JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

RICHARD D. "DICK" KEMP

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Interviewer

Morton Kondracke

Jack Kemp Foundation
Washington, DC

Morton Kondracke: This is a Jack Kemp Foundation oral history interview with Jack's youngest brother, Dick. Today is August 3, 2011. We're in Dick's home in Irvine, California, and I'm Morton Kondracke.

Thanks so much for doing this. How would you characterize your family life growing up?

Dick Kemp: First of all, I reinterpret your question, if that's okay. I think families are fascinating. Relationships within families are fascinating. I've written two books, one completely on that subject, and then another one on more biographical, about my experience in Vietnam. But I just think the subject is fascinating, and I think Jack is so interesting. I grew up right next to him.

My favorite time and story about Jack is that we used to play on the front lawn out in front of our house a game called Grounders, which Jack invented. In fact, one time we played with a baseball that had Babe Ruth's autograph on it, and after we got finished, it was faded and used and, I'm sure, diminished in importance, but Jack pulled out a pen and wrote over it and renewed it so it was just as good as new to him. [laughs]

We would play Grounders, and that would be if the shortstop, we would throw the ball as hard as we could at the other person, and if the shortstop would bobble it, it would be a single or a double, and if he missed it completely, it'd be a home run. Jack would be not only my competitor; he would be my coach, the announcer, the crowd. He would even be the [U]SC Marching Band. He just had a mind that would create on the spot an event that was bigger than what was going on between us. And the worst thing I could do would be to cry

or to moan or complain, because my mother would hear it and put a stop to the game, and I didn't want that. So we would play for hours and hours and hours, and we would water down the lawn to make it harder on the receiver and just throw the ball as hard as we could.

I became a shortstop, but I would be tutored by Jack. So that would illustrate to me a competitive nature between us boys and that certainly was the case. Everything was a game or a contest, and that's it.

Kondracke: Your brother Paul [R. Kemp] says that the way to understand Jack's character is that he was the number three child and that he had to scrap to get into the game with Paul and [Thomas P.] Tom [Kemp], who were older, and that that's important in his character. Do you agree with that?

Kemp: That's not my experience. I think it's interesting that Paul and I really see life and family life from very different perspectives. It was a different family that he grew up in than what I grew up in. The parents, by the time I came along, were much more mature, were better off financially, psychologically, spiritually, than when Paul grew up. That may be the case, but I don't know that.

Jack was certainly the leader, and it was through Jack that I got entrance into neighborhood games.

Kondracke: So you were both competitors, but he was also your sponsor, in effect?

Kemp: He was my coach; he was my mentor; he was my teacher. He taught me the steps, I mean physically the steps a quarterback

makes, fading back to pass or handing off. Great, great detail, and would do it for hour upon hour until I got it right. I was very mature as an athlete, and so when I went to Fairfax High School, where Jack and Tom went, I tried to fade in with the crowd, but the football coach, out of a hundred boys, would say, "Where's Kemp?" And I was ready to go, but that was very embarrassing to me at the time. But I knew football and I knew baseball and I knew athletics very well, and that held me in very good stead.

Kondracke: So would you say that he basically treated you well?

Kemp: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The greatest thing in the world was to get—Jack, when he was in professional football, would buy me a new mitt or some kind of athletic gear, and that would be a treasure for me. It would be way beyond what I could have expected from my parents, who were on a much tighter budget. But keep in mind that those were days that Jack earning a salary in the low twenties was a big deal. He was one of the highest-paid football players in the AFL [American Football League], but it really was small potatoes compared to today or compared to athletics today.

Kondracke: So you were sort of worshipful toward him? I mean, you were his little brother and he was four years older that you were, right? And he was your coach. So did you idolize him when you were a kid?

Kemp: No, no, and I didn't worship him. I respected him, but brother Tom was actually a better athlete. Tom made All City, All Los Angeles

City. Jack made Western League at Fairfax. I made All Western League at Fairfax probably at a halfback or so.

Kondracke: So to the extent that there was sibling rivalry at all, was it between you –

[interruption]

Kondracke: So to the extent that there was sibling rivalry at all, was it between Jack and Tom or you and Jack or both?

Kemp: Probably both, but I would speak from my experience, and "sibling rivalry" might be a little too cut and dried, but, yes, everything was a game to Jack and me, and has been a game throughout our family existence. We played a lot of games together and athletics together just all the time.

