

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

University of Arkansas
365 N. McIlroy Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-6829

Arkansas Memories Project

Martin R. Steele

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

February 26, 2010

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - standard English spelling of informal words; and
 - interviewee and interviewer edits.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

See the Citation Guide at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php>.

Scott Lunsford interviewed Martin R. Steele on February 26, 2010, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Marty, this is our—uh—actually . . .

Trey Marley: Tape's rolling.

SL: . . . um—we probably we need to update our release form 'cause it's a new day. This is a different . . .

Martin Steele: Okay. [*Laughs*]

SL: This would be considered a different recording.

MS: Okay.

SL: A different deal.

MS: Okay.

SL: But—uh—I'm going to assume . . .

MS: No problem.

SL: . . . that we're still okay on recording all this stuff.

MS: Absolutely. Yeah.

SL: Um—uh—and this—uh—if we were—uh—counting from yesterday, this would be our seventh tape.

TM: Yes.

SL: Is that right?

MS: Yeah, yeah.

[00:00:27] SL: You're givin' us a lot—you're very generous with your

time.

MS: Well, I've . . .

SL: Really appreciate it.

MS: I'm honored and humbled to be a part of it.

SL: Well . . .

MS: Particularly at this stage of development of the Pryor Center and what you're doing here for the state of Arkansas.

SL: Well, thank you.

MS: And I'm honored to be a part of it.

SL: Well, I have the greatest job in the world.

MS: No doubt about that.

SL: [*Laughs*] I get to sit and . . .

MS: No doubt about that.

[00:00:45] SL: . . . hear all these great stories. Um—I think that we had been talking about—um—um—Desert Shield and Desert Storm and—uh—how General Gray really wanted to be a part of that. And—uh—I'm—I'm not really clear on exactly who was supposed to report to who, but it was kinda puttin' you in a rock and a hard place right at [*laughs*] . . .

MS: Yes. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . the moment you walk in . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . for the first day.

MS: Yeah. It—it's just that—uh—service—everyone has a role and serve as chiefs. Uh—their role is to provide forces and matériel and equipment. They do not get involved in strategic planning of a war plan or the execution and implementation of a war plan. And so the rock and a hard place was that—that there was no way that General A. M. Gray—uh—could not not do it. I mean, he—he had to be a part of all of it and—uh—uh—because it's his nature. [00:01:44] And so it rubbed a lotta people the wrong way—uh—and he sent those of us—uh—out into the fiery pit, if you will, to grease the skids to make sure that—uh—even though may—that many people may have been upset, his thoughts and ideas and everything still got implemented in some way or form or fashion. And—and it—it worked. It worked. I mean, and he—he understood where we were headed, and he was—he backed off at the appropriate time. And he's a—he's a different person—uh—but—and Schwarzkopf brought—wouldn't—you know, at the end of the day, wouldn't tolerate it either. I mean, a service chief has his responsibilities; I have mine, and clear delineation between the two roles. So—but the—uh—the irony was that there was no other service chief back in Washington doing what Gray was doing. I mean, they

were providing forces and tryin' to help—uh—shape—uh—
Schwarzkopf's ability to be able to execute by having enough
resources there and people and—so Gray was a—this—from the
smallest service, if you will—uh—the marine corps, although we
had fifty, sixty thousand people involved in the fight—uh—it was
just one of those different things, different things.

[00:03:07] SL: You know, it seems kinda strange to me, the—the
service side of the operation wouldn't be integral to the planning.
I mean, it would seem like . . .

MS: Well, you . . .

SL: . . . before you can make a plan, you gotta know [*laughs*] what
can be delivered.

MS: Well, you—you do. There is a—a synergy there, and there's a
dialogue, but you're really not involved in the war plan—I
mean—uh—the war planning of any war plan—uh—because the
unified commander responsible for that region or that particular
war, if you will, in this case—uh—he has a permanent staff that
is working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on that.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:03:43] MS: That's their total focus of effort, and the service chief
is not. He's all over the world. He's got people all over the
world, and he's providing a myriad of—uh—resources to various

requirements around the world, and that's where his focus of effort needs to be. So . . .

[00:03:58] SL: Now—uh—looking at—at the book—uh—*The Boys of '67* by Charles Jones . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . um—it sound like, to me, one of the bigger challenges for you was getting the navy to buy in to the air support . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . that the marines were going to need . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . on the ground.

MS: Yes.

SL: And it took a while . . .

MS: It did.

SL: . . . to get that . . .

MS: It did.

SL: . . . get the . . .

[00:04:27] MS: Again, it was not—uh—as I alluded to earlier, their thought process is all about air-to-air combat, first of all—air superiority for the power projection capability of an aircraft carrier. And the notion of close air support, meaning—uh—flying low to support ground troops with—uh—either dumb bombs or

rockets or whatever, is not their core competency with aviation forces in the navy. So much so that over time because of the—uh—remember, we just had the demise of the Soviet Union a couple of—you know, I mean, it was a couple years before that only. The navy was makin' an adjustment of what—who it was and what carriers were all about and twelve carrier battle groups and their roles and responsibility. And—uh—so they were really tryin' to find their niche in this. And as you may have read in the book, they were, no pun intended, somewhat of a fish outta water. There wasn't going to be a power projection force from the sea—uh—because as the National Command Authority back here—Schwarzkopf—they weren't gonna create another Tarawa by landing forces in forcible entry into Kuwait with seven Iraqi divisions there. And the navy was tryin' to figure out, "What's the best use of our resources?" And so as I indicated, they're targeting support—what the—Horner and his staff did in Riyadh, was include them in what's called the air tasking order, ATO, but they were—their targets were way out. Way out. And it required—uh—uh—tanking in the air . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:06:16] MS: . . . to have enough fuel to get there and get back.

It required—they couldn't—what's called a sortie generation,

which means how many times can the same plane go out and back, reload with more bombs, and go out and back. And in the case of the air force, because of the proximity, they could have four time—the same aircraft do four missions in a period of time, where the navy could get one in or two at the most. So it was a very difficult thing. And then that they were satisfied with it was the real issue, that they thought that they were makin' a major contribution and that—uh—they were making a contribution, but it wasn't probably the best use of resources. And then when we started studying if the enemy fought against the marines going across those ditches and if they were set on fire and we got stopped why—by the enemy's fires, we were gonna have to counter that, and we don't have enough artillery. Our—uh—it was just not that much depth to the battlefield, so we'd need all the close air support that the marine corps had with our fixed-wing aviation. And when you stacked the numbers up, it wasn't sufficient enough, and the air force air was gonna support the army, and we needed the navy to get engaged in it. And that was the sell. [00:07:33] As I alluded to again [*laughs*] yesterday, my task when I went out—it was sorta like—again, besides "Who is this guy?" it was "What? [*SL laughs*] What are you talkin' about?" And so the sell was on from the beginning of

making them understand what the issue was 'cause they had no understanding of the issue.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:07:52] MS: Uh—it not had been made—had not been made aware of it. And they—then they were tryin' to figure, "Well, how in the heck am I gonna participate in that and—and train up in such a short period of time to be able to fly close air support in an effective way where I don't—uh—what's called blue-on-blue—you know, put my bombs on friendly forces" . . .

SL: Right.

MS: . . . "because I'm not experienced in all of this." And—uh—it's a far cry different than going for a—the—an enemy—uh—uh—anti-air or electronic device way out in the—60, 70, 120 miles away, than it is when the ground troops are within eyeball distance of one another, and you've gotta hit that guy instead of the friendly guy. That—that's a technique and a practice and a skill set that's—requires a lot of—uh—talent and training to do. So it was—it was a big adjustment for them—mentally, emotionally—uh—and, plus, they have egos. I mean, they're—these are jet pilots, for gosh sakes, and—uh . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:08:53] MS: . . . and there really is a difference, and I say this

as—uh—unemotional as I can, but if you can—and historians would be—uh—supportive of this. If you can fly a fixed-wing jet and land it on a postage stamp called a aircraft carrier in the middle of the night with no moon—uh—you—you're good.

[Laughs]

SL: You're the best.

MS: And—you're the best. And they believe that they are the best, and obviously, that aircraft carrier is far different than a five thousand-foot runway in the middle of the night 'cause you got a lotta room for error and make mistake—you have no room for error on that aircraft carrier, and it's like lookin' at a BB in a boxcar when you're—uh—when you're comin' down in the middle of the night.

[00:09:36] SL: Um—this makes me think of a couple things. Fir—first—um—early on in—in the—um—uh—uh—conflict, our forces pretty much neutralized Saddam's air . . .

MS: Forces. Yeah.

SL: Air force.

MS: Yeah, and his air defenses.

SL: And it was—it was never a factor . . .

MS: And his air defense capability.

SL: And his air defense.

MS: Yeah.

SL: And also during that, we—uh—television was very—the news was pretty active, and the air force or someone was releasing the camera where there'd be a pillbox or an anti-aircraft . . .

MS: Laser-guided bombs. Yeah.

SL: Laser-guided bombs.

MS: Yeah.

SL: And—and people could actually see the contact being made and explosion and the . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the device or the building demolished.

MS: Yeah.

[00:10:25] SL: Uh—so it makes me think that there's a big technology leap between the time that you were spending in Vietnam flying around in a Piper Cub targeting things and the way things were targeted in—in the—uh—Gulf War.

MS: Absolutely. Tremendous difference. Uh—the intelligence-collection capability of where enemy capabilities were, like his air fields, like his air-defense systems, et cetera; the superiority of these weapon systems to do pinpoint bombing and damage—uh—and the information of how it was collected and gathered and—and used was—uh—exponentially—uh—better than what it

had been in any previous war. I mean, it really was where technology—uh—the coalition—jointness of our own forces, coalition with other countries, and technology all came together at one time, and it was masterful. It really was.

[00:11:25] SL: Was—were [*MS sniffs*]*—was satellite data deployed . . .*

MS: Absolutely.

SL: . . . then? I mean, it—was it . . .

MS: Absolutely.

SL: I mean, now, in every movie . . .

MS: Well . . .

SL: . . . you see, you see, you know, the . . .

MS: Right.

SL: . . . satellite images . . .

MS: Oh yeah. Absolutely.

SL: . . . uh—people . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . on the ground.

MS: Oh yeah. [*Sniffs*]

SL: And you—you're . . .

[00:11:40] MS: Well, most of the—uh—you—first of all, maneuver even on the ground, we were usin', you know, GPSs that were all

satellite. I mean, that—you could—in that environment, it's so harsh and bleak and nothingness, you know, for miles and miles and miles. Even to know where you are in relationship to your fellow friendly forces, you had to have—you—it wasn't a map. I mean, you had to have GPS capability to be able to do that effectively. And—uh—uh—it all came together. I—I don't know if it was in the book or not, but I had the privilege to go on the night before the ground war started into a raid into Iraq to test—I was on the ground with the marine forces, and—uh—we're testing to see what his defenses—what was left and if he was gonna fire us, it was in our—what we call an artillery raid. And I was in the command and control vehicle—uh—checking out—we were—it was a probing-type action to see how he would react. And it gave us great confidence that we had done the job in preparation, but we still didn't know if they were tenaciously gonna fight at the end of the day. [00:12:48] And—uh—but we were not giddy with confidence, but we were much more confident after that raid to see what—how they were responding to what we were doing, and they didn't know whether we were comin' then. They had no idea we were comin' the next morning but—uh—so we—we really did this thing right [*laughs*] is what I'm tryin' to say, all across the board. People were at their best.

I mean, obviously—uh—in any war, things occur. I mean, in this case, you know, we did have blue on blue in some situations where friendlies were killed by bombs and aircraft, and—and as an aside, I was the chair of that committee to study that after the war and—uh—change the procedures and protocols because a procedure for the navy and marine corps was far different at that time than the procedure for the air force—uh—and the army. And we were coming closer and closer together, and we thought we had it—the symbiotic relationship, but there really were differences. And that has been worked over time, too, now and still not perfect but it—we're getting closer together, leveraging the technology, process management, et cetera.

[00:14:01] SL: Um—you know, having skimmed the—through the book last night, there are—there are some things that we've already covered, but there was a little bit more detail in the book than—than what we've covered. And so there's probably some things that I wanna go back over at some point in time. And it really doesn't matter to me how—how you feel about goin' back and forth. Uh—we can either address some of that stuff now, or if you wanna keep the chronology going and then maybe at the end . . .

MS: It doesn't matter. Whatever way . . .

SL: Doesn't matter?

MS: . . . you wanna do it. Yeah. No, it doesn't matter. Whatever.

SL: Well, I mean . . .

MS: But I also think we were more detailed in many things. I mean,
I haven't read the book in a long time . . .

SL: Right. We—we were . . .

MS: . . . obviously but . . .

SL: . . . there were . . .

MS: Yeah, yeah.

[00:14:45] SL: . . . but [*MS laughs*] I kinda feel like you—you—uh—
in some cases you kind of sold yourself short [*MS laughs*] in—in
some of the things that you were doing—uh—particularly in
Vietnam.

MS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Um—you know, there was—um—and I'm—I'm just gonna go
ahead and go back to Vietnam. We—we kinda brought it up—
just in the difference in technology. But you were out there—
um—uh—dismantling trip wires, dismantling—uh—booby traps.

MS: Yeah.

SL: I mean, you were . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . out there in front . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . of all this stuff and—uh—these systems were extensive. I mean, they had prepared.

