it was all ideology and substance. I suspect for her it was the same thing. I had a very different view on certain issues.

Kondracke: Let's get back to your hiring. Did you get hired as part of a gear-up to the '88 campaign for Jack Kemp? I mean, how did it come about that you got hired?

Hoppe: Joe [O.] Rogers, who had sort of fallen into being chief of staff after [David M.] Dave Smick left because he was running the Conference and then Dave Smick left, and so Joe sort of took on the other. I think Jack was sort of searching, but Joe was a great guy. He was a trained economist. I think he had his doctorate from Duke, but I'd have to go back and look, in economics, and did Foreign Ops [Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Committee on

Appropriations] Committee stuff along with Michele [Van Cleave.] But he handled most of the economic, the bank side and those sorts of things, and ended up as a U.S. ambassador to the Asian Development Bank under the Reagan administration. But Joe was there, and he left in I would say late spring, early summer of '84, and so the job was open. He came to me and he said before he left, he said, "You've got to find somebody to do this job for Jack. You've got to get somebody in there because John [D. Mueller] doesn't want it and in fact that's not the way John's mind works. That's something he wouldn't want other people to do." He said, "There's just nobody there. Give me some thoughts, give me some names." And I said, "Okay, fine." And we went to the Convention in Dallas in '84 and Senator Lott was chairman of the platform committee, and Jack was on it, and a number of others, so I'd be working closely with Jack actually from about the 1980 platform effort forward. And there was a lot of interaction with his office because he was chairman of one of the platform subcommittees there in 1980, and was again in 1984.

Kondracke: Was it the same job, on defense?

Hoppe: It may have been. I'd have to go back and look to be sure. In '84 I know it was. I think in '80 it was as well. Because in '84 I think we had [Robert W. "Bob"] Kasten [Jr.] be chairman of the tax whatever we called it subcommittee for the platform. At any rate, I sort of mulled it over and thought about it and finally decided that I didn't know of anybody else.

Kondracke: Were you chief of staff for Lott?

Hoppe: I was chief of staff in his Whip's office. [Thomas H.] Tommy Anderson [Jr.] actually about that time, who had been his chief of staff for many years in his House office was nominated as ambassador to one of the Caribbean Islands, and was confirmed, I think, in September of '84 he was confirmed by the Senate to that job. So he was leaving, but Senator Lott wanted a Mississippian to be his chief of staff in his Mississippi office, which was exactly the right thing to do obviously. I'd been thinking about what Joe said and I finally decided that maybe I was the right one to do this. And, Senator Lott, I have nothing but thanks for every opportunity and everything he taught me and offered me. But this was a time, it seemed to me, that where things were headed—Congressman Lott at that time and I had had a conversation and he said, "You know, the day after this election, in November of 1984," he said, "You know, Ronald Reagan is going to be president. But everything on the presidential level for the next—will start." And he said, "If Jack wants to do it he better get started, because he'll be behind other people." We're already thinking that. And obviously the Bush people were and rightly so. This wasn't disloyal; it was simply the fact. And so that got me thinking as well. And so I went to Senator Lott and said, "I'm thinking about this." And he was supportive. And he said, "We've got a great relationship and I wish you'd stay, but if you're thinking of doing this, I think you'd be good for Jack. I think you could do a good job and be helpful because clearly he needs you and a lot of other people." You know what I'm saying. I wasn't the only one he needed by any means. But he said, "He needs you and a lot of other people to make this happen. So, we'll be working together a lot anyway." So he was supportive of my doing that. He wasn't pushing in any way but he was supportive of my doing that and I went to Jack and I talked to him and he said, "Have

you talked to Trent about this?" And I said, "Yes, I have, actually. I wouldn't come to you unless I'd talked to him." He said, "If he's alright with it, that would be great."

Kondracke: Clearly the '88 race was part of the decision, and you were switching from being the chief of staff to the Minority Whip to being a congressman's—

Hoppe: Well, I was actually hired to be both the chief of staff in the office as well as the chief of staff in the Republican Conference, which Jack was chairman of. Jack had combined those roles under Joe Rogers because what he did with Joe was he took Joe as chief of staff for the Conference and made him also his chief of staff.

Kondracke: Trent Lott was for Kemp for president, right?

Hoppe: Yes he was.

Kondracke: So, at the '84 Convention, did Kemp's slot as defense chairman, was that part of the '88 effort?

Hoppe: Lott saw it as such. He believed that Jack had clearly made his mark in economics and tax policy and those sorts of things and had to broaden his appeal and knowledge and base and defense and foreign policy were areas, if you're going to be elected president, you had to have some base in. So he was one of the ones who urged Jack many years before that to move over to the Foreign Ops subcommittee and to engage in these issues. Now Jack has always been interested in defense issues and foreign policy issues, but he had

focused so much time and attention in his first really six or eight years that it's not that he had given short shrift, it's just that nobody can spend as much time as he spent on tax issues and have enough time left to do the others. So Lott was part of that strategy of saying to Jack this is a way for you to broaden yourself. And, all things considered it was a little thing, but it did put him in the middle of a lot of good people. [William J.] Bill Schneider [Jr.] had already been working for Jack at that point and there are very few people in this country who are as knowledgeable as Bill Schneider.

Kondracke: So, what did you do at the Convention, exactly?

Hoppe: In the '84 I was, since Lott was chairman of the platform committee, I worked on that. Now John [R.] Bolton was actually the executive director. John knew Trent a little bit but not very well. I was sort of the interpreter between John and [William] Bill Gribbin, who was writing the platform.

Kondracke: Who was he?

Hoppe: Bill, he's retired now, but he wrote a big chunk of the '80 platform and he wrote the '84, the '88, the '92, the '96, the 2000 and the 2004 and the 2008 platforms.

Kondracke: What was the job in-between conventions?

Hoppe: Mostly working at the Policy Committee. He worked for Vice President Quayle as his Senate liaison for all four years he was vice president. Then he went back I think to the Policy Committee for a

short period of—no, he went to the House to work for Henry [J.] Hyde on the Policy Committee over there for two years and then when they took over the House, Hyde was going to become chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I think it was Judiciary Committee first, and Bill is not a lawyer and that is not his background, so actually we then started to work together for Senator Lott in the Whip's office. And then Bill stayed on and worked for us in the leader's office until he retired. Bill is a marvelous writer and a true genius. I mean literally a true genius.

Kondracke: You said at the Miller Center that the biggest issue of the '84 campaign was a comma. How did that all unfold?

Hoppe: As we were working on the platform it was clear that [James A.] Jim Baker and [Richard D. "Dick"] Darman wanted a little more flexibility on taxes than the Reaganites on Capitol Hill wanted on taxes. And as we'd started up in the language, everything we were writing we'd send down to the White House. And it kept coming back. Darman was editing it. I don't know whether Jim Baker looked at it or not, but Darman was clearly Baker's right-hand person. So the presumption was that what he was telling us was what Baker wanted as well. Everything came back opening the door to doing something on raising taxes, to be blunt about it. And as we looked at this, we kept getting closer and closer on the words. And I think Bill was the first one to realize. And I can't tell you how I remember whether we put in the comma or took out the comma, but whichever way it was, it changed the whole meaning of the phrase.

Kondracke: The phrase was "We oppose tax increases which would hurt economic growth." If you put a comma in there it means that all tax increases hurt economic growth. Do you remember who wrote it with a comma?

Hoppe: It was Bill Griffin who wrote it with a comma. Yes, and we talked about this. It wasn't just, gee, I'll put this in there.

Kondracke: Was Jack involved in the discussion?

Hoppe: Yes, and Bob Kasten was involved in it, and Trent, obviously was involved in it. I'm trying to think who the Senate co-chairman was that year. I can't remember off the top of my head.

Kondracke: Where was Dole in all this?

Hoppe: Not involved.

Kondracke: Not involved?

Hoppe: No. He was chairman of the Finance Committee, was happy to be so. He made pretty clear what his views were and weren't exactly what Kemp's were, and Lott was pretty much a Kemp person, not a Dole person.

Kondracke: And this was just the platform anyway, right?

Hoppe: Yes. And I guess his figuring was Reagan's the president, he's running for re-election. How is this possibly going to be different

from what it was before? I don't think Dole cared or worried about it very much. I don't remember a time when he stuck his oar in the water and said, "What the hell are you doing over there?" I think he just looked at it as these guys are playing around in the sand box and it's a sand box I don't particularly care about right now.

Kondracke: So, how much back and forth and sturm und drang was there over this comma?

Hoppe: It got to be quite a bit, in fact to the point where Lott called Baker and said just before we went to Dallas, maybe a week or two before we went to Dallas, and said "I don't want Dick Darman in Dallas. I don't him want him near Dallas. I don't want him on the phone with anybody in Dallas. If you've got something to say, you say it to me. I don't want any games played." And I was told that Darman spent a couple of weeks in Maine.

Kondracke: What had preceded that? Were there angry words over the phone, or what?

Hoppe: I can't tell you I was privy to all the phone calls, because Lott would have some that I wasn't. But yes, there was unhappiness and there was tension. But Lott said… and we did this in 1980, as well as in 1984. We figured out who would be—you know, some states have had the same person on the platform committee for ever and ever. [Ruth] Ruthie Johnson from Idaho, a woman who was always on the platform committee. Solid, hard-core conservative, just the nicest person. She and [David S.] Dave Broder were best buddies. I think they only saw each other once every four years at the Convention, but

Broder and she would go to breakfast. She was just a wonderful woman, but she was just as hard-core as you can be. She was always on the platform committee. So, we went and lobbied Ruthie Johnson to make sure she was where we wanted her to be. And she was, because naturally she was going to be there, but also this was right, and she listened to [James A. "Jim"] McClure a lot. So we sort of worked the people we wanted to be chairmen and vice-chairmen of the subcommittees, and to the degree we could, to make sure we had good, solid Reaganites who were tax-cutting Reaganites as other members of the platform committee. There's only a little bit you can do with that because the states—but, what we did in 1980 is get a whole bunch of senators and House members to say, I would like to be on the platform committee. From those states that didn't have sort of a person they always sent. Most of those guys could seed themselves in. We did the same thing in 1984. We didn't need to use quite as many because we knew who the core Reaganites were at that time. So we literally worked to seed the right people onto the platform committee and we put the right people on the subcommittee, because we knew it would come out of the subcommittee. And when it got their invisibility were they really going to change it? Were they really going to have a fight in public to change it? And Lott said, yes, after that. He said, "All I have to do is make sure this works from here to here." Now, between then and that time, what was being written back and forth. But Lott sort of held the comma for the end.