My dad would come home from work, after working with California Delivery Service, and he would have to be catcher for Tom. I mean, Tom was a high school very powerful pitcher, one of the best pitchers in the nation. Jack would then have to pitch to him and then I would have my turn to pitch with him. If you missed the ball, it would be like a quarter of a mile down the block to go pick it up, and it would be, "No, Dad, I'll get it," but his hand would swell up and he would have to have a sponge inside the catcher's glove. But that was a big treat, to have him do that, and he did it all the time, without complaining.

Kondracke: Let's talk about your father. What would you say your father's major influences were on Jack?

Kemp: Dad was very quiet. It wouldn't be verbalized. I just think longsuffering, patient, just a dear, sweet man. If you're looking for influences, I would say we were a matriarchal family and that my mother was much more influential than my father. I might have Jack disagreeing with me on that, but I don't care. [laughs]

Kondracke: So Jack thought that your father was more influential than your mother?

Kemp: Yes, yes, yes.

Kondracke: How did he explain that?

Kemp: Inadequately. [laughs] Because that would be one of the issues of debate, but just his being there and working, a very hard worker, would be what he would reference, I would think.

Kondracke: What did Jack think his father's influence on him was? That he was an example of hard work and what else?

Kemp: I think values. He just was a sweet, dear man. He was the opposite of what today we would say a Little League parent. If we lost a football game, he would say, "Well, you came in second," and he was more interested in us participating, and he thought we were good, and spiritual goodness. We didn't have to do anything to please him; he was already very much enamored with his boys. He would use the term, "I'm busting my buttons," a statement of being proud of Jack playing with the [Los Angeles/San Diego] Chargers, for example, or

something that Tom would do or Paul would do, other brothers or I would do.

It would be hard for me to identify, because I would think that Frances [Pope Kemp], my mother, would be much more influential. She was always correcting her boys' manners, table manners, and there was a lot of occasions to do so, I can assure you. Four boys are not beautiful. [laughs] I mean, it's messy at times, and dinner table, competing for dessert would be something to behold.

Kondracke: A lot of dessert ended up on the table?

Kemp: Yes, yes, absolutely.

Kondracke: You, in your book, though, say that your father was an example to you all of brotherly closeness because of his relationship with his brother.

Kemp: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Kondracke: So did that translate to you guys, to you kids?

Kemp: I think so. I adore my brothers. I love them dearly and they love me. Every morning of every day at seven-thirty, the phone would ring and it would be my Uncle Jack [Kemp] calling to just connect with my dad. Every day when Dad was retired from California Delivery Service, the phone would ring and they would have nothing to say; it would be, "Hello, Chief." Jack would call my dad. They were in business together with that delivery service. But no content whatsoever, but just connecting, and I think it had a profound effect.

I think my grandmother or others would tell me stories about their relationship, but I wouldn't hear it from my dad. He was more silent.

Kondracke: Was it your dad or your mother who got you so interested in sports?

Kemp: Don't know. It was Jack or Tom, my brothers, but that's kind of like—oh, I can't think of a good analogy just offhand, but I was interested in sports because I was a natural. I could do anything with sports and did. I played everything under the sun. I went into the gym to work out for pole vaulting and would climb the rope, and I qualified on the gymnastics team and won a letter just by doing it. I could do anything that I wanted to, and Jack played a big role in that because he taught me how to be a shortstop, and I made the team easily. It wasn't an issue. He taught me how to be a quarterback; he taught me how to be a leader.

When you go into the huddle, you—I went to Fairfax High School, which was about, oh, I think, without exaggeration, it was 80 or 95 percent Jewish. My mother respected the school because she thought they were serious about education, and she was an educator. I would go into the huddle and call a play, and we would have arguments and I would have to walk away from—I had some lawyers in the huddle or in the backfield that wanted the ball. Jack would teach me how to call a play. He would say you have to have confidence in your play-calling. You have to a sense of direction or they'll pick it up and whatever.

[interruption]

Kondracke: What were your parents' economic circumstances when you and Jack were kids?

Kemp: Dad was a small-business owner, a partner with my Uncle Jack. I think they were over the hump of the Depression. Life was not a struggle when I was growing up, but we lived modestly. My brothers are all what I would consider well off. None of that would have come from our home, not a show, because they're all too puritanical to have that attitude or be impressed with money. None of them are, and they all have probably a very good income. I don't know what it would be.

Kondracke: When you say that you lived in a matriarchal household, what does that mean in terms of the relationship between your mom and your dad? How did they interplay?

Kemp: I mentioned that my dad would retreat and my mother was very respectful of him. I think she grew up the daughter of a businessman, a sheep rancher in Montana [Gershom Barlow Pope], and at one time probably—not probably, but she would be from a well-off family. I don't know about my grandmother on the Kemp side, but certainly Mom's family, the Pope family, lost it during the Depression. But Dad would be very respectful of Mom, and she would verbalize, and had to a lot.

