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PANEL 3

CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES AND FAILURES, THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW, AND WHAT CAME NEXT

JACK KEMP FOUNDATION
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Morton Kondracke: This is the third panel of our Jack Kemp Oral History Project Symposium on the 1988 presidential campaign. This is the same as the first panel but we're joined by [Jeffrey L.] Jeff Bell who was the national campaign coordinator of the '88 campaign, and [J. David] Dave Hoppe, at the far end here, who was Jack Kemp's Congressional chief of staff. I want to ask Charlie a little bit—and all of you can chime in with your memories of all this—but about the decision to play in the Michigan caucuses in August of '86, which John [W.] Buckley thinks was the big strategic disaster of the campaign, setting you off on a bad course to begin with. So how did that decision get made, and in retrospect do you think it was that great a disaster?

Charles R. "Charlie" Black, Jr.: Well, obviously any time you lose, a lot of people have different opinions about the decision, whether you should have done it or not. Listen, in the summer of '86 we did not have a campaign. Clark Durant and others in Michigan, [Richard] Dick Posthumous, did have a good grassroots organization, which Clark has described. And so they had to work without the benefit of a campaign or paid staff or national staff or anything else in those caucuses. So we did not do as well as the better-known candidates. Now that said, Clark also gave you a little history going forward about Michigan. He mentioned something called the Michigan Opportunity Society. In those days, outside the scope of the campaign, it was legal to have independent delegate committees. What that meant was a separate committee could go out to elect delegates without regard to your campaign, and the Michigan Opportunity Society was designed and funded to elect Kemp delegates. Because of that, we played in Michigan with relatively little expenditure from the campaign of our

finances. Jack did spent some time there. So you can make the case, as I always do, that the candidate's time is your most valuable resource, but it wasn't that expensive an undertaking to play in Michigan. Let's talk about the result in Michigan. By the time you got around to the state committee meeting, it really wasn't a convention, the state committee meeting, [George H.W.] Bush had about half the support. Depending on how you polled it, he was in the range of 50 or a little over 50 percent. So there'd been discussions going on for weeks and weeks about the Robertson and Kemp campaigns getting together, putting a merged slate together and trying to defeat Bush at that committee meeting. Try to beat Bush and get all or most of the delegates to split between [Marion G. "Pat"] Robertson and Kemp. It did not look like to us, to our campaign staff and to our key people on the ground, like we could count that out. We were afraid Bush was still going to have a little over 50 percent, with a disciplined group of delegates, and we might be shut out. So, without boring you to death, the second way to go was to have Kemp and Bush make a deal, and it was obvious that Jack's support plus Bush's support would guarantee the election of the slate, and what happened there was in the end, Jack got 32 delegates in Michigan. Bush got 40, I think it was, maybe 42, and Robertson got eight. So now, since we lost, it doesn't look like it mattered, but if we'd been in a competitive race going down the stretch against Bush or [Robert J. "Bob"] Dole, those 32 delegates would have been valuable.

Kondracke: How did you hatch that deal?

Black: I just talked to the Bush campaign, and our field staffs talked to each other, and then we talked to our people on the ground in

Michigan. Obviously if the people on the ground in Michigan had not gone along with it, it wouldn't have happened.

Kondracke: Supposedly the Robertson team got angry that the breakup of the so-called Conservative Coalition caused a lot of hard feeling on the part of the Robertson people that played out later on. Is that true?

Black: I don't know that they felt any different about Jack than they did going into that. They were already bad-mouthing Jack and saw him as their competition. They'd already been running ads, radio ads in Iowa against Jack before that meeting. So it's back to this question of Jack Kemp would love to run a campaign that was totally positive, optimistic, and doesn't alienate anybody, but that's not the game of presidential nominating contests, and I'm sorry if Pat Robertson's upset about it. He didn't say anything to me.

Kondracke: I read that after the August '86 Michigan caucuses, that you assembled a meeting of backers from 41 states in Chicago, apparently to reassure everybody after the bad news of Michigan, that everything was on track. What do you remember of that meeting, does anybody remember of that meeting?

Black: Yes, we had the meeting. It wasn't specifically about Michigan; we'd been planning it for a long time before the caucuses in Michigan, and again, this was pre-campaign. I think the meeting was sponsored by the Campaign for Prosperity political action committee, but it was just an effort to pull together key leaders around the country who we knew wanted Jack to run, and who would have been good campaign

leaders, for him to talk to him and say, "Look, we haven't made a final decision as a family, but I may well do this, and if so, I need your support." It was a good meeting.

