

you. Don't do it. It's a terrible mistake." They would say, "There's got to be some reason no other President ever did this." Every other President always made a deal, made an agreement, did all this. But you know what? After 14 months of study, they came back and said two things. These people have known for 30 years that what they were doing was addictive and dangerous. They are marketing to children. They are trying to sell to children. And every day 3,000 children start smoking, and 1,000 of them will die early because of it. And it just seems to me that if we can give 1,000 more kids a day a chance at a full, good American way of life, it is worth whatever the near-term political consequences are.

That is how we all have to begin to think about our future. That's the way I want you

to think about our future. And I want you to go out of here just remembering with all of our difficulties, with all the problems California's been through, there's a reason we're still around here after 220 years nearly. This is a very great country. And when we remember our basic values and when we work together and when we look to the future, we always do all right.

So I just want you to remember that. You stay with us, stay with what you know is right, and the best is yet to come.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Note: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon cochairs Richard Blum, Walter H. Shorenstein, Ernest Gallo, Chang Lo, and Susie Tompkins.

Interview With Larry King in Culver City, California

September 21, 1995

President's Trip

Mr. King. Thank you for joining us. This is a campaign trip or a Presidential trip?

The President. Well, a little of both.

Mr. King. Why so early?

The President. Because we have to get out now and raise our funds. And if I can do it in a regular, disciplined way, then I can maintain as much time as possible for my job even next year when the election begins.

Mr. King. Is it hard to run a country and run for office?

The President. It is if you have to do it full-time. And I just determined that the best thing to do would be to try to handle the fundraising in a regular way this year and try to get it out of the way so I could spend as much time as possible being President next year and defer the campaign as long as possible.

Mr. King. Oh, so next year the campaign is going to come late to you.

The President. Well, it depends what happens. But what I'd like to do is to work as much as I can. Even on this trip we've done several official things. This morning I was up in San Francisco with 19 executives of major information firms announcing that we were going to provide computer hookups for all the schools

in California over the next couple of years and challenging the rest of the country to follow the lead. And over the next few weeks, I'll be trying to put together a national plan for this sort of thing. We know we can get computers in all of the schools, and if we can get the teachers trained, have good software, we're going to do very well, indeed.

Mr. King. Was Bill Gates there?

The President. He was not, although I know him quite well, and I expect that he will be very supportive of this.

Mr. King. Because he said recently on a show we did on television that he would be very supportive.

Mr. President. Yes, he—I know him quite well, and we've talked about this extensively. But he couldn't come today. We had lots and lots of other people there. There's a great feeling that California ought to lead the way because the State is now only 45th in students—computers per student—but they have the—they're the technological leader of the world. So I'm encouraged by it. It's a very exciting thing.

1996 Election

Mr. King. All right. This is the audience's show, but let's cover some bases right up front. When are you going to announce?

The President. Don't know.

Mr. King. This is just pro forma, right?

The President. It's a pro forma thing. Everyone knows I intend to run again. And again, I would like to put it off as long as possible. I—

Mr. King. Because?

The President. Because there is so much work that needs to be done. In the next 60 days, in the working out of this budget, we're going to define in some measure what our country is going to be like for the next several years. And I just want to continue to focus on the substance of the changes we ought to make and the values we ought to put up front in protecting families and individuals and trying to bring our country together and give people a chance to make the most of their own lives and try to write that into the budget. And I think the less politics, the less partisanship we have, the better off we're going to be.

Mr. King. And Al Gore will run again, too?

The President. He will unless he decides not to. I think—you know, he's plainly the most influential and effective Vice President in the history of the country, what he's done with technology, what he's done with the environment, what he has done with reinventing the Government. We have done more than any previous administration, Republican or Democratic, to shrink the size of Government, reduce regulation, and basically make Government more entrepreneurial. And he's led that effort. And of course, he's been the leading voice in what we've done in foreign policy as well. So I'm looking forward to running with him, and I like working with him.

Mr. King. A few areas. I don't even have to ask a question, I just say a name. Colin Powell—what do you make of it?

The President. Well, as you know, I've worked with him and I like him and I think he's got a very compelling life story and he's a very appealing man. And I think his book will do very well. I have no idea what he's going to do, and I can't—I don't really have any influence over it. So what I have to do is—

Mr. King. You have to think about it, though. I mean, the polls coming out that he's doing great and—

The President. Believe it or not—well, and you would expect that. I mean, he's a very impressive man, and he's gotten a lot of very favorable publicity, much of it very well deserved. And so that's just a part of it.

But I have no control over that. What I have to do is to do the job the people gave me. And I really believe, in the world we're living in, with so much change going on and people being bombarded from all sides with so much information, people like me who are in office should not worry so much about being popular. We ought to do what we think is right for the long run and then hope—believe the election can be our friend. Because only when the election starts do people really begin to focus on it.

Public's Mistrust of Government

Mr. King. Are you, though, concerned about this apparent feeling in the country—Powell said it the other night on my television show—a plague on both the Houses, the Democrats, the Republicans. Bill Bradley is a classic example—he leaves the Senate. What's going on? Both parties seem to be in disfavor.

The President. Well, I think they're in disfavor right now because the American people have seen them fighting in the Congress and they've seen few results since the last election and because in the previous election they didn't understand what results had actually occurred. But if you look at the facts—first, I think there's a good chance that we will get a budget agreement that will both balance the budget, which both parties want, but which will preserve our fundamental obligations to our children in terms of education and technology in the future—

Mr. King. And that will change the feelings?