[00:15:28] MS: They—well, they were. That was their—that was their expertise—where improvised explosive devices are today for the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's the leveler on the battlefield, these bombs that are used. In the—in the Vietnam War, it was booby traps and trip wires and—uh—that was their core competency. That's what gave them—not equal, but it really did even the game out because we were—that was in everybody's mind. I mean, everywhere you went, you didn't know what was gonna happen, if you were gonna run into one, so—again, in my experience, we were—uh—in the early part, I was part of that effort to discover what they were, how they put them together, how do you dismantle it, how do you avoid it—uh—what type of training—it's part of the leadership training thing that I did later back at Quantico—what—what do you do to stay alive? [00:16:25] And—and I had some—again, not mentioned, but I mean, I really had some moments there where—uh—just one more step or one—one move to the left or right, and I wouldn't be here today. And so it was a—your sensory perception, your intuitiveness, your—that today—even

today, walking into a room, I have a unique, uncanny ability to kinda see what's all around me—uh—in a moment, you know, and could walk in and close my eyes and then tell you what was the picture on the wall or whatever. And it's just—and it came from that experience because you had to be—you wouldn't survive if you didn't have that, if you weren't so tuned to the smells and—and the nuances of—of the land—uh—if there had been human beings around there and so on.

SL: What . . .

MS: 'Cause they were very, very gifted at it.

[00:17:16] SL: . . . what—what was the bamboo device that was overhead?

MS: Well, it's a mal—it was called a Malayan Gate, and it was a swinging gate that—that was arched up in a tree, and it was heavy—uh—and because of the force of it swinging through the air—uh—when you hit the trip wire, I mean, it would impale you, and the bamboo stakes were—I mean, they would kill you instantly. Uh—and it was—they were large devices and—uh—petrifying, I mean, to see one and then to dismantle it and the thought of if you didn't—hadn't seen it and hadn't dismantled it—or to see someone who's a victim of being struck by one who—there's no survivors from that. People didn't survive that

at all. I mean, I never know—I don't know of anybody who was struck by a Malayan Gate and survived. No one that I know. So I mean, I discovered many of the those [*laughs*] in the early stages because they had had time. They—they knew where we were comin' and—and the—I mentioned the—finding the water. That area around where I found the water was just completely booby trapped and mined and—because they knew eventually we'd find the source of the water, for fresh water, around there, and it was—it was huge—the—the resource. But they weren't gonna make it easy to get to it and so . . .

[00:18:38] SL: You got some sort of—uh—citation—some kind of—uh—uh—uh—recognition for finding that and securing that.

MS: Well, [*sighs*] like I said, back then—uh—medals weren't the norm back then. Uh—occasionally you'd have that, but really, what happened to me, like in the case of what we're talkin' about, it was that, and there's a combination of other things that I was meritoriously promoted to the next rank for my performance. But you know, it just didn't happen, and particularly at my rank, people didn't get that. There was no bitterness. It's just the way it was.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:19:17] MS: I mean, if I'd have fell—you know, fallen on a

grenade like so many young men did, army and marines, that's a Medal of Honor, you know, for givin' up your life for someone else, or like what Staff Sergeant Taylor did. But you know, a lotta this was just your job. I mean, it's just what you were doin', and you were helpin' yourself and helpin' other marines and knowin' that—knowing that you were gonna make a difference. And so that's the kinda the way I looked at it.

[00:19:48] SL: It's—it's—uh—[*MS laughs*] quite remarkable to me that someone that—um—had—uh—found himself in the situations that you placed yourself in voluntarily, eagerly—uh—that you would go back to it after surviving the first round. I—it's just . . .

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:08] MS: Well, I don't think it's too unusual. I think that it's sorta like, you know, if someone asked me today—just talkin' about my own son going to Afghanistan, having two tours, and the young men and women—and when I'm in public speeches talking about things like some of the things we've been talkin' about, but really it's more about leading yourself and leading other people—they ask me a question about reflection. If you had one wish, I would say I would prefer that I went to Afghanistan in lieu of my son.

SL: Yeah.

[00:20:41] MS: Again, not a martyrdom-type thing. It's just that I've been there, done that, got the T-shirt, as they say, and I know that I can do it. I'm good at it. I understand it. I have a respect for life and death. I understand the banality of war, man's inhumanity to man, the harshness of it all. I can inspire people to be better than they thought they could be, to rise above it, to—it's my capability, if you will, competency as a man and as a leader. So I—you never really think about it that way, of going back. You just do it. And better me than him, if you will, 'cause he's not quite ready to go do it yet. Now today, it's better me than him or her, I mean . . .

SL: Right.

[00:21:32] MS: . . . because we've got so many women involved in this thing now, who are just remarkable in what they're doing. But in my war, there were no women, you know, so—but that's kinda—I think everybody views it that way once you been in it. It's just like someone—before I came here today, a young mother came up to me and introduced herself. Her husband was a marine in Vietnam. And she's not that young, excuse me, but she's—has a son who's in the marine corps, and he's got a medical problem, and he's in North Carolina or South Carolina

right now, and all he wants to do is get in the war to kill someone, and that was what she said to me. And I said, "That'll last about a nanosecond. Trust me. I mean, once he does it, that'll be the end of that because war—no one likes to do that." I mean, you've gotta have something wrong with you if you like to continuously do that and relish it. Do we have people like that? You bet. But they're marginal at best in their performance because they've kinda lost the perspective of—the great fighters—don't get me wrong, but if you relish that whole thought, there's something missing in your character that concerns me. We're all fearful it could be our day, but you have the confidence that you can get up today and do your duty 'cause it is your duty. [*SL sighs*] [*TM coughs*]

SL: [*Unclear words*].

[00:23:00] MS: That's what the profession of arms is all about. I make these statements, like we were talkin' yesterday, and they—they're euphemisms and they—until we get "the rest of the story," as Paul Harvey used to say. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

MS: You—we're not sellin' shoes at Kinney's here. This is life and death. And so when I make these statements that were emotional yesterday, about you learn to love one another,

there's a mutual respect, but when you get into that environment and you're all in the same condition, you learn to love one another because, as I said, and I'll say it again for emphasis, that, Scott, I know you'll give your life for me, and you know intuitively that I will give my life for you if the condition comes up. It's just the nature of the beast. So the more I was involved in those kinds of things, the more competent I was and the more—again, the other thing is, is you're successful at it. They keep sendin' you back. That's what happens. You do well at it, you keep goin' back. "You—you're in the next patrol. Go get some sleep 'cause you're gonna do another one and"—and you know, and that happened to me with—immediately it happened to me. I mean, I knew it was gonna happen beforehand just from the training I've done and my nature. But then, when it happened in real, and I did respond to the crisis, if you will, I just kept bein' asked to go do it again. So I sure wasn't gonna say no.

SL: Yeah.

[00:24:33] MS: I never even thought about sayin' no. Wouldn't even know how to say no. But [*laughter*]*—and again, it was just the nature of it. And I've shared this so many ways and saying it—and I just keep comin' back to the same thing. You learn about*

yourself so much, and you learn about your mortality, and you learn how precious life is. And for me, the only conundrum was I couldn't understand why I wasn't gettin' hit. I wasn't gettin' killed. I mean, I don't have a Purple Heart, and you know, people dyin' all around me and gettin' wounded seriously. And I was just miraculously, from my faith-based perspective, unscathed, I mean, and to this day, you know, the takeaway and from the Karl Taylor thing later, but to this day, it is, "What do you do with the gift of life? What do you do with your life?"

[00:25:26] Because as you've read and have listened to me, the—my experience—when I came back—said, "There's a reason that I'm not dead. There's a reason that I'm not maimed. I don't know what it is, but I'm sure gonna seize the day, in my vernacular, of the precious gift of life and give back." Training officers to go over there to be successful, you know, it's—as you've read—if you read the first chapter of the book, I mean, that whole thing was about that. I mean, that's all it was, was about me sayin', "This is a bad fight you're about to go into. These guys are tryin' to kill you, and you gotta work—you gotta be in the best physical shape, emotional shape. I mean, that's what the whole first chapter of the book is about. Takin' yourself to another level of excellence, of preparation, so when you do

come into the moment of truth in the crisis that you—it's almost like autopilot. I mean, you're so well prepared, you just go do it. And after the fact, you can't even remember what it was on many occasions that you were doin'. But—and exhaustion sets in, you know, when it's over, but I don't know how much you've read about Ray Smith, the third person in there, my closest friend . . .

SL: Not . . .

MS: . . . in the marine corps.

SL: . . . not a whole lot.

[00:26:45] MS: Well, I mean, when you get an opportunity to read the book, his actions over and over and over again—he is the most decorated marine we had in the war. And he is a true American hero, and he's a warrior. But the same thing—I mean, today when we—I talk to him all the time. He's lost his wife to colon cancer, and I eulogized her at her funeral, and he subsequently remarried, and I was the best man in his next wedding. And he married a woman much younger than he is. Fact, he's—she's younger than his youngest child, so she's younger. So I'm smiling here. [*SL laughs*] And I won't get in any more detail. Too much information, but you know, when we talk about it today, it's been forty years for him. He was in

Grenada and in Beirut and is a recognized war hero in the marine corps. But he—to this day he's having second thoughts. He's got his own post-traumatic stress. It's taken forty years to get there because he was so gifted at what he did, it was—as a leader in combat, and when you read it, you'll just be mesmerized by what he did. But he was on autopilot, and it's taken this long to catch up to him. You know, my God, how—what happened there, you know. Just . . .



[00:28:02] SL: How is it—I mean, is it possible not to have post-traumatic stress if you've been in a combat—I mean . . .

MS: That's a great question. I'm not sure anymore. I mean, at one time I absolutely believed, yes, it was, that some people—we all are affected differently about it. I mean, just like the young man that I've talked to you about that said, "That night you became a leader, and I became a hospital patient." But residually, over time, if you really have been in a fight or—and it's intense, and it is intense if you're—someone's tryin' to take your life, no matter how far away they are. I don't know, if you're honest with yourself, that—you can call it reflections and a golden eye. You can call it looking back. You can call—"I've buried this." And a lotta people have a tremendous gift to bury it and don't think about it, which you would say—they would say,

"I don't really have a problem because"—but the reality was they went through a very, very intense period to bury the thought, and in some cases, block it outta their mind that they don't remember because they don't want to remember. [00:29:15]

So—but on the whole, I would say, at this juncture in life, dealing with these young men and women that I am now, makin' the transition out of this war—no. Everybody—if you're in it somehow, it's gonna affect you in a way, of some type of reflective stress. Not so much a disorder—and many specialists, like my partner, the renowned post-traumatic stress disorder psychiatrist in America, Mark, Dr. Mark Goulston—he doesn't like the term PTSD. He doesn't even like to use it. It's a disorder at the end—bothers him. That that would make people deny—"I don't have a disorder"—and doesn't get to the real issue of dealing with their demons. But don't call it a disorder. And he's much more effective at communicating about it, and obviously, he's a trained psychiatrist. But you know, I'm—it's a long answer to a short question, but basically, I think we're all affected differently, some more intensely than others; but "You're all affected" would be how I'd summarize it up.

[00:30:27] SL: I just don't see how you couldn't be.

MS: Yeah.

SL: And you know, if nothing else, it sets you apart from those that didn't experience that . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . sort of thing.

MS: Yeah.

SL: So you—it—it's gotta have some . . .

[00:30:40] MS: Well, again, we alluded this yesterday, and it's part of the reason I'm involved in this transitioning program. You just touched another nerve, Scott. Part of the struggle with these returning veterans who've gone through this experience multiple times now, five tours of duty in this eight-year protracted war and—men and women—is this feeling and firm belief, "You weren't there. You have no idea what I went through. You don't understand who I am." And it creates an antagonism, a lack of respect for other human beings. And so what we're tryin' to do is help them assimilate—come to inner peace with themselves about what they did, come to inner peace with their demons, if you will, get treatment if they need it. But learn to respect the society that doesn't share your experiences, doesn't have any idea. Don't necessarily have to educate everybody, to tell them, because we have a line about, "Please don't go out there with a big USMC on your forehead." You're

tryin' to assimilate back into society. I mean, they'll know you're a marine just by the character of your deeds and how you comport yourself. But you don't need to go out there and put it in everybody's face because all it does is gets you outta whack of the assimilation and may get you to a place where it's less than comfortable, and you have a lack of respect for the people around you. A lotta these young men and women goin' back to school, to college, for example, they have a hard time with academics, pontificating on a platform. Doesn't matter what the subject is. It's—they—they're bored. Their personality—I mean, it's not inspiring to them. I mean, they—it's a ritual that they've got to go through, and this is many cases, now. Not all, obviously. [00:32:41] But they really take umbrage with some guy standin' up there talkin' about something that to them is so innocuous and inane, less important, and, "If you only knew, buddy!" That kinda thing and it—and I am tryin' to help so many of 'em get over that, you know. I—one young man who's got PTSD very bad—tremendous performer in combat. Took a lotta lives. He was a major warrior for the marine corps. And he can't—he couldn't stand—I got him into—helped get him in a college in the Northeast. But he was so bored—when I'm thinking about this, I'm thinking about him. But I made—he

called me every Friday, and I said, "What did you learn?" And I said, "You're gonna go to every class, and you're gonna take one thing away. Don't care if it's a note or not, but you're gonna take one thing away, and you're gonna tell me what it was that you learned that you didn't know before. You're gonna, therefore, have to pay attention and not blow this guy off standin' up there talkin' about business 101 or whatever it may be." And it was a ritual that he's thanked me for because that's what he did. 'Cause he was so angry inside, so filled with venom about it, that, "I gotta go through this, but it's a waste of my time listening to this bozo." [00:33:55] But you know, it settled out with time. You use the ritual of one takeaway, and of course, I'd always end the conversation every Friday—"You—what—you still have an A in the class?" And he'd say, "Yes, sir, I do." I'd say, "Keep doin' it. Talk to you next Friday." Then he'd come in with the five things he learned or three things or three classes—you know, three sessions or two longer—you know, I mean, but you know what I'm talkin' about, but he—and that's, again, that's the other point about all this is the—if you haven't been there, you don't know. And it's really hard to communicate it. Just like yesterday, you're goin' back to this. I don't wanna talk about that. I mean, I'm uncomfortable, really. I did—it's—

for me at the—if someone can take a positive way about surviving and—the other message there, subliminally, as I said, is that, again, I went from private to lieutenant general in the marine corps, what I believe to be the greatest organization that God ever put on the face of the earth, and I don't have a medal for that, for combat. And that's rare. That's really rare. You—did a lotta fightin' and was recognized for what I did by bein' meritoriously promoted, but it's unnecessary. You don't wanna have people lookin' for medals, in my opinion. It's not a healthy thing. People get hurt if you're tryin' to self-indulge yourself to be recognized. I hope I'm clear on that.