Frank Cannon: Let me just say about John's point. I think this is a fallacy that comes up in every campaign, which is that you somehow can start the campaign in the middle, you know, we could make New Hampshire, per force, the beginning of the campaign. There was a sequence to the campaign, and what we had to do was maximize our delegates and our success at every point in order to build the momentum. You can't just skip contests. This is the great lesson from the [Rudolph W.L. "Rudy"] Giuliani victory of a few years ago, where you start in Florida, where you have great strength. Iowa was always going to be a problem for us, Michigan was much more fertile territory, and trying to maximize our ability there strategically made more sense than abdicating the field to somebody else. So I do think it's always after a campaign easier to say, "If only we had gone into New Hampshire having never had anything negative happen." The problem is the sequence actually happens in the order that it does.

Kondracke: Jeff and then David, what's your view about the decision to play in Michigan?

Jeff Bell: I think it was unavoidable. The analogy I would make is in 1996, in that nomination race, Louisiana suddenly appeared at the head of the class unexpectedly. Nobody had been planning on Louisiana, everybody had assumed Iowa was going to be first, and the [Patrick J.] Pat Buchannan campaign, instead of saying "Wait, we've been planning for Iowa," they went in and won Louisiana. And

Buchannan wound up knocking [William P.] Phil Gramm out of the race, knocking several candidates considered much more major completely out of the race, because he was flexible, he was tactical, and he went in and he won Louisiana, which was a very limited thing in terms of the amount of turnout in comparison to New Hampshire or Iowa, but it was there. And he did the right thing. You have to play where the first delegates are selected. If you don't, then you're going to be seen as irrelevant. That's particularly true of a conservative who is running in a conservative state. On the Iowa versus New Hampshire thing, which hasn't really directly come up, but Iowa for a conservative, [John S.] McCain [III] was able to skip it and go directly to New Hampshire, but he was the moderate in those races. The conservative has to show, has to do well in Iowa. I would argue that if [Ronald W.] Reagan had known in advance in 1980 that he was going to lose Iowa to Bush, it was important for him to be second if he wasn't first.

Dave Hoppe: I guess I would piggy-back on what Frank said. The old adage is generals always fight the last war. Well, you're in a national situation, and people have been talking about can you get in late, can you go to this, can you skip that state? We tend to forget that Jack wasn't a household name around the world, and certainly not in Iowa. For that matter not in Michigan or in any other state other than New York. So it was not possible to pick and choose, in my opinion. There's always a lot of talk about this, but in the end you've got to be out there trying to get delegates, votes, support, and build name I.D. and build a movement and momentum, and that's what we were trying to do. Michigan happened to be the first state because they jerry-rigged themselves around. The process had started, what, two

years before the convention? That's just where we were, and we took it at face value and said "We're going to compete and we're going to compete everywhere."

Kondracke: We'll go back to the chronology, but I wanted to ask both of you something that I asked in the first panel. What are your most vivid memories about the '88 campaign? If you want to think about that I'll let Jeff—

Bell: Well, it was exhilaration at having such a fantastic candidate, somebody who had already, it was paradoxical, because less than a year after his fiftieth birthday, Jack Kemp had accomplished things in the Congress of the United States. He had become the most important legislator of the entire twentieth century in terms of his impact on world history, and I mean that literally and I can defend that statement. I've thought about it a lot. And yet, here he goes running for president, and he's seen as an outsider candidate, as a minor candidate. And so we had this tremendous, accomplished legislator and political leader, who had already shown more political leadership at the age of 50 than most people ever come close to accomplishing in their entire lifetime, and yet he was a long shot. And it was frustrating because we knew what we had, and yet the American people didn't know who he was, for the most part.

Hoppe: Actually, you say of the campaign, and I'm going to give you two that are actually at the end and after the campaign. I remember thinking as Jack gave a speech and was getting out of the campaign, that he was still a person who brought people into politics. Dwight [D.] Eisenhower was a great man, a great leader, but there's nobody

who came into politics because of Dwight Eisenhower. Robert [A.] Taft never got to be president, but there were all over, still, Taft Republicans. Barry [M.] Goldwater brought people in. Jack did. President [George H.W.] Bush, 41, did not bring people into politics. He was president of the United States, and did some great things while he was, there are some I may have disagreed with, but I remember thinking as Jack gave that speech, "This is a person who, there are people who are Republicans because Jack Kemp was a politician." The second one was after it became public that George Bush had chosen Senator [James Danforth "Dan"] Quayle as his running mate. That night Jack had a lot of interviews to do with the different networks. And the convention was at New Orleans in the Superdome. And so what you had is half of the place was convention, and half, behind it, was all these trailers and things. But there was an open area and I accompanied him that night and as we started walking, Mrs. Bush was coming from had to be 100 yards away, and we were coming from the other direction and we were going to cross. We crossed right there and she stopped and said, "Jack, [whispers] I was for you." [laughter]

Kondracke: You believe her?