The President. —and to the elderly in terms of having—reducing the rate at which Medicare and Medicaid grow but still not really hurting a lot of the older people of the country. If we get a good balanced budget, if we can get a decent welfare reform bill, if the people see the system working, then I think they will not have such negative feelings about both parties.

But I also believe, in fairness, that the Democratic Party has done a lot of things that most Americans never thought they would. I mean, the Democrats took the lead alone in reducing

the deficit from \$290 billion to \$160 billion a year. They passed a crime bill that increased the death penalty but also invested more in prevention, that had “three strikes and you’re out” but also put 100,000 police on the street. The crime rate is going down in every State in the country. The murder rate is down. The only—

Mr. King. So why are we upset?

The President. Well, because we still have troubles and because it’s an unsettling time. If you look at what’s happened all over the world, you’ve got this global economy that’s going from an information society to a technology and—I mean, it’s going from an industrial society to a technology and informational economy—

Mr. King. Look at all this here tonight.

The President. Yes. And you—look at all this, yes. And you’ve got—people are going to be faxing us; they’re going to be E-mailing us; they’re going to be doing all this stuff on the Internet. We don’t have the cold war anymore, with nation-states organized in roughly two different camps. We’ve got instead a global economy. And the good news is you’ve got economic integration. The bad news is there’s all this pressure for unsettling people’s lives, whether it’s people being less secure in their jobs or working harder for less or being subject to smaller fanatic groups who practice destruction like the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway or the Oklahoma City bombing or a bus blowing up in Israel.

So it’s a time of great ferment and upheaval where there are a lot of wonderful things going on and a lot of very troubling things going on. And the United States has—our job now, all of us in positions of authority and all of our citizens, is to embrace new ideas and change to try to create a new economy in which we can grow the middle class and shrink the under class, to try to create a social policy which rewards work and family and freedom and responsibility and to try to give us a different kind of Government that’s more entrepreneurial and less bureaucratic but helps people solve their own problems.

Now, this has only happened—the last time this happened to this extent was 100 years ago. This is a 100-year change period we’re going through. And it is not surprising in a period like this that people would be looking around at all their options because they think there are so many balls up in the air.

Mr. King. So, therefore, come independent candidates and disfavor and people leaving politics.

The President. Yes. And not only that, if you’ve got—look, if you go home at night and you’ve got 40 channels on television, and they say, which would you rather have, three parties or two, you’d say three. And if you ask five or four, they might say five.

But I think that if this system that we have, which has made us the oldest democracy in human history, the longest lasting one, if it produces a balanced budget with a commitment to our children and our future and being decent to the seniors on Medicare and Medicaid, if it produces welfare reform that promotes work and responsibility without hurting innocent children, if it shows that it can come to grips with the fundamental challenges of the time, then it will generate more support. If it doesn’t solve the problems, then it won’t. It’s pretty simple.

1996 Election

Mr. King. Would you welcome an independent candidate? Is that good for the mix?

The President. I think it—

Mr. King. You ran against it last time.

The President. I did. And I think it all depends. I think it depends on who the candidate is, what the person says, what the issues are. But the main—

Mr. King. What Powell would be for?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. Could we elect a black President? Are we ready?

The President. Oh, I think the American people—I would hope the American people would judge any candidate based on his or her merits, without regard to race or gender. That’s what I hope, and that’s the America I’ve worked for all my life. If you look at my appointments, if you look at the policies I’ve pursued, that’s the America I’ve worked for.

But I think—again, I will say it takes almost all the concentration I can muster every day to do the job I was hired to do. And that’s what I’m going to work on.

Mr. King. But you love it.

The President. I love it. I love working every day.

Mr. King. You told me once, “My bad days are good days.”

The President. Yes, because of—it is an incredible gift, with all the difficulties, to be given

the opportunity to meet these challenges. And as I said, I honestly believe, when the history of this era is written people will say this was the period of the biggest change in the way we work and live in 100 years. So who could not be grateful to do that for a day, a week, a month, 4 years? If I get 8 years, that's so much the better. I'm working hard at it.

Welfare Reform

Mr. King. We're going to turn it over to the public. Are you going to sign off on this welfare bill?

The President. It depends on what it looks like. The Senate bill—I still have a few problems with the Senate bill. But it basically is much, much better. They took a lot of the extreme, kind of right-wing ideological things out of it. They've put in a bonus for moving people to work. They require people to sign personal responsibility contracts. They've put in a lot more funds for child care so people can go to work and still be good parents. These are all ideas that I have been pressing a long time. So I like it.

It really would end welfare as we know it. And I think we can make it—if we can make it a little better in conference, I'll be happy to sign it. If they make it a lot worse, they could kill it. I think it wouldn't even get back to the Senate again.

Mr. King. Right now you're leaning toward yes?

The President. Well, right now I like a lot of—the changes in the Senate bill that were made in the last 2 weeks were very good. If that's the direction the Congress is going in, we're going to have a great welfare reform proposal. But it still could get off the track. I just hope they'll keep going in that direction.

Mr. King. This is Westwood One. You're listening to Larry King with President Bill Clinton.

[At this point, the stations took a commercial break.]

Mr. King. Our guest is President Bill Clinton. Granada Hills, California. Hello.

Q. Hello?

Mr. King. Yes. Go right ahead.

The Environment

[A participant asked what the administration had done to help the environment.]

Mr. King. Did you hear that clear?

The President. Yes. What have we done in the last 4 years to help the environment?

Mr. King. We don't hear a lot about Clinton and environment?