Like I mentioned earlier, I started my book with the assumption that we were very competitive, raised by two very non-competitive people, and I probably would withdraw that comment now. I think Mom was very competitive. She just knew how to speak diplomatically about it, very much so.

Kondracke: So do you think it was she who made Jack the competitor that he was?

Kemp: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Kondracke: How did she do that?

Kemp: I mentioned that I went to Fairfax High School. She just was a teacher and she was for improving your performance and sociability in hundreds of ways, and didn't hesitate to verbalize that.

Kondracke: Did she criticize a lot?

Kemp: Never any criticism. We were thought to be really very special, and both my parents thought that. We didn't have to do anything to please them; they both were very pleased that we were just participating and a part of the events. But she was a teacher and she just taught all the time. I'm a teacher with my kids. There are teachers in my life that have been very influential, and I'm just naturally always thinking in terms of how to better perform, how to better make it as an individual.

Kondracke: So what do you think her major influences on Jack were?

Kemp: Of what?

Kondracke: Your mother's influences on Jack and his character.

Kemp: I haven't thought of that. I don't know. I think probably it was their goodness. She had an extraordinary sense that you didn't have to—you know, kids grow up feeling they've got to be something in order to please their parents, and I don't feel that way at all and I don't think Jack felt that way or Tom or Paul.

Kondracke: Paul thinks that Jack was a loner, that he was not really intimate with other people, that he was kind of private or aloof. Do you?

Kemp: I think he was a politician and I think that he was well schooled in how to keep people at a distance, and that impacted his ability to relate to everyone, "everyone" underlined. Jack had the ability also to focus, and that focusing ability was part of his genius, but he could blot out everything in the world and focus on one—it's like a predator. When they show the brain of a fox catching a prey, a rabbit or something, the brain changes. It becomes "That's the issue," and it's right there in front. Does that answer—

Kondracke: Was that evident when he was a kid?

Kemp: I think so. He had an extraordinary mind. I shared a bedroom with Jack for many years, and every inch, I mean ceiling and walls, every inch of the wall and ceiling was with a sport magazine picture of some athlete. Jack knew athletics. He was a spotter for the announcer at the Hollywood Star [minor league baseball team] games. We would go out to Wrigley Field and watch, with my Uncle [Dr.] Laurn [Woods], Hollywood Star games, and Jack would help out with the spotting, because he just knew statistics very well. He had a

mind, and that has been, I think, very influential in his ability at a political rally. You know, going to a different town and having three different events and three different speeches for three different events just gets to be overwhelming to me. He did it naturally. He thrived on it and would go into an area and know hundreds of people by name and sight in the audience. Tremendous ability to remember detail and names and numbers. I would just fall apart and I would be guacamole in the process. He did it naturally.

Kondracke: Was he a politician when he was in high school?

Kemp: No, not at all. He was a leader.

[interruption]

Kondracke: So what's this poker story?

Kemp: The poker story is that I felt left out. I would watch through the hedge at Jack playing poker with the Gendian [phonetic] brothers down the street, and I told him to show me some of the chips, and I said, "I'll show you how to play so you won't lose." And I went into the garage and got the same chips, and I made a deal that, "If I show you how to play poker, you will let me play." So I played all afternoon and just lost my shirt, but I came out a winner because I had my pockets filled with chips out of the garage. I just added to them, and no one even suspected that. I don't know if Jack followed my advice or not, but I did very well. I just lost my shirt and came out a winner.

Jack used to play a game that was a Russian roulette spin-the-wheel and drop a ball in for a strike or a single or an out, and he would

play this game by the hour. I mean most people could keep track of a game or whatever, and Jack had a league of teams going, but he would play that just forever and ever.

My parents were concerned—I think it's interesting—with the fact that Jack was almost nonverbal, not truly, but in telephone conversations, it would just be a grunt and, "Hello," and just non-communicative. It would drive my mom absolutely nuts, like it drove my wife nuts. Not telling about this story, but I had a son, Matthew, that was nonverbal until he was—I learned, hearing him talk to his friends out in the street when he's nineteen, that he really could talk. So we're a strange bunch. Jack makes his living and Tom is very articulate and so is Paul very articulate about expressing themselves politically and economically and socially about all kinds of issues, and these people just didn't talk much growing up.

[interruption]

Kondracke: Back to high school. You said he wasn't a politician, but he was a leader. Besides being a quarterback, how else was he a leader in high school?