Kondracke: So the comma stayed in.

Hoppe: Without a fight.

Kondracke: Without a fight.

Hoppe: By the time he got there the fighting was all done.

Kondracke: So Baker and Darman just gave into it.

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: There were other people at the White House who were involved in this that you mentioned—[James W.] Jim Cicconi and [James P.] Jim Pickerton. What role did they play?

Hoppe: They weren't—the whole fight on the taxes and the comma, it was Baker and Darman. I'm sure at the White House they had input into how they were doing it. But Lott wasn't happy with those guys around. He was not a Darman fan.

Kondracke: Since there was no question about who was going to get nominated and all, this sort of became the centerpiece of press coverage of the Convention, right?

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: So was that with the intention of raising Jack's profile, or just establishing a point or—?

Hoppe: It was both. To some degree we didn't want to make this a fight with Jack, but we wanted it to be a fight on Jack's ideas. And Jack's ideas would triumph. But it was not solely that. It was also to

make the point that in Reagan's next four years—I think I reflect the view of Senator Lott, although we never had a specific conversation about this—that the profile of the Reagan administration was that they took fewer and fewer risks with each passing year legislatively. And you wanted to make sure you could hold them as much as possible to a line. And if they weren't going to take risks, what you wanted to do was make it riskier for them to do something than not. And so this added to that.

Kondracke: I mean the whole history on this is that the '81 tax bill is what you wanted, and then '82 and '83 and '84 were peel-backs on all of that—

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: Which interestingly Trent Lott supported and Jack Kemp did not. So, what was the byplay between Lott and Kemp on all those votes—TEFRA [Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982] and so on?

Hoppe: I think they were sort of in agreement to disagree. Because Lott was inclined to vote against the '82 tax bill, and Tommy Anderson and I were very much opposed to what they were trying to do. So Tommy and, I worked very closely with Tommy to try to do everything we could to keep Senator Lott—Congressman Lott at the time—against that bill. We could cover everything but one thing, a personal meeting with President Reagan. When he went down there Tommy and I just sat there and commiserated because we knew we were dead. There's no way we could beat Reagan. Not at all.

Kondracke: Did Kemp get called down too?

Hoppe: What?

Kondracke: Did Kemp get called down?

Hoppe: I think he did, I think he did. Although I can't guarantee that's—I think he just said, "Mr. President, I think you're wrong." And Lott thought he was wrong but was unwilling, especially as the whip, to go against. By that time lot had established himself as a pretty good vote counter. Eighty-one was sort of trial by fire on whether you were a good vote counter as Whip, not so much on the tax stuff, although that was important, but on the reconciliation bill, which had been voted in June. And we had seven or eight critical votes over two days, and we never won more of them, one of them, by more than four votes, and we never lost one. Lott earned his spurs that day.

Kondracke: Lott was number 2; Kemp was number 3. What role did Kemp play in 'whipping'? Any?

Hoppe: Yes. I mean, there'd be people who Jack was good with, talk to. And that's what Lott would do. He knew sort of who matched up with who. But also Jack was so far out in front that it was, people knew where he was and the substance of the policy and Jack was in many ways more, as the Conference chairman, the organizer and get sort of the whole Conference 'whipped up'. And that got some people, now there were some, Claudine Schneider and Olympia Snowe and some of the others who were tougher votes to get on this. But Jack

was helpful in sort of being the megaphone. With certain people he was very helpful; there were other people—obviously Barber [B.] Conable [Jr.] didn't want to see Jack come around and talk to him. They got along, they got along.

Kondracke: As far as Jack was treading on Conable's turf.

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: How much animus was there in the Conference against Jack because he was treading on turf that he didn't have any right to be treading on?

Hoppe: In the whole Conference not that much. It really tended to be those guys who were ranking Republicans on committees, especially that had been there a long time, and if you looked at that time, many of them were more moderate members. They'd been there a long time; they tended to be Rust Belt and Northeastern. If you look at the timing of it they reflected—

Kondracke: He was Rust Belt and Northeastern.

Hoppe: Yes. They tended to feel, what's this guy doing? We're supposed to be sticking to our committee work. You're not supposed to be getting out of your traces here. But for the most part the broad number of the Conference felt it was fine and they tended to be Kempites, or want to do something different. And their view was we sure would like to be in the majority, and Jack's ideas were ideas that

could make them more popular and hopefully help bring them to a majority.

Kondracke: But, here he is a leader, and he is opposing the White House on policy that is front and center, so how much guff did he take for that?

Hoppe: There was some, but once again, if you look at that vote, there was a very significant core of Republicans, and when Lott whipped it, it was not, I'm really mad at Jack because I did something and he didn't. It was, I understand; I understand where he is.

Kondracke: And how much guff did he take from the White House?

Hoppe: My guess is significant, but I was not close enough to Jack at that time in terms of a daily basis to really tell you. But my guess is significant, because I know Lott was getting a ton of it before he switched, and he switched fairly close to the end.

Kondracke: Let me go back to the '84 Convention. The second big issue was the dollar as good as gold? Tell me about that.

Hoppe: We were fighting on a Kemp area that Jack felt strongly about and most other people said, "Okay, if you do you do." Jack had a lot of converts on tax policy; he didn't have very many converts on monetary policy. And mostly because it tended to be so arcane they didn't really know whether he was right or wrong and they didn't really have much ability to change it anyway. So what you were doing was talking at the outside to these guys at the Fed [Federal Reserve Board]

who were independent and could do what they wanted. It wasn't something you were going to change by legislative action, and most of them understood it that way and if it wasn't in their bailiwick, "Okay, fine. Jack talks about this stuff a lot, I guess that's okay. He's probably right because he knows a lot more than we do on a lot of these economic subjects," but nobody was invested in it other than Jack.

Kondracke: It never took. Did Jack ever proselytize with Lott to try to get him to be a gold person?

Hoppe: Oh, yes. And Lott listened to it and probably felt Jack may be right on this. But I can't think—and there may have been some—but I can't think of a convert in the way he got converts on taxes. Because at times when I was working for Lott we'd be talking about something and he'd ask me a question, which was obviously a leading question that had to do with tax policy. What he was trying to do was make sure that I understood the Kemp line because that was his line and he believed it.

Kondracke: Was Lott a supply-sider from the get go?

Hoppe: Probably not. He was pretty standard Republican. But he watched what Jack was doing and what Jack was saying and it made sense to him. And he knew it was a different message which was something he knew Republicans needed. And if you look at the substance and how supply-side works if you start implementing it—how do people work? And he believed that they worked along the

supply-side model. It wasn't something that he had in his own head, but he came to it and was very sympathetic to it.

Kondracke: Describe the relationship between Lott and Kemp.

Hoppe: Lott admired Kemp and admired him as somebody who worked hard, dedicated to a cause, the cause was in Lott's belief right. In many ways Lott was a much more skillful legislator than Jack was. And Lott liked people to like him, or as Jack said, "I've been booed by 60,000 people. The fact that you guys are mad at me doesn't really cause me a lot of fear. It doesn't bother me." Well, Lott didn't like being booed by 60,000 people. He didn't like being booed by two. Having said that, he did believe these things and wanted to pursue them, but he sometimes was a little better at the personal relationships with people who are maybe not as willing to go here or there.

Kondracke: Were they similar in seniority?

Hoppe: Lott was elected in '72 and Jack was elected in '70. So Jack had two years on him.

Kondracke: Were they Chowder and Marching?

Hoppe: Both Chowder and Marching.

Kondracke: And so when Kemp got guff from Chowder and Marching and [Melvin R.] Mel Laird and those people, the seniors, did Lott align with Jack right from the get go?

Hoppe: I don't know for sure. My presumption is he probably did. Although in 1976 Lott ended up supporting [Gerald R.] Ford [Jr.] over Reagan.

Kondracke: Kemp stayed neutral in that.

Hoppe: Yes, and I mark it down to a Chowder and Marching relationship, because Ford was Chowder and Marching. The [Charles A.] Halleck stuff from '64, none of these guys knew that. I mean I guess I could have known, but it wasn't real for any of them. That whole thing of Ford challenging Halleck in '64 and [Charles E.] Goodell and all that might have been 100 years ago as far as they were concerned. Gerry Ford was their leader. He was a good guy. All of a sudden he became vice president/president and it was still good old Gerry from Chowder and Marching Society.

Kondracke: When Lott got into trouble as Senate majority leader over the [James] Strom Thurmond remark, what did Jack Kemp do in that?

Hoppe: They divided, and Lott was really hurt. Really. Because Jack basically said, "Come on, what are you doing?" Jack publicly said "You've got to apologize" and this, that and the other. He didn't say, "Trent Lott's no racist. For God's sakes, I worked with this guy for 20-30 years. Give me a break, he's no racist." He didn't say that. He said you ought to apologize. And he contacted Lanny [J.] Davis, and Lanny Davis came in and said what we should say and what we should do.

Kondracke: What does Lanny Davis have to do with Jack?