The President. We have, first of all, faithfully advanced the cause of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Secondly, we have done a great deal to try to promote public health in dealing with problems like the cryptosporidium problem—that was the thing that got into the water in Milwaukee that killed all the people. We're trying to deal with that.

Mr. King. Only you would know the actual name.

The President. We've also tried to improve public health through improving the food testing, like dealing with the problems with *E. coli* that caused the deaths from eating the meat.

Mr. King. Would you say you've kept your promises?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I have pushed through the California Desert Protection Act here, which was the biggest single land protection act and that kind of legislation in history. We worked very hard to solve the problems of the old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest—which the Congress has kind of messed up now—to get that out of court to protect the old-growth forests and to try at the same time to permit responsible logging. We reached an accord between the environmentalists and the farmers here in this so-called Bay Delta accord, in the farming area of California. We have worked to try to reduce the global warming and hazardous emissions through working on the clean car project with Detroit. We've supported the development of electric cars and natural gas-burning cars and other things to promote clean air.

Those are just some of the many things we've done in the environment. And in addition to that, I'm obviously carrying on a vigorous fight now to prevent this Congress from using the budget process to undermine our ability to stick up for clean air, clean water, and the other basic environmental protections of the country.

Mr. King. Sacramento with President Clinton on Westwood One. Hello?

Q. Hello. Can you hear me?

Mr. King. Yes, sure.

Education Funding

[A participant asked about focusing on a stronger education system to provide opportunity and prevent crime, instead of spending money on building prisons.]

Mr. King. Are we too much one way?

The President. Well, I think it is a terrible mistake to neglect education funding in favor of building prisons. On the other hand, you still have to have strong criminal justice laws. The crime rate is going down in almost every State in the country.—

Mr. King. Prison's the answer?

The President. The murder rate is going down. It's not the only answer, but some people need to be sent to prison. Now, when we passed the crime bill last year, in addition to providing for "three strikes and you're out" and more funds to help States build prisons, we also gave the States and the communities of our country a good deal of money to promote prevention through education, through community activities and recreation, to give our young people something to say yes to.

And in addition to that, our administration has worked very hard to give the States and the schools of this country and the young people of this country more educational opportunities, everything from getting kids off to a better start in school, to giving the school districts money for smaller classes, more computers, higher standards, to more scholarships and national service opportunities to pay for college education, to many, many more low-cost, easier repayment college loans.

Mr. King. So it doesn't have to be either/or?

The President. It's not either/or. We have to be tough on crime, but we have to be smart about prevention and we have to continue to invest in education. You know, we've got 7½ million new jobs in this country and an economic explosion by conventional measures, but half the people are still working harder for no raise. And the reason is education. We have got to increase the skill level. So I agree with the questioner.

You know, in California the cost of education has been increased so much and the funding decreased, that enrollment here has gone down in colleges by 10 percent at a time when it ought to be exploding. So I do want to reverse that, and I do think one of my fundamental

obligations as President is to help our young people make the most of their own lives by getting a good education. And we can't sacrifice that; that is the most important thing we can invest in for the future.

1996 Election

Mr. King. Based on that, are you surprised that Governor Wilson got into the Presidential primaries?

The President. No. I have no opinion about that. Let the Republicans pick their nominees. All I'm saying is, my obligation is to try to make sure that people like that caller can make the most of their own lives, and education is perhaps the critical element of that.

Mr. King. We have an E-mail question. By the way, do you expect it to be Bob Dole? Is that logical?

The President. I don't know. One of the things I learned is that you can't predict, just as nobody predicted that much that I would be nominated and elected.

Mr. King. Correct.

The President. It's very difficult to predict. I'm going to be President, work on being President, and let them make their own decision.

NAFTA

Mr. King. E-mail question. With Mexico in an economic and social tailspin, is NAFTA dead or jeopardized?

The President. No, it's not dead. And because I think Mexico is beginning to come back, I think it is not jeopardized. I still believe it was the right thing to do.

Mr. King. Wouldn't change it?

The President. Yes. And let me tell you why. NAFTA gives us a chance to have more access to Mexican markets and not to have a permanent trade deficit with Mexico just because their wages are lower than ours. In the first year of NAFTA's existence, we had a huge surplus with Mexico and generated many thousands of jobs.

The truth is that the Mexicans expanded too quickly, borrowed too much money, and got in trouble. But now, under President Zedillo, they're slowly working their way back into a stable situation.

Over the long run, NAFTA means more opportunities for Americans to sell products that bring higher wages to our workers, it means more stability in Mexico, it means less illegal

immigration, it means better partnerships in Mexico and in Canada and then throughout Latin America for the long run.

We have to make these decisions in this period of change not just on what might be good next month but on what will be good for America 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, and I'm convinced that NAFTA and the GATT world trade agreement will be very good for America over the long run.

Bosnia

Mr. King. A report just in, Mr. President, from Reuters, that all the factions in Bosnia are going to meet in New York this week. What can you tell us?

The President. We just released that information, I think, from our plane. Ambassador Holbrooke, who is handling those negotiations for me, has been working very hard. I believe that a combination of factors, including the firm resolve of our NATO allies in the United Nations in stopping the siege of Sarajevo with the air campaign, some changes on the ground there in Bosnia, and the willingness of parties to work with Mr. Holbrooke and with our partners in Europe in Russia to get a negotiated settlement, give us some hope.

Now, I want to caution everybody, this is Bosnia, and it's tough.

Mr. King. Why New York?

The President. But I feel better than I have in a long time.

Mr. King. Better getting them on turf here?

The President. Yes. Well, they're coming to New York, as I understand it, in part for the United Nations.