Kemp: He just thought he was a leader. Mom would laugh at a pink shirt that he—this is college, but it would express, I'm sure, a thought that was true in high school as well. He would wear a pink shirt that he bought for himself, and my mom would laugh at it and say that it looked sissified, and he would say to her, "I don't follow trends; I set trends." A quote. He just had his own drummer, and thank goodness for that. He was used to being an individual. We were taught to be individuals. When we would walk out the door, Mom would say, "Be a

leader." And by that she didn't mean come in first or win or make sure you won the prize or anything other than be an individual. Don't go along with the crowd. She was distrustful of the influence of other people on her boys. She liked the fact that they would think for themselves and be an independent thinker. I'm very independent as a thinker. Jack was too.

Kondracke: How did that evidence itself? Was there ever any a time when Jack stood up against the conventional wisdom in school or elsewhere as a kid?

Kemp: I don't know. I didn't go to school with Jack. I was always four years behind him. But I would contact him. My contact with him would be mostly watching him on the athletic field at Occidental [College] or Fairfax High School or whatever. The game was truly a game to him. It was fun, but it was very different for him than other people, as evidenced by my story about Grounders.

Kondracke: Was he in command when he was on the football field?

Kemp: Oh, very much so. Oh, yes. He used to kneel down in the huddle at Occidental and draw. First of all, it was an age when quarterbacks called their own play. He would not only call the play, but he would do it at the line of scrimmage, like 85 percent of the time or 80 percent of the time. He would kneel down in the huddle and draw pass patterns, creating it on the spot, telling players where to go to get open so he could throw a pass to them. It truly was like a sandlot game, and that's what I would refer to as leadership.

Kondracke: So back to this business of being a loner. Sometimes quarterbacks think that they have to be a bit aloof from their teammates in order to maintain command. Was there any aspect of Jack that was kind of a loner or aloof from other people? Was he intimate with friends and others?

Kemp: Good question. I don't know that I know. I think the term—I wouldn't choose "aloof." He just had the ability to focus. We could be talking here and he, all of a sudden, just like turning a station, could change stations and be in a different world, and I would just recognize the fact that I didn't have his attention. Tom would say, "When you talk with Jack, you need to make sure you have his attention. Give him something to think about." And that was true. It wasn't that he thought aloofness would have the implication of feeling better, very much not so, not so at all, but he did have the ability to block out anything that didn't fit his vision. Most of the time that's very positive, but there are some times when it's very annoying.

Kondracke: As in when?

Kemp: Oh, just a casual comment that I don't know I could back up.

Kondracke: Okay.

Kemp: In conversations, I think. I think that would be very annoying to kids. I just was more understanding of that fact. But that means that he could also—he was an avaricious reader.

Kondracke: As a kid?

Kemp: I don't know if it really surfaced as a kid. After he became politically interested. He was a researcher. He went to a pretty good school, Occidental College. I don't think it's a Dartmouth, but it's a pretty substantial school, so he had to be a student somewhat, but I think he really became a student when he needed to be, as he started speaking in San Diego and different places when he was with the Chargers. That was a very maturing experience for him.

Kondracke: He must have learned some of this at these family discussions that you describe in your book.

Kemp: Oh, yes.

Kondracke: So tell me about those family discussions and how they went. What were they about? How did Jack participate? How were they initiated and were they every day, and so on?

Kemp: I can speak from my experience more than I can as an observer. I'm just a kid growing up. But I think just being critical, looking for content, being an independent thinker, because those discussions, arguments, debates were very competitive. But when I listen to someone, I'm looking for where's the beef, you know. What's the issue? And I'm sure he does too; he did too. He was not a light thinker.

Jack was ill during the last few months of his life, and I thought really hard, as a thinking person, how I could thank him for all the just hours and hours that he spent with me and helping me and coaching me and teaching me, and I thanked him for—I went back to his

experience at Occidental when he was taking probably a History of Civilization course and they would bring in professors from different departments to speak on different issues relative to the period of history that they were studying. Jack opened up for me the fine arts. So I thanked Jack for opening up and legitimatizing the fine arts, and I think he was very disappointed with me that I didn't mention [Winston] Churchill or [Alexander] Hamilton or [Abraham] Lincoln or one of his idols that he had spoken of in so many different speeches, but I tried to throw a curve ball and I think I succeeded, I mean probably more than I wanted to. [laughs]

Kondracke: Let me ask you about the role of Christian Science in your family. How did your parents become Scientists?

Kemp: My grandmother was. A horse fell down probably some kind of hole and they were ready to put the horse to sleep, and someone said to my grandmother, Elva, "Why don't you call a Christian Science practitioner and why don't you pray about it." And they pulled the horse up and the horse was all right and ran away. That was enough to convince her that that was the way to go.