Hoppe: Yes. No reason to say that. She didn't have to say anything, other than hello and hope you do well and thank you, whatever she wanted to say. For me it was a neat moment because I really think it was something she meant.

Black: Can I interject something?

Kondracke: Yes. You believe that too?

Black: Since you've said we're supposed to be talking history here and facts and not political spin, first of all, I've been around the Bushes enough to believe certainly she could have had a different opinion than her husband, that's happened before. But I was involved a little bit when President Bush selected Jack for the Cabinet, and it took a little bit of persuasion by people who were fans of Jack's and friends of Bush had to go persuade the President that Jack could be loyal as a Cabinet officer. He liked Jack, he admired Jack, he just thought Jack was his own man, and he didn't know what he might wake up one day and read in the newspaper with Jack as vice president, or in the Cabinet. To his credit he took a risk and put Jack in the Cabinet, and Jack was the star of the Cabinet, and in that role helped further opportunity for the Republican Party. But since I know that was a fact about the Cabinet selection, I could see the same reason for why President Bush might have hesitated to pick Jack as a running mate.

Kondracke: We'll go to the veep issue at the end of this. Let me just ask you, what do you think about the media treatment of Jack Kemp during the campaign? Do you think it was fair, do you think it was supportive or negative, or how do you think about it?

Marci Robinson: I would say it was fair. Some of the press lacked perspective, and some of them, myself included, I'd done presidential campaigns in the past, so they did not have the experience in which to understand. You just look at who has been the nominee, it's an establishment party, you can barely get the nomination, if you hadn't been on the national ticket at least once before that primary. [Richard

M.] Nixon, [Gerald R.] Ford [Jr.], Reagan, Bush, Dole, they had all run for a national office, and you're running against a sitting vice president, a sitting minority leader-once majority leader. It's tough, but they all liked him, they genuinely liked him. Until this day they like him, on the left and on the right. He connected with them in a very real and sincere way, personally and substantively. They knew that he cared.

Kondracke: Mona?

Mona Charen: I'm going to demure, just slightly, because I think they were polite, they didn't hate Jack the way they hate some Republicans, but at the same time I think that if Jack had been a member of the Democratic Party, he would have been such an emblazoned star in the firmament of the press. They really would have given him his due. And instead there was a certain distance and a certain tendency to minimize his contribution and his gifts. And so I think that definitely played a role. They hated when people on our side would talk about Jack Kemp as being our Jack Kennedy. They hated that.

Kondracke: Did you ever actually have anybody say that to you?

Charen: Not explicitly, but there was a certain, I remember there was a certain dismissive response, kind of a snort that you would get if you spoke about Jack in those terms.

Robinson: But he was also being introduced to the national press corps. Even though he'd been on the national scene, he was well-known to the Congressional beat reporters as well as to the economic

beat reporters, but beyond that this was really a getting to know you campaign. And considering that, I thought they got to know him and they liked him.

Kondracke: Anybody else? Jeff?

Bell: I think I agree with both of the previous speakers. I remember working with Reagan on the tax cut. Reagan called it, in commercials I was involved in making, thanks to Charlie, the Kennedy tax cut. And [Edward M.] Ted Kennedy was furious about it, publicly, even though we put together the Kemp-Roth tax cut modeled on the Kennedy tax cut, it was a specific strategic decision to make our selling job easier, simpler. And yet the left refused to accept it. I also remember when Jack was awarded the Freedom Medal in the White House, they talked about his outreach to minorities. They didn't mention supply-side economics or the tax bills, those 1981 or 1986 tax bills, so although Jack was a well-liked figure, there's an element of denial in his true accomplishments—the way he changed tax policy and the attitude to growth all over the world. It's just like a non-event in the media to this day.

Kondracke: Let me just, concluding this, posit a couple things. It would seem to me that even though Jack was a winning person and fun to be with and all of that, that there were issues that the mainstream media would have problems with. One is Reagan tax cuts, to begin with, right to life, hawkish foreign policy. I just wonder whether the personal liking of him wasn't diminished somewhat by the fact that they disagreed with him on policy.

Black: I think that's right. It's kind of what Mona said. But let me put it this way. I don't know of any Congressman, whoever announced for president and got national coverage and got treated seriously as a candidate like Jack did. Nobody else. They gave him a chance, but at the same time, the press is by and large, I have to exclude Mort here, by and large, they're focused on horse race coverage. And so the horse race, if it looks like a Bush/Dole horse race, if you don't come up on the outside and catch one of them pretty soon, you don't get covered at all. But reporters respected Jack, they thought he was honest and sincere. I think a lot of them did disagree with him and occasionally you'd get a little snippy paragraph about something. But he got better treatment than anybody else running from that position would.