Mr. King. And since they're here, why not?

The President. So it is convenient for them, and it is good for us. So we'll be working—we talked for a long time today. I talked with the Secretary of State and my National Security Adviser and Mr. Holbrooke; we had an extended talk and we agreed on what the agenda was going to be, and I feel good about the process. But I want to caution the American people, this is Bosnia, we've got a long way to go.

Mr. King. Are you hands-on in this?

The President. Yes, I've been very involved in it, and I feel that we're doing the right thing and we have a chance to put an end to the misery and to limit once and for all the possibility that this could spread into a wider war that can involve our people.

Mr. King. This is the Larry King special on Westwood One, if you've just joined us, with the President of the United States.

Spokane, Washington. Hello.

Balanced Budget

[A participant asked if the President could make across-the-board cuts in Government spending to balance the budget.]

Mr. King. Let's knock everything off.

The President. Well, let me first of all say that we have been doing a version of that. When we took the deficit from \$290 billion down to \$160 billion in the first three budgets that I was involved with, the first time since President Truman was office that we had a three-year-in-a-row reduction of the deficit, we eliminated hundreds of programs, we cut others, and we cut domestic discretionary spending and defense spending in the aggregate and then tried to make our priorities within them.

Now what we're trying to do is to agree on a timetable for going to zero, and instead of—we're cutting categories, if you will, as you suggest. But within those categories, I still believe we ought to preserve our commitment to education, to technology, to research and development, to the things that will generate the jobs and the opportunities of the future for Americans, because that's an important value. But we are doing, in general terms, what you suggest. The reason you can't take the politics out of it is because there is so much difference between the various Members of Congress and the administration on what should and shouldn't be funded. But I do believe that what we need is an automatic mechanism to say that if in any year we miss our deficit reduction targets, then there will be some sort of across-the-board cut.

Now, that's what we did when I was a Governor, and it worked very well. So I'd like to see us make our priority decisions now over the next 60 days, and then say if, in these years, these out-years we miss it and we have a bigger deficit than we thought, then there ought to be some sort of across-the-board shaving so that we can keep faith with the American people and take that process out of politics.

Mr. King. Someone by fax wants to know where you draw the line in sand? What would you definitely veto that's a Republican proposal?

The President. Well, I have issued a lot of those things. The veto threats, if you will, or veto notices, I do not want this balanced budget process to be a pretext for destroying our ability to protect clean air and clean water. I do not want the balanced budget process to lead to massive cuts in our efforts to give our young people a chance to make the most of their own lives through education investments.

And I don't want the balanced budget to be a pretext for really hurting the elderly, the disabled, and the poorest children in this country with excessive reductions in Medicare and Medicaid just to meet the 7-year target and mostly to meet this very large tax cut that benefits the upper income people like you and me who really haven't asked for it.

Now, I think we can have a tax cut targeted to the childrearing and to education and still balance the budget in a timely fashion. But we shouldn't just jerk the rug out from under the health care of the most vulnerable people in this country.

Line-Item Veto

Mr. King. Have you asked Mr. Dole and Mr. Gingrich about the conference committee on the line-item veto?

The President. Oh, repeatedly.

Mr. King. And what do they say? We have less than a minute because I've got to get an on-time break here.

The President. They basically said that—they said they were for the line-item veto, but once I became President and they had the Congress so they were in charge of the spending, they didn't want to give me the line-item veto.

Mr. King. So you think there's no doubt it's just deliberate because of Bill Clinton? If it were a Republican President, they'd have had it done?

The President. Well, I don't even know if they'd do that. They've got the Congress, and so now they like the spending. When they were in the minority, they liked the line-item veto. I have been consistent on this. I have always believed in the line-item veto. It imposes some discipline on the process. It's not a cure-all, but it gives you much more discipline.

Mr. King. This is Larry King. We have more to come. We're going to take a break, and then when we come back, more from President Clinton, more E-mail, more faxes overseas, in the United States, phone calls, et cetera, in this

kind of historic town meeting. This in Westwood One, and you're listening to Larry King with President Bill Clinton.

[*The stations took a commercial break.*]

American Justice System

Mr. King. I guess this is from America Online. This is a question from the United Kingdom: Due to the fiasco surrounding the O.J. Simpson trial, what's its effect on the American justice system? How do you see that trial—they're going into the jury next week?

The President. Well, I think it depends in part on things that still have to happen. But I would hope neither the American people nor our friends in the United Kingdom would judge the American justice system entirely on this trial, because the facts are so unusual.

First of all, the trial was televised, which I think contributed to the circus-like atmosphere and some of the developments.

Mr. King. You're opposed to televising?

The President. Well, I just think that you run a serious risk when you do it in a high-profile trial.

Secondly, you had a very excellent defense, and you've had a lot of—in terms of—and they're famous, they're well-known, and they're able. And then you had all these extraneous elements coming in that don't normally come in a murder trial.

So I would just say, we should be hesitant to recommend sweeping changes in the American justice system based on this trial, which is unlike any one in my experience.

Mr. King. As an Attorney General in—which you were in Arkansas—

The President. In Arkansas, yes.

Mr. King. Did you ever have a televised trial?

The President. Never. And I just think—on balance—I think all criminal trials can be heavily covered in the press and then reported on by television. But I think on balance, you run the risk of having more derailments and distractions if you have televised trials.

Mr. King. To Tucson, Arizona, for President Clinton. Hello.

Japan-U.S. Relations

[*A participant asked about the recent rape of a 12-year-old girl in Japan by U.S. military personnel and what effect that would have on Japan-U.S. relations.*]

Mr. King. Yes, we've got problems there, don't we?