SL: I think that's a great point.

MS: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

MS: Yeah.

[00:35:34] SL: I think that's really good. Okay, do you—can you say anything about the Tet Offensive?

MS: Not really. I wasn't there. That's in 1968, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: . . . again, it was the most intense time in the war. The battle of Hué City was part of Tet [19]68 where the tanks perform in that built-up area, and we alluded to that yesterday. Again, Ray

Smith, my closest friend, was a commander in Hué City at Tet [19]68. He was a Silver Star recipient in the battle of Hué City, one of our heroes outta that. Many friends of mine fought in that battle. It was—Tet [19]68 was a horrendous time for everyone. All of my classmates—remember, we came in in 1967. So my 586 classmates, the lion's share of whom went immediately to Vietnam, all fought in Tet [19]68. Most of the lives that we lost in my class were in Tet [19]68, so it was a brutal time of the war, and it was a major operational period for all forces, army and marine, in the battle on the ground and everywhere. But having not been there, I would be not the person to tell you what was happening on the ground. I just . . .

[00:37:01] SL: I've got one other thing here about Vietnam, and unless I lose control and think of something else later, we'll put this to rest, but I see a 1972 date here, line jacker operation, Christmas bombing raid. Do you—does any of that ring . . .

MS: No.

SL: . . . any bells?

MS: No.

[00:37:20] SL: Okay. All right. What about the hostages in Iran? What were you doing when that was goin' on?

MS: Well, again, I have several friends that were on that operation to

repatriate or collect the hostages. And one very close friend, who was a helicopter pilot who was involved in the disaster of the dust storm and one—and he survived it—very fortunate and burned seriously—magnificent marine that I sat with in school for a year at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College—that event, if you will, and its build-up is studied extensively by professionals of the proper training to get there and then what is outta your control, in this case, the weather. I mean, everything just—you couldn't have had a worse situation when it all went down at the end of the day. Tremendous people that were involved in that, many of them who lost their lives. But again, I was in Detroit when that went down and just following it like everyone else until I walked into Quantico after I left Detroit into class, and there was a guy that I knew that was in it who was—he had just come outta the hospital with all the burns. He'd been burned very severely, and he was a remarkably talented guy, and he had spent extensive amount of time in the hospital. And so I got to be with him, and he would talk about it all, good, the bad, and the ugly, and very pride—proud of what they did and just tragic, the loss of life. And he had a great personality to be able to deal with it pretty effectively. I'm—it's unfortunate.

[00:39:13] But it did—you know, the disaster or the fact that it

wasn't a successful operation, in the case of the marine corps, refocused our efforts in regards to the equipment that we needed, the training that we needed to have, kinda seeing that those kinds of things can happen again and again because of where we are in the world. And it kind of doubled our efforts, if you will, to—and that was the positive takeaway from it. It made us that all—that much more professional in what we were doing because of the lessons learned from that experience.

[00:39:53] SL: Now, when I was skimming through the book, I know that Beirut was talked about quite a bit in the book.

MS: Tremendous.

SL: It—now, that—was that Smith that was . . .

MS: That's correct. Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . there for that?

MS: Yeah. And . . .

[00:40:07] SL: So do you know much about the Beirut . . .

MS: Absolutely. I mean, again, the—it's not me. It's the—it's second source, but again, he's my closest friend, [*laughs*] so we've spent an inordinate amount of time talking about it. I lost a—some officers that worked for me were killed in the bombing, in the Beirut bombing. They were in the building and died, and they had been lieutenants for me, and they were killed. And I

know—again, in the case of the marine corps, after the tragedy of the Beirut bombing, if we could have picked one commander to go in there to be responsive to that—horror of that attack, if you will, you couldn't've picked a better one than Ray Smith, who was in the book. He was the perfect leader to go in there, and as you will read in the book, I mean, they were magnificent in the follow-up to recover from that. But like everything else, I mean, politics of all of it and what—and I'll just let you read the book about it. I wouldn't wanna get too much more into it. It's just—we're tryin' to do the right thing, and it's . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: Yeah.

SL: Okay.

MS: It was rough.

[00:41:24] SL: Okay. So let's get back—we've—do you think we've finished up with Desert Storm and Desert Shield?

MS: Yeah, I—we were talkin' before we started today about—I think we finished up but—and I didn't know if you were gonna go there or not, but the tremendous success that we had and the greatest operation of success, its irony is so profound, that after that was a major cut in all military forces because of the success of that. And it was during President Clinton's term, and so my

terminology now—the services were emasculated for budgetary cuts, and in reflection, I think it was justifiable to some degree that the cuts took place because besides jointness coming in and the leveraging of all four services in a unified effort—success—coalition forces with multiple countries and not just unilateral United States. We used to have a slogan that—and I'm paraphrasing now. I had it committed to memory once, but "We will engage multilaterally, desired; unilaterally, if required." But we were looking in the future that we were never gonna unilaterally go into anything. And it was the perfect time to cut, so I was involved [*laughs*] with the team that was led by a one-star Brigadier General Krulak. General Mundy formed a team because it was directed that we would go from over 200,000 to 159,000 marines. And we had to build the entire force. And it was called the Force Structure Planning Group, and we sequestered ourselves at Quantico for weeks to reshape the institution of the marine corps based on the mandated cuts that the president had—and the National Command Authority had said. [00:43:37] So again, I'm at the—in the center storm of one—you know, initially goin' in—"Oh, well, let's just go back and tell 'em we can't do it." You know, we had that attitude. "We'll defend our honor of the number, and we'll win," when we

all knew that that wasn't gonna cut anything. And so we did a great job and a great service. Tremendous people again, many of whom went on to be generals in the marine corps that were in this group, and of course, General Krulak became the commandant because he understood the structure and the dynamics of it all. I had the responsibility for the command element of this, so all of our headquarters across the marine corps and downsizing all of those. And so we had an arm that did all the ground units. We had an arm that did all the aviation units. We had an arm that did all the logistics unit support, and then we had an arm that did all the command units. And we had iterations of various levels of cuts, and it was a masterful stroke of how we put it together 'cause we had the right people in the room who had the courage, even though they're—where they came from—they came from all over the marine corps—the last guidance they got from their boss was, "Don't cut us, you know. If you come back here, and we're cut, you're dead," [*SL laughs*] type thing. And they had . . .

SL: Yeah.

[00:45:02] MS: . . . to have the courage of understanding of their convictions. Of course, they came in there in their opening day when we'd go around—General Krulak was masterful how he did

this. But he'd listen to people's opinions about it all, and most of the people who had never done anything like that or didn't understand it would just say, "You can't—gotta save this. Gotta save this." And of course, he would laugh privately, and he and I would talk. And it was absurd. It was not that we wouldn't be cut, it—we'd have to grow it, you know. I mean, from their perspective, it needed more. But that was a Herculean effort, and again, another one of those things where you're isolated. The rest of the marine corps thinks you're up to no good. If you touch their unit or their military occupational specialty or their structure or whatever—"Shame on you. We're gonna hold you accountable to that forever." And so from one perception, it was a lose-lose proposition. You couldn't come outta this.

[00:46:00] But from another, it was, we really did the job of saving the marine corps, and we did. And we didn't go to 159. We stayed at about a 173-, 174,000. And we justified that with how we had done it, and we didn't take the deep cuts like the other services did, particularly the army, at the time. And—but we did cut 25,000 plus, I guess. But anyway, we did it very organized way. And so our thought was that it wouldn't continue to free-fall, that eventually, someday, we would gain some of it back, and no false expectations about that, but we would gain

some of it back. And of course, over time it has come back—obviously, with this war. I don't know what the number is today. I haven't paid that close of attention to it. But some of the units that we had to get rid of are now back in existence again because we've got the structure to go along with it. So I was involved in that afterwards, right before I was selected for general in that effort. I'll just leave it at that.

[00:47:14] SL: Well, I don't know if I can do that. [*Laughter*]

MS: It was a wonderful experience, and obviously it bonded General Krulak and I forever. I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: . . . that's why I became his chief operating officer, and it's from that experience. He knew me. We knew each other, but it was only more in passing. But the intensity of that effort, sequestered, and it was, you know, feed the monkeys a banana-type thing. I mean, "Don't come out until you're done." And then we—having to brief it to the leadership of the marine corps, who had no concept of what we were doin', didn't want to be cut. "Don't tell me that," you know, all that. It was—I mean, there are so many funny stories that emanated from our experience with people, incredulous to what we had done. "How could you do that?" But they had no idea what we were goin'

through, how to get there, and the difficulty is involved in it. They were not necessarily appreciative. We had a [*laughs*—I say this—I should—need a training aid—hand me that little film thing there. But—I mean, it's one of our favorite stories that one of the great leaders of the marine corps, when we briefed the thing to all the generals, and we were in a special meeting room and all that, we had this big book [picks up tape case as a substitute for a book] that was the explanation of what we had done and all the rationale behind it and how to do it and then the timeline to do it. I mean, it was very, very thorough. But we all laughed, and we were sitting there thinking that they were gonna get substantive about the general thrust or some specific thing, and one of our tremendous leaders in the marine corps were—they're all kind of enraptured, listening to the briefer. One of our colonels, who was a very—he went on to be a two-star general. Anyway, he holds up the book like this [holds tape case up and down and moves finger left to right on case] and says, "You got your title like this? Don't you think it'd look better if you put it like that?" [*Laughter*] And you know, all of us that—incredible response, first of all, and then the disbelief that he was serious, you know, that it—this was real, and that was his response . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Gosh.

[00:49:28] MS: . . . [*laughs*] to our effort. And it just made all of us start laughing, you know.

SL: Yeah.

MS: And he didn't understand—you know, "You gotta be" . . .

SL: Oh.

MS: . . . "kiddin' me, you know, this" . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: "Don't you think it'd be better if you do" [*laughter*] . . .

SL: That's funny.

MS: Yeah.

[00:49:40] SL: That's funny. Well, so this didn't—Clinton Administration was not very popular by bringing this about.

MS: Well, for a myriad of reasons. First of all, he was very unpopular with the military for a myriad of reasons. "Don't ask, don't tell." Bein' . . .

SL: Didn't serve.

MS: Yeah, didn't serve. The—all the issues that led up to his election. He—the preponderance of people in the military were—are—were Republicans, if you will. They're all Reaganites because of what—the tremendous growth and to win the Cold War, and Ronald Reagan was an icon in the military because it

was our zenith. I mean, we—everything improved. We got brand new equipment. We got—we came outta the Dark Ages with these technologies. That's when they came into fruition, all the research and development money to do that. And it was directly attributed to President Reagan, so anybody that would come after that that had anything different would be a contradiction. And President Clinton, whether you—may've voted for him or not, it was—he was not looked upon very favorably. But I would say the primary reason was the "Don't ask, don't tell." We just—that was a major issue at the time. I had some friends who resigned summarily because of the implementation of "Don't ask, don't tell." I—very close friends of mine, mentors of mine, general officers. I was a one-star, obviously, at that time, and they were three-stars, and they just resigned on the spot, wouldn't be a part of it. Very religious people, and you know, I would say, "We really need you"—and I—they'll remain nameless but they—your—"This'll have—your resignation out of almost protest will have a half-life of twenty-four hours. It may—probably won't even—not even get in the media. I mean, I know it's your honor that you're speaking about, but we need you to implement the policy and—'cause you're gonna be a critical resource to implement the

policy, and we need your presence." [00:51:50] But there were a lotta people at that juncture that just didn't wanna deal with that. It—this—it was such a change. In the structure piece, by the way, we used to have a term that I created that when we would downsize, we were going to need people—the marine corps was going to go to what we called Yankee Stadium. That was our euphemistic term that we've been the most valuable player in the Class D Appalachian League in Bluefield, West Virginia, and with a smaller force leveraging the technology, all the lessons of theater-level operations in the Gulf War, the new emerging threat—"We're going to need people to get on the bus to go to Yankee Stadium. This is not Vietnam anymore. This is not even the Gulf War because we have no near peer competitor. We're gonna have a smaller force. We're gonna have to be thinking outta the box, and we're gonna go into Yankee Stadium where people are throwin' ninety-five-mile-an-hour fastballs, and everybody's booin' you. I mean, you're the new guy in town, and we're gonna need people to get on the bus to go to Yankee Stadium." And General Krulak had that mantra and traveled around, and he used me to do that to our leaders in the marine corps, primarily colonels and generals. And you know, we had many that said, "I don't wanna

get on the bus, you know. I don't wanna be a part of this. This is too Draconian, these structure cuts. This is not the marine corps that I know. I'm comfortable where I was." [00:53:24]

We have a famous guy, who'll remain nameless again, but a Medal of Honor recipient in Vietnam who, you know, that was it for him. Didn't wanna be a part of all this, and so on. So we were—it was chaotic again for different reasons, a different era of chaos. And I was privileged, if you will, to be a part of the change, part of implementing the change. Part of the vision of the future of how we were gonna get out in front of all this, how we were gonna—we were so far out in front philosophically, strategically, and I may have alluded to it yesterday but—and it's in that paper that you read. It was thinking about nonstate actors, religious extremists, haves and have-nots, coalitions, taking the Clinton doctrine, if you will, and the philosophy of—and foreign policy, particularly in Asia, where we really thought the future was in stability and security in northeast Asia with China, Japan, and the Koreas, and stability for growth, economic growth, in south Asia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, et cetera, and the need that we had to have economy of force forces, if you will, carrier battle groups, providing stability in the Malacca Straits from piracy—all these things that were starting

to emerge. And the Tuna Oilfields, the largest natural gas fields in the world, countries claiming rights to those, and we had every country in the region from China and their way south. But all of that was gonna be very disruptive, and we were gonna have to have the force that had the strength and the flexibility to deal with all of that. [00:55:12] And so the institution of the marine corps, led by General Krulak, was way out in front of thinking about how to do that and what it's gonna take and "How do we train people? How do we posture ourselves? What type of equipment do we need to deal with all of that? And how do we train and equip the force?" And so one of the great things about this evolution with the Clinton Administration, if you will, we viewed ourselves as not the only remaining global superpower, which we were, but a player, partner, and beneficiary in the new globalization process. So we needed bilateral relationships and multilateral relationships with all of these countries, not from "big daddy" perspective but a player, partner, and beneficiary of these coalitions. [00:56:11] And so, again, as—what was happening there, it's—after we had kinda built what we were gonna do—when I was at Quantico, I was the—involved in the Warfighting Development Integration Division. How do we make an unassailable case of our

requirements for people and equipment? Unassailable in that the Congress will give us the money to buy it, and we'll have the ability to have the funds to sustain it and maintain it with money—increase in budget even though decrease in numbers, et cetera, and how do we have—not that I want it 'cause that's brand new. It's a new toy, and I want one of those or two of those—some of the things we talked about from the laser technologies and all of those kinds of things—but an unassailable case that to do these kinds of things that we're going to do requires that, and it's unassailable. You cannot say no. We're gonna have to find a way to get it because we can't do what the national military's strategy is or—and 'cause we were all architects of that, [*laughs*] and I was the guy in the marine corps writing the response to the national military structure—the national military authority, the Quadrennial Defense Review, and I was part of the—writing what the statement of the requirement was during that period and then writing what our ability to respond to the requirement was for the marine corps.

