

to Walter. And tonight we're giving the second award to Lew Wasserman, who is here, and I want to thank him. And I'm going to bring Walter up in just a second and let him say whatever he wants to.

But I came to see Lew Wasserman the first time, oh, maybe 20 years ago, more or less, when I was the young Governor of Arkansas—with no gray hair, didn't even look as old as I was and probably wasn't old enough to do what I was doing—and I asked him for advice. I went to his office, and I asked him for advice—this was in the seventies; it was more than 20 years ago—about how to make more movies in my State.

And then in the early eighties, I came out here again to an event that was held at his home. And over the last, now more than 20 years, Lew and Edie have spent a lot of time with Hillary and me; they've always been very generous to take us into their homes. I told Lew tonight I've been to so many fundraising events at his home, I expected him to prorate this year's property tax and send me my share—[*laughter*]*—and I would pay. But in a remarkable lifetime of personal and professional success, he has shown astonishing generosity to a wide range of causes, but never stopped believing that one of the things that he ought to do is be an active citizen and an active supporter of his political party.*

He has been a good Democrat without being a negative partisan. We've laughed in the past about how he supported the Presidential libraries of Republican Presidents, for example. But he was, he is, and I think Walter is, in the best sense, people who believe in their party and believe they can be proud of it without having to run down people in the other party, people who can sit down across a table and have an honest discussion about honest differences. And that's really what I was pleading for in my speech tonight.

You know, I don't think anybody who participates in the electoral process can have a genuine complaint if, after the election, everyone who votes is fully aware of the differences between the candidates and makes a really informed choice. And no one can complain. And this country is still around here after over 200 years because people normally get it right.

But the political parties play a role in that. And I can tell you, as someone with some measure of experience now spanning a few decades, there are very few Americans in the entire 20th century that were any more effective in supporting their parties in a patriotic way and, therefore, fulfilling their fundamental citizenship responsibilities—very few who did it as well as Lew Wasserman.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 p.m. at Paramount Studios. In his remarks, he referred to Joe Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Walter H. Shorenstein, founder, Shorenstein Co. LP; and Lew Wasserman, chairman emeritus, MCA, Inc., and his wife, Edie.

Remarks at a “Tribute to the President” Reception in Los Angeles

August 14, 2000

First of all, thank you. Let me say on behalf of my family, we're honored to have this Oscar. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Governor and Sharon for welcoming us to California, for the wonderful reception that we've had, for the great convention we've had. And I want to say to all of you—I don't know if any of you saw my “Home Alone” video that I did. Do you remember that? [*Applause*] Well, in this “Home Alone” video I was talking to myself in the mirror, and I had Kevin Spacey's Oscar. And he was ungracious enough to come take it away from me, just because he won it, and I didn't. So now that I have one of my very own, I'll be able to lord it over him.

We have had a wonderful time. I want to thank the delegates who are here from every single State. From the places where we started to the places where we ended, it's been a great ride. I want to thank you for being so good to Hillary tonight. And you just remember what I told you. We had a good run tonight because we've had a good 8 years. But the best way to validate all the work we've done is to win again and keep it going.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 p.m. at Paramount Studios. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Gov. Gray Davis of California, who presented the President with an honorary Oscar statuette for "Best President." The President also referred to Governor Davis' wife, Sharon.

Interview With Ron Brownstein of the Los Angeles Times

August 11, 2000

Republican National Convention

Mr. Brownstein. One of the things that was a little surprising at the Republican Convention was the extent to which they tried to characterize the meaning of your 8 years. Bush said you had coasted through prosperity. Cheney said these have been years of prosperity in the Nation but little purpose in the White House.

What is your response to that? How do you feel hearing that?

The President. Well, first of all, it was, on the facts, absurd. So I think what they're trying to do, their strategy seems to be to hope people think it all happened by accident. You know, when they had the White House for 12 years, they took credit every time the Sun came up in the morning. And also I think they did it because they fought so much of what we did.

You remember what they all said when they opposed the economic plan in '93, they said it would bring on another recession. They practically said it was the end of civilization as we know it. Then they fought the crime bill. They were against the 100,000 police. They were against the Brady bill. On welfare reform, we agreed that work should be mandatory and that the States should be able to design their own programs, but we disagreed on the requirements for national standards for nutrition and medical care and transportation and all that. So we just differed on so many things.

I think they were just trying somehow to get the American people to discount what's happened.

Economic Decisionmaking

Mr. Brownstein. In your mind—this is a legitimate debate—how significant a role did your economic decisions, the '93, the '97

budget, the other things that you've done, how important has that been in the prosperity of the last 8 years?

The President. I think it was pivotal. Because if you remember when we just announced what we were going to do—we announced we would have a deficit reduction plan that would cut the deficit by at least \$500 billion. After the election, but before we took office, there was this huge boom in the stock market and interest rates dropped. And then when we passed it, it happened all over again.

And if you look at what's happened, Alan Greenspan said many times our fiscal responsibility in bringing the deficit down is what kept inflation pressures down and enabled him to leave interest rates lower so this whole thing would unfold. Otherwise, we would have had what had happened so long in the past—the productive capacity of the American people would lift the economy, then it would sag again, lift and sag, which is just what had happened before.

Social Indicators

Mr. Brownstein. A little bit on social policy, on crime, other social trends. Do you think that Federal decisions have been significant—

The President. Yes.

Mr. Brownstein. —in things we've seen on those areas?

The President. Yes. I think if you look at it, I saw a study the other day—and I'm sorry; I don't remember who did it—which said that about 30 percent of the drop in the crime rate could be clearly attributable to the improvement in the economy. But I think the rest is due to better policing strategies and to more sensible efforts to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

The crime bill that we passed in '94 basically was the product of law enforcement officers, community activists, prosecutors, who were beginning to do things that were working at the neighborhood level. But since 1965, between then and 1992, the violent crime rate had tripled and the police forces of the country had gone up only by 10 percent.