Hoppe: Lanny had said, "Call Jack," apparently, and said, "This is a big problem. You're a good guy; Lott seems like a good guy. You say he's a good guy. I'd like to help." And so, sort of tried to correct it. And I called Jack a couple of times and I said, "Jack, what are you doing? You've got to say what the truth is here. This has nothing to do with—this is a joke I heard a lot. When guys are 99 years-old there's just—you don't have a lot of conversation with them.

Kondracke: So just so everybody understands what this is. Trent Lott said at an event for Strom Thurmond—

Hoppe: The 100th birthday party for Strom Thurmond that they had down here. And they had a bunch of guys speak, and Lott was one of them. And he said, "Boy if you'd been president sooner this country would be a lot better off," which everybody thought meant gee, he ran for president in 1948, he's this Dixiecrat. Lott's a racist. Lott was reciting part of an inside story because Strom would always say, "Ah,that Tricia [Patricia Thompson Lott], I love her, she's such a pertty girl. You'd better hang onto her. I love that Tricia." And Trent would always say, "Ah, Strom, you should have been president. You should have been president, Strom. You're the greatest." He was retelling an inside joke, which we didn't handle well after it was done, but that's what was happening here. And so I heard that and I didn't think anything of it. Then it started getting a rise and I said, "This is ridiculous." And [Thomas A.] Tom Daschle's first comments were, "This is nothing, Trent Lott's no racist" sort of thing. He didn't say no racist, but he said—and then within about 24 hours they got to

Daschle and he didn't say another word. And it kept getting worse and worse and I didn't understand it. I can be blamed as much as anyone for this thing getting away, not being handled. Because the guy who was our press guy at time, Ron Bonjean, came to me and said, "This is a lot bigger than you know." I said, "Ron, the guy is 100 years old and this is something Trent Lott and he, every time they meet they talk about because Strom can't think of anything—I mean Strom is not exactly pushing on all cylinders here. I mean you don't have to be really sharp to figure that Strom's a little bit out of it. That was about the level of conversation you had with the guy. At this point his chief of staff [R.J.] Duke [Short] was going everywhere with him because they couldn't—they always had somebody with him if Duke couldn't be there because they couldn't do anything else.

Kondracke: So, Jack—

Hoppe: And Trent was very hurt by this.

Kondracke: Did Trent talk to Jack about it?

Hoppe: I don't know that they ever talked about it then. Because in the next few months, I wasn't the only one but I was one of the people that tried to mend the relationship, which it probably took a good year and a half to do.

Kondracke: When Kemp first came out and said in public "You have to apologize," this took you and Lott by surprise? How did you feel?

Hoppe: I couldn't understand why Jack wasn't going to defend his friend. Because that's what the guys after Lott were saying. By the time Jack said this I'd realized that we were in a pitched battle.

Kondracke: And Lott's majority leadership was hanging in the balance. Do you think that Kemp contributed to Lott's being dropped?

Hoppe: Yes, I did. Everybody did at that time. Anybody who didn't come to your defense. I mean, one of the reasons Lott did so much for Arlen Specter? Specter came to his defense and stood by him 100 percent and was one of the first people to do it and the first people to do it publicly.

Kondracke: So what did you say to Kemp?

Hoppe: I just said, "Jack, you have to understand this from Trent's point of view. He made an innocent remark that he'd made 100 times in private and there was no more racial comment to this than the man in the moon." What they were hanging on him is—some of them said it but a lot of the guys implied it—is that the guy's a racist. And clearly the White House didn't want to fight that fight and they were ready to cut Lott loose about as early as anybody.

Kondracke: So what did Kemp say to you?

Hoppe: He said, "It doesn't make any difference. You've got to apologize." Then Lott said some things about I didn't mean it this way and they called me up again and they said, "That's ridiculous, I've just got to say flat out, 'I apologize, I'm wrong.'" I just said, "Jack, he's

not going to say that. Because he doesn't think he said anything wrong. You've got to understand where his mind is. This is where his mind is." Jack's way of helping was to send Lanny Davis our way.

Kondracke: Lanny Davis came to you and did what?

Hoppe: I don't know that he and Lott ever talked person to person. They talked over the phone. Because I talked to him just briefly and he said, "I want to see if I can help. Maybe I can talk to Lott." And I said, "Fine." So I said, "Lott, Lanny Davis would like to talk to you. Kemp thinks it would be a good idea." I'm quite sure that Lott talked to him on the phone but I don't think they ever met. Lott was talking to Dick Morris at the same time. There was way too much advice without very much thinking. And once again it was my job to do the thinking and I didn't.

Kondracke: How did they patch it up, Kemp and Lott, or did they?

Hoppe: They did, they did. Time was the great healer here. But I tried to impress upon Jack how Trent felt and why he felt so betrayed so that Jack would understand his mindset. And I tried to impress upon Trent that Jack just didn't understand it and he made a big mistake. Jack had just flat out made a mistake. I don't know whether I was ever successful in trying to get Jack to say I'm sorry, because Trent wanted to hear that. But I know it's probably a year before they met. And then a couple more times and time and time heals a lot of those things.

Kondracke: You get bounced for being a Senate majority leader over something, you'd think that everybody who was not with you was your enemy. I would think that that would be difficult to overcome.

Hoppe: Certainly for a while you do. And some of those people remain, people who are on your list of enemies. And others you're able to change your mind about. Jack was one of those who he was able to change his mind about. I don't think the relationship was ever what it was, but it certainly was a world better than it was for that first year after that.

Kondracke: Are there any other significant episodes in the Lott-Kemp relationship?

Hoppe: In some ways it's difficult to express. They really were two people who while operating in their own spheres always came together on these issues, because Trent just believed Jack was right. And if Jack needed some help doing it, he was there to help. He thought Jack should do something one way, he'd tell Jack. They really were very close in a way that you don't often see elected officials get close. It wasn't like a brother relationship, but it was as close a professional relationship as you see. Especially among two people who are at senior positions in their party, have been elected to leadership, and party because their vision was so much different. Jack's vision was, maybe I'll be president some day. Trent Lott's vision was, I want to be a senator. Because if you're a Southern guy, you don't imagine, a Southern Republican especially, you don't imagine yourself being president. But you've watched all these Democrats be senator for 30

and 40 and 50 years. And Lott had the job he could ever imagine himself being in, which is Senate majority leader.

Kondracke: Were they social friends too, I mean Joanne [Kemp] and—?

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: So he was always in the back ield. I mean, Lott took some risk, I would guess, coming out for Jack for president in ’88—

Hoppe: Well, he was one of those people in ’84. At the ’84 Convention you had, and the first one is Connie Mack reminds me all the time when he sees me, is [Cornelius H. M.] Connie Mack [IV], who came out and said, “I’m for Jack for president.”

Kondracke: Connie Mack came out at the ’84 Convention and said he was for Jack for president.

Hoppe: And Trent was clearly there as well. In ’80 part of what he was trying to do was get Jack the vice presidential nomination. That’s what one of his goals was.

Kondracke: What did he do at the ’80 convention for Jack?

Hoppe: The platform stuff. To get Jack in the middle of the platform. And selling the Reagan tax cut was not a foregone conclusion because the Republican senators were not, I mean [William V. “Bill”] Roth was, but he was in a distinct minority on the 10-10-10 [tax cuts].

Obviously Reagan capturing the nomination, all those things. [John G.] Tower was chairman of the ’80 platform, and Lott was the vice chairman and Otis [R.] Bowen from Indiana, who was governor at that time was the other. It’s always a senator, a congressman and a governor. Bowen’s wife [Carol Hahn Bowen] was ill at the time so he wasn’t very involved at all. But we spent an enormous amount of time doing things that Senator Tower was not involved in but didn’t care if we did or not, like lining up the right people for the subcommittees, getting the right subcommittee chairmen, getting all these House members involved. We had a ton of House members involved, and a few senators. But the senators we had involved were steering committee senators. But Tower, he wanted to write the platform and what it looked like and the preamble were the things were most important to him. He brought, I remember, we’d gone through and we’d had all the committee meetings all around the country. That was [William E.] Bill Brock’s idea. So we maybe had half a dozen, eight. We had one in Los Angeles, we had one in Tampa, St. Pete, we had one in Philadelphia, we had one in New York, we had one in Quad Cities in Iowa. We’d gone all over the country to have these hearings just to try and get people involved and see Republicans and Tower cared a lot about that. And he cared a lot about how the platform was put together. So we had the subcommittee meetings and we’d written and gotten everything set, and had put together this lovely preamble that we thought was great. The morning before we finished up with the final document we presented to people, Tower had all the subcommittee chairmen and some of the staff up to his suite and comes out, and he’s got this whole new preamble. Bryce Harlow had written the new preamble and came to present it. Mr. Harlow is a legend at that time among Republicans. And he’d written a beautiful

preamble. It didn't exactly fit with the Reagan stuff—it wasn't contra, it just didn't fit in with the one we had, but that's what Tower wanted. And in the end he got what he wanted. And that was more important to him than some of these other things. What Lott was doing as vice chairman is helping to put this whole thing together. We got [David A.] Stockman as one of the subcommittee chairmen, we had Henry Hyde as the subcommittee chairman on the subcommittee that was doing abortion stuff. At that time, to go back to old issues, [George W.] Romney was either governor, or had recently just retired as governor of Michigan, and his wife was very pro-choice. She was in the lead-up to the Convention there involved in saying this that and the other but what she believed and this was an important issue and what we were going to do on it, because in 1976 they talked about it, but in 1980 we put it in the platform. So that was an issue too, not as big as some of the others because we handled it in a way that the platform was overwhelmingly pro-life. But Lott helped sort of set Kemp up through that process in doing that.

Kondracke: That was with the tax plank.

Hoppe: Tax plank at that time, yes.

Kondracke: Because Reagan was still not totally committed in your mind, or the party—?