Kondracke: Now, we didn't have anybody from Iowa, so Charlie, talk about the Iowa campaign, what you had in the way of organization, who your leadership was and specifically what did Scott [W.] Reed do.

Black: Well Scott had handled part of the Northeast for Reagan, he was a very experienced field person and probably our best, well we had a lot of good ones, but probably the best person to go in and do that kind of caucus organization was Scott. We had a lot of people on the ground in Iowa, not big names, but we had legislators and some of the right to life leaders. The people who thought of themselves as evangelicals first, as opposed to right to life first, tended to go with Robertson, but we had a good enough organization to turn out the votes that we had. What changed the game in Iowa was that Robertson brought in thousands of people who didn't normally go to the caucuses, and so therefore your vote goal for how to finish third in

Iowa turned out to have to be a lot higher than our goal was. We tried to make it up, but we couldn't.

Kondracke: You had a warning from the straw poll. So what did you do, this is September of '87 to January of '88, what did you try to do to counter what you knew was coming?

Black: We put more people in there, we put a little more money than we had planned in there, didn't we, Frank? And we were trying to split Jack's time so that really spent about half his time in New Hampshire and maybe a quarter in Iowa and a quarter everywhere else. We beefed that up some. We still never shortchanged New Hampshire, but we changed our vote goal, Scott came up with a new vote goal, and we just about achieved the vote goal. It's just Robertson poured in, and I speak as a Southern Baptist evangelical, all these people getting off buses and going to their precinct caucuses just overwhelmed us.

Kondracke: So at what stage was there discussion within the campaign that Jack should get out?

Black: Beginning after New Hampshire.

Kondracke: How did the discussions go? Who were the discussions with, who was pushing it, who was against it?

Black: Well, I think we all talked among ourselves about it, and not everybody shared the same opinion.

Kondracke: What was your opinion?

Black: I thought he ought to get out after New Hampshire, but that was based on experience and also on the fact that we had committed not to go into debt. I would have hated not to have given our friends like Henry McMaster and [Russell] Rusty [Paul] a chance to see what they could do, but again, the only reason people keep me around is history. I've been through nine of these things. In fact that one was my fifth one, and I knew that if you didn't make the cut after New Hampshire, if you weren't in the top two, you probably weren't going to be covered by the press or be competitive. That said, we had enough money to continue through South Carolina. We even ran some ads in South Carolina, a couple hundred thousand worth, as I recall. And Jack wouldn't hear of getting out after New Hampshire. He said, "Let's go through the South Carolina," and we did. I'll let these guys speak because they were in these conversations, but I think I'm the reason that Rusty got that phone call on Saturday night from South Carolina. I said, "Okay, Jack, now after South Carolina we really don't have a chance and we don't have money to spend in the next few days," and again, he didn't want to let down the people who'd worked so hard in the Super Tuesday states. So from that standpoint he did the right thing, but obviously it didn't yield any political result.

Kondracke: Jeff?

Bell: I agreed with Charlie, my memory is I agreed with Charlie at the time, that if you finished a distant third in New Hampshire you're not going to win the nomination, you're not going to come back, you might win a primary or two somewhere down the road, but you're not going

to win the nomination. But I don't remember being in a serious discussion about it because I knew right from the beginning that Jack was determined to go on, so we were all loyal to him and we wanted to help him go on and take his last shot in South Carolina. Personally I didn't think he had too much of a chance, and it wasn't that I was worried about him having a big debt. I thought the debt was manageable, but I did feel that he was just going to be butting his head up against the wall after New Hampshire, but I don't remember having an argument about it or talking to Jack about it, because I knew from the beginning, we all knew, that Jack wanted to do it and we loved the guy and we wanted to help him.

Kondracke: Did he want to do it because he thought he could win, or because he wanted to carry the message, or because he he didn't want to disappoint the people who'd been working for him, or all of the above?

Black: I think, and Dave will have some observations about all this in a minute, but it was a combination of feeling loyalty to the people. I just think, look, we were down 35 to nothing but there were still four minutes left in the fourth quarter in his mind, and he damn sure wasn't going to walk off the field. [laughter]

Hoppe: I think that's right. Jack really appreciated people he would meet. You'd go on a trip with him outside the campaign, way before the campaign started, there were some people he'd meet and just lock on to. They told him this story or came up to him after a speech at a state Party fundraiser or whatever it was, and for whatever reason, he got an almost instant relationship with them, and he always felt that if

he didn't follow up in what he was doing, he was letting them down. There wasn't enough time in the world for all the people Jack Kemp met, to do things for them that he wanted to do for them. But that's the way he felt about it. And yes, part of it was the message, and he knew, he believed that a certain issues and a certain part of the message would simply stop in the campaign once he left, and frankly he was right.

