

olis. What's the title of your paper you just wrote?

Q. "Arkansas: The State Where the People Rule."

Mr. Smith. And you don't think you'll get extra credit for getting it signed by the President? [Laughter]

Ms. Zahn. This wraps our special 2-hour edition of "CBS This Morning," our town meeting with President Clinton. Thank you so much for your time today.

The President. Thank you very much.

Ms. Zahn. Will you ever invite us back into the Rose Garden here?

The President. Absolutely. I'd like for all of you to come back.

Ms. Zahn. All right. Have a good day everybody. See you in the morning.

NOTE: The town meeting began at 7:03 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Interview With Connie Chung and Dan Rather of CBS News

May 27, 1993

Ms. Chung. Good morning, Mr. President.

Mr. Rather. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Dan. Good morning, Connie.

Ms. Chung. Mr. President, I was watching you on "CBS This Morning," and you were very funny. I think I heard you say that you also had a manicure in California. Is that right?

The President. I was kidding, you know. It was a joke. J-O-K-E. [Laughter]

Media Coverage

Ms. Chung. But I also could hear a lot of excuses when you talked about the Travel Office problem, the haircut, the economy, the jobs stimulus program. Why not admit if indeed there was a mistake perhaps with the Travel Office or with the haircut? Why not just say so?

The President. I did say that. I mean, the haircut thing was a boner, but I'm just saying I did ask whether I would inconvenience anybody and was told I wouldn't. It was a mistake. What else is there to say?

The Travel Office thing, obviously I don't think it was handled as well as it should have been, and so I said so. Now that I've said this, I challenge you to tell the American people that I think that we have a right to run an office with three people instead of seven at taxpayers' expense, the primary job of which is to arrange travel for people who travel with me. And I challenge you to tell the American people that we saved 25 percent on the very first flight that we put out for competitive bid. I take responsibility for any mistakes made in the White

House, and mistakes were made in the way that was handled, absolutely. But the goal was to save taxpayer money and to save the press money. And the press complained to me about how much the plane rides cost. I'm just trying to fix it. I still think we can achieve the goal and correct the mistakes. We did make a mistake.

Obviously, on the stimulus thing—no one asked me about that—if we would have followed the right strategy somehow we would have won, and we didn't. But if you try to do a lot of things, you're going to make some mistakes. I'm going to admit my mistakes. All I want to do is to have the kind of relationship, with you and others, that will present me as I am to the American people and not as some sort of clay figure that's all pulled out of shape. I'm going to make a lot of—you get out and go to bat every day, you're going to make mistakes. Babe Ruth struck out twice as many times as he hit home runs. And so I expect to strike out. But I'm going to make a few hits too, if I keep going to bat.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, we will accept that challenge. And Connie joins the "CBS Evening News" next Tuesday night; we hope you'll be watching. She'll accept that challenge and meet what you said.

The President. I think you two will be great together. I'm excited about it.

Mr. Rather. Thank you, Mr. President, thank you.

The President. Bye-bye. Thank you.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, if we could be

one one-hundredth as great as you and Hillary Rodham Clinton have been together in the White House, we'd take it right now and walk away winners.

As you know, Mr. President, I pride myself on trying to ask the tough questions. So I'm not going to apologize in advance for this question, but I do want to put you on tough question alert.

The President. Go ahead, I'm bleeding already. Go ahead. [Laughter]

President's Television Habits

Mr. Rather. You've been through 2 hours of questioning this morning with two of the most insightful questioners on television, Harry Smith and Paula Zahn. Connie came at you there with a substantive question. So here's my question: When you're able to take a deep breath, when you're able to watch television, besides news and sports, what do you like to watch? What do you watch on television?

The President. Besides news and sports? I did watch the NBA playoff game last night while I was calling Congress, asking them to help me in our playoff. I like to watch old movies. After news and sports, my favorite thing to watch are old movies.

Mr. Rather. Could you name two or three that you particularly like?