Hoppe: We thought Reagan was, but we also thought there were a whole lot of people here who, all these, as a good House staffer, we were highly suspicious of senators and Senate staff and what they would do and how they would change things. So, we worked very

hard, and finally actually some time in June of 1980, you'd have to go back and look at the date, but as I recall it was like the second week of June. They had this big press conference with Republican senators outside here where they all came around and said we're for Ronald Reagan and they all said we're for his 30-30-30 plan and [Jacob] Jake [K.] Javitts was there and Bill Roth was there and I think Dole was there, but I can't be sure of that. You know, [Howard H.] Baker [Jr.] and all of them were there. It was sort of the Senate Republicans finally saying, okay, Reagan, you've won.

Kondracke: What had Lott tried to do to try to get Kemp to be vice president in 1980?

Hoppe: Mostly where Lott had influence was to work two places. Number one, to work on the platform committee and give Kemp as wide and as much importance and publicity on the tax plank, which was Reagan's tax plank, as possible. The second part was that Lott had come out early, and as the number two Republican—actually he was not number two at that time because he was not Whip. At that time, he was Research Committee chairman. But in the fall of 1979 there weren't a ton of elected Republicans in the House or the Senate who were Reagan-backers. And Reagan in sort of his announcement tour in November of that year came and gave a speech, one of them was in like Iowa and New Hampshire, and then he came here to Washington and went a couple of other places. But the one he gave in Washington was one of the rooms over in the Dirksen [Senate Office] Building and he had Kemp and Lott and I'd have to find out who the others were but there weren't a huge number of them. And Jack wasn't in a leadership position at that time; Lott was in an elected

leadership position, although about as low on the totem pole as you could find. That was something for the Reagan people. And Lott, Tommy Anderson had also worked real closely with [John P.] Sears and those guys in 1976. Even though Lott had been for Gerry Ford, Tommy had been for Reagan, and Tommy had put a lot of time and effort into it and Sears knew who he was very well and all those guys were very aware of Tommy. So Trent had an in with the campaign, some of which he lost when Sears and those guys got fired, other parts of which he kept on with because he was a leadership Republican House member who was for Reagan from Day One in the 1980 campaign. And so he had a least some ability and talked inside to whoever he could talk to.

Kondracke: Did anybody come out publicly for Kemp for vice president in '80?

Hoppe: You know, I should know and remember that but I don't.

Kondracke: So in 1984 at the Convention did Lott and Connie Mack say that they were for Kemp for president?

Hoppe: Connie Mack did, I know, and Lott was and said as much if he didn't say right at the Convention, he said as much afterwards. In fact when you got to 1988, the Senate seat opened up and Lott ran for the Senate seat and was not visible. Now he and I talked a lot and I'm sure he and Jack talked a lot of times when I wasn't there and he'd say, "Do this, do that, you gotta look here"—but he may have been uncommitted—just didn't take a position on the presidential thing because he wanted to make sure in Mississippi he didn't make

anybody mad, not that anybody—[W. Thad] Cochran had already gotten the other seat. There was nobody who was going to challenge him in the Republican Party, once Cochran, he and Cochran were the two big lights. But he still wanted not to make people mad. He and I talked as often as he wanted to talk and he would give me advice on things.

Kondracke: Planning the '88 campaign, the people who were involved who were members were Lott, was [Newton L. "Newt"] Gingrich involved in all this?

Hoppe: Yes, but more at the side. [John V.] Vin Weber was extremely closely involved and spent a lot of time on it, Connie Mack did. But Vin was somebody who was known to be knowledgeable and capable of day-to-day politics. There's a lot of members who you can't understand how they ever got elected, you talk to them and you think, how did this guy ever get elected? Well, they had somebody who knew how to get them elected. They might be a great member, but they just—Vin was one of those guys who knew how to get elected. He'd worked in party stuff. He'd worked in state political stuff, and he knew politics. And some of them just know politics, and Vin was one of those. And so Vin was extremely valuable from that point of view, in addition to being very close to Jack and a real Kempite. He was somebody who understood politics and could give you a cogent reason that this was the right thing to do or that was the wrong thing to do for political terms in a campaign. There's just not a lot of those.

Kondracke: Do you remember any memorable strategy meetings?

Hoppe: Some, and the reason I sort of chuckle there is I don't think I'm revealing any secretly-held confidences to tell you that [Charles R.] Charlie [Black, Jr.] and I were not exactly on the same page as far as the campaign.

Kondracke: Charlie Black.

Hoppe: Yes. I ended up working mostly with [Thomas P.] Tom Kemp and Vin and [Richard J.] Dick Fox, who was a businessman from Philadelphia, helped a lot, did a lot of fundraising for Jack. That was the core of the group.

Kondracke: What were your differences with Charlie?

Hoppe: The major differences had to do with financial stuff. The Kemp campaign ended up pretty significantly in the red and one of the things Tom felt most strongly about is that Jack not be left with a lot of bills he couldn't pay. So there was always this tension between running a big name presidential campaign and having a strategy to win that put resources in the right place at the right time. And the resources were not overwhelming in the Kemp campaign. We did okay.

Kondracke: How much money did he raise?

Hoppe: Oh, I'd have to go back and look. I don't remember.

Kondracke: But Charlie was spending it?

Hoppe: It was being spent pretty freely.

Kondracke: What did they spend it on that you thought they shouldn't?

Hoppe: You know, you had offices, you had a lot of people employed, you had consultants, we had nice offices in a high rise over in Rosslyn [Virgina] and all these sorts of things. You know, we weren't the vice president of the United States. We were not going to raise the money George Bush was going to raise. And Tom knew that and it became clear that we weren't. Jack did very well in the Republican Jewish community because he was such a forward and aggressive supporter of Israel. And Dick Fox was very good at raising money in that community for him. And others were too but Dick—I remember Lott said to me at the Super Bowl in '87—Kemp did his usual Super Bowl thing and I don't think I even went down. But after it Lott had gone down and they came back and they would always have a couple of political meetings at these. Lott came back to me and he said, "Listen to Dick Fox. He's the only guy in your campaign who knows what the hell he's doing." He said, "Listen to him." So, I listened to him. And Dick was someone who was very worried. The part that made Dick and Tom a little anxious is whenever they got a report from the treasurer of the campaign it was never the same report twice. There was always a shifting of categories and things. These were guys, I mean, Tom was a very successful businessman. Dick was a very successful businessman. These guys knew how businesses run. And they said, I can't make heads or tails of this. I can't compare any two statements; they're never the same. If somebody is doing this to you, you think, gee, why? There's ways of doing it, even in campaigns. I

realize they're different from businesses but there's ways of doing this, and they were anxious about it. And so I tended to work more with them than I did with the campaign.

Kondracke: How did Charlie Black get picked?

[pause]

Hoppe: Jack had been very close to Charlie for years. In fact, one of the things Jack did after Charlie and John Sears and others were basically fired from the Reagan campaign the night of the New Hampshire victory, Jack within a couple weeks after that had Charlie to lunch at the Capitol Hill Club, which is the Republican club, and very visibly there, and it was to help Charlie. Charlie was a friend, and by God Charlie was down, and he was going to help. It was a very nice thing for a friend to do and obviously—

Kondracke: Just the two of them?

Hoppe: Just the two of them, but very public, very visible, it was meant to send a message to people that Jack Kemp still considered Charlie a really good guy and one of the people to listen to. They had been very close for a long time. Charlie was the guy who Jack wanted to run his campaign, and it was a foregone conclusion that that would be the case.

Kondracke: Did Charlie bring [Edward J.] Ed Rollins in?

Hoppe: You know, I want to say I think so, but I think it was more Ed coming and Charlie being okay with it as long as it was clear that Charlie was running the campaign and Ed was an advisor. Charlie is a very accommodating guy as long as you set the planets where they ought to be, and you set the sun where it ought to be. So I think Charlie was fine with it but I don't think he brought him in. I just think he was ready to accommodate him so far as Jack explained to Ed that this is how it would work.

Kondracke: How did John [W.] Buckley come to be press secretary?

Hoppe: John was recruited by Charlie and Roger [J.] Stone. He had been [Lewis E.] Lew Lehrman's press secretary for his gubernatorial campaign in '82 and then was doing some other things in New York because John came on to work for us as press secretary to Congressman Jack Kemp in I want to say February of '85? So what John had done in '84 I don't know because the Lehrman campaign was in '82. But that's where John had sort of met—

Kondracke: John had something to do with the Reagan re-elect, I think.

Hoppe: He may have been involved in doing that, yes. But Charlie brought John in. He probably doesn't remember, and this may be terribly embarrassing to him for me to say, but I had tried to get [Frederic W.] Fred Barnes to leave the *Baltimore Sun* and do it. You know Fred better than I do, I'm sure, but Fred's star was really rising because, remember we had all those disputed debates in '84? And Fred was one of the questioners at one of those—so he was on the

move up and I thought, this is somebody who understands supply-side economics, he knows everybody, he's actually a conservative in the press. And I called him and he was very kind. He didn't laugh in my face, but he said, "I'm where I want to be right now."

Kondracke: When [Merrick] Mac Carey left was that because you were gearing up for the campaign?

Hoppe: Mac made his own decision. I don't know whether he saw the handwriting on the wall because Mac left shortly after I came over to the office and I had nothing to do with that. I think Mac saw that this wasn't what Charlie and others—he was not going to be the person they wanted in that position.

Kondracke: Were there other staff changes?

Hoppe: Not very many, no.

Kondracke: Marci [Robinson] came in—

Hoppe: Marci came in as John's assistant, that would have been, I think she worked as an intern for us before we hired her on and that would have been the summer of '85, or early '86, but I'd have to go back and look to be exactly sure. And proved herself very ably.

Kondracke: What kind of conflict was there between the Hoppe-Weber-Tom Kemp group and the Charlie Black campaign?