Kondracke: There was an [Rowland] Evans [Jr.] and [Robert D.S. "Bob"] Novak column that was February 24, which I guess is after New Hampshire, before South Carolina, I guess it's after Minnesota and South Dakota too that said that there was a dinner and a breakfast meeting at the Kemp house to discuss whether to get out or to continue. Were you there, and do you remember that?

Hoppe: I don't remember it. Joanne [Kemp] was kind enough to feed me any time I showed up, so I well could have been but I don't, I remember several other meetings but I don't have a vivid memory of either of those.

Kondracke: Anybody?

Black: I don't recall where it was or whether we got a meal. We certainly got better meals around Joanne than we did on the road.

Kondracke: I just wondered whether there was sort of a conclave where a decision had to be reached.

Black: No, not all at once. And again Jack, remember, Jack had a lot of friends and treated a lot of people as advisers who he respected, so he called [C.] Trent Lott, he called [Newton L.] Newt [Gingrich], he called [John V.] Vin Weber. They might have been at the house, I don't remember. He talked to Dave, he talked to me. You know, I told him what I thought. He called some other people to check it out, and either in person or on the phone he said, "Look, I think I ought to go on." And I said "Fine." Like Jeff said, we weren't going to argue with him about it. If he'd wanted to go on after Super Tuesday we would have had to, but he saw it then, that it was time.

Kondracke: We'll get to the veep stuff, I promise. But first I've got to ask you about some stuff that [Edward J.] Ed Rollins wrote about in his book, which is pretty critical of everybody, in fact. So he says, for example, that he and Jack are great friends, but that Jack was "a totally unmanageable candidate, impossible to discipline, simply wouldn't listen." Jeff?

Bell: Oh, I don't agree with that. One area where I thought there was going to be tension was the subject of Jack signing letters for direct mail. Jack had always been a stickler for having the right language. The people who had been running his PAC [Political Action Committee] had just gone crazy trying to get Jack to approve copy. But I remember something that we later remember as the Christmas Eve massacre, where we were sitting down with Jack, and Jack, I swear to God, he approved 35 letters, 35 different letters to different lists, because we knew we had to have such a volume of mail out there in order, as Frank said in the earlier panel, to qualify for the matching funds, and to build a list just much more quickly than normally could

ever have happened, and Jack just sat there and approved 35 different direct mail letters.

Black: Because he couldn't go home to his family on Christmas Eve until he approved them.

Bell: Well that was a factor. But Jack adjusted his practice to the greater demands of a presidential campaign, and as Charlie said in the earlier panel, he also actually stood up there and delivered about 10 or 12 formal speeches, which he didn't like to do either.

Hoppe: The side I heard was [imitating] "Somebody called me about these letters that are going out. I hate this, I hate this. I don't like—" which was not unusual. Sometimes he would do what he felt that "these people were running the campaign, and they had expertise," but I'm telling you, anybody would call him and say "I got four letters today, Jack," he found somebody to talk to about it. Sometimes it was me and sometimes it was other people. He didn't change all that much. He might have signed the letters, but he didn't change all that much about his feelings about direct mail.

Cannon: Having worked in direct mail, I want to change the subject. I think it goes to the question of Jack's management style and leadership style, okay? Jack was a consensus-building leader, and a guy who took information from multiple sources. He never, in my experience, wrote anything without asking 10 other people to comment on it, and he used the tension of that to make better decisions. I think that Charlie was in charge of the campaign, remained in charge of the campaign, was the person he looked to,

because Charlie is a consensus leader who imitated Jack's style in terms of bringing in all kinds of people. My wife [Mary Brunette Cannon] said that I could only say nice things and not say anything negative, so I'm going to put this in the most positive way I can, that I think other people have a command style that would not have worked with Jack, that Jack was somebody who was his own man, and that was the essence of what made him really phenomenal. He decided on things outside what everybody else thought was within the boundary of deciding. The tax policy was completely outside, but he sought information from people who weren't thought to be the experts, and he consolidated that and made sound decisions. I think that's how the campaign had to be run, because, as Charlie said, there wasn't just one kitchen cabinet, there was an intellectual kitchen cabinet, there was a Congressional kitchen cabinet, there was a familial kitchen cabinet, and so all of them added value, and added value to Jack in the way he decided. So I think Ed's totally off base.

Kondracke: But was he the decider?

Cannon: Ultimately when it came to important things he was the decider, but he took the expertise that Charlie, I think that's one of the reasons he trusted Charlie is that Charlie would get it from a number of sources, bring it to Jack, and I think given the pace of the way things had to go, he accepted that, but not without question.