[00:57:35] And it wasn't a fox-in-the-henhouse thing, is that we knew this is where it was goin'. I mean, we—because all the evidence was there with what was going on in the world. And that's the direction that we were heading in that entire

eight-year period, which I give great credit to that administration, the president, and the leadership in the Congress, the State Department, Madeleine Albright, all those people, they were into this. They understood it. Secretary of Defense, everybody—before Madeleine Albright—I [*unclear word*] mean that. [00:58:10] But anyway, everybody was kind of understanding this newness of what we were doing and why we were in this unique—we called it a strategic pause. We were in this moment of history that we can't go asleep at the switch, [*laughs*] but we have to respond by getting way out in front of thinking of what we're going to do as a player, partner, and beneficiary. [00:58:33] And I have a great story—the—that exemplifies all of this. The—I mentioned yesterday, not on tape, but one of the most remarkable human beings I've ever had the privilege to know and got to know pretty well was the head of Singapore, the founder, Lee Kuan Yew, who's still alive today. He's in his nineties. But his mind—he was so gifted and so sharp and understood global security, diplomacy, the economy, the need for stability against a hegemonic China. He's a brilliant human being. But what he would share with me when I'd meet with him, and I met with him several times alone, just he and I alone, and it's not classified or anything like that, but it was very

thoughtful, and the meetings were—once we had one that was powerful, effective. I mean, he used to often ask for me to come back to—and I did. And again, it wasn't my boss. It was me. I was a two-star, and it wasn't my four-star boss. He just wanted to spend the time with me because he knew that what was emanating from that was taken back not only to Washington, but it was in the Asia-Pacific Command about creating the capability to respond to and be proactive to his vision, if you will, of what was gonna happen. But we had a great line that—he said, "Marty, we need your presence, your American presence, for stability and security in the region, for our economic vitality and growth. We have to have your military security. We need diplomacy here first. We don't need guns, but we need your presence here to know that there's a capability here. But the last thing that we want is your permanent presence. We don't want you here. [*SL laughs*] We don't want your feet here."

SL: "We want the cake and eat it, too."

[01:00:23] MS: Yeah, but it—you know, it had a mixed reaction, and I understood him clearly. But I mean, you remember, this is the place that if you spit on the sidewalk, you get the switch, if you remember—Singapore. I mean, they're—they view life and

values and narcotics and crime differently than we do. I mean, totally—and he does, and he created this city-state there, and it was in his image and likeness of what his value system is and so on. But I applauded him because what he said at the end of the day, and he meant it, and I say this as humbly as I can. I don't wanna lose it here. He said, "We need people like you with the character of your deeds and your behavior to look at—through the—our lens, and that's what you need to be developing, people like you that are looking at it through our lens, [*laughs*] not your hubris and pride and ego to come in here and tell us what to do. It's how do we create this synergy and dialogue with one another to ensure stability and security in the region?" And what he didn't want was permanent presence, where everything that comes along with that historically, from something as simple and horrific as prostitution. You know, I think of the Philippines and Subic Bay and things like that, to drugs, to crime, to American movies and the whole Hollywood liberal—I mean, he just didn't want that in his culture. Yes, to some degree, cake and eat it, too, but it was a perfect fit for what we were tryin' to do. [01:02:05] We wanted to be able to assure we had the capability for power projection, stability forces in the form of naval forces, and we were amenable and receptive, as

was the president, to non-permanent presence. You could be there. You could move away. You're not gonna establish a major base all over the place. We were having issues, if you recall, in Japan. We've talked about the heinous rape in [19]95 in Japan that really was so disruptive to the whole region and the threats of removing military forces from Okinawa and what the ramifications of that were. So all this dynamic was going on, but there was a clear understanding by the great leaders—Suharto in Indonesia—a thousand islands that are wider than the United States is, you know. I mean, it's a huge place. And the Malacca Straits—all the trade coming out of India, I mean, all of it. You—we needed stability there. And so we were a part of creating that from deliberate planning and from strategic planning and building the force to be able to be proactively responsive to that, player, partner, and beneficiary. And then what happened—I'm jumping ahead when . . .

SL: Okay.

TM: We need . . .

SL: We're . . .

TM: We need to change tapes.

SL: We're gonna change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[01:03:23] SL: So we were gonna—we're talkin' about Taiwan . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the nonpermanent influence . . .

MS: Yeah—we're—Singapore.

SL: Singapore.

MS: But I mean, again, it was Taiwan for sure, obviously, because of the three communiqués during the Nixon Administration and—but not permanent presence, but how do you have some type of—you know, we were gonna—remember, in the [19]88 timeframe, we were talking at that time while I was in Korea about—and had been for years, since the armistice in [19]53—of removing the thirty-seven thousand US forces off the peninsula.

[01:03:56] And it ebbs and flows, and you know, once a year it's, "Take 'em off and move 'em back," and they're predominantly, of course, army and air force forces. But the—you know, at the end of the day, we were still—we're still there today . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: . . . much to a lotta people's chagrin and misunderstanding. But it's—you know, when I was there it—the approach was as long as the Republic of Korea and its people want us here, it's a great place to ensure stability and security in northeast Asia. And it

is . . .

SL: Yeah.

[01:04:24] MS: . . . because of the presence along the demilitarized zone and what that does. Hard to quantify ebb and flow, but when you have a irrational actor in the case of North Korea and you really—anyone who says that they have any clue what the North Koreans are going to do, that's just impossible. I mean, there's no one that has any idea. The Chinese don't. They used to tell me when I'd go because they were their closest ally and they—the same people that were dealing with me dealt with the North Koreans, and they would flat say, "We have no idea what they're gonna do." And, you know, and it wasn't a posturing for them to lie to us that some clandestine plan was being developed. Had no idea. No idea what they were gonna do. Well, where I was just—we were talkin' about policy, of national policy of player, partner, and beneficiary, bilateral and multilateral relationships, and all the hard work we were doing all around the world but primarily in Asia because it was the economic engine of the world. That was it—the future economic engine. And we had to get it right and trade. We still don't in China; India—had to get it right, or we're collapsing here. And it wasn't coming from Western Europe or the Middle East. You had

to have the oil, obviously, fossil fuels and so on, but needed to start looking at alternatives to fossil fuels, all these things that we don't do effectively enough. [01:05:49] But we were way out in front talking to those things and saying that the key was these relationships, bilateral and multilateral, dialogue between former adversaries Korea and Japan, China, et cetera, where it was not a "Kumbaya," but it was mutual respect and dialogue. And again, in my opinion, humble opinion, having been what we would call affectionately a subject-matter expert in the area, we really were headed in the right direction, in my opinion, because we put so much intellectual capital and sweat equity into the whole notion of it all. [01:06:28] Well, I retired in—and I'm jumpin' ahead—we could talk—but I just wanna make this point. The—in [19]99, and I was in New York at the Intrepid Sea, Air, Space Museum as the chief executive. It's the largest naval museum in the world, and it was a wonderful transition experience for me. But I was called back to Washington to be one of four people, senior leaders, if you will, a representative from the navy, air force, and army, to participate in the writing of the national military portion of the strategy for either party. We wrote one for Bush, and we wrote one for Vice President . . .

SL: Gore?

MS: . . . Gore. And we did it off their campaign promises and what their vision was for the future. And so they were—there was some thread through both of them, obviously, but there was—they were—had significant difference for whoever won. And we worked very hard at that, and I was the guy that—one of the authors of those two documents to do that—to be presented at the end of the election. Of course, then when the election is [*SL laughs*—goes to the Supreme Court and all the Florida hanging chads and all that, it delays all of that and kinda people in limbo. [01:07:50] But at the end of the day, when President Bush was named the winner, the presentation was made, and what had happened in that interim period was things were jockeying around and so on, but the briefing was made, and the proposal was thrown outta hand, just disregarded. And it's—the whole philosophies changed. I'm not saying right or wrong, but it was totally different. It was our day. This player, partner, and beneficiary—"We're the only king. It's our moment, right now." Again, way before 9/11, now, I mean, this is our moment. "We're gonna"—and so there was a philosophical shift that took place in the new leadership of the country that was—you know, and they were open about it, and it wouldn't have matter if it was just reversed, Democrats, Republicans. It's not—it's just

the nature of politics. But it really was a dramatic shift in philosophy, if you will, about the role of—for national security and diplomacy. [01:09:00] And you know, that took us to a completely different path up to the events of 9/11, which, [*clears throat*] again, I was in New York and witnessed and knew [*coughs*] 'cause I'd been involved as the chief operating officer in the [19]90s about these emerging terrorist threats and was pretty much aware that something—when they didn't bring it down on 26 February [19]93 with the bomb in the basement, we had enough information which, you know, has subsequently come out that they were comin' back to take 'em down, and they were gonna use aircraft to do it. We just didn't know when. [*Clears throat*] And so I had been involved in a lotta the testimonies about that, many classified, some not, and this is very difficult to kinda walk through, but when I'm watchin' the plane on that morning come down the river, I'm—with a kid, employee of the Intrepid, and it's there outta the flight pattern, and I said, "Son, that's a terrorist blowin' up the World Trade Center." And he looked up in the sky and saw this plane just—said, "What, sir?" And I said, "Get everybody in the conference room." And I just watched until it banked and pranged into the building, and I had everybody in the conference room of the

Intrepid wailing and had, you know, told them, "We kinda knew this day was coming. We just didn't know when." Tryin' to calm everybody down there. [01:10:25] And then the second plane came in, and I called the FBI. I knew the director, Mueller, and invited them to come over to the Intrepid. And they sent two agents over. Closed the museum. Obviously, all of New York is locked down, but invited them to come in, and we did a reconnaissance of how we could set up command and control nodes, communications, secure communications, et cetera. And within forty-eight hours, we had 750 FBI agents on the *Intrepid*, and it was the national headquarters for the investigation into the attack of America on the ship that I—museum that I was in charge of. So the ship came back to life. *Intrepid* is singularly unique. It survived torpedo attacks in World War II, fought in the Korean War and in Vietnam. Was John McCain's favorite ship. But it's a national landmark, obviously, but it came back to life with those agents living there. [01:11:29] And that was a very difficult thing for me personally because I had been so much involved in that, and again, my personality is such that I—the weakness of my personality is a guilt that we didn't—couldn't prevent it from happening. And I had testified about it at one time when a senator stopped the hearing and said, "General,

you're gonna scare the American people." I can't get too much into this. And I said, "Senator, I'm not tryin' to scare the American people. I'm tryin' to scare you. We keep comin' over here"—and this is in the [19]90s, now. This is [19]97, [19]98. And then General Krulak was in England at the time, and he called me on the phone, and we both kinda wept. "Why didn't they listen to us?" And the senator called me to apologize. It was too late now, you know, to—but I—it was a very emotional period for me, and I went on a religious retreat in the Pocono Mountains about fifteen days later just to get my head straight about it all. [01:12:39] One of the board members was Cantor Fitzgerald, who had 650 losses. I'd had lunch on Friday before 9/11 with—honoring the firefighters. We honor every year the firefighters and police officers of New York. We get tens of thousands of visitors to put on there. But I'd had twenty-some odd fire chiefs in my—at a private luncheon I had for them on the Friday before 9/11, and thirteen of 'em perished on the following Tuesday morning, including my own fire chief, who was just a couple blocks from the *Intrepid*. So it was a very traumatic event, and we used the *Intrepid*—and I mean, I flew over the—in the—one of the first helicopters to go over the site. Within twenty-four hours it, you know, came in and landed on

the *Intrepid* and then went down and looked at it. And I just—it was devastating to see. [01:13:43] And the ramifications of it—again, the personality is it's not a—my personality is the—intuition side of me is not about the event itself. It's the ramifications of the event. "What's this going to mean? How are we going to respond to it? What's going to happen?" And it kinda gets to my immediate view—a radical fundamentalism and—is that, again, the—we're not gonna solve this problem by ourselves as Western Christian capitalists, that we're going to need to have moderate Muslims to help us solve the problem. And it's—they're going to have to be critical to our success in doing this. And it's—again, the relationship we had with Indonesia that we were talkin' about, the largest Muslim population in the world. We had great dialogue and relationships with Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia—all—we're gonna need them, you know, because we used to always have a feeling—I mean, and to this day—again, I don't wanna go too far into it all. [01:14:50] But you know, the—bin Laden, if you will, and his vectoring toward us was a great relief to King Fahd in Saudi Arabia because Mecca and Medina are there, and they had disgraced the sacred places of the Muslim faith, Islam. And they were quite relieved that they weren't killin' everybody in King

Fahd's family, and they were vectoring their efforts towards us. [Laughs] [01:15:18] But we were really of the strong belief immediately that we really needed to work tirelessly to get with our Muslim allies, moderate, secular, or whatever you wanna call them, to help us. And although I'm not in government, it'd be absurd for me to criticize from my vantage point. I think we've missed a lot of things on—in that early stage and did a lotta things that coulda been done better and differently.