Hoppe: Both sides were very correct and polite with each other and both sides were very suspicious of each other.

Kondracke: And were you arguing to Jack that too much money was being spent and so on?

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: What did he say?

Hoppe: In the end, Charlie was running the campaign. Part of it was, then go out and raise me some more. Jack really admired his brother Tom, because as much success as Jack had, Tom was his older brother and Jack looked up to him like an older brother. It was a really interesting relationship, and Tom was a great man, great man.

Kondracke: Talk about Tom a little bit.

Hoppe: Tom was a very successful businessman. Coca Cola—he ran bottling or distributing for Coca Cola in Los Angeles and that area, so, big market. And, had been successful, but he didn't want to intrude. If Jack wanted him he was there, but he didn't want to intrude. And in some ways if Tom had pushed a little harder, I think Jack would have liked it. But in some ways Jack was almost trying to earn Tom's respect. I mean, here's a guy who's successful in two very different businesses. It was what Tom felt was important. And Tom loved Jack, respected him, he didn't want to get in the way. If Jack needed his help he was there, but he didn't want to get in the way and didn't

want to be pushy. But the one thing he didn't want was his brother saddled with a whole ton of debt.

Kondracke: What was his role in the campaign?

Hoppe: His role in the campaign was to overlook it. Because Jack wanted a group of people who were not involved day to day to overlook it and to make sure from a financial point of view it was alright but also just other things. Because Tom was not a political expert and Dick Fox was not a political expert.

Kondracke: Who was the finance chairman?

Hoppe: [Rodney A.] Rod Smith was the fundraiser, but the finance chairman, I don't know. I should remember and I don't. Shows you how much I dealt with him. I think Dick Fox probably raised more money for the campaign than anybody else. Rod Smith, who was sort of the genius of direct mail at that time was a big coup. Every Republican presidential campaign wanted Rod and we got him to work for us. But Rod was one of those guys who, two pieces of direct mail a day weren't enough. More direct mail was always better direct mail, and Jack had some friends who'd say, "For God's sake, Jack, I got five letters from you this week. For God's sake, stop it." Jack would always come back and say, "We're doing too much." And Rod would say, "No, here's how it works. He's the numbers"—but I should know and I honestly don't remember who it was but Tom and Dick and Vin were sort of to oversee things.

Kondracke: Vin was the campaign chairman, is that right?

Hoppe: Well, Ed Rollins was, at first. I mean when he came on he was sort of the campaign chairman. But Vin was, once again he may have ended up with that title but it was really, Vin took on a role because he could talk to Charlie and Charlie had faith in him, and he could talk to Tom and these guys and they had faith in him, and was a very honest go-between. And try and make sure the differences as they existed did as little to disrupt the campaign as possible. Did an excellent job of doing that.

Kondracke: So who all in the House did you have with you?

Hoppe: Vin, Connie Mack, Newt, I'd have to go look at others.

Kondracke: [Daniel E. "Dan"] Lungren, [Robert L. "Bob"] Livingston?

Hoppe: I'm trying to think when Lungren ran. Probably, but I don't remember the whole list, and I'd have to say in some ways we were happy to have them but that wasn't the big push.

Kondracke: Where was [Richard B. "Dick"] Cheney in all this?

Hoppe: Cheney was, it's interesting, because Dick Cheney was very suspicious of supply-side economics, and had some people who I'm sure from the Ford administration, the many connections he had from that, who he really listened to who were not supply-siders. And in the latter part of the seventies, or '79 and '80, when Cheney was chairman of the Policy Committee, we tried to influence him more toward supply

side, and in the early eighties we tried to do the same thing, without much success. And so, he was not a Kemp supporter.

Kondracke: Was he Bush?

Hoppe: My guess is he probably was, yes. I would be surprised if he wasn't but you know it's not something I looked at that much. I'd have to go back and look. Cheney as he always is, is very, how a guy who's that seemingly calm and polite has the worst heart in the world, I don't know. You think one of these guys who screams and yells all the time, but Cheney was always very quiet, very calm, very measured, but was not a supply-sider.

Kondracke: Okay, let's just run down a few other people. How did Jack relate to [Robert H.] Bob Michel?

Hoppe: Bob was really loved as a friendly guy. He was Chowder and Marching and he liked him and he was a nice guy, but they all realized that Bob was never going to be Speaker of the House because the Republicans couldn't ever become a majority with Bob Michel as leader. It just wasn't going to happen. But they liked Bob and respected him and, I mean, Bob was a nice man, a really nice man. I remember one time I was in Lott's office before Lott became Whip, and it was on the Department of Education, so it was the Carter administration. It was a vote on creating the Department of Education, and Lott had promised his mother that he would vote for it. She was a school teacher and thought it was right and it was a close vote. I remember sitting in his office and Michel called him up, the Whip, and they had the conversation back and forth, and Lott said at

the end of the conversation, "Bob, you know why I like you? You never push me too hard." Now wait a minute, you're the Whip. What are you supposed to do? You're supposed to lean on the guy. It was a very remarkable conversation because Lott managed to be a lot tougher pusher as whip without being obnoxious, which you can fall into. And Lott's view was, if I don't get you on this vote the next vote, there's going to be another vote that's just as important, so I'll get you for the next one. But he would really push hard, a lot harder than Bob Michel had pushed. But that's the way Bob was. There was nobody out there who was going to challenge him. Some of the guys on the right would say, "We've got to have a different leader. Someone ought to challenge Michel." And I'd say to them, "Fine, if you want to get 12 votes, go ahead." The chance to beat Michel was—

Kondracke: This is before Gingrich started advocating.

Hoppe: Yes. The chance to have Bob Michel not be leader was when [Guy A.] Vander Jagt ran against him in 1980 and Michel put together a good campaign and beat Vander Jagt by a couple of votes and became leader and after that he was not going to be challenged until he got to the point where Newt realized that you just couldn't do it around Bob. You had to go over him. And he said to him, "I'm going to run against you." And Bob knew he would lose. Because by that time all the classes who'd come wanted to be, I mean, you had enough guys who no longer were the guys who felt they wanted to have a good relationship with their chairman. They wanted to **be** chairman.

Kondracke: So, were Newt Gingrich and Kemp really close from the get go?

Hoppe: Not really close, although Newt had enormous respect for Jack because of what he had done in making this the transcendent issue for Republicans. And they had a good relationship, but Newt was not close to anyone except Vin. I'm never quite sure whether Vin simply vinned him, but Vin was the governor on Newt. I mean, he was there like a governor on an engine. He was there to say to Newt, to pat him on the head and say, "Yes, you had 20 good ideas yesterday, but remember these three are the ones we're gonna do? Yes, 20 ideas this morning but these three are still the ones we're gonna do." The Opportunity, Conservative Opportunity Society, worked because Vin Weber gave it a direction and forced it to continue in that direction.

Kondracke: Is the Contract With America Vin?

Hoppe: No, because Vin had left by that time. He may have had some background in it but it was, you had Newt, primarily, but all these guys: [Richard K. "Dick"] Armey and [Thomas D. "Tom"] DeLay, and all these other guys really worked together. Henry Hyde was a part of putting that together as well because I had some conversations with [William] Bill Gribbin at that time and I remember one of them in late spring of '94, and Bill said, "Dave, you can't imagine the number of meetings we have planning for this." He said, "These guys really believe they're gonna win." He said, "And they're planning on winning. They might," he said, "they actually might." And so I sort of watched it and it was really a group effort they brought together. At the staff level you had [Edward W.] Eddie Gillespie and just a lot of people who

were very good at making this what it was. In fact, [William J. "Bill"] Clinton was more the reason Republicans won than Republicans were, but they gave people something to say "It's worth a shot. I'll let these guys try because they've got something to be for." I remember, and I may have told you this before, a meeting that we had with Republican leadership in early September, and it was mid-to-late September they did their thing on the Capitol Steps in '94 with the Contract For America and they all signed it, House members. [William P.] Phil Gramm, who was running the Senatorial Committee at the time came into the leadership meeting and said, "We've got to be part of this, this ought to be House and Senate Republicans, not just House." Big fight. Finally the leadership decided they wouldn't do it. All these big fights in the leadership come down to the leader and Dole just didn't, but it was Cochran who fought most vociferously against, "These guys are nuts, they're crazy and we just can't do this." And Cochran was in fact reflecting opinion of a number of members. Whether it was a majority one way or the other, I have no idea, but it was at least close division. And so Gramm realized he lost but he still went on and talked about it. He acted like he was there without being able to be there. But it was Republican senators, Republicans in the Senate got the majority in '94 because they were dragged across the line by what was a national election. And they had enough candidates out there and there was enough opportunity because of this, that and the other who they were running against at the time and place that they literally got floated across the line by the House guys.

Kondracke: Did Kemp have any senators supporting him in '88? Did Kasten support him?

Hoppe: I presume Kasten did, but he probably was the only one. Once again, those are lists I never looked at very hard. I suppose I did at the time, but my memory doesn't serve me very well. And he and Kasten were close and had a good relationship.

Kondracke: So how did Kemp get along with the Democrats, with [Thomas P.] Tip O'Neill [Jr.] and [James C.] Jim Wright [Jr.] and [Daniel D. "Dan"] Rostenkowski

Hoppe: Jack always respected them, but they all thought Jack was a pain in the ass. He's just a pain in the ass. Now, he's a pain in the ass they had to deal with because in fact he had actually accomplished something politically. You know, most of them tend to think, okay, here's another dumb jock. But Jack had been pretty successful and they couldn't ignore him. And he always had a good relationship, but they weren't close. None of them were close.

Kondracke: Did Kemp have any good Democratic friends?

Hoppe: Actually in the New York delegation he did.

Kondracke: [John J.] LaFalce?