Her husband [Benjamin Franklin French] was a lawyer who practiced medicine among the Indians, and she had a philosophy of—the Blackfeet Indians were probably in Montana, and I don't know the tribe, but they were unmolested by the Indians because my great-grandfather would ensure that they were well provided for, and he kept supplies in the barn and they could stay there and he would bind up their broken leg or arm or whatever was wrong with them, but he practiced medicine. This is going back a long time.

But Grandmother was a Christian Scientist, and my parents, probably through a sickly child, my oldest brother Paul, became serious about it because they struggled long and hard with his illness of asthma, I mean as young parents, and he still struggles with that, I think, today, periodically.

Kondracke: So what do you think the influence of Christian Science was on Jack and his character?

Kemp: Let me go first to your first issue, just the general influence on Jack. The goodness of man, although I would hear from Jack about man's sinfulness as well, but I think that was a foreign idea to him, just the worthiness of human endeavor, of speaking in very positive terms about the nature of the universe as being good, certainly one god, monotheism, which would be characteristic of a number of different religions, I believe, was very much practiced, I say not preached, but practiced in our home.

My mother felt that all of us boys should be as thoughtful of a homeless person as the President of the United States, and that was very much apparent in my dad's business. He treated people very well, and that had to have an effect on Jack and it did me and Tom and Paul.

Kondracke: So the positive attitude toward the world, everybody says about Jack Kemp that he was the ultimate optimist. So does this arise out of Christian Science?

Kemp: I would think so, yes, yes, very much so.

Kondracke: Anything else out of Christian Science that you could see in his character as he got older?

Kemp: Oh, lots of things, but I'm trying to see what I can articulate. Ask me that again.

Kondracke: Well, if you grow up in a household with a certain kind of world view, as you all did in Christian Science, and it has a lasting effect on your character and your outlook on life, and I just wonder what the lasting effects of Christian Science might have been on Jack Kemp as you look at his life.

Kemp: Well, as a Christian Scientist, we're a lay church, so there's not a stratification of a priest or a rabbi knowing more than you do or I do. There's no authority in the church other than the resources that everyone has. I think that, probably, and the issue of the test of religious truth is not what someone says or what the church says; the real test is how well that idea plays out in your life, and if it's true—that sounds so Calvinistic, and I don't mean it that way, but if it's true, it works. It is demonstrable. The test is in the impact it makes on your heart. There are just hundreds of issues like that that stand out, and my mind just floods with all kinds of issues, but—

Kondracke: Let me ask you this. When he married Joanne [Main Kemp], he became a Presbyterian and he became sort of an evangelical Christian, but I've heard from other people in the family that about the time that he was considering running for President, he spent a lot of time reading in Christian Science and sort of returning to his roots. Do you know anything about that?

Kemp: Only that I've heard about it, but that's when he's living in the East, in Washington, and I don't know it firsthand. But running as a Christian Scientist would be a problem to him. It means the same kind of problems that Mitt Romney would have, of having to explain your religion all the time. People would pick up on the idea and say, "Oh, you're the people that don't believe in evil or you don't believe in doctors," and you'd be on the defensive. And I think playing professional football would wring that out of him in very short order, because hundreds of thousands of dollars every week would ride on how well the quarterback is feeling, and I think that had to be a problem to him.

Kondracke: He sure had a lot of shots, that's for sure. [laughs]

Kemp: Yes, yes. He used to love the story of getting a concussion and taking X-rays, and the headlines saying "X-Rays of Kemp's Head Show Nothing." [laughs]

But just the belief that evil is overcomeable, that it's not of god, is probably very influential. That would have an enormous impact on him, that man is good, that creation is good; it's worthy to be in politics; it's worthy to attempt to do great things. It's not just that it will be remembered; it's that it really is a substantial contribution to make.

Kondracke: So as time went on, when Jack moved away to the East as a Buffalo Bill and all that, how much did you and he talk?

Kemp: Rarely. We would get together. He was not a good phone communicator, although he tried. And toward the end of his life, I could see efforts for him to improve in that area, but that was not a strong suit. Relating to people is something—

[interruption]

Kondracke: So what was it like being around him as a brother over time? What did you talk about?

Kemp: He was not a smalltalker, and I think he didn't relate to—it isn't correct to say that he didn't—he related to hundreds of people, thousands of people insufficiently [sic] or he'd be elected again, but that wasn't his strong suit. I think I'm the same way. I'm more interested in the issue. I'm more interested in the concept, the idea. Ideas are important and have consequences, and I think he would say the same thing and did say the same thing.