The President. Well, the case obviously has been very traumatic, as you would imagine. And it's a much more rare occurrence in Japan, unfortunately, than it is here—

Mr. King. Yes.

The President. —unfortunately for us.

But I would say to you that we will first of all make it clear that the United States deeply regrets the incident, that we do not condone any misconduct or any abuse of the Japanese people. We think that anybody who violates any laws should be treated accordingly.

But we have been a good partner with Japan. And even though we've had some differences over trade matters, for example, when we had to have a real conflict over the treatment of automobiles and the auto parts, the Japanese are a great democracy and a strong ally for us, and our forces have been there now for quite a long time in genuine partnership.

So if they think there's any kind of procedures we ought to take to improve things, we obviously are open to that. But I think as long as they know that we are not turning a blind eye to this, that we are outraged, that our heart goes out to them, they know that we have been a good partner and we respect them and we'll continue to be.

Mr. King. Is Vice President Mondale doing a good job of being up front with the Japanese?

The President. Yes, he's been a terrific Ambassador. I think it's fair to say that he has exceeded the expectations even of his biggest fans in both showing the Japanese that we are deeply committed to our friendship and partnership with them and that we respect them in every way but that there must be some changes in our trading relationship. He has been very tough and very strong and, at the same time, very supportive of them. He's struck just the right balance.

First Lady's Trip to China

Mr. King. Hillary's decision to go to Beijing—her own?

The President. Well, it was a decision that we made together. I strongly felt that she ought to go. Everybody said that it was bad politics—the people who said that if she went it would be condoning their human rights record and then if she went and said it was strong, that

she would upset our developing relationship with the Chinese.

But I felt that she has invested so much of her life in the welfare of women and children in our country and then around the world, and I thought that she could speak for our American values and about conditions that exist, not only in China but in other countries, even here in the United States, that are bad for the future of women and little girls—that it would be a good thing.

And I think now everyone sees that it was a wonderful thing for our country and for the cause of freedom and human rights around the world.

Equal Access to Technology

Mr. King. From America Online: I'm sitting in an office in the middle of our farmyard in the middle of North Dakota. The information highway is open to us, but the long-distance charges are much too heavy. Can we expect equal access for rural America in the future?

The President. Great question. That is one of the things that we have worked very hard on. The Vice President and I strongly feel that we've got to have equal and affordable access, whether people are isolated in rural areas or whether they are low-income people in inner-cities or whether they're small business people or people in schools and hospitals and libraries.

And so one of the things that we're looking for, for example, in this telecommunications bill is a bill that will guarantee genuine competition to bring prices down and the quality and variety of services up. Rural America actually is in a position perhaps to benefit more than any other part of America by putting America into the information superhighway because you can bring all—everything to the smallest rural hamlet in North Dakota or in North Arkansas. But equal access is a big issue. It's going to be a big issue in the telecommunications bill, and it will continue to be a big issue for us.

And I do believe the answer to your question is, I think this will be like all technology. I think the more of it there is, and the more competition there is, the lower your prices will be.

Media Ownership Restrictions

Mr. King. In that regard, this legislation might remove all ownership restrictions for radio and

television, meaning we could own anything in any amount. Do you favor it?

The President. No. Now there are restrictions now on how many—what percentage of the national television stations you can own—it's at 35 percent, I think—but the present bill has no restrictions in local markets. For example, in any—

Mr. King. You could own five stations.

The President. Well, no, you could own two television stations, the radio stations, and the town newspaper.

Mr. King. You're against that.

The President. I'm against that. You might say, well, look at Los Angeles, we have so many television stations, but most places have three television stations, a handful of radio stations, and one newspaper. And I just think that's too much. So I think the local concentration provisions ought to be changed before they send the bill to me.

Media Responsibility

Mr. King. You got into criticizing Calvin Klein. Any change of heart in that regard?

The President. No. I want to emphasize this: I have no judgment about whether whatever they did violated the law. That's not the question.

The point I was trying to make—Calvin Klein are not the only people who do this—but let me just say, here's the situation in America: The crime rate's coming down, and the murder rate's coming down. Drug use by people 18 to 34 is coming down. But violent crime among people between the ages of 12 and 17 is going up, casual drug use between—about people between 12 and 17 is going up.

And these young people, in their most vulnerable years, trying to come to grips with their physical developments, with their intellectual challenges, where the world may seem bewildering to them, I just don't think they ought to be used as commercial objects. I don't think you ought to put teenagers out there selling jeans where you show their underwear. And basically, you send a message to all these kids out there that are struggling to try to come to grips with the world that what's really important is how they look in jeans and whether they can show their underwear and whether they can basically be sex objects when they're teenagers. I just think it's wrong.

And it was an emotional, visceral reaction on my part. It has nothing to do with the law. I just think it's wrong. And I think the American people are going to have to reassert some things are important—more important than commerce, and the welfare of children is one of them.

Mr. King. And speaking of nothing to do with the law, was Senator Dole also right in his criticism of what some of the things Hollywood turns out? And I know you're supported here very well—tonight there's going to be a gala with a lot of those people there.

The President. Yes, but I think that the general comments he made were correct; the specific ones I don't have a judgment about. That is, the general thrust of saying that we need more sensitivity on the part of everybody in our culture—all the cultural influences in society, not just movies and not just records but all cultural influences in terms of the welfare of our children and their future, I think that is accurate.