Hoppe: Yes, but not so much those guys. [Charles B. "Charlie"] Rangel, he and Rangel got along well, really well. I think it's because Rangel realized, I suspect Rangel thought most white Republicans were sort of closet racists. He knew Jack wasn't. Jack's whole life was not that and he knew it. And Rangel is a hail-fellow-well-met anyway. And so he and Jack actually got along really well. I don't think they

agreed on two things in the 18 years they served together in the Congress, but he and Rangel got along really well.

Kondracke: Did he have any really close, I mean, Rangel and he might have gotten along but they weren't going to be social friends or anything like that.

Hoppe: No.

Kondracke: So did he have any close friends who were Democrats? [Richard A. "Dick"] Gephardt, [William W. "Bill"] Bradley?

Hoppe: Once again, no, but that's not unusual because most elected officials don't have very many close friends. One of the things that shocked me over all these years is how few of them can let their guard down enough, even with guys they agree with on almost everything, to be friends. There are political friendships, there are friendships because they're members, but if you'd say are they really close personal friends, not very many.

Kondracke: Did Jack have any really close personal friends?

Hoppe: Lott.

Kondracke: Lott.

Hoppe: Yes. He and Lott were.

Kondracke: So they could talk about anything.

Hoppe: Yes. They really were very—Trent was really strong where Jack was probably weaker and Jack was really strong where Trent was probably weaker. In many ways they sort of complimented each other in such a good way that they really were.

Kondracke: What was the content of that?

[interruption]

Hoppe: Back I believe in ’86, I want to say the summer of ’86, Newt and Jack had gotten into a fight about something, and Sharon Zelaska will probably remember what it was, because her memory is better than mine on things like this. Having said that, I mean they really, really, Jack apparently lost his temper, and so we thought about it, and Sharon was the one who suggested that Jack should take Newt to dinner. So what we did is set it up in Jack’s office and had it catered from outside on a night when they were staying somewhat late but they weren’t going to be interrupted by votes. And we set up this whole white tablecloth nice dinner so that Jack could have a good atmosphere in which to apologize without groveling. Once again I should remember the issue but I don’t. I remember more the situation. But they weren’t close in any way like Lott and Kemp were close, but Newt was somebody who respected Jack for what he’d been able to do, and Newt’s view all the way along is we got to take over. And it came more to a real acting out of that in the late eighties after Jack was gone and after Lott was gone from the House. The other thing was that there were a few people who Newt, being junior to them in terms of seniority and also because they were leaders, he—

and you've got to be careful choosing your words with Newt—almost looked up to. And Jack and Trent were two of those.

Kondracke: Do you remember any specifics?

Hoppe: When Newt was Speaker, it was sort of this half-bow. You know, Lott would walk over, Lott just, you could tell. Newt expected everybody else to half-bow; he didn't expect Lott. That just wasn't the relationship.

Kondracke: It's interesting that Newt running for president as a Kemp Republican.

Hoppe: Yes.

Kondracke: Is that out of admiration or is that—

Hoppe: No, he was supportive of Kemp and what he did. He was a supply-sider, but economics is not Newt's area. The history of the issue is more important to Newt than the economics of the issue. And that's maybe understandable given his professional situation.

Kondracke: Did Jack and Newt ever talk about history? I mean Jack read a lot of history.

Hoppe: I'm sure they did. I was not involved in any of those conversations, but Jack did, and Newt knew it. Really respected Jack. Newt didn't respect a lot of people. I mean he was, he has a very big ego, as you know. And there weren't a lot of people that he

respected, but Jack and Trent were two of them. And partly it was because they were good at things he was not so very good at. He didn't know economics very well, and Jack did, really did. And Trent was a really, sort of how do you get from here to there? Newt always wanted to get from here to there but he used to do it sort of by just charging through the glass china shop and broke a few things. Lott would get from here to there as fast as a guy going straight by doing this, and I think Newt respected that. He had a lot of respect for Lott's political abilities.

Kondracke: Okay now talk about Jack Kemp and Bob Dole.

Hoppe: Dole just, number one, Dole was chairman of the Finance Committee, and he had to do this crap that this guy Kemp, who he didn't have a lot of respect for, he was a jock and he was a rabble rouser, he wasn't a politician like Bob Dole was. For a lot of reasons I think Dole just didn't like Kemp very much. Kemp's view was Dole is for the wrong things. He's wrong, he's just wrong. I'm sorry, you're just wrong. Dole has as good a sense of humor probably as anybody who has been at this high level of politics. I mean, genuinely good sense of humor and also genuinely tough sense of humor. I mean he can figure out where to put that knife like nobody's business and he's really good at it. And he liked doing it. That's Bob Dole's, that's who he is, and he was good at doing it and he would stick it to Kemp and Kemp would respond. It was more that way than Kemp's taking the action because that wasn't Jack. Jack could get mad at people but he'd get hot very fast and he'd go down very fast. And then we're best friends again, we're good buddies. Whereas Dole, I think just, it was like a canker with Dole.

Kondracke: There's that famous story about Dole visualizing the airplane going down with supply-siders and Jack Kemp's seat was empty or something like that.

Hoppe: Yes, the bus went off the cliff, the only problem was there were three seats empty. Without saying who was not there.

Kondracke: Right. Do you remember any other major fights or major . . .

Hoppe: It was Dole, because of the position he was in in '85 and '86 when they did the—in '85 actually, in the spring of '85, the Senate Republicans had a big fight on budget stuff and Social Security, and really went out on a limb. You remember [Peter B.] Pete Wilson, who had his appendectomy and they literally hauled him in on a gurney to vote? And Lott and—

Kondracke: They were going to raise Social Security taxes or cut Social Security benefits.

Hoppe: Yes, maybe it was change the age. All things considered it was a fairly minor change in the reality of the Social Security system. But having said that, they went way out on a limb. And Lott and Kemp just thought this was political suicide, and were two people who basically said, "Uh, uh, we ain't gonna do that; we aren't going there." Now, we didn't have a majority in the House, so doing it would have been tough anyway, but they basically pushed the Senate Republicans aside.

Kondracke: Was there a lot of artillery fire?

Hoppe: Oh, yes, and real anger. I mean, the Senate Republicans felt they had really stepped out on a tough issue, and they'd made the right choice and this was sort of as tough as it gets, and these guys in the House, House Republicans. It never even got to the point where House Democrats. These two House Republicans, who at that time were the second- and third-ranking members among the House Republicans, just said forget it. We ain't gonna do that; no way.

Kondracke: The White House was in favor of what the Senate wanted to do, right?

Hoppe: Oh, yes.

Kondracke: And Jim Baker—

Hoppe: And Darman came up to have a conversation with Kemp and Lott.

Kondracke: What was that like?

Hoppe: I was not in the conversation, that conversation. I was in some others but not in that one. Lott and Kemp both reported to me that they were very unhappy, and these guys said, "I'm sorry. We just think this is political suicide." They sort of felt they'd been down that trail in '82 because of some things that had been done in '81 at HHS [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services] and so they

weren't about to go there again, not about to go there again. They thought that politically this was just suicide.

Kondracke: Did Dole and Kemp ever talk to one another?

Hoppe: I never got the sense they ever did. I don't remember a time that they talked to one another when I worked for Jack. That was just sort of, if you didn't know how serious it was you would have thought it was just needling, but pretty tough needling. I don't think either one particularly liked the other, which is why it was such a—

Kondracke: Did Jack ever talk to you about Dole and say what he thought about Dole?

Hoppe: Not other than just 'ahhhh.' Basically his view was sort of we're different people, we just don't agree. I don't want to talk about it. So, no.

Kondracke: This may be before you were with him, but he delivered a speech to the International Longshoremen [Association], and I believe it was when Dole was running for vice president with Ford.

Hoppe: '76

Kondracke: And said that a national Republican politician running for office came to Buffalo and said that he wanted to raise taxes or something like that, to fight inflation. And this was dead wrong, and it had to be Dole.

Hoppe: I presume it was. That was before I worked for him, but you couldn't come to any other conclusion. They were really different personalities, they had different views of the world, and as far as Dole was concerned, Jack was intruding on his turf.

Kondracke: So, were you amazed in '96?

Hoppe: Absolutely. Fell off my chair. I couldn't believe it. I could not believe it. When Sharon called me, when she was allowed to call me, [laughs] it just shocked me.

Kondracke: What about Howard Baker? What did he think about Howard Baker?

Hoppe: As far as the House Republicans were concerned, you know, riverboat gamble and those sorts of things, they weren't big Howard Baker fans but they didn't have enough time to really care one way or the other. They felt he was the typical Senate squish Republican. They regretted that he said something this dumb when they were obviously going to go ahead with it and it was Reagan's policy. I mean, why would you possibly say that about your own president's policy. But most of them, you know, they didn't know him very well; he was typical, when you talk about the chasm between the House and the Senate, this would be an example of that chasm. They just didn't really know him at all.

Kondracke: Did Kemp have anything to do with [Daniel Patrick] Pat Moynihan? I mean they were both from the same state.

Hoppe: I don't know that he did. He was certainly a fan of the things he did when he was ambassador to the United Nations. But whether it went any further than that I don't, because over time some state delegations meet, and others don't. The House New York delegation met, but I'm not sure they ever met with the senators. Or if they did it was not that often. I don't remember Jack saying much about Moynihan.

Kondracke: Okay. Administration people. You did witness meetings between Jack and Jim Baker. What memories do you have about those?

Hoppe: Maybe my view is colored by my love for Jack and my suspicion of Jim Baker, but I always felt that Jim Baker was talking down to Jack in these meetings. "Jack, you have to understand." "Jack, do this." "Jack, no, no." That was the impression I got. Once again I obviously felt, as a person working for Jack and as a friend of Jack's, very protective and maybe jumped to conclusions and he didn't mean that at all. Because outside of those meetings I didn't know Jim Baker, and obviously that's not a situation where you get to know somebody. I mean, you watch somebody, you don't know them. But I always felt that there was a condescension.