[01:15:52] SL: Post-9/11?

MS: Mh-hmm. Yeah. I mean, from, you know, from focusing—I was a proponent of focusing in Afghanistan but—and—but—just a—you know, it's just—we could be here for another thirty hours talkin' about it. But it's—it was very unsettling to all those of us who were involved in all this in the earlier stages and clearly understood the issues and watched where it went, you know. Supportive of America. This is an attack on America against our very survival as a nation-state, if you will. But how do you respond? And it sounds like Monday morning quarterbacking or—and I don't wanna get into that in this interview or whatever but—excuse me—proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and all that stuff that emanated out of all this was just my—there was a small group of us that were so knowledgeable of

those issues. The inspectors, they were people who used to work for me, you know, when they went in there and came out and said, "Nothing. There's nothing there." I mean, the—I—it worked for me. And so to see how all that went down—Colin Powell, who I have the tremendous respect for—and knowing what they were goin' through, that ?nut role? to get all that out and how it went down. It was just very disturbing. Very disturbing. [01:17:17] And you know, preemptive strike—another thing which we—for thirty years we were building a military using diplomacy and then concentrating that in the Clinton Administration, that we really weren't gonna do preemptive strikes on anybody. I mean, that was the nature of our profession, not to be—that we were gonna be on the defensive. I mean, if—but we weren't gonna do something like that. And we did. And . . .

[01:17:47] SL: So you know, the—here—you know, I—I'm no quarterback either, but you know, the perception is that when—and you obviously got hit head-on with this when you'd spent all that time and all that effort to prepare two different doctrines for whatever candidate won and you—all that work was just totally dismissed, it sounds like it was pretty—in a fairly arbitrary fashion, like, "We're not even—thanks for—but I didn't"—it's like

they didn't even hear it. It's like they were already marching . . .

MS: I think so.

SL: . . . to a different drummer.

MS: Yeah.

[01:18:35] SL: And it comes from a—you know, I'm—I can name names. I mean, it sounds like it was Rumsfeld and Cheney and that whole group of "go get 'em before they get us" attitude.

MS: Yeah, I—again, we could spend thirty hours talking about it. It's one of those things that even in something like this, to have a sound bite response would be misconstrued. It's very difficult because there are so many issues relating to all of this.

[01:19:11] And so, yes, I mean, I'm not gonna disagree with what you're saying and I also—it's—I have to be very careful about—and not for political reasons, just—but for—it is different, and who's to judge whether it was right or wrong? That's—that—you know, that's the point that I wanna make about all this. And I don't condemn or condone anyone. It's—if you make the decision and it—you think it's a rational one, you better have the wherewithal to be able to implement and sustain it. It's just like Eric Shinseki, the chief of staff of the army who's a very close friend of mine, now the director of the Veterans Affairs. If

you'll recall, he was in essence the chief operating officer of the army when I was the chief operating officer of the marine corps. We're very, very close. And he was recommending forces before 2003, hundreds of thousands more than what went in. And you remember, he was asked to retire, asked to resign, or fired, whatever you wanna say. I mean, I just had lunch with him within the last month. [01:20:22] And so it was different, you know. "We don't need to do this. Don't need a heavy army. We can do"—I mean, so they were—they had a thought process and a philosophy that was different than most of us who had been involved in these things. And what's happened, of course, is we're in protracted war. You can say we did a great thing by getting rid of Saddam Hussein. He was a bad actor. And like I alluded to yesterday, there are a lotta bad actors in the world. And just like in the end of the first Gulf War when we were talking about going up the mile of death and attacking into his capital . . .

SL: Baghdad.

[01:21:10] MS: . . . Baghdad and depose him at that time, and fortunately, we made the decision not to do it, and the reason primarily was we had no alternative to the guy. We had nobody to fill the void, and we were concerned about Iran and how

disruptive this was going to be if you brought down that head of state. And we, in essence, neutered the guy militarily. He was a pariah in the Middle East with his neighboring nations, and it really was kind of a perfect condition for us to do a lot of other things as he's sitting there neutered. But if we woulda deposed him back then, I believe it would have been—and you know, second-guess historians—they all—everybody has a different view, and I respect all those, but we really had no viable alternative. So when this came around the next time and the—I was called on—a small number of us were—we dusted off the [*blows air from mouth twice*—and said, "What conditions are different since they were in [19]92? I mean, name them." And we had a list of things that—conditions—and "What's the end state you're lookin' for here? What definition of victory? What are you tryin' to create?"

[01:22:20] SL: And who's next?

MS: Yeah. Yeah. What—and we went through the litany of all that, and there was no answers for it. They had no answers for it, and it was so very unsettling about dealing with that. I mean, you've done—there's no thing—there's nothing here that is going—is different than why we said no twelve years ago or whatever the number is, in [19]92, eleven years ago. There's

nothing different. And so until we have defined what we're tryin' to do here—and again, revisionist history, second-guessing, people who are involved in making the decision could be sitting here. Many of them are—Paul Wolfowitz is a friend of mine. I've known him for thirty-plus years. I've talked to him about this in private. He could be here, and he would give you all the reasons why. I mean, there've been several things said subsequent about what his thought process was. I mean, I talked to him shortly before the—that event in very emotional speeches in private conversations with him. [01:23:23] But it came down at the end of the day—something that I think I said—I mean, I shared with him, I said, "Mr. Secretary, it's not the president's daughters, and it's not your son, it's mine that's gonna have to go fight this thing." And I said, "It's just—how do you justify it?" I couldn't do it, and he couldn't do it, to my satisfaction, anyway. But—so it was very difficult. Very difficult. And the, you know, the 9/11 Commission, when it went into session, I got called to testify—to come testify. I said, "Well, if you subpoena me I—I'll do that." And I—I'm not gonna—again, I'm talkin' to someone that I'm not gonna release their name and said, "Well, Marty, you're—you were at the thrust of this thing before in the [19]90s and you—you're so much aware of the issues." And I said,

"Well, that's correct, but that's ancient history, and it's revisionist, and it's second-guessing. And I'll be frank with you—your—what you would want from me is to blame the previous administration for not doing something. And what you know is that by—I'm a Republican," I said. [01:24:41] "And you know that. But I'll be damned if I'll come down there and allow you to blame the Clinton Administration for this because the hearing was stopped by a Republican, not a Democrat. [Laughs] So you're talking to me as a Republican and I—and it'll be embarrassing for you. I mean, I'm just gonna lay it all out there. I'm not gonna do it in a—unless it's a classified hearing, but I'm just gonna lay it all out." And he said, "Well, I'll—we'll call you back if we're gonna call—you know, call you." And I said, "Now, remember, I'll obey the law if you subpoena me, but you're not gonna get what you think you're gonna get if you call me down there." And he called me back and said, "We're not gonna call you." [Laughs] And I said, "Good for you and good for me. It's just too painful to go back and you"—and I said, "You know, I'd like to share some thoughts with you before I hang up the phone." I said, "Quit pointin' fingers at people. 'Who shot John, and who did this?' That's not what we're in now. I mean, we're in this damn thing, and it's gonna swallow

us if we don't start workin' together and get partisan politics out of it. Quit—we have to quit pointin' fingers. It's done. We kicked it in the grandstands. It's there. Let's get on with it, with what we're gonna do, how we're gonna ensure that we don't have another Vietnam and protracted war and no end state in sight, and we made the situation worse. We killed and maimed tens of thousands of people. I mean, I don't think anybody's for that. But let's really make sure that we get on with this and do it right." [01:26:19] And that's the other thing about, you know, the performance of our forces there in Iraq, on the whole, have just been truly remarkable. Really, the quality of these young men and women and the leadership that they've been givin' has really been remarkable. And it really emanates from the forces that both the army and my own service, the marine corps, what we built in the [19]90s. I mean, the—how to fight the three-block war that I mentioned yesterday and [*unclear words*—I mean, it's—that's what we built—people to do it. And you have hangar queens—we called an outlier, a flyer like the abuses in the prison, et cetera. But on the whole, they've just been magnificent in this thing, and I'm, as I said yesterday, I'm just glad that the American public hasn't turned on the forces like they did in my generation in Vietnam. And I hope that that

never happens 'cause they don't deserve, just like we didn't
[laughs] deserve it, either. So . . .

[01:27:17] SL: Yeah, I sense [TM coughs and clears throat] that
there's overwhelming gratitude and support . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . for the troops on the ground.

MS: Yeah, me, too. Everywhere I go, it's obvious. I mean, and I—
and you know, and even as long as this thing has gone on,
people may be against the war, and that's understandable—me,
too. But the fact that it's not coupled with anything about the
troops. It's, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: Yeah.

SL: I know people that go out of their way . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . to thank troops at airports when . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . they're traveling and . . .

[01:27:53] MS: Well, it's another great thing about this university
and Chancellor David Gearhart with the veterans' program that
he's established here of welcoming veterans into this university,
having a formal organization that takes care of them overseas

and their assimilation into this university, scholarships that are being given to veterans because of their service to this country, selfless service. I mean, being with David today when he spoke at lunch for the alumni association, it was prominently referenced, you know, that we're doing that. [01:28:28] And again, all around the country, that's happening, but not only here at Arkansas, but I cochair a committee at the University of South Florida, the ninth-largest university in the country, and it's a veterans integration committee. And I'm with a stem cell scientist who cochairs it with me. It's Karen Holbrook, the former president of Ohio State University, who retired in Florida—came out of retirement to run a research and development effort at University of South Florida. And she is responsible for this because it's looking at all the—in this university—veterans reintegration—all the scientific areas of research on post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, prosthesis, paralysis, burn victims, and they've got all these scientific authorities, if you will, that—from the University of South Florida, which is a major cancer center there; the largest polytrauma center in the VA; the Haley medical center, where central command is headquartered that's responsible for this war. It's a tremendous synergistic effort to bring these young

men and women back and assimilate them, not only in the school, but to help them get jobs and subsequent, and so on, and I'm honored to be a part of that. [01:29:44] So I'm on that pulse today that it is so much better and different. Sorta like the—and I didn't mention it, but I mean, it's almost humorous now—I mean, how we were recognized for those of us who were from Vietnam, and although I was never spit upon comin' back in the airport from both tours of duty, I was definitely frowned upon. I mean, I—it was a horrific experience in coming back, and I've had obvious people curse at me and things like that. Again, not a "woe is me." It was just the reality. But what happened when we came back from the first Gulf War—I mean, we—there're notoriously famous stories of this city of Bangor, Maine, which is where most of the flights came and land—touched down in America, twenty-four hours a day. Bangor, Maine, put its citizens out to greet every plane that came in from that war. They're doing it today to every plane that comes in from Iraq or Afghanistan, bringin' the kids home. And we had a band there at three in the morning, people cheering and—I mean, it—for—and then all of us—the new kids—they had no idea. This is just normal to them. I mean, I'm [*unclear word*] "Hail the conquering hero. I just beat Saddam Hussein." But for

those who had been in Vietnam, I mean, it was a unbelievable event of reflecting on what our experiences were comin' outta Vietnam.

[01:31:07] SL: Pendulum had swung.

MS: I mean, I was signin' babies' diapers, and I mean, just—it was just remarkable what went on. And they did that for every plane, and they're doin' it today, so it's a wonderful thing. And it speaks volumes about the greatness of America and its people.

SL: Yeah, things have—things are changing, aren't they? The—and some of it's good.

MS: Yeah.

SL: Some of it is much better.

MS: Yeah.

[01:31:43] SL: So what do you see [*MS coughs*]*—well, okay. The things—some of the things that are going on today . . .*

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . seems to be a greater reliability—they rely more on National Guard and the . . .

MS: Tremendous.

SL: . . . and those troops.

MS: Yeah.

SL: And so how do you—I mean . . .

MS: Well, I . . .

SL: . . . that was never a part . . .

MS: Part . . .

SL: . . . of any of the formulas that . . .

MS: And . . .

SL: . . . you worked with, was it?

[01:32:10] MS: In fact, just the opposite. Our formulas were more of Guard doing traditional guard duties relative to state security and stability, guard duties relative to the immigration issue in Texas, for example, southern-tier states, Arizona. And so we never envisioned what's happened with the guard and the reserve. I mean, they're more employed than the active forces, and the reason is there aren't enough active forces [*laughs*] to be able to sustain this over the period of time we have. You think at 2.2 million people have participated in this war. You couldn't sustain that with the—only the active-duty force. So the role of the guard and the reserve has morphed tremendously. I'm not a proponent of it, personally. It is an exigency that requires their participation, and they've been magnificent in their performance, but I'm not a proponent of it philosophically. I wouldn't want a long-standing army or—and I'm not a proponent of, at this juncture, reinstating the draft. But you know, if I

had my druthers, I would not want the guard performing these roles because I think we have roles and responsibility for them but it just—the exigencies are such that there's just no way you can pull it off without their participation. And we're gonna continue to do that.