Kondracke: Rollins writes that in the summer of '87, Jack asked him to prepare a memo, which he calls the "apocalypse now memo" about how the campaign was going, and he said everything's a disaster, and that he took the memo to Jack, and Jack read the memo, and Jack

said, "I've got to go watch," I guess it must have been in September that he got the memo, that he had to go watch [James P.] Jimmy [Kemp] play football and that he said to Ed "You and Charlie work it out," and he never heard back again about the memo. Do you remember this, Charlie?

Black: Yes.

Kondracke: Tell us about that.

Black: First of all, Ed Rollins is a friend of mine, I've worked with him in a number of endeavors, and I respect him. In most campaigns there are some disagreements on things. We were very lucky to have Ed as chairman of Jack's campaign. I described his credentials in another session. Ed wasn't there every day, he wasn't able to be there in the headquarters 12, 14 hours a day like some of the rest of us were, and I'm not sure he knew everything that was going on. I tried to answer his questions that he raised in the memo, and whether or not he agreed with me, he dropped the questions.

Kondracke: So he accuses you in the book of micromanaging and trying to do everything yourself.

Black: I hope so. It was my job to micromanage. Listen. Back to Jack's style, any campaign team of management has to adapt to the candidate's leadership style. Ronald Reagan, the greatest president of the twentieth century, liked to be scripted. Now he had people around him who knew what he believed and knew what he thought, and he didn't care whether he showed up in Iowa or New Hampshire or

Florida. He just wanted to be told where he was going and whether he needed to take a coat with him or not. And he would work with whoever was writing the speech to get it in his words, and then he'd go give the speech. That's not Jack Kemp, and you had to manage Jack Kemp with taking Jack's style, helping present it in the best light at the right place at the right time, meaning try to get press to turn out, try to get him to speak on the subjects that would fit that occasion and that state. Sometimes he would, sometimes he wouldn't. All of these strategic and tactical campaign decisions you had to talk to him about it, and you had to talk him through it and get his agreement. And as has been said, he had a bunch of people he listened to about all these things. Most of it was good advice, but sometimes two or three of us had to sit down and say, "Look, Jack, out of all of this advice, here's the right way to go." Look, he told me no sometimes on decisions, things, that I wanted to do, and that's fine. We worked around that. He was the candidate.

Kondracke: Jack Kemp announces on March 10th that he is going to stop campaigning, that he's going to get out, but he does not endorse Bush until 19 days later. Why?

Hoppe: Let me give what I think is a piece of the answer. Jack was in the campaign as a mission, to talk about what he believed was the right direction for America. He did not find any of the other candidates, some shared pieces of it here and there, but he didn't find the rest of them doing it. And I remember one thing John [W.] Buckley told me, he said the press have told him, "You're going to get, we're all going to sit and listen and tell what you say on the day you get into the campaign and we're going to do the same thing on the

day you get out of the campaign. Any other time we're going to do what we want to do and we'll report it the way we want to report it. But you get two shots to say what you believe in." And I think Jack understood that, that this was a chance for him to talk about what he had campaigned about, why it was important, and try to implant it into what was left. I'm not sure there was even a conscious decision to endorse or not to endorse Bush as much as there was "Jack, say what you believe." And that's what he wanted to do, say, "This is why I did this, this is why it remains important," and I'm not sure he said it exactly this way, but the gist of it was "These other guys have to think about these things, because they are real issues that are very important to the future of this country."

Black: That's correct, and I would always advise a candidate of ideas to exit that way. You don't want the news to be "Kemp endorses Bush today," you want it to be what Kemp said when he withdrew and what it means for the future of the country. Dole was still trying to compete, and at that point it was pretty nasty between Bush and Dole. Now I didn't push Jack about any of this. I'd actually gone back to work at my firm immediately after the withdrawal, but he said, "Look, I could never be for Dole. At some point I'll be for Bush." Finally Bush wised up and called him and talked to him about it, and I think we picked that particular day because Bush was campaigning in Wisconsin and the Bush campaign thought it would be a good boost to put Dole away, help Bush win Wisconsin, the Midwest being more natural Dole territory. So that's when we did it. Ed Rollins and I went up with Jack to be visible to the press so that they would know it was the team coming, and not just Jack, and he made a nice endorsement of Bush.

Kondracke: When did he decide that he would endorse Bush?

Black: I don't know.

Hoppe: I think it was inevitable. It evolved like a lot of other things, "okay, this is a good time. I think it's good. I'm ready. This is what I'm going to do anyway."

Kondracke: How much discussion was there and how interested was Jack in being Bush's vice president?

Black: At that time?

Kondracke: At any time. When did the whole vice presidential thing come up?