Now, having said that, let me remind you that this was an issue that I raised before when I was Governor in the 1992 campaign. In '93, instead of attacking Hollywood, I came to Hollywood and challenged the people here—and in television, which I think is a bigger problem just because kids watch more of it—to join with me in trying to deal with this issue. And one of the things that came out of that meeting—and I want to compliment the networks on this—I think the major networks and I believe Fox was involved with this—commissioned UCLA to do an annual study of the violent content of television programs. And UCLA recently issued their first report. So that's something positive that the networks are doing. Now we'll have to see—will they act on those reports.

Mr. King. But again, you don't want laws.

The President. No, I'm not interested in censorship. What I'm interested in is asking all of us in American society to be accountable for what we do. You can't say the first amendment makes you unaccountable. The more freedom you have, the more responsibility you have to exercise, in any area of life.

And I think these things should become open for public debate, not because we want to gag people with laws, not because we want to be unrealistic but because our children, large numbers of our children are in deep trouble, and we all ought to be trying to rescue as many

of them as we can and give them a good start in life.

Mr. King. This is Westwood One. You're listening to Larry King with President Bill Clinton. [The stations took a commercial break.]

Q. Hello, Mr. President. My name is Brandon Kaplan, and I'm 6 years old. And I want to know how I can become President.

Mr. King. Okay. All right. Thanks for calling, kid.

The President. Brandon, I'd say you're off to a good start just the way you handled the question. I want to compliment you for calling in and—

Mr. King. By the way, it's appropriate because the President planned on being President when he was 6.

The President. That's not so.

Mr. King. [Inaudible]—directly to him.

The President. It's not so, but it's not too soon for you to think about it. I think you should—I would give you just a little simple advice. Number one, I think you should devote yourself to learning as much as you can in school. Study hard. Learn as much as you can in school. Develop your mind.

Number two, I think you should try to make friends with and understand all different kinds of people because in a democracy like America, many different kinds of people make up our country and get to vote.

And number three, when you're old enough, I think you should start to work for people you believe in in elections and learn how the election system works. So I would do those things.

If you like people and you understand them, if you learn a lot in school and you develop your mind, and then you understand how the political system works, you might grow up to be President.

Mr. King. Caller from Scotland, hello.

Native Americans

[A participant asked what the U.S. Government was doing to redress the grievances of Native Americans.]

Mr. King. Have we redressed that grievance?

The President. Well, it's interesting that you would ask that because I have—our administration has spent a great deal of time with the Native American tribes. And we now recognize in our country a government-to-government relationship with the American Indian tribes. We

are trying to do things that recognize their integrity, that recognize their right to exist, their right to make many autonomous decisions, and that give them more support in trying to become more independent and to overcome some of the economic and other problems they have.

As a matter of fact, I invited the heads of all the American Indian tribes to the White House, and I was the first President since James Monroe in the 1820's to do that. So we are working on having the right kind of relationship with the Native Americans, and I think we're making some good progress. And I hope we won't see that progress reversed in this Congress.

[The stations took a commercial break.]

Medicare

Mr. King. Before we take the next call, if we can capsulize it, what's happening today with Medicare? It seems to change daily.

The President. Well, essentially, here's what's happened. I presented a balanced budget that balanced the budget in 10 years and had a smaller but still sizable tax cut than the Republican congressional cut. Mine was basically targeted to middle income people to help them raise their kids and to deduct the cost of education after high school.

They presented a 7 year balanced budget with a \$250 billion tax cut and then basically made an arbitrary decision that they had to cut Medicare and Medicaid. Together, they had to reduce that spending by \$450 billion over the next 7 years.

With regard to Medicare, the problem with that is if you try to reduce it that much you either have to take so much out of the hospitals and doctors and other Medicare providers that you run the risk that they won't stay in the program or can't stay afloat, or you have to excessively increase premiums and copays and other costs for seniors. And keep in mind, three-quarters of our seniors live on less than \$24,000 a year.

So what I am trying to do is to find some common ground with the Republicans to say we have to bail out the Medicare Trust Fund and lengthen its life. We have to slow the rate of medical inflation, but your cuts are simply too big and will cost too much hardship for the seniors of this country or to the health care system.

Mr. King. Are they going to change them?

The President. Well, we're trying to find a way to work through to an agreement. There are lots of possibilities, and you know, the details are probably too complicated to go into here now. But that's basically the difference between us. And I'm working hard to—because Medicare is a program that has integrity, it works, but it needs to be preserved for the future.

Mr. King. May I ask if you are confident that we're going to see a compromised Medicare bill?

The President. I believe the chances are 50/50 or slightly better that we will ultimately reach a good faith agreement which balances the budget, preserves the integrity of Medicare and Medicaid, increases our investment in our children's future, and protects our environment. I think that—because those are all American values we need to all advance.

President's Trip

[A participant asked if the President's current trip to nine cities was a Presidential trip or a campaign trip.]

Mr. King. In other words, what is this?

The President. Oh, well, it's not hidden. I mean, at night I've been doing—

Mr. King. Campaigning. Or raising money.

The President. Yes, I've been doing fundraisers, and I've made addresses. But even the speeches I've given at my fundraisers have been reasonably nonpolitical, and then I'm mostly trying to explain to the American people what I think we are going through right now and how I think we need to embrace new ideas based on old-fashioned American values and try to come together. I am really doing my best to see the American people go beyond partisanship to reach some common ground.

Mr. King. Does the party pay, then, for part of this trip?

The President. Well, my campaign pays for all—if I do anything political, my campaign pays 100 percent of it. The taxpayers can't pay for it. They don't pay for it.