The President. Yes, I saw "The Maltese Falcon" again on television the other night. I thought that was great. My two favorite movies of all time are "Casablanca" and "High Noon." "High Noon" is my favorite movie. It's a movie about courage in the face of fear and the guy doing what he thought was right in spite of the fact that it could cost him everything. And Gary Cooper is terrified the whole way through. So he doesn't pretend to be some macho guy. He's just doing what he thinks is right. It's a great movie.

Ms. Chung. Are you a channel surfer?

The President. I surf the channels. I do. A lot of times when I come in late at night, I punch that button frenetically just to sort of see what's on. And I like Washington because there are a lot of cable stations here. And I get frustrated, particularly on the weekends if I have a little time, when there's not a single good movie on. But I do like to bump through the channels.

Economic Program

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, we all recognize that you have a kind of "high noon" today with the vote in the House of Representatives. And with that in mind, let's go to our first questioner from among our affiliates, Virgil Dominic from Cleveland.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Hi, Virgil.

Q. Thank you very much for being with us today. We appreciate it so very much. Mr. President, could you please give us more details on the agreement that you and the House leadership and the conservatives worked out early this morning on your economic package that will be going to a vote in the House sometime later today? And specifically, sir, does it include an increase in spending cuts or a lesser increase in taxes or both?

The President. The short answer to your question, or second question, is no. But the agreement that was worked out late last night is an enforcement mechanism to make sure that what happened to the '90 budget agreement doesn't happen this time. That is, this is a mechanism to guarantee that if there's a 5-year deficit reduction target, we meet the targets every year. Because under previous budgets, you could adopt a 5-year budget, but it's hard for CBS or your affiliate or the businesses of anybody represented in this audience today to do 5-year budgets. So this says, after every year, if we miss that deficit reduction target, the President is bound to come in and offer a plan to correct it, and the Congress must vote on it. They don't have to take his ideas, but if they don't do that, they must do something else. This will give the American people the assurance that each year we are going to meet these targets. I think that is very, very important.

Now, let me say one other thing. Most everybody believes that to whatever extent we can, we should have more cuts and less taxes. That's a good thing to do. But when you get to the specifics—if you look at, for example, Senator Boren's plan, which reduces taxes on the wealthy and imposes more burdens on working people and elderly people just above the poverty line, you see how hard the details are.

The Congress will have three more chances to vote to reduce spending. All the appropriation bills are also going through the Congress now, as soon as this is voted on. We're going to

have a health care program which will produce savings in the health care area for Congress, the entitlements. And Vice President Gore is going to present a program to reform the way the Federal Government works in September that will give a third chance to cut spending this year. So this is not over. We're going to keep doing things that will reduce unnecessary spending in the Federal Government whatever happens on this bill today.

Mr. Rather. Thank you, Mr. President, and we have another questioner who will identify himself and his station and town.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. My name is Bill Sullivan from Missoula, Montana.

The President. That's a great town.

Q. Thank you very much. First of all, on behalf of all the CBS affiliates, I want to thank you, and for free broadcasters all over America, for your support of free broadcasting, and also want to say thank you for participating in this town meeting this morning. We were proud to have you on our network.

The President. Thank you.

Pacific Northwest Resource Management

Q. My question, sir: The subject is the Northwest and development and use of the natural resources in the Northwest. The debates have been going on for many, many years. You yourself have been involved in hearings. When is it time to make a decision and let the folks go down the road?

The President. We're going to recommend a resolution to the problems that we found in the timber summit that was held a few months ago, very shortly. We're going to make our recommendation. The Northwest now has a lot of difficult natural resource issues. For example, if you cut all the old-growth forests, you can keep people working for a while, and then you won't have any left at all. You will have lost a lot of not only the biological species there, but there will be more water pollution and the salmon fishermen will be hurt. A lot of these things are very, very complicated. We're going to try to resolve them the best we can and make a recommendation that will preserve as much of the old-growth forests as we can, recognize the importance of maintaining responsible logging practices, and keep the salmon fishers going, and doing as much of those things as we can to balance the economy and the environment.