Kondracke: I think it was you who described a meeting in which Baker puts his feet up with his cowboy boots up on Jack's couch?

Hoppe: No, he and Darman were both sitting on a couch and there was a little table like this. [gestures] Boom. Boom. Baker was on one end of the couch and Darman was on the other and Jack was

sitting in a chair, sort of facing them, and I was removed to the side in an appropriate staff chair. The whole thing to me was, probably fine. Once again, I had a particular view of Jim Baker without knowing him and I probably jumped to some conclusions. Having said that that was my conclusion.

Kondracke: What was Jack's opinion of Jim Baker?

Hoppe: Very smart guy, and somebody, if you wanted to get anything done, you by God had to know him, so don't be stupid here, buddy.

Kondracke: How about Darman?

Hoppe: I think Jack just considered him wrong. Once again a bright fellow, but just, I'm not sure Jack thought he believed in anything. And I know Trent didn't think he believed in anything. And if he did it was wrong.

Kondracke: What about [Edwin "Ed"] Meese [III] and [Michael K. "Mike"] Deaver?

Hoppe: You know, Jack had a real respect for Ed Meese because he'd known him for a long, long time. He'd known him back from the sixties when Reagan was running for governor and Jack was doing volunteer stuff in the off-season and that sort of thing. I think he had a real respect for Ed Meese. He may have known Deaver from that same way but I didn't get the sense—Ed Meese is such a nice man. It's hard not to like him even if you disagree with him on everything. He was just the world's nicest man. Mike Deaver was not. And Jack

from time to time, I'd be in the office when he'd talk to Mike Deaver on the phone. And it was always very business-like and to me it was Jack telling Mike Deaver what he thought and Mike Deaver listening and saying thank you and that was the end of the conversation. There didn't seem to be a lot of interaction between the two.

Kondracke: I wonder if they got to be friends after Deaver got into trouble.

Hoppe: They may have. They may have because the little bit I saw of it, it was a very correct relationship. As I said, if Jack had something to call him about, he'd call him about it. But it tended to be a very one-sided conversation. With Meese I don't remember him talking to him that much, but when something would come up, and by the time I worked for Jack, Meese was way in the background.

Kondracke: He was probably attorney general by that time.

Hoppe: I have to remember the dates, but if not, it was pretty close to doing that because it had been the start of the second term at the latest that he went to be attorney general.

Kondracke: When Jack came out in October '87 in the CPAC [Conservative Political Action Conference of the American Conservative Union] speech to call for [George P.] Shultz's resignation, what happened in the office? Was this a big deal?

Hoppe: Jack's view was that Shultz was pushing Reagan in all the wrong directions and that we were getting to a point with the Soviet

Union where things could go the wrong way, and Jack thought that Shultz was always the guy who was arguing with Reagan to do the wrong thing. So, yes there was, but Jack had gotten progressively more frustrated with Shultz, and in some ways it was sort of the natural conclusion of where he had come to, just because, what Jack thought we ought to be doing and what Shultz was doing—every point where there was a decision, he thought Shultz took the wrong path.

Kondracke: So, did you guys regard this as a major policy departure?

Hoppe: First of all, members are hesitant to tell somebody, I mean you're hesitant to tell somebody else who to employ, not to employ. Clearly Shultz was somebody Reagan listened to, but it was the sort of thing where Jack felt Shultz wasn't letting Reagan be Reagan. So, yes, it was considered an important thing. Was it the most important thing we were going to do? No. But was it an important thing to say, to get to the point where you'd say, this guy ought to be fired. It was clearly also a dividing line. If you look at the Republican candidates in 1988, by and large they were all saying the same thing. They all wanted to be Ronald Reagan's successor. Jack's view was that Reagan was not being Reagan because of Shultz and he would be more Reagan than Reagan by saying get rid of Shultz. And he knew George Bush would never go there. First of all Bush presumably agreed with what Shultz was doing, and secondly, as vice president he obviously couldn't go there. Because as we saw it the biggest thing that Bush had riding for him was his loyalty to Reagan, and he had been loyal. As loyal as anybody could ever ask a vice president to be to Ronald Reagan, and Ronald Reagan respected loyalty. And we all knew that.

Kondracke: Did you guys try to find any other seams between Reagan and Bush that you could exploit?

Hoppe: Yes, but for the most part Jack looked at it as "I'm a true believer in Reaganomics and he's not. Do you want the real guy, or do you want the guy that sort of adopted it because he's loyal to the president?" We thought it was a divide you could do something with but it really wasn't.

Kondracke: Did you look for places where you could find differences?

Hoppe: Yes, we did. But once again, Bush was very loyal. So it was who's going to be for Star Wars [Strategic Defense Initiative], who's really going to build Star Wars? Jack Kemp is going to raise his hand; we don't think Bush will. Well, Bush wasn't saying, "No I'm not going to build it." And tax policy: who was there at the beginning, who helped Reagan put the ideas in, who called it voodoo economics? But who'd been loyal for eight years? The Republicans are monarchists, and next guy on line usually ends up with the nomination. Especially when he's been as loyal to the president, who everybody revered, on the right among Republicans, as Ronald Reagan? It was just hard and to do it you had to be a personality that Jack wasn't. I mean you would have had to be bare-knuckled, and even that probably wouldn't have worked. But that wasn't what Jack was going to do. I remember Jack telling me, because after he got out of the race and after the Convention he would give surrogate speeches. He said he realized at the end of most of these speeches that what he had done is just talked about what Jack Kemp would have been as president. He said I guess Bush will be the same thing anyway so it's not so bad. But he realized

he was just giving a speech about himself. Economics were going to continue, Reaganomics, we'd change the tax code, Star Wars, and all this sort of stuff. He said the speech was no different from the one he was giving on the stump when he was a candidate, in reality. And we'd mention George Bush a lot more and say great things about the nominee, but he said basically he was portraying Bush as Kemp.

Kondracke: So what did he think about Bush? Did he know Bush at all?

Hoppe: No, not really. Bush had come and gone from the House before Kemp got there or if they overlapped it was a very short bit of time. And Bush was ambassador to China and sort of out of the country and gone. They didn't interact much at all. Bush was clearly skeptical of the economic ideas, whether that was all for campaign purposes, I doubt it was, but some of it may have been to play it up as big as they could when he was running against Reagan. Their personalities were so incredibly different. Where they actually interacted with each other was at meetings where they would have either the Republican leadership down from the Hill or bipartisan leadership down from the Hill. And those are, everybody waits around, stands there, and then the president and vice president come in and they walk around the room, shake everybody's hand, sit down to their meeting, and leave. There's not a lot of interaction. But Jack being who Jack was, he was always, "One more point. Had to make this one more—" "Mr. President, Mr. President I gotta tell you this—" And Bush I'm sure just sat there and thought, "For God's sake, shut up. Won't you just shut up?"

Kondracke: Were you ever actually a witness to any of this kind of…?

Hoppe: No. They were such different personalities. I'm trying to think who it was, but somebody who had known Bush, he was a lobbyist who had known Bush when he was a House member and they were not close friends but passing friends, and he said to me one day, he said, "You can't believe how different these two personalities are." He said they are oil and water. Last summer when I was a lobbyist and going to fundraising things and giving money, I went to the golf tournament they do down at Williamsburg [Virginia] every year and happened to sit next to Senator [A. Lamar] Alexander. And so we got talking about the presidential race. I said I'd worked for Kemp, and we talked about 1988 and about being in the Cabinet. And he said to me, "Why do you think Bush didn't choose Jack?"

Kondracke: As veep?

Hoppe: Yes. I said, "I think he sat there and thought, 'Do I really want to get up every day and have this guy in my ear? I won't be able to stand it. I mean, I literally won't be able to stand it.'" And he said, "Yeah, you may be right about that." And then he went on to tell me a few things about Cabinet meetings where Jack would never shut up.

Kondracke: What did he tell you about Cabinet meetings?

Hoppe: Basically, Jack would never shut up. He had a comment on everything that everybody was doing. By the end of the meeting everybody would go, "God, Jack, shut up!" I'm sure it wasn't everything, but basically Jack had a view on a lot of subjects and he

figured they might as well hear it. Which is just Jack. Certainly as you can tell by watching the length of his speeches, Jack didn't value the unexpressed thought. He thought it ought to be out there.

Kondracke: During the '88 campaign was the Kitchen Cabinet involved? I mean the [Jude T.] Wanniskis and the [Irving] Kristols and the—?

Hoppe: Yeah. Or it was more Jack would talk to them by phone. Because he was traveling so much. From time to time I think Jude would hop on and go, but I think for the most part it would be phone conversations and Jude could get ahold of Jack anytime he wanted. It wasn't quite like it is with cell phones these days, but Jude could always find a way to get ahold of Jack if he wanted to. And Jack wanted to talk to him, so it wasn't like anybody was going to keep Jude from talking to Jack. And Jude was always the most insistent. Irving Kristol was very respectful. If Jack wanted to hear from him he'd tell him, or if he had something he really wanted to say he would figure out a way to get it to him, but Irving wasn't sort of a bug in his ear. Jude was.

Kondracke: How'd you get along with Jude?

Hoppe: I got along with Jude pretty well, I think. I mean I think Jude, as long as you were a supply-sider and you weren't going to mess up what Jude believed was important, Jude was going to be okay with you. If you were, then that was a problem. But I was a supply-sider, I'd read his book, I'd done all the things I was supposed to do. Jude's

view was okay if you're alright on that then you're serving Jack. That's what I believe.

Kondracke: So when you guys were starting out from '84 on looking toward '88, were there things besides the '86 tax bill that you regarded as ways that Jack could shine? And I realize that '86 was not only about shining.