[01:33:38] SL: So—but is it inevitable that the draft comes back to sustain this stuff?

MS: Well, I mean, again, there are people—and that's a great question, again. And you get the Charlie Rangel, who's a proponent of it from New York, and there's a number of minor voices that kick it up. I think that because of the sustainability piece, if we were going to continue to do what we're doing and I—President Obama and this administration are tryin' to deal with it with a exit strategy and the numbers and even with the thirty-thousand increase in Afghanistan and no timetable yet—I mean, mixed things whether they come out in 2012 or 2013 or whatever—you cannot sustain that rotation cycle with just active-duty forces. It—you can't do it. [01:34:30] So for the foreseeable future, they're forced into this. I would like to see over time, not just a draft, but I think it's for the good of the nation with the—with where we are in our evolution as a nation-state and the whole concept of entitlements. *[Laughs]*

And I'm not just speakin' about Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security entitlements, but I mean entitlement in its true sense of the word. I really would—I'm a proponent of public service of some sort. And you know, I had visions of grandeur here with the Obama Administration on infrastructure improvements on bridges and highways, something equivalent to the Civilian Conservation Corps, jobs being performed like that and the New Deal and Roosevelt. You know, it has—again, it had a great impact in the Depression. Some people were—are against it, in retrospect. But I'm a believer that we really do need to kinda wake up here of "You're not entitled to anything. We—you don't get somethin' for nothin'." And we need to have more people with public service in mind in some capacity, both here and abroad. And I'm a strong believer in that. But you can't do it—I mean, I have a—it sounds goofy. [01:35:57] You'd think I was a obsessive-compulsive disorder, but [*SL laughs*] part of my ritual in my community in Tampa, Florida, to decompress from all the dealings I have with these young men and women that—with PTSD and all the things that I'm involved in—I listen to books on tape, and I've—it's been a great experience for me, by the way, but I pick up trash on—we have a beautiful boulevard that I live on—trees—palm trees. I mean, it's just one of the

most aesthetically beautiful spots in America, the street that I'm adjacent to. And it stretches for about two miles. But I picked up—again, not self-serving here—310 thirty-gallon bags of trash in the last couple years of litter from high school kids, grade school kids, and adults throwin' beer bottles and—everything you could possibly imagine, I've picked up. Everything. And I'm incredulous to that. I just—again, we just don't get it. We don't get it. I think about my own children, when they grew up, we had the Indian on the side of the road with a tear comin' down his face.

SL: Yeah.

[01:37:05] MS: "Don't litter." Smokey the Bear. We've changed the slogan about "Don't start forest fires." We've changed the wording of that. But my children wouldn't—they're adults now—would no more think about throwin' a gum wrapper outta the window of a car. It'd be the last thing in the world they'd ever do. It was imbued in them by not only their parents, but our society.

SL: Yeah.

[01:37:26] MS: That Indian on the side of the road with a tear comin' down his face. Well, today I get children, high school kids, that would—will throw it in my face. See me out there with

my headphones on and a bag in my hand and a picker in my hand, and they'll make some [*SL laughs*] profane comment as they throw the thing toward me. And so, again, I'm not angry about it, I'm just—we were talkin' about I. C. Benton in civics class and I—you know, the teachers that I speak—it's just not being imbued in them, a sense of responsibility and accountability. It's "I'm entitled to this. Something for nothing. You owe me." And it's so pervasive that it just runs across all, you know, aspects of our lives right now. And you look at someone, and you talk to them about it, and they look at you like you have six heads, you know. And we have a lot of—and like we do all across the country, the common areas, if you will—the company that does that work and cuts the grass and plants the plantings and et cetera, they're predominantly Mexicans. I mean, they're Hispanic descent. They're led by white business leaders, but the people who do that job are Hispanics, all over America right now. [01:38:44] And I just believe that part of this notion is is that, "They'll pick it up. You know, that's below me to do that." And I talk to—I can't speak Spanish. My daughter is bilingual, and I'm just—I studied Latin, and I wish I woulda been able to speak Spanish, but we can communicate with 'em, and they get it. They get it, the workers, 'cause I talk

to 'em all the time. I'm out there amongst them all the time. And it's not in their contract, by the way. They cut the grass. They don't pick up the trash of all the—what the gringos leave, and so they just blow it off into the common areas where the alligators are, which are all around me, and deer and—I mean, it's just—alligators are everywhere in Florida but anyway—but I—I'm saying this, and I'm, you know, laboring on this wonderful interview at the Pryor Center because it bothers me where we are. What is the future? I'm all about that. That's my—been my whole life, building a military for stability and security to preserve our way of life; ensure that, you know, we have better than our—just like my parents, the products of the Depression—better for me. And—but we've done a lousy job here with my generation to imbue in—this sense of responsibility. [01:39:56] And you know, pockets of racism and hatred and bigotry that, you know, you think have gone away, they're still there. We have . . .

SL: Still there.

MS: . . . have the largest rebel flag in America that flies in Tampa, Florida, at the intersection of I-4 and 75 and have gone to the courts, and they have the right to put it up there, and it's, you know, said to honor our heritage. It's bull. That's—it has

nothing to do with that. It's all race. It's all hatred. It's all—
and anybody that tells you otherwise, it's a bunch of caca.
[Laughs] It's the residual of race and "Somebody owes me
somethin'" and anger and all that. And it's pathetic. And so I
worry about it. [01:40:35] So, for example, your question was
about the draft and its inevitability. I believe that, at this
juncture in time in our history where we are, it would be outrage
if you tried to reimplement the draft. It would be total outrage
of America. I mean, we would have chaos in the streets and the
whole notion of—just as in every draft, but in the Civil War,
there was a draft. I mean, the privileged bought their way out,
and the common man fought. And it's the same way that
happened in the Vietnam War. The privileged bought their way
out. And if you had that at this juncture with our economy the
way it is, the situation in the world the way it is—a perception
that we're not being personally threatened. It's a foreign
entanglement of a war that we got ourselves into and now, in
retrospect, should've never got ourselves into, and "You're
feeding my son or daughter to go just to be fodder in this foreign
entanglement against religious wackos." I just don't think it
would work. [01:41:34] Now, I'm not saying that tomorrow all
that could change if we had another terrorist attack of

proportions of 9/11 and something else. It—you know, it's—things happen, and life is different every day. But I just don't think it would work. And so when I get asked this question, which is, by the way, a question that I'm asked frequently in my—as a motivational speaker, and I'm always asked in the Q&A period, but the preponderance of the people who are asking the question are people of my generation and older who lived through the draft, and they want it to come back. They think it'd—"You can't keep doin' this. You have to bring it back." But I really—when I—givin' the answer like I'm giving you, they all—they were—they agree. Not now. It wouldn't work because we've really gone too far with entitlement. "Why me, you know? You nuts? I'm not gonna go do that." And . . .

[01:42:27] SL: So a civilian corps working on infrastructure is probably a very—that sounds like a very reasonable halfway . . .

MS: I think . . .

SL: . . . 'cause it could be couched in . . .

MS: You . . .

SL: You're, first of all, helping the economy and giving—getting jobs to all the folks that don't have jobs while—and the proliferation of dollars spent. In local communities it becomes popular, improves life—quality of life.

MS: Yes.

[01:42:59] SL: But it—somehow in there that idea of service . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . has to return . . .

MS: Yes.

SL: . . . or . . .

MS: Selfless—or service . . .

SL: . . . that's gonna happen, you know.

MS: Service before self. I agree with you, and I think that—again, Lee Kuan Yew in his remarks to me in private, he also had another great saying about not wanting our permanent presence. He said—and again, this was before 9/11—but he said if we don't start exporting the character of our deeds of who we are as a nation and the greatness of America as a model to emulate, he believed that Western civilization will cease to exist within fifty years. And it's us—this self-indulgence piece that you're alluding to right now—with 'em—"What's in it for me? What's mine is mine. What's yours is negotiable." Greed. All the things that have happened in a compressed—last eighteen months. I mean, this has collapsed around us, and it's all about greed and not managing yourself, if you will, and your value system, not your religious, your value system. And the results

of that are, is that we're tryin' to find ourselves again.

[01:44:12] My—you know, with the economy the way it is, in my business and my public speaking and dealing with corporations in America, for-profit organizations and not-for-profit organizations, my focus of my remarks are all about "This is the time and an opportunity for self-reflection. Who are you as a human being? What are your value systems? What do you believe in? What are your priorities in your life? Do you believe in a supreme being? What does money really mean to you? Education, family, et cetera." And prioritizing that and then writing it down, looking inwardly, so you can be better today than you were yesterday by what you do outwardly. And it's under four themes. Seize the day. Can't bring back yesterday. Don't know tomorrow. This moment right now. What am I gonna do today? What am I gonna do in this moment? For me, it's the gift-of-life piece again. I'm blessed that I'm alive, every day. [01:45:11] From our first interview, my dad tried to throw me out the window at age two, my brother saving my life. I mean, it's so hardened into me that life is a gift. "What are you doin' with the seize the day?" The second one is bloom where you're planted. Bloom where you are. Don't be covetous of the guy next to you's job. Love what

you're doin'. Bloom there. I have a sign, "Bloom where you're planted" in my bathroom in my home. It—we have gotten away from—we complain about everything and now, with all the loss of jobs, forty-two million Americans with medical insurance—I mean, "What are you doin' as part of the work effort to be able to be better and effective in what you're doin'?" The third is subordinate yourself to the task at hand. You're not bigger than the marine corps. You're not bigger than Johnson and Johnson. You're not bigger than the University of Arkansas. You gotta understand the vision and mission, shared values, of the institution that you're a part of. If it's unethical, you got to make a decision whether you're gonna be a part of that, a part of changing that or leaving to go find something else. But subordinate yourself to the task. It ain't about you. It never was. Never will be. I mean, take your ego, flush it down the toilet, and let's get on with seizing, blooming, subordinating.

[01:46:37] So the last thing and the most important for me, which has been my mantra in my life, is seize off of each other's strengths rather than attack each other's weaknesses. We're all human beings. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, we commit sin. We do bad things we regret. That's the human condition. We're flawed. But the one thing that we can control is this

mean-spirited, egomaniacal disdain for other human beings and their success or who they are or what you envy about them. And so what I learned and what we've been talkin' about here for twenty hours in my whole life experiences, in the profession of arms, we learn to love one another. And we could not be in competition with one another. It wouldn't work. You had to seize off each other's strengths. "What do you bring to the game? What do I bring to the game? What are we gonna do to be better because we each bring something collectively to the game of life, rather than me"—my line is—and I use this—the zit on the end of your nose, how you part your hair, the color of your skin. You know, and so I established as a young man after I was meritoriously promoted in—at age nineteen in Vietnam, I called all my little team around me—it was three guys—and said, "As long as I'm in charge, the one thing we're never gonna do is say anything bad about another marine, untoward. Now, we're gonna correct in private on what they need to do to improve their performance of duty, but there'll be no public jokes. We'll not have Rastus and Liza jokes here. How many Polacks does it take to change a lightbulb? Those are demeaning, and we're not have it here because this is life and death. Those people're tryin' to kill us over there, and at the moment of truth, when someone

says to me, 'Cover my flank,' meaning, you gotta get up to maneuver to get to them, and you need to put fire on them, so this guy can move, and someone just hesitates for a moment, 'Why would I do that when,' in the language of today, 'he dissed me yesterday about my girlfriend or about bein' a Polack from Chicago.'" And that slight hesitation in my profession meant life and death and loss on the battlefield. [01:49:02] And we're—again, what started out as just this little thing—seizin' off each other's strengths—it became known as Steele's Rule Number One. And I go from corporal with that, that every unit I'm in it's the same thing—"As long as I'm in charge here, there will be no kibitzing. Even jokes. Not in jest. This is not a macho thing. 'I'm better than you.' 'We shot better on the range.' 'I ran the PFT.' No, no. We're a collective team here tryin' to do something that's aberrant. Fight in war. Kill other human beings. And it's gonna require the best of all of us, the strength of all of us collectively together, to do this." [01:49:42] And so by the time that—you know, people tested me along the way. "That's naïve." "This is the—we're the biggest macho organization in the world." "Give as good as you get." "I'm from Boston. You kiddin' me?" "It's the Yankees against the Red Sox." I'm—you know, and I'm sayin', "I got where you

came from, but as long as we're here, you're not gonna do it. You're not gonna work for me. I mean, I'll find you another job. But what you're gonna be is so unsettling because in our profession, with who we are"—men and women now, but in the early stages, men—"the—it's always gonna go to 'I'm gonna take you outside and kick your fanny if you say one more word about my mother, even as joke. If you use that term to me again. If I ever hear the *N* word.'" I mean, it was all unconscionable. You couldn't function as an organization with that and living through all that stress of racism and hatred inside the marine corps that we've talked about in these interview and how we got through all that. [01:50:43] I mean, I became a firm believer that if we seized the day, bloomed where we were planted, didn't think about the last job or the next one, the promotion, the medal, just bloom with what you're doin' there. Subordinate yourself to the task. You're not bigger than any of this, and then seize off each other's strengths where we learn to respect one another and love one another and don't—even in jest—we're gonna be a success and better off for it. And it carried through in every job I had until the day I retired. You could ask anybody that ever worked for me, "What's Steele's Rule Number One?" And he would—they would all tell you, "Seize off of each other's

strengths rather than attack each other's weaknesses." It's the only rule I had. I just would not tolerate anything other.