I understand a little about this because I live in a State that's over half timberland with a lot of national forest land. And I know that these are very tough issues. Probably no one will be happy with the recommendations that our administration will make. But we're going to do our best to be fair and to look at the long view. We have to think about people making a living not just now but also 5 years from now and 10 years from now and how to preserve those essential parts of our environment that are an important part of the character of the Pacific Northwest.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you very much. We have, I think, time—we want to keep our commitment to you, because we do appreciate very much your doing this. And Allen Howard from KHOU-TV in Houston has a question.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Allen.

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. We've heard a lot of comments regarding yet another broadcast campaign reform; 50 percent of lowest unit rate and three commercials are just a couple of the things we've heard. I wonder if you might enlighten us on that, please.

The President. Well, the whole issue of free campaign time from the broadcast networks arose, frankly, as a result of the opposition that some folks have in any public funding of campaigns. The position the administration has taken is pretty simple. I presented a campaign finance reform law to the Congress which lowers the cost of campaigns, lowers the cost of political action committees, and gives people who are candidates for office communications vouchers so they can have access to the airwaves, so the challengers as well as the incumbents, and without regard to party, can have access to the airwaves.

The only discussion about requiring you to offer free air time came about because there are some people in the Congress who are against any public funding of congressional elections. Now, the United States Supreme Court has said that the only way we can lower the costs of campaigns is to tie that to getting some public funding. In other words, the Supreme Court says that if a billionaire wants to run for President, for Senator, for Congress, they can spend all the money they want, they can

try to buy the election, they can do whatever they want. We can't stop them, according to the Supreme Court. So the only incentive we have to get people to live within a lower campaign spending limit is to be able to give them some public funding, which I propose to do not in terms of direct money but for communications vouchers so you can only use it to overcome your disability to reach people through communications, either over television or radio or newspaper or mail. So that's how our plan would work.

But you should know that the question you asked about mandatory air time would only come up again, probably, if the public funding portion of this fails. We've got to find a way to guarantee that voters hear an honest debate at an affordable cost, the election should not be bought, and that incumbents should not be

insulated from honest debate and challenge. That's all we're trying to do.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you very, very much. Our thanks to Virgil Dominic, Bill Sullivan, and Allen Howard. Mr. President, we appreciate more than we can say in a short time both being on "CBS This Morning" and taking the extra time to do this. God bless you. Thank you very much. And tell Mrs. Clinton we respect her and we're pulling for her. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you very much, Dan.

Ms. Chung. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Connie. And good-bye.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:05 a.m. The President spoke via satellite from the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on House of Representatives Action on the Budget *May 27, 1993*

For a long time now, the American people have wondered whether their Government in Washington could ever really work for them again, ever really face the tough problems. Well, tonight the House of Representatives gave America a victory of growth over gridlock. Tonight the House showed courage and conviction. Tonight the House made hard choices: to cut a quarter of a billion dollars in spending; to ask those most able to pay, the wealthy, to do more to reduce our deficit; to increase incentives to invest and create jobs in the private sector; and to provide the incentives to make people at the bottom rungs of the economy prefer work over welfare. Tonight the House said no to gridlock, no to the status quo, and no

to the special interests who worked so very hard to frighten millions of Americans about this program. Tonight the House said yes to jobs, yes to lowering the deficit, yes to lower interest rates, yes to a brighter future.

Tomorrow we go on to the Senate, and we go back to the country. We have broken the gridlock. We are taking responsibility for the future. We are dealing with the tough problems. I am very, very proud of the people who tonight cast a very tough vote in a hard environment for a better tomorrow for America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Appointment for Posts at the Department of State *May 27, 1993*

The President today announced his intention to appoint Molly Raiser to be the State Department's Chief of Protocol. He also intends to

nominate her to the rank of Ambassador while serving in that capacity. In addition, he approved the appointment of Fred DuVal as Deputy