My wife, Carolyn, is a relater and she would relate to people much better than me or Jack. I think Tom did a better job, and Paul probably does a better job at that task, but that would be particularly how Carolyn Kemp would view the world.

Kondracke: Did he ever confide in you about any disappointments or failures?

Kemp: No. He felt it was very important to present yourself as a winner. He would slide into his political role there, and I don't remember anything of him being a human being or having shortcomings or whatever, and he had a number of them.

Kondracke: Such as?

Kemp: Oh, that's a dirty question. [laughs] I hope you got that on camera. In relating to individuals, I guess, is one that I can speak of. He was less effective one-on—that isn't really true, because I think he did a great job of relating to individuals at times, but not so familially. I think that was one of the deficiencies.

Kondracke: How about impatience?

Kemp: Oh, legendary impatience.

Kondracke: Such as?

Kemp: Driving. He and I taught swimming out at the Encino Swim School when I was in high school, and he would give me driving directions with his little finger, and I had to respond very quickly, and if I didn't, I would incur the critique of my older brother, the unhappy critique of my older brother.

Kondracke: What would he actually say?

Kemp: He didn't have to say anything. [laughs]

[interruption]

Kondracke: Go ahead with impatience. So besides—

Kemp: Oh, just, you know, with the weather make Tom very nervous. Vacationing in Laguna. "Why is this so bad?" Because it would be overcast, and Tom would say, "You know, I can't do anything about the weather." [laughs]

Or yelling at Joanne. "Joanne, come out here. The car needs fixing again."

And she said, "Oh, the steering will improve greatly when we get the front tire fixed." It was flat. He had no mechanical ability whatsoever, and interestingly enough, Tom didn't, but Paul and I do have mechanical ability. Jack just did not care about things mechanical. It didn't come on his screen.

Impatience with—oh, I think his kids. Before we started this interview, Carolyn mentioned Jack punching the wall of a suite because of an event on the football field involving his son. "I don't know why [Jeffrey A. Kemp] Jeff isn't throwing, and why is he stretching so much? Because the whole team is stretching out on the playing field. He should be throwing." He had a short circuit to his vision, and that carried the day with him.

Kondracke: Did he have a violent temper?

Kemp: No. I didn't ever experience a violent temper.

Kondracke: It sounds like, though, kicking a wall if your kid isn't—if something's wrong on the football field—

Kemp: Oh, worse than that, my son, Jonathan [Kemp], told me that I had to find some way of working into our discussion the fact that I probably had seen a cowboy and Indian movie on television and I

pulled a bow and shot while Jack is at the incinerator, so this is a pretty long time ago when people had incinerators and would burn their trash in the back yard. But he's out there and I pulled the bow back and shot a little bit to the left with a steel-tipped arrow, hit Jack in the middle of the back of the head, and blood is spurting everywhere, just spurting all over the place, and his back is just a bloody mess. My only comment is, "Don't tell Mom." [laughs]

My arm has a big cut. I showed my daughter last night, has a big cut in it here where Jack was taking a knife and stabbing on either side. He must have seen some kind of movie. I struggled to get loose and he sunk a big Bowie knife in my arm, and I still have a big scar right here.

Kondracke: And what did he say after the blood started flowing?

Kemp: [laughs] I don't remember.

Kondracke: What did he do after you shot him in the head with the arrow?

Kemp: Oh, he went to Mom, and Mom—raising kids had to be a challenge, four boys, and we made it so in hundreds of ways. Their theology was really tested, I mean their life picture, because we really were a bunch to contain.

Kondracke: Did you and Jack fight?

Kemp: I'm sure we did, yes. A friend of Jack's would tell a story about me in the backyard of our Plymouth address with a golf club,

shutting my eyes and swinging it back and forth and saying, "I can't see you, so I'm not responsible." I didn't say that, but I'm not responsible if I hit you and swinging a golf club out in front. Yes, we fought lots of times and I had to be very inventive, because I was nothing in terms of competition fighting Jack, who was four years my senior.

Kondracke: Did he know when to quit?

Kemp: I don't know if I know how to answer that. I'm sure he did, yes, or I'd be dead. [laughs]

Kondracke: Was there any big difference between the public Jack Kemp and the private Jack Kemp, the Jack Kemp that you knew?

Kemp: I think that's really a good question. I think that around our discussions he presented his ideas and I would hear the same arguments publicly that he would have privately, that he would have with me privately, because we would argue the great issues of the campaign together, and I was impressed with that fact that he didn't change. He really believed what he was putting forth, and it came forth naturally. There was not a discontinuity between his private life and his public life.