Mr. King. So even if you work 5 hours and you do politics 6 hours, politics pays?

The President. That's correct. Unless I take a separate and distinct trip that is solely for the purpose of dealing with an issue before my job. Like the other day, for example, I flew to Colorado to do a fundraiser. My campaign

paid for that. I left and went to another small town that was completely an educational event, and that was a public part of my job.

[The stations took a commercial break.]

President's Leadership Abilities

[A participant asked what the President had learned about leadership since his election.]

Mr. King. What have you learned? Good question.

The President. Well, I think the most significant thing I have learned is that the President—being President and being an effective President and a good leader for our country is about more than actually what you accomplish. It's about more than the bills you pass in Congress or the executive actions you take. It's also about the words that you say and how you say them.

And I have learned that, for example, the President has to be much more careful, much more clear, much more unambiguous than, for example, a Governor can in discussing an issue. And I am much more, I think, sensitive to the impact of my words and the way the decisions are made and the way they are communicated to the American people since Washington is so far from Boulder, Colorado, and all the other places that have called in today. And I think that giving the American people the understanding that we're making the decisions based on my convictions about American values, even though I know some of my decisions, whether it's to go into Haiti or to take on the NRA over the assault weapons ban or to take on the cigarette companies on teen smoking, may be wildly unpopular in the short run—I am trying to do things that are good for the long run.

And I think I have to communicate to the American people clearly what the basic values are that animate my decisions and why I'm doing this even though it may be unpopular because I think it will be good for the country over the long run. And that's a real lesson I had to learn, because when you're Governor, being Governor is more about whether you accomplish things and what you actually do in terms of the day-to-day work. Now, that's very important for a President, but very often it's almost impossible for people even to keep up with that until the election starts. So I've learned that. And if I were to win another term, I would try constantly, because I believe we're in a period of historic change, as I said earlier, to bring

the American people together around shared values and a willingness to take bold steps and embrace new ideas even if they seem to be unpopular in the moment.

1996 Election

Mr. King. By the way, you will be participating in many debates in this campaign? We can count on it.

The President. Oh, yes, you know, I—you can. I believe the President should be accountable, and I think debates are a good way to do it. So I've always been willing to do that.

Proposed Special Education Cuts

[*A mother of two special-needs children voiced her concern over proposed cuts in special education.*]

The President. Basically I would be opposed to those changes. Our education budget preserves the commitment to special-needs children. My Domestic Policy Adviser, Carol Rasco, has a child who is almost—about grown now. But he had cerebral palsy. I've known him since he was 5. And I watched him come up through our public schools and develop and flower and get to the point where he could live in his own apartment. My college roommate for 4 years adopted a special-needs child. And I watched that child grow and flower. And I think the commitment of our Nation to let every child live up to the fullest of his or her own ability is something that we should not abandon. And we do not have to abandon it to balance the budget.

Tobacco Industry

Q. Hello. How are you?

Mr. King. Fine.

The President. Fine.

[*The participant asked about the influence of the tobacco industry on future legislation.*]

The President. Well, as you know, I believe the tobacco industry has made two great mistakes in the last several years. First of all, it is now clear that at least a couple of the big companies have been aware for years that tobacco was both addictive and harmful and that it was concealed. And secondly, it is clear that many of the tobacco companies definitely market to teenagers to get more customers because they lose customers every year even though it's

illegal to sell cigarettes to teenagers, I think, in every State in the country.

So I would like to see a firm effort against teen smoking. I don't really care, as I made it clear, whether the FDA does it or whether the Congress does it by law. But if the Congress does it by law, I expect them to adopt all the restrictions in substance that we have recommended.

Now, many Congressmen are very loath to take on the tobacco companies because they are very wealthy, they have massive informational capacity to communicate to smokers, they have the ability to incite, inflame, and terrify the tobacco farmers who are really good, old-fashioned American hard-working people but who can be frightened by the tobacco companies. And so they do have a lot of influence, and frankly, all my political advisers told me that it was bad politics to take on the tobacco companies and there was a reason why no other living President had ever done it and that it was dangerous.

But we had evidence that for 30 years companies had known that tobacco was addictive and dangerous and that 3,000 kids start smoking a day and 1,000 kids will have their lives ended sooner because of it. So if we can save 1,000 kids a day, that's worth a lot of political damage to me. I think it's the right thing to do, and I hope they won't have so much influence in Congress that they will try to undermine this important effort.

Mr. King. Should it come under the FDA?

The President. It should come under the FDA unless Congress is willing to write these requirements into law. Now, the FDA itself, Dr. Kessler said he didn't care about regulating tobacco. If Congress would take the things we want to do and put it into law, the FDA would lose jurisdiction. They wouldn't be able to do it on an ongoing basis, but the benefit we would get is then the move against teen smoking would begin right away whereas tobacco companies can tie us up in court for a while otherwise.

So the FDA head, Dr. Kessler, has said that he will do it either way. But he would gladly give up jurisdiction to the Congress if, but only if, the Congress would take the same tough stand that we have recommended.

Agriculture

[A participant asked how agreements such as NAFTA or GATT would affect American agriculture.]

Mr. King. Well, we're all over the board today.

The President. I believe on balance that both NAFTA and GATT will be a major boon to American agriculture. I was just out in California meeting with a lot of farmers there. And virtually all of them talked about how much stronger agriculture was as a result of it.

With regard to NAFTA and Mexico, some of our livestock people have been concerned about how NAFTA would play and whether it would hurt them. With the GATT agreement, which is a worldwide trade agreement, there's no question that our farmers will be better off because other countries subsidize their farmers more than we subsidize ours. So if everybody has to reduce subsidies to an equal basis, American farmers will come out way ahead because we have the best, most competitive, most productive farmers in the world.