Hoppe: It's always the same thing with people to get out there and say, "Gee, I'm running for vice president." Now was Jack doing that? No. Did Jack think he could be helpful to the ticket? Definitely. Did Jack think he could help move and strengthen the ideas he believed in in a Bush presidency, if he was a part of it? Yes. Was he panting after it? I don't get the sense he was, but also these things have a life of their own over timing. The part I remember most vividly of this were the days in New Orleans, particularly Monday and Tuesday. And Jack gave a speech Monday night which was "Thanks to the Gipper," really honoring Ronald Reagan. That was what Monday night was, and that's the night they gave Jack a time to speak, and it was an excellent speech.

Robinson: It was about the big tent, and opening up the tent.

Hoppe: And I remember the next morning, some time around breakfast, he had a long series of interviews with different people, but one of the earlier ones was David [S.] Broder, who came in and said, "Betting up where I come is that you're going to be named the vice president." And just idle chatter, obviously, but as you went through the day, and you kept hearing, because what was happening is that Vice President Bush and in some cases, I think, [James A.] Jim Baker, were calling different people and saying "You're not going to be it. We want you on the team—" Well, we got to about three o'clock in the afternoon and hadn't received a phone call, and by process of elimination you ticked off eight, 10, 12 people on the list who'd been called and told they weren't going to be the vice presidential nominee, and I remember we were in Jack and Joanne's room, and the family was there and a few of the other staff people and things. The way people happened to be sitting, Jack was on a couch and he was sitting sort of in the corner of the couch, which turned him towards where I was standing, and when the phone call came in from Vice President Bush, and I remember just watching his eyes, and there was a moment at which, I'm not even sure it was a blink, it was just clear to me that he had said no. And he just shook his head, almost imperceptibly, like that, and then you could tell from the conversation, which didn't take a long time. But that remains quite vivid in my memory.

Black: I have reason to believe that the last two calls that were made before Dan Quayle got the call were Kemp and Dole in that order. So

he was seriously considered. I gave you reasons earlier, my theory why he wasn't selected, but there were a lot of people around the country telling Bush he needed Kemp, so naturally Jack had to be thinking about it and had to be pleased that he was getting support from the grassroots. I don't think he ever expected it, really, until, as Dave says, down at the end when he didn't get the call for a while. But the irony of this '88 race is that Jack Kemp had no enmity toward anybody in his life that I know of, but he certainly was no big friend of Bob Dole's in those days. Ironically it was Dole that put him on the ticket and not Bush.

Bell: I'd like to comment on this also, and it's just an instinct that I had at the time, and I remember it very vividly. I wasn't at the convention, I wasn't talking to Jack about the vice presidency at all, so it's just based on my gut feeling about, I think he had a mental block about running with Bush. The Monday night speech, which I watched, was very striking in its lack of any mention of the prospective nominee of the Party, who was about to get nominated two or three days later. It isn't that he endorsed Bush on March 29 instead of March 10, but here's the audition. Yes, Dave is right technically that it was Reagan night and he did his justice to the Gipper, but it's a rather striking thing. If you want to be picked for vice president and you're giving a speech Monday night and the choice is going to be announced on Wednesday, and you barely mention the guy who could pick you or not, and I think it probably contributed to that feeling that Bush had that had to be overcome, even in nominating Jack to the Cabinet, it contributed to that. "Is this a team player?" And I honestly think that Jack was, he had a mental block or some kind of conflict about whether he really wanted to be Bush's teammate.

Kondracke: I think we're just about done. I want you all to reflect on what Jack Kemp's example has to teach the contemporary Republican Party, or indeed the country at this moment. Jeff.

Bell: Well, I kind of stepped on my own closing line, but I honestly believe he was the most important legislator of the twentieth century. He changed the world. Just if you take the two tax bills of '81 and '86, and Jack did other things in addition to those, but his influence on those two pieces of legislation and the way it changed, it ended the progressive income tax, it ended basic socialism all over the world, I think he would have been a fine president if circumstances had been different and he had been elected. But this was a man who was very special. We wouldn't be sitting here if he weren't. He was a world historical figure who made a tremendous difference in millions, even billions of lives all over the world.

Black: Jack taught a whole generation of Republicans, and by the way the teaching goes on, and what we're doing here will help, that the Republican Party had to stand for policies that included everybody, 100 percent of Americans. We had to go to those constituencies that weren't Republican, and didn't believe we wanted to help them, to spend extra time and attention on them to persuade them that we wanted to help them and that they fit in the Republican Party. That civil rights and human rights were as much a part of our party and our message as tax cuts or strong foreign policy.