Hoppe: No.. There weren't a lot of them at that end. Star Wars were really the two things that we thought separated Jack from everybody else. He knew them, he was dedicated to doing them, he thought they were essential and he could talk about them with expertise. He knew enough of the science of Star Wars to know, because he had number one he liked the subject, number two he had staff people who were really good at it, number three he had former staff people who really knew these things backward and forward. If he needed to know something and needed to have a technical answer to a question he could get it [snaps finger] about as quick as you could blink your eye. He cared deeply about that and thought it was critically important to the future going forward. None of us realized how good a job Reagan had done and that we'd see the thing start cracking apart in the fall of '89.

Kondracke: He made a lot of speeches about Star Wars?

Hoppe: Yes. And that was sort of a standard issue in the speech. "This is who I am. Why am I different? Because I'm going to do this." And I remember at one point him saying, "I'm the only one who's going to build Star Wars." Whether he was or not he believed he was.

And he really did believe he was. So those were the two issues more than any other and we got into the financial mess in what was it, October of ’87? We felt like we understood that better than anybody else, from where it came and why and how, but so much of it was wrapped up in gold and monetary policy that was almost impossible to explain—that it never really did anything for us. When it first happened we thought, here’s an opportunity, because Jack actually understands this stuff better than others, and the trade and all the things that had an impact on it Jack understood. But also Jack’s understanding was keyed to gold and the monetary policy and as he explained things, he got into detail on an issue that sort of takes people back—the weeds that made it very difficult to use it for anything very effective. And thank heavens things got back on a straight keel fairly quickly after that when you consider the dislocation, economic dislocation and potential for disaster that was. The fact that it was quieted, calmed down and things got back on an even keel is, made it less an issue than it might have been, but thank God.

Kondracke: How did the Michigan straw poll become the sort of the key—?

Hoppe: Because everybody make it such. It was, as you recall that process was the most arcane and drawn out process. I mean we think Iowa is drawn out now when they start by doing this sitting in your corner raising your hand for your guy and you really don’t have anybody who’s a delegate until July or something. This was a year, what, two years out.

Kondracke: Summer of ’86.

Hoppe: Yeah. It was absolutely crazy. And it was one of those things, at that point everybody thought you had to be every place, you got to be in early and there were arguments, you know, if Reagan lost Iowa because he didn't show the right respect for Iowa and get in there and wasn't early enough and that sort of thing. And we were still, I mean, in some ways you're fighting the last war, and the last war was 1980, because we did nothing in '84 with Reagan running for reelection. So you're still fighting the last war and you gotta be every place and you gotta be early. Well, Michigan had this arcane process that started then and the Michigan people, being no dummies, and [E. Spencer] Spence Abraham being no dummy, "Come on, guys, get in on this." I mean it was good for them politically, good for the Michigan Republican party, but it was terrible for candidates, in my opinion. And it grew and grew. It took on a life of its own and then you got to the point where clearly [Marion G.] Pat Robertson had sort of an internal organization that he could move, if you could call it together. Had the potential to reach out to a whole, a group of people who were almost only his, although we felt, issue by issue, we represented every one of those issues as well as Pat Robertson did. We clearly couldn't call and reach out to the people the way he could. And his organization and then the Bush campaign had more money and [Harvey L.] Lee Atwater was very, very good at what he did. So you started looking here and hooking and backing up and you had people reaching out from one campaign to another, and here, there, do you want to work together, do we want to . . . It was sort of way ahead of when you should have had any of these things being talked about or thought about. It grew in a way that I don't think anybody ever expected or understood but it did. For that one year, that one

unique year, that one unique phase, between then and 1988, and in the end it didn't mean nearly as much as it did in 1986, but in 1986 we got set back on our heels.

Kondracke: And did you put a lot of resources into it?

Hoppe: Yeah.

Kondracke: Lot of people?

Hoppe: Lot of people, lot of attention, Jack did a lot of flying around, back and forth to Michigan and spent a lot of time there.

Kondracke: And came in—?

Hoppe: Fourth, maybe, I don't know. I have to go look. But we were not, let's put it this way, we weren't first tier.

Kondracke: And so Buckley said the other day that he thought that after that basically the back was broken. Do you believe that?

Hoppe: He may be right. Although, and maybe it's because I'm not as attuned as others, my belief was at some point Jack would just, people would sit and listen and really figure out that Jack was the best Reagan. Nobody else was really Reagan; Jack was. And I always believed that could happen. Never did. And George Bush was a loyal person who said—you know what it is, Ronald Reagan got elected three times. It happened one of them under the name of George H. W. Bush. If Jack would have gotten the nomination, he would have

been elected as Ronald Reagan. That's the way things were in that period of time.

Kondracke: Okay. I've used a lot of your time. Any other great stories that you—?

Hoppe: I'm trying to think as we go through. I think I've told you the one about [Arnold A.] Schwarzenegger.

Kondracke: Yes.

Hoppe: You know, there are just some vivid memories you have of Jack.

Kondracke: Any others like that? Wrestling stories?

Hoppe: Not like that. The only other one I have is I remember—

Kondracke: Did they actually get down on the floor and wrestle?

Hoppe: Schwarzenegger didn't, but Jack was down on the floor. I mean, his coat was off because he had it over his shoulder as he walked into the office and he just threw it over a chair, laid down flat on the floor and said, "Let's arm wrestle, Schwarzenegger."

Kondracke: He wanted to arm wrestle lying prone like this [gestures].

Hoppe: Lying prone, yes.

Kondracke: And what did Schwarzenegger say about that?

Hoppe: He didn't say anything. His eyes just got real big. And he just kept looking, and finally Jack got up. I mean his eyes were about this big. It was funny. Jack and I had one really big fight. It was about campaign stuff. One of the things that happened is, as it was outlined, the campaign was going to raise enough money to take a couple of people off the Washington staff, you know, our Hill staff, and put them on campaign payroll because they were going to be spending all their time on it. And so I'd worked out the budget with that in mind. Well, we got to that time and the campaign didn't have enough money and so they basically said, "Okay, we'll ratchet back the amount of time they'll spend on campaign stuff and they can work out of the office and basically you'll pay them a significant amount of salary." You know, it was all legal and done the right way but it had to be put together right, and what it meant is I had to fire four or five people in Buffalo. These are people who had been with Jack since 1970, in some cases. I went in and I said, "Jack, this is an outrage. This is just," I said, "the campaign has done this, that and the other and they're screwing up this and they aren't raising enough money and they're spending like this and this. Now I'm firing people to pay for it." And he finally looked at me and he said, "Well maybe I don't need a chief of staff." And I said, "Well maybe you don't need me." And so I walked out. And it was near the end of the day so I was going home anyway. So I went home and I thought, I'm not sure it's worth the time and the money. Fire me and keep these people on. They're loyal Buffalo people. But things calmed down. As I said, Jack could get very hot very quickly but calm down. But I just remember how. The other one, he was not mad, when they were doing the tax

stuff. Just made it clear who was in which place. I was really mad and he was really mad, very quickly.

Kondracke: How often did he erupt?

Hoppe: Really not that often, it really wasn't. And he tended sometimes to have little eruptions with people he could have the eruptions with. He'd get mad at somebody and come back to the office and say it. But then he was done. Okay, go on. I mean, he'd see the guy in the hallway, "Hey, how you doing?" So, not a lot, and he tended he be in all things pretty discreet about doing it at the right time in the right place, but every once in a while it would boil over. But not very often.

Kondracke: The day that the *Atlantic Monthly* came out with the Stockman interview, Kemp invited Stockman to dinner.

Hoppe: I didn't know that. I probably heard it but I don't remember. That was before I worked for him. I have a theory about Stockman. The problem is I don't know if the theory holds together because I don't know whether Stockman had any ability to have an influence on this question. But after we passed the reconciliation bill in June, the next big issue which was not going to come up until July just because the way the calendar was working—in the House you can know, at least have a pretty good idea of when things are coming up—was going to be the tax bill. And one of the things they did with the reconciliation bill is have Bob Michel be a member of the conference committee, which is very rare, because if you're the leader you don't have a committee assignment. Now Michel had been on the

Appropriations Committee for years, and had background, and obviously had been involved in everything. But it was clear to me the White House wanted him on that conference committee, sitting there being a part of it. And I can't help thinking part of the reason they did is because they thought, because it was just as clear to me as [David A. "Dave"] Stockman did not want the tax bill to pass. He did not want that at all. That, they figured if they took Bob Michel out of the equation, the tax bill was so close, that Republicans would probably lose. The problem is that they didn't understand Trent Lott was pretty good at his job, and they didn't understand the power of the idea. If you remember, Monday of the week—the tax bill passed on Wednesday—Monday of that week there was a headline in the *Washington Star* saying "Democrats Will Win Tax Bill" and Tip O'Neill was holding up the paper and da-da-da-da. By Wednesday we won by 55, 60 votes. It was like 230-something to 180-something, or whatever it was, something in there. All things considered, in two days a pretty significant victory. I'm not saying all that's due to Lott, but Lott had an organization that could tell you who to go to, who was the problem, where you had to get and those sorts of things. He had set up a pretty good Whip. And I really think that Stockman never respected Trent Lott very much and thought if he could just get Bob Michel out of the way this wouldn't happen, everything would fall apart and we'd be fine, because we'd have a House bill that was Democrat and a Senate bill and we had to have a tax bill, so they'd just compromise down to something Stockman could live with. Maybe it's just my own suspicions.

Kondracke: But Stockman was part of the gang before he went over to the White House.

Hoppe: Oh yeah. And if you look at things he said afterwards you're wondering whether it was part of the gang because it helped Dave Stockman jump a couple of notches very quickly. Because Stockman had no credibility with Reagan. Kemp did; Stockman didn't.

Kondracke: Well, David, thank you very much.

Hoppe: Hopefully it's useful.

[end of interview]