Intellectually he was honest. I think that set him apart. I said that recently in front of a politician, and I apologized to him. I said it at Occidental at the dedication of the Jack Kemp Stadium, to [Daniel E.] Dan Lungren, who was there, and I apologized to him for saying it. But Jack really was true and a genuine character, and I think that was

very appealing to the population, that he was believable for that reason. A little narrow in his focus, but believable.

You know, they called him "Jackie One-Note" at times, that he thought that all problems could be solved through a lower tax rate and a gold standard, and that did change from time to time, but scratch him and that's where he was.

Kondracke: Did you talk to him about politics a lot?

Kemp: Oh, not a lot, but when we're together, we talk politics, yes. We talked everything. Tom and I talk more because Tom lived in Laguna down the road about twenty minutes and I had more occasions to run into him socially. But that was a tradition in our house and I have to remind myself that people don't necessarily think that way, so I'll enter into discussions that will be very uncomfortable for people at times and kind of stumble into them, thinking this is natural to talk religion, politics, ethics, social issues, or whatever. I believe you can talk about anything. I don't know how well I can, but I believe that there's no subject that's off the table. We would talk about that issue with Jack or any issue and it just was interesting to me that he would present the same persona and argue with the same passion that he would have on the political stump.

Kondracke: Did you participate in his political campaigns? Do you go out and campaign for him?

Kemp: I did not as much as I probably would have liked, not as much as Tom did, but yes. Went to New Hampshire, and that requires a thick skin. Went to New Hampshire and handed out a brochure in a

parking lot to someone, "Vote for Jack Kemp," and the person looked at it and saw Jack's name and said, "Jack Kemp, I hate that guy." So it required a thick skin to get along with that.

I had to teach my wife how to go to an NFL [National Football League] or an AFL, American Football League, football game. We used to go watch the [Boston] Patriots and the Buffalo Bills play football in Fenway Park in Boston, and Jack threw a short little pass and Elbert Dubenion ran for a touchdown in a Patriot game, and my wife is the only one in that stadium that stood up and cheered, and a big three-hundred-pound guy was sitting in a seat in front of her that was saying, "Break Kemp's arm. I want to see blood, blood," and he just was pretty well inebriated, and she winds up and hits him. I said, "Oh, no. I'm in a real mess now." And he didn't even feel it. It felt like somebody brushing by him in the next row. But it was really a funny time. I thought I was going to have to just really do some very fast talking or I would have 80,000 people against me and cheering, because they could see we were for Buffalo, and the rest of the stadium was for the Patriots.

Kondracke: After he lost in 1988, was he at all depressed?

Kemp: Not that I know of. He was used to losing, and he lost a lot, you know. I wrote in my book about him playing professionally for five or six teams and getting fired. That is very traumatic, and I think that's where Mom would play a big role in helping Jack, but I don't remember him ever showing or I wouldn't be able to identify it necessarily, but he would not be depressed in any way that I would imagine. I think he had to go through that kind of experience many times and was well used to it.

I've danced around and haven't really said he was a good loser, because he was not a good loser. That's when I say he was the 'SC Marching Band, that was a performance that I would really fight to avoid, because it would be "Fight On for Old 'SC," and you'd have flexing rights, or we would argue.

Kondracke: So you're kids and he is staging these mock events, if I understand, and this is USC, your favorite team, and he was pretending that—

Kemp: Nothing to do with my kids.

Kondracke: No, you and he are kids, and he's staging these events.

Kemp: Yes. Thank you for clarifying.

Kondracke: So why did you not like this USC—

Kemp: Oh, because it would be taunting. It would be an inappropriate expression of victory. They would throw a flag down and penalize you if they had a referee there. One time I said to him, "Well, so what if you beat me?" Big mistake. I heard about that comment for at least two decades.

Kondracke: What do you mean by that?

Kemp: "So what if you beat me? Who cares?" And he just saw it in different proportions.

Kondracke: So what did he say?

Kemp: He didn't necessarily have to say anything. He just repeated the comment, "So what if you beat me?" And that was enough to bring me to tears.

[interruption]

Kondracke: So for twenty years, for twenty years he throws it up to you, basically, that he beat you.

Kemp: My brother Tom would do it longer than that.

Kondracke: It sounds like you kids were intensely competitive with one another and, frankly, it doesn't sound very loving to me.

Kemp: Okay.

Kondracke: How do you respond to that?