[01:51:27] And some wonderful experiences—young men and women that got out that worked for me that they would—they're manufacturers—own their own businesses—and they write me around the country, "It's the only thing I ever—I've adopted in the plant. We don't allow barbing and joking and innuendo and talkin' about behind somebody's back about their personal life or whatever. We just don't allow it here. And our productivity is up. Camaraderie is up. The belief in one another—the succession plan of who's gonna take the—everybody's building towards the team. My next—you know, if you meet these standards and so on"—I mean, everything—and a teacher, coach, mentor, role model, and evaluator. When you can do that and have a standard like that as an evaluator of others' performances, and it's not based on a bias or a preconceived notion. It's based on their performance and what you've asked them to do. It's unlimited at what your possibilities are.

Unlimited. [01:52:25] And I've been able to build successful teams over that simple concept. To this day, I don't allow it in my own company. We just don't do it. I mean, it started out as a marine, and then, of course, I'm in joint jobs so I—it was navy,

air force—doesn't matter, whoever it was. And obviously, it's— carries into my business life today of the two companies that I own—one called Uncommon Leadership, which is a limited-liability corporation. We do sustained leadership training for corporations around America. And then Steele Partners, Inc., which is a strategic advisory company that is doing all kinds of things to help the quality of life—obesity, heart conditions—a number of initiatives in tryin' to improve the quality of life of Americans. And mergers and acquisitions—we're involved in a myriad of things, but it all has that common theme is that "Seizing this day. What are we doin'? Why are we here? What are we—what can we do to make it better?" [01:53:23] And it's not naïve either. I mean, you know that joke about "You were born last night" or "You fell off the watermelon truck yesterday" . . .

SL: Right.

MS: . . . and all those things. I mean, I use that—those euphemistic terms in my remarks. And you can say that all you want, but it's—if you live it, it's real. I mean, you can make the connection to the Bible, do unto others as you do unto yourself. If you want to do that, I choose not to make it a Christian religious thing outta the Bible, although I believe those kinds of things.

[01:53:50] SL: It's the same principle.

MS: Yeah, it's the same principle. It's just—this is nonsectarian here. I mean, this is just—this is treating people with dignity, no matter what their race, color, or creed, religion, or whatever. And we have an opportunity here to make a difference and make changes in our behavior. And it's been very, very effective and successful. And for my clients, as they share with me, life changing, life changing, just trying to adapt those philosophies of life.

[01:54:31] SL: That's great stuff. The, you know, the—that formula, in other words, threads through most successful lives.

MS: Yes.

SL: Threads through lives that have made differences for people. So congratulations on that 'cause I know it's working, and I see it work in many ways.

MS: Yeah.

[01:54:56] SL: And I can tell that it's working for you. You know, I wanna talk a little bit about your family. We've mentioned your kids, and we've talked a little bit about Cindy, but I would like for you to spend a little bit of time 'cause I know how important those folks are to you.

MS: Yes, they are.

SL: You can't be the kinda guy that you are . . .

MS: No.

SL: . . . and ignore family.

MS: Right.

SL: So I think we should spend a little time . . .

MS: Sure.

SL: . . . talkin' about your family.

MS: Well, I—you know, I'd be remiss. We have talked about Cindy and, obviously, going back to the ninth grade and my love for my wife. I think that some of the things that I haven't said about her—and without being embarrassed about it—obviously, with—now that you've learned about my life and what I've done and the time—I mean, there were times in some of those jobs that—again, stupidly, but—I didn't make my people do this, but I worked twenty hours a day, seven days a week in some of those jobs. It was the nature of—I was a workaholic. I mean, I'm not gonna look back and say, "I shoulda done it differently," 'cause I don't know if I coulda done it differently. I mean, it's just . . .

SL: You . . .

MS: . . . kinda who I am. It's how I'm hardwired. Yeah.

SL: You did that in school.

MS: Yeah. Same thing.

SL: Yeah.

[01:56:14] MS: Same thing. And the reality is, is that my wife supported me in all those things, including threats on her life and our children's life, and she raised our kids, fundamentally. And you know, I often—when I get my family together, the last time was Thanksgiving, and you have a photograph when we were together, and this is February. But they all always talk about at some juncture when we're talking about family, it comes up about me making some statement about not being there all the time. But my kids all respond in unison. They all have their separate version of all this, is—"But Mom was—all the time," 'cause she didn't work. I mean, she just raised our kids. She didn't have a job. [*Clears throat*] We never owned a home, by the way. Twenty-six moves in forty-three years of marriage around the world. Twenty-six moves, and the first home we purchased was when we moved after 9/11 from New York to Tampa. So we were vagabonds, gypsies, get up and go wherever the marine corps said. And I never invested in a property 'cause I didn't wanna get tied down to a house. Financially stupid, but it's just kinda the way we lived our lives.

[01:57:26] And she raised our kids, but she would say—and then my children would say, "But Dad, whenever you really—

whenever you came through the door, whether it was midnight or whatever, you were through the door, and work wasn't comin' with you. It was family time and whatever. We didn't sit around watchin' TV." I mean, it was mentorship and education and reading and all those things. My mother was a prodigious reader to me when I was a kid, and I read to my kids, and my wife read—and they all are very good readers, if you will. My son doesn't like to. He's a—but they can, you know. But I mean, it was imbued in them at a young age. [01:58:04] And so what's happened is is that it existed like in any family—again, there's a separation here. I have a forty-year-old daughter, a thirty-eight-year-old son, and a twenty-nine-year-old daughter. So there's a gap. And it was all planned, by the way. We were gonna have two sets of two but the—what happened was—there—I'm sure there were sibling rivalries or sibling fights, but what I'm so proud of, and my wife is so proud of, is the bonding that exists between the three children. I mean, they revere each other and respect each other, and there's no demeaning or there—you know, they'll—and families are hard. I mean, it's tough. You have rivalries, and you have families that don't stay connected. But in our case, they'll stay connected till the day they die, and they'll imbue in their children the same connection.

[01:59:00] And it's a wonderful thing as a parent to be able to observe your kids and the—their character of their behavior, their value system. Again, not their religion or their faith. I mean, that's a private thing to them. They're all adults, and they make those decisions on their own, and I don't make a judgment on it. I mean, I guided them in a certain—at least exposure for them to make a decision about the way they were gonna choose to have a faith or not or live their life. But the bond—the thing about the unconditional love that exists between my wife and I and the unconditional love that exists between my wife and I and our children,, but most importantly, the unconditional love that exists between my children and their fellow, or their siblings, is what makes us most proud.

[01:59:48] The—my daughter is the most like me in personality, extremely intense. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas. She was a—close to a 4.0 student—I mean, driven. She's an educator. She studied education here—English. She got a master's degree in English as a second language. She taught in a barrio in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a trailer with no water and no bathroom for eight years. She was teacher of the year in her first year when she came outta college from the University of Arkansas—teacher of the year, not rookie

of the year, but in the state of Virginia. She's a driven, competent woman, extremely gifted. Extremely gifted. And she's—she was an athlete. Ran track. Took her team when she—we lived in Virginia—to the state championships when she was a sophomore. They won it. She was a 100-meter dash, 220, long jumper, relay anchor. Took her team, and when we lived in Rhode Island when I was at the Naval War College, to the state championships, she won it. She was the fastest woman in the Northeast. She got shin splints. She woulda—I wanted her to come here on track scholarship, but she got shin splints in California her senior year in high school so—very fit person and driven. I mean, driven. [02:01:11] She's married to a Hispanic person that she taught English at the University of Tampa, and then she taught English at the University of Madrid. He's an engineer from Westinghouse. But he's of Spanish descent. His mother is a doctor in Spain, and they live in Pittsburgh now. He works for Westinghouse making nuclear power plants. And she's visiting my wife right now—it's why my wife's not with me on this trip—with our youngest grandchild, Raquel, who's twenty months old, who's bilingual. [SL laughs] I mean, she could just say agua rather than water, I mean, because that's how they're gonna raise her. A magnificent,

beautiful little child. [02:01:48] My son is most like my wife. He's an athlete, first of all, like me. And my wife, if they had sports for women, she woulda been phenomenal, but they didn't have sports for women in my generation. There was no girls' sports. But she was extremely fast runner like I was and very fit, as she is today, and my wife's a tennis player and a very, very good one. But my son is a superior, national-caliber athlete. He came to the University of Arkansas his freshman year. We were—let's see—came from Korea. We were stationed in Korea. He graduated from Seoul American High School, where he wrestled and played—they didn't have football team. They—he played soccer. [02:02:38] Anyway, he came on here to—and walked on or whatever to the club soccer team back then and made it. And then he wrote a—or called me at the end of the first year and said, "Dad, I really do believe that I can wrestle in college at Division I." I had mentioned earlier that he was a wrestler in the Far East in Seoul and then the Olympics in Seoul. And he warmed up our Olympic wrestlers before their—they were outta school for the entire period. So he got to see a world-class athlete.

[02:03:09] SL: Now what's his first name?

MS: David.

SL: David.

MS: My daughter's name is Diane.

SL: And when was he here?

MS: He came in [19]90—[19]91, I guess, somewhere in there.

SL: Kay.

MS: Yeah. Yeah, that woulda been it. But he—it's a great story. He came—he said, "We have a team that's eighth in the nation in Division I wrestling at George Mason University, just north of you, Dad." I was at Quantico, Virginia, and they're just west of Washington. It's a great university. [02:03:48] And he wanted to come—leave Arkansas and walk on there. Well, I'm payin' in-state tuition 'cause I've been a resident of Arkansas until I retired, and I could no longer do that. I did it for my entire time I was always payin' taxes in Arkansas 'cause I revere the state and what it means to me. But I'm not—so they're payin' in-state tuition—my—both my daughter and my son. And he wants to come to Virginia, where the cost is gonna go skyrocketing through the roof to walk on to wrestle. [02:04:16] So it's a great story, one that I'm very proud of my son and what's happened from it. But his coach there was named Mike Moyer, and Mike is now the national—or the director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association. He's the executive director in

Pennsylvania. But at that time he was my son's college coach.

Well, we go up for an interview, and I'll make this brief, but it's a great, great life lesson story.

SL: Do we have time?

TM: We have three minutes.

SL: Three minutes.

MS: Yeah. The—he did a lousy job in the interview, and the coach said—I could see it in the body language—"You know, I really don't see—you started way late." He didn't start wrestling till he was a sophomore in high school, and wrestlers normally are from the womb, you know. Four years old, they're out there flounderin' around on a mat. [*SL laughs*] And he said, "I just don't think"—and I asked my son to leave the room, and my son looked at me. "What do you mean?" And I said, "Just—could you leave us alone just for a minute." And I looked when he left—and Mike Moyer tells this better than I do, and he's told it in public with me there 'cause I speak all over the world—world's championships of wrestling, Olympic trials, colleges, and universities all over the world today for him on character and leadership for wrestling and what it does. Anyway, I said, "Don't be offended by this. Are you a coach, or are you a recruiter?" And he looked at me, and he said, "Well, I am offended,

General." And I said, "Well, I'm not tryin' to offend you, but what are you, a coach or a recruiter?" And he said, "Well, this is a self-sustaining program, and I guess—you know, I'm a wrestler. I was an All-America wrestler in college, but I guess now I'm more a recruiter than I am a coach." [02:05:55] And I said, "Well, if you wanna coach again, my son's the best athlete you'll ever see here. Not the best wrestler. You'd have to coach him because he did start late. But I don't care if you were number one in the nation and had ten All-Americans. He's a better athlete than any of 'em. He's an athlete, so if you wanna coach again, give the kid a chance. But I'm not gonna move him from Arkansas to northern Virginia to pay ten times the price that I'm payin' there, and you're not gonna give him an opportunity. So if he comes here as a walk-on, if you pledge to me that you'll give him an opportunity, I'll do it. And he'll prove himself to you." And he looked at me—he was supposed to go to Alaska, where my wife's brother lived, the next day to cut trails—round-trip ticket, nonrefundable, the next morning. [02:06:40] And I said, "Listen, I—what do you say?" And he said, "I'll give him a chance, and I'll"—long story—his older sister went to Alaska to cut trails the next morning, a woman from Arkansas, the only woman on the crew up there, this girl I've

talked about. And he approved, and he called me in thirty days, and he said, "General, you were right. He's the best athlete I've got, and I'm gonna make him a wrestler." Walk-on wrestler. Captain of the wrestling team. Conference champion. National championships [*telephone rings*] in Hawkeye Arena in Iowa. Didn't win but he—then he was inducted—he's the youngest inductee in their athletic hall of fame.

SL: [*Claps hands*] Kay. Let's change tape.

[Tape stopped]

[02:07:23] SL: So now . . .

MS: And we're—yeah.

SL: . . . we're gonna talk about your . . .

MS: Well, I just wanna finish my son. We were . . .

SL: Okay.

[02:27:28] MS: . . . talkin' about our children and their relationship.

He—I could tell stories forever about my children. But in the middle of his collegiate experience, he made a statement to my wife and I that he wanted me be an officer of marines, which was a shock to both of us because we'd just raised him—raised all of our children to be individuals. And frankly, I'd never even thought about my son bein' a marine. He just didn't seem to have that kind of focus—nature. He—I said that he could read,

but he really—he didn't like reading. He liked doing. He's a doer. He was an athlete. Play. Go outside. Hit the ball. Do whatever. I mean, that's—and I just didn't ever see him in it. So—and my wife was concerned of her dad, wounded in the head—me—World War II—my dad, prisoner of war—now me, three tours of combat, and now her only male offspring wants to be a marine. And it was very difficult for her.

SL: Yeah.

MS: But obviously, we'd let him make his own decision about it. But he wanted to be a pilot in the marine corps. And he—you know, I just—he just didn't seem to have the nature. And the other tragedy is, is that the training for all of this was at Quantico, where I was the commanding general. So I knew that he would not get special preferential treatment, which you shouldn't have, but it was gonna be just the opposite of that. He was gonna be—he better be—'cause he's gonna be under a microscope because . . .