Cannon: I was asked by a professor at Princeton, [Robert P.] Robby George, to put together a group to address, after Obama was elected,

what we could do to revitalize the conservative movement and the Republican Party, and what I realized I was doing was I was trying to channel everything I learned from Jack into modern policy outcomes. I pictured him here laughing at all of you and saying "You're all wrong about the whole talk about the gold standard, because time has proved me exactly right. Republicans lost their ability to connect to middleclass voters, to their concerns, their economics, and I knew all along gold was the answer." I honestly believe that he would have the courage, the determination to take on a second fight that large to transform not only how we transformed tax policy, but transform monetary policy. I think that he would be appalled that there isn't an outreach effort to Hispanic voters. I think he would say, "This is insanity that the Hispanic voters are the Reagan Democrats, the Kemp Democrats, who need to be brought into this party." He'd be going, as he liked to say with a Spanish accent, to every barrio in the United States. I think he'd be doing that now. And I think he would be the guy who would continue to connect social issue policy and economic policy. I think he'd be able to speak out on Chen [Yun] and the one-child policy in China, and connect human rights in China with his beliefs about the importance of every human being, and how that undergirded his whole sense of why he was pro-life. I think that all of those things are alive today, and they're not combined in a single politician. I think that the country's looking for Jack Kemp.

Charen: Well said, Frank. We've talked a lot today about Jack's optimism and his inspirational qualities. We haven't talked quite as much, and so I think we should just add this to round out the picture and remember that he was an incredible, passionate Cold Warrior. Wherever there was an oppressed person around the world they had

Jack Kemp on their side, and he spoke up for them on the floor of the House, and he made it part of his mission to try to make the United States as strong as it could be to lead the freedom forces in the world. He was a passionate supporter of Israel. And he embodied in all of the policies that he promoted a sort of classic three-legged stool that we talk about for Republican politics that are so important. You have to be a foreign policy conservative, you have to be an economic conservative, and you have to be a social issues conservative. He was all of those things, and integrated them very naturally because as Frank said, they grew out of his love of humanity and his belief in people's innate sanctity, that life had sanctity and that every person had potential. But personally I have to say that right after the 2009 election, when everybody in America was suddenly saying "Well, we're in for another New Deal, and it's time for huge new government programs and a huge stimulus and that the financial crisis represented the collapse of capitalism and the failure of capitalism, at that moment I thought "We need Jack. We need Jack to be the one saying that absolutely capitalism is the greatest engine for human progress that the world has ever know. It elevates people out of poverty better than any other system that's ever been known." And it was that aspect of his message that I think the Republican Party needs to revive, that kind of self-confidence and vigorous defense of free markets and free people.

Robinson: You know when you have a leader who's ideas are grounded in scholarship and a huge heart, frankly, you're going to come out with some pretty good stuff. His ideas, and it wasn't just his ideas, the way he was able to marshal forces in the House on both sides of the aisle in a very sportsman-like way, where people are still

on his side today from both sides of the aisle, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone to match that kind of track record. I think if you took a collection of his speeches, in particular, the one that he gave at the convention in 1988, where he didn't talk about George Bush, but he talked about the Gipper, but also about how we have to have a big tent and invite people into it. He knew almost, he had what I call just this sixth political, this instinct. And when someone is critical of him not being a manageable candidate, it's absolutely false, because he really would want to bang out the pros and the cons of every aspect of a decision, such as LULAC [League of United Latin American Citizens]. How many Republican primary candidates went to LULAC? One, and it was Jack Kemp. So I almost feel like if you can just collect some of those classic speeches and give them out at the convention this time around, we'd be singing off of a pretty good song sheet and we'd be moving forward in the right way.

Hoppe: Jack had two careers, and in both of them he was a competitor, and he had to convince you of what he had come to believe, what he knew was right. And he not only had to convince you, he had to convince everybody. Jack would often talk about the good shepherd, and leaving the 99 to go—he meant it! He would chase you around the corner to convince you. He would chase people around the corner who he could never convince, but he wanted them to hear it, because as a competitor, he thought, "Just maybe if they hear it, it will sink in and they'll understand I'm right." And it wasn't an oppressive "I'm smarter than everybody else," it was just "This is what works. I've worked on it, I've talked to people, I've seen it, I've read about it. It's right. I just have to talk to you long enough for you to believe it's right." And if you went to some of his speeches you

knew what he meant, because 55 minutes in he still hadn't convinced, that guy in the third row looked a little skeptical, and by God he was going to convince everybody. So he just kept talking until he thought he had them all there. He was a competitor who proselytized for what he believed was right, and without a negative thought or feeling or bone in his body for anybody else or what they thought. They just happened to be wrong. It was his job to convince what was right. There was nothing negative about this; it was all positive, and we could all do with a little more of that.

Kondracke: Thank you all for a wonderful day. Thank you for coming.

[applause]