Kemp: I'm working on it. Maybe thicker skin is required. It didn't cut that much, and maybe I'm overplaying it, but yet every bit of it is true and it isn't very loving; it's competitive. I buy that. But, still, there's a great deal of adoration and love there as well. And in our discussions or debates, arguments, that would bring out a lot of competition, a lot of argument, and if it would ever go over the line, as it would from time to time, we would stop and mend the fences. The relationship was that important. There was also a sensitivity that this is my brother, and my father attitude would kick in and we would take

care of each other. But "So what if you beat me?" relates to competition, yes, very much so, and taunting, but I don't see that as unloving, but I would agree with you that it's not a loving thing to say.

Kondracke: So, sum up. You were obviously proud of your brother. How do you think he ought to be remembered in history?

Kemp: As an extraordinary thinker, as a very passionate advocate who dedicated himself to a lot, would not be discouraged over—he was at the Reagan house, his kitchen cabinet working on where they would go, and I would say, "Well, how are you doing, Jack?" And he would say, "Well, it's now thirteen to zero," or "thirteen to one," and he would be very proud of the fact that he was a lone wolf arguing against the field, and a lot of his stories would illustrate that. He was doing his own thinking, and I think unique in that way. It didn't matter what you thought or how you related to it; he was going to be true to his ideals.

Kondracke: So is there anything about your brother that I haven't asked you that you think is important to add to this history?

Kemp: Yes, all kinds of things. [laughter]

Kondracke: Tell me.

Kemp: But you didn't say, "Well, prove it," and I will have a hard time doing that. But I just think he should be remembered as a very independent, powerful thinker who dedicated a lot of thought and was against great odds and didn't mind them, didn't mind being thirty

points behind in a football game. He would come back and prove it, prove victorious.

Kondracke: Thank you very much for doing this.

Kemp: Thank you.

[interruption]

Kondracke: Did you agree with his politics?

Kemp: Most the time, but there were times when I didn't.

Kondracke: And what were those?

Kemp: Oh, gosh, those are great questions. He had a lot of ideas about the war. I was a chaplain in the Navy and served in Vietnam for a year, and I probably agree with him now against involvement in Iraq and Iran—not Iran, but Afghanistan. I'm more thoughtful now than I think I was before. You know, we would argue these issues ten years ago, so I'm having trouble dredging them up again.

[interruption]

Kemp: Yes, we would argue about more than just politics. I would try to steer him into issues that steered him off politics, because his arms would get too long. I'd bring up Arafat, and he knew Yasser Arafat. He knew [Benjamin "Bibi"] Netanyahu. He knew the people that I was just reading about in the newspaper, so I would move the

conversation, whenever I could, to something I was more familiar with, but a lot of times I was not able to.

I thought he was an astounding politician. We were in New Hampshire, Hanover, at a mall and following [George S.] McGovern in the presidential race, and the place was filled with very passionate McGovern Democrats, and here was a conservative speaker coming up next and facing a crowd, and I was concerned for my life—and I've been in lots of life-threatening positions—because it was standing-room only, and I was concerned that we would get out of there. He did a masterful job of throwing away his speech and just starting over and talking about how far the Democrats had come from John [F.] Kennedy, and just did, I thought, a wonderful job of articulating to a different audience.

Kondracke: Was that in '88?

Kemp: Probably in '88, yes. I'm a basket case at remembering dates and times. But I would ask Jack, "Do you ever plant on radio interviews, questions for your staff to call in?"

He said, "No, I don't ever do that." He liked the real question, the real issue more than that. He didn't want to try and steer the conversation. He loved debate. He would go to high schools and colleges and traveled all over the country with [J. R.] John Edwards, who, aside from his marital infidelities, was a very good debater.

To show you my candidness, I thought Jack lost his debate with [Albert A.] Al Gore [Jr.] in the televised debate in Florida that they had as vice presidential candidates.

Kondracke: You were watching on TV or were you there?

Kemp: No, I was there.

Kondracke: What did you say to him after the debate?

Kemp: "Nice job. Well done. Good going."

Kondracke: How did he feel that he had done in that debate?

Kemp: He thought he did well. You mentioned earlier that you didn't think Jack was particularly introspective, and I think that's right on. Paul is and Tom and I am, but I don't think Jack—Jack was ill one day and laying in my dad and mom's bed, and my dad sat down next to him and started rubbing his feet, you know, just expressing his concern and love for his sick boy, and Jack's comment was, "Are you almost finished?" [laughs] You know, stupid comment, but I think that it bothered him that someone was getting that close.

Kondracke: That reminds me to ask you, did you talk to him as he was dying or when he was sick? And how did he handle that, the end of his life?

Kemp: I think that's a question that can be directed better to his family than me. I'm a long ways away and we didn't talk about that.

Kondracke: Okay. Thank you very much.

Kemp: You're very welcome. A pleasure for me.

[End of interview]