If we can get a decent farm bill out of the Congress, that is, one that continues to reduce the cost of the farm programs but doesn't take us out of global competition and doesn't really wreck the family farm, then I think the future of agriculture is bright. In fact, I think we may have seen a bottoming out of the number of farmers. We may see the same or even a larger number of farms in the years ahead because global population would probably outstrip the ability of other countries to produce food.

So farming should do very well in America for the next 20 or 30 years if we have a good farm bill and if these trade agreements are faithfully followed by all the countries.

Unabomber

[A participant questioned the decision to publish the Unabomber's tract in newspapers.]

Mr. King. What did you think of what the Post and Times did?

The President. Well, first of all—

Mr. King. I might add, the FBI praised them today.

The President. Yes. Just for the reason that the caller said, I thought it took a lot of real courage on the part of the Post and Times to do what they did because our country has basi-

cally taken a very hard line in not cooperating with terrorists of any kind, not being blackmailed and not being subject to blackmail.

The FBI recommended to the Attorney General, and she recommended to the Post and Times, after careful consideration, that they publish this for two reasons. One is they really felt, based on the best psychological profile they had of the Unabomber, that he would honor his commitment and stop killing people, stop trying to kill people. And secondly, they felt that the publication of the document, if it could be widely read, might actually help Federal authorities who have been looking for this person for nearly 20 years now, to identify a range of potential suspects.

And they thought that this was not like, you know, like asking for a million dollars or asking to swap hostages or anything like that. There were no people involved. So it was for that reason, with great reluctance, that the FBI recommended, that the Attorney General recommended, and that the Times and the Post did it.

Mr. King. And you agree with it?

The President. I do agree with it under these circumstances. It is a tough call. I sympathize with the comments of the gentleman that just called in. Our basic policy is strictly to not cooperate with terrorists of any kind. But under these circumstances, this narrow case, I think the Post and the Times did the right thing. And I appreciate the risks that they took with their journalistic integrity and with their principles to try to save lives and help us to finish this case.

Colin Powell

Mr. King. One other quick fax in a closing question. Do you plan to read Colin Powell's book? You're an avid reader.

The President. You know, I was kind of hoping he'd send me an autographed copy. I haven't gotten one yet, but I was kind of hoping he would.

Mr. King. He's autographed every other one in America. He might as well send one to you. By the way, would you—I know this happened once with Mr. Gingrich in New Hampshire. Would you sit down with Colin Powell and Ross Perot and others who are critical and semi-critical—

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. I know you like—discussions in the White House.

The President. Everything, as you—Mr. McLarty, my special Counselor, pointed out at Ross Perot's convention, we have done almost everything he said ought to be done in the '92 campaign. And all of the comments that General Powell has made so far with regard to the issues of the day, including our efforts to deal with assault weapons and the Brady bill, have been supportive of our position.

Mr. King. Do you think he's a Democrat at heart?

The President. Well, I think at heart he's kind of a new Democrat. I think he probably is trying—would like to see the country take generally the direction that I've tried to advocate. But I don't know that because we've never discussed anything about domestic policy other than what he said. I've talked to him a lot about foreign policy matters—

Mr. King. —him to be Vice President? Or was that one of many?

The President. No, no, that's true. It was one of many, but we did. He was one of the people that I thought that should be considered based on what I knew about him. And there were many that we thought about, and I thought he should be.

Mr. King. Any closing comments on this kind of thing we did here today? Could do more of it?

The President. I'd really like to do more of it. I want to thank all of the people who called, all the people who sent their faxes, all the people that used America Online, and the E-mail and everything. I thought it was great.

Mr. King. It was great having you with us.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. at Westwood One Radio Studio. In his remarks, the President referred to Bill Gates, chairman of the board, Microsoft Corp.

Remarks at a Clinton/Gore '96 Dinner in Los Angeles, California September 21, 1995

Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, Mr. Vice President, you sure convinced me. [Laughter] One down; 110 million to go. [Laughter]

I want to thank all of you so much for being here. Thank you, Tom Hanks, for introducing Al Gore. Thank you for not introducing me. [Laughter] Somebody's talked to Al Gore about playing Tom Hanks in an autobiography. [Laughter] I want to thank young Ashley Ballard. She looked so beautiful up here, and she sang so well. I wish her well. I thank the chairs and the vice chairs and the executive committee and the host committee, everybody who is responsible for this, this very wonderful night. I thank you all for being here. A lot of you come to a lot of these things, I know, and they may get old to you, but you know it's important.

But I want to say something rather unconventional tonight about this dinner. We're doing our best to finance our campaign early and in a disciplined way so that I can spend the maximum possible time doing the job the American people elected me to do in 1992, being Presi-

dent. And it's very important. But the most important thing you can do is to take the little article and the summary of the record and leave here and make up your mind that between now and November of 1996, you're going to take every opportunity you can to talk to the people you come in contact with about what's really at stake in this election.

And I was trying to think if there was some simple and halfway hilarious characterization I could give you about what's really at stake here. I think it's fair to say that everybody has figured out this is a time of great change, and the people who would like to see someone else be elected President have an enormous and psychological advantage because they're telling you, "All you have to do to change this country is to destroy the Federal Government. It's all their fault. You know, it's just their fault. Nothing wrong with the rest of us, it's just them, those slugs in Washington." It's interesting, because nearly all of them have been in Washington a lot longer than I have. I still have a hard