SL: That's right.

MS: . . . he was my son.

SL: Yeah, he's gotta perform.

[02:09:00] MS: Yeah, he's gotta perform. So it—so many great stories about he—when he went to officer candidate school

because he wouldn't know a right-face from hand salute. I mean, he just knew nothing about it. And they—his staff, many of them who worked for me, all of them who I knew, were—could not believe it. They could not believe it. And there's so many great vignettes. Once was he was called out one night after chow, after evening meal, to sing the "Marines' Hymn," "From the halls of Montezuma." And he's standing in front of everybody, and they're just matter-of-factly sayin', "Sing the 'Marines Hymn,' Candidate Steele"—thinking that he'll sing it. So he says, "Sir—yes, sir." And [*MS sings*] "From the halls of Montezuma, da-da-da-da-da-da." [*SL laughs*] And the instructor, who I knew—he's a black gunnery sergeant and tremendous marine that I'd known for years. And he—later he told the story to me that—he said, "What? Start over." And still thinking the same thing—repeat. And then he leans over to my son and whispers in his ear, and my son's at rigid attention, just all locked up, really. And, "Candidate Steele, why don't you know this shit?" [*SL laughs*] And my son, with great presence of mind, as we call it—looking straight ahead, not flinching, moving at all—he said, "Sergeant Instructor, he's my father, not my drill instructor." And that went from that gunnery sergeant to the lieutenant to the captain to the colonel at OCS to me in

about a minute and a half. [*Laughter*] And the colonel, who later became a three-star general—a great friend of mine—called me and said, "You'll never believe what your son just did, sir, [*laughter*] with presence of mind." [02:10:49] And so at the end, when he graduated, he won the physical fitness award. The—he broke all the records of the obstacle courses and running, and he's a truly gifted athlete, and he won all the awards. And so I'm the reviewing officer for the graduation parade, and you know, they've got the high academic guy, the guy with the military—all these awards, and one of 'em is the physical fitness award. And they made it last just because of the—me bein' there, and it was hilarious. And my son was all standin' in front of me at attention when I'm givin' him the trophy for the physical fitness award. And the black gunnery sergeant—they did it all as a set-up, and he was the one that handed it to me, and he said, "General—Candidate Steele, if you ever learn anything about the marine corps as much as you know about physical fitness, you might make a hell of a officer someday." And so I handed it to him—my son. "Yes, sir." You know, and I'm sayin', "Son, that's a joke. You're—lighten up a little bit, you know. Congratulations." [*Laughter*] You know, he's all locked up. [02:11:52] But anyway, he became—he

went in the marine corps, and they wanted him to be an infantry officer. Tried to get me involved to change him from being an aviator because the marine corps is the infantry. And he's so gifted and a sense of awareness. He was a geography major in college so—I mean, he—situational awareness about everything. I mean, he's just got it—hand and eye coordination as an athlete. "Well," I said, "you're talkin' to the wrong guy. You think I'm gonna—my son's gonna make his own decision what he wants to do, and he wants to be an aviator. And if he's qualified and has a—passes the physical, I mean, that's what he's gonna do." So . . .

SL: Yeah.

[02:12:27] MS: . . . anyway, he went to flight school at Pensacola and became a naval aviator. He's a helicopter pilot, and he's an attack helicopter pilot—a Cobra pilot and a very gifted Cobra pilot. And I could speak about his career. He was just selected for lieutenant colonel. He's been in sixteen years now and just got back from combat in Afghanistan in October of his second tour there. He was at HMX1, which is the president's helicopter squadron, and he flew President Bush and flew the pope when he was here. He was the principal pilot. Tremendously gifted. Today he's the captain of the Marine Triathlon Team, swimming,

biking, and running. He's run in the Hawaii Ironman, and he doesn't run to participate. He runs to win. I mean, he's very, very gifted. Just on Super Bowl Sunday a couple weeks ago, he ran in a half-marathon in Los Angeles with twelve thousand runners and finished twentieth . . .

SL: Wow.

MS: . . . outta twelve thousand runners. And this is an amateur, now—these are professional runners. And so he's a extremely gifted kid—young man today. And he has a beautiful wife who is a graduate of the University of Vermont. She's a NICU nurse and a junior diabetes nurse in—out in San Diego. And they have two beautiful children, a boy, Matthew, five, and a little girl, Natalie, three. And he's a tremendous father. The—he has a personality like my wife, kinda laid back—school—gettin' a 2.0 was fine, you know. "Why study for the A when you could make the C by showin' up and takin' a few notes?" I mean, that's kinda way they—and I admire him for it, but in athletics that's where he . . .

SL: Excels.

[02:14:11] MS: . . . he's there to compete and win. And driven to it. And he has a great gift, which most great athletes have. He doesn't think about—like, in a baseball metaphor or analogy—

0 for 5 yesterday. That game's gone. It's over. It's done. It doesn't weigh on his mind. "I'm going 5 for 5 today," and that's the way he lives his life, which why—it's a great thing about being a pilot and being a pilot for the president or the pope or whomever, heads of state, it's all about your ability in the moment. He lives in the moment very, very effectively. It's all about the moment. And you know, he often said to me, "Dad, don't—I mean, I'm not—if the plane is havin' problems I'm sure not gonna turn around to President Bush, sayin', 'Can you come up here and give me a little help.'" [*Laughter*] So . . .

SL: Oh gosh.

MS: But I mean, it's that kind of a personality that makes those kinds of people so effective in what they do.

SL: Yeah.

MS: And he's had some near crashes and things like that in combat, and he's a very, very talented young man. [02:15:17] And then our youngest is Deborah. She was born in Mount Clemens, Michigan, while I was at the Tank Automotive Command.

SL: Detroit.

MS: On the tank business in Detroit. And she's a remarkable young woman in her own right, very proud of her, but totally different because of the separation. She often complained as a child that

she had two sets of parents, [*SL laughs*] my wife and I and her older brother and sister because the age gap was significant, and she begrudged 'em. And I was stationed in Hawaii when she was in high school, and my kids are in college and out. They're back here at Arkansas or George Mason and—but they came out to visit, and one of our great family stories is, it's her time now, you know. Course, my kids, the older ones, I wasn't a general and, you know, being with President Clinton in the Oval Office was just routine for my youngest daughter 'cause that's all she saw. [*SL laughs*] I was a general.

SL: Yeah.

MS: So the pretty houses and the maids walkin' around and all these perks, and that was normal for her. I mean, she wasn't spoiled. She was different. But she said in Hawaii once when my other children were there, "When are these people leavin'?" [*Laughter*] I said, ", that's your brother and sister!" She said, "I know, but it's my time now." [*Laughter*] "When are they leavin'?"

SL: That's good.

[02:16:37] MS: Yeah. But she's a—she—I have done a lotta speaking around the country and universities and football teams, and Lou Holtz is a friend of mine—obviously, a relationship here,

but when he was at Notre Dame, I used to speak to the Notre Dame football team and had such a relationship with the leadership of the university that when it was time for my daughter, who went to a parochial school [*SL sniffs*] in Washington, to go to college—I mean, the head of Notre Dame, Monk Malloy said, "Well sure, General, she's comin' to Notre Dame, isn't she?" And I said, "Well, Father, she doesn't have the grades. She's dyslexic and has really struggled in school." [02:17:16] She has a sequencing disorder. I mean, six times nine is forty-five, not fifty-four. And . . .

SL: Right.

MS: And she struggled in school with it. And we discovered it early in the fifth grade—but anyway, tremendous personality. She takes the best of both my wife and I. Attractive young woman but a very outgoing, extroverted, look you in the eye, communicate with you straight up, unintimidated—I mean, just like with President Clinton. I mean, "Deborah, how're you doin'?" It's—I mean, you—she wouldn't do this, but it's, "Bill, how're you doin'?" you know. I mean . . .

SL: Right.

[02:17:56] MS: . . . one of those things. Just very unaffected by power or people. It's the relationship, and she's very, very

gifted at it. Anyway, the—she went to the feeder school there—I just lost the name of it—hmm—Holy Cross, which is where Rudy went in the famous *Rudy* movie to go, which is a feeder school. And she did very well for a while because we had a tutor and a—you know, to get her through these things because they knew she was—sequencing disorder. But then got tired of it and quit school after a couple years and went to work at the House of Blues in Chicago and was the greeter at the House of Blues as a nineteen-, twenty-year-old and before she could sell alcohol or whatever. And so I was—I don't know if you've been to the House of Blues. It's a remarkable place. The one in Chicago is kinda their flagship. [02:18:50] And they get four or five thousand people in there a night, and all these bands and drugs, sex, rock and roll, and all that stuff. And so I was concerned, and I called the owner, and I said, "Listen, I'm really concerned about my daughter getting involved in that kind of environment 'cause she's on her own livin' with a guy in Chicago and all these things that a parent would worry about." And he said, "General, we know all about you and your relationship with your daughter. Trust me. We'll take care of her. She can't serve alcohol, but you just have no idea how effective she is as the greeter, that every person who comes here, the first person they see is

Deborah Steele. I mean, she knows 'em by name. They come back because of her. I mean, she's a remarkable woman." And I said, "Well, just take care of her and watch her and just don't let her go out"—and they did. And she did. And course, she stayed there for five years and got into understanding the retail, and they wanted her to stay and get involved in the business side of it 'cause she's got a good mind on her shoulders.

[02:19:48] Left Chicago. Came down. Went back to college. Tried it again. Didn't work the next time. And then I got her into—we really had a lot of soul-searching about, "What do you wanna do with your life?" And she wanted to be a stand-up comedian. I mean, her vision of—"Tell me, if you saw yourself with one goal, what would it be?" She said, "Dad, it's Carnegie Hall, and it's just me up on the stage." And I'm—and it's—"Carnegie Hall?" "Yeah, anywhere. Just—I'm a one-man act." And she's very funny, and one of her friends is—that she's lived with in Chicago, is now in this comedy shows out in LA I mean, the—one of the famous ones—I don't know—is her closest friend, and she's the star of it out there, so she's been around people in comedy. And so—but anyway, we sent her to beautician school for a year, and she's now in a fairly high-end salon in . . .

SL: Salon. Uh-huh.

[02:20:45] MS: . . . in Tampa down the street from us and has a great client base, even in this economy. And it's a perfect fit for her because she's so affable and communicative and very gifted in her skill set of hair, both for men and women, and is havin' the time of her life. I mean, she's really kinda blossomed.

SL: Is she doing any stand-up stuff on the side or . . .

[02:21:04] MS: No, I—well, she'll—I—she goes to these places for—you know, where the karaoke and the—and you stand up, and she'll do it. She's fearless about all that. But no, not to the point—I don't think she would even have the dream, really, anymore. It's—she's kinda living it vicariously through this friend who—you know, the friend's been to our house in Tampa, this comedy star now, and you know, she said to me alone when Deborah's not in the room, you know, "She could do this. I mean, she's that good at it." And I said, "Well, I know she's got the good looks and the personality, and she's got the wit, but I mean, you've really worked hard. I mean, I don't think Deborah's got the stay—you know, the stick-to-it-ness like you did to get there." And she said, "I think she does—to do it." And I said, "Well, you've been workin' your tail off to get where you are." And she said, "Well, it's a rough life. I mean, that's a lonely business. I mean, I don't know how much you know

about it, but makin' people laugh is a hard thing to do."

SL: Hard thing to do.

MS: Hard thing to . . .

SL: Comedy's the hardest thing to do.

[02:22:07] MS: It's hard to do. And if you're good at it—like this woman is phenomenal at it. I mean, she—you blog her—you know, those—whatever you do, and the—you—her stuff comes on the tube and I—you just get in stitches with everything she does. I mean, it's just—it's clean. She—I mean, she has a—you know, acts that are on the raw side and profanity, and then she can do a thirty-minute routine with never usin' one profane word that'll just—any way you want it. I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: . . . she can make it . . .

SL: It's professional.

MS: . . . do it in stitches—yeah, it's a profession.

SL: Yeah.

MS: They are really good at it. [02:22:36] Anyway, she's—we're thrilled that she's nearer. She lives about thirty minutes away and comes once a week to spend the night and . . .

SL: That's great.

MS: . . . meet with us, and so we have all—the family unit, goin' back

to your opening, is probably better today than it ever has been because of the maturing process, grandchildren. My wife—we go to California to babysit my son's kids. We go to Pittsburgh to babysit. And right now my oldest daughter with our youngest grandchild is in Tampa, and they'll be there when I get back, you know, from this trip. But it's really hard to describe in words just how meaningful the family is. But I guess in—my wife and I were here—just to make kind of a summary statement—we're—we've just been blessed. We've been blessed. They have a—they're wonderful human beings. They have great character, and they're just great kids. Yeah.

SL: Well, Marty . . .

[02:23:41] MS: So that's a long answer to a short question . . .

SL: Oh no.

MS: . . . "Tell me a little bit about your kids."

SL: No.

MS: But . . .

SL: No, it's . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . good. I think we needed to talk . . .

MS: Know that a little bit.

SL: . . . a little bit about that.

MS: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

MS: Yeah, they're . . .

SL: 'Cause it—there—it was missing . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . in our disc . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . in our conversation.

[02:23:53] MS: Yeah. My wife—I didn't say—she has a

tremendously—understated on her part, but she's a artist, and she studied art here, and traveling around the country with me, she's never not gone to art classes. And she probably has—she has not kept track—three or four hundred hours of college art class credits [*SL laughs*] but doesn't have a degree in art. And it's one of those things—she doesn't want it, but I mean, she studied at the National Institute in New York, I mean, the number one place. She's gifted in all mediums, oils and drawings and, you know, statue making and all that. But she has one character trait, which her personality type, again, from Myers-Briggs is they're filled with self-doubt that they're not good enough. Not good enough. And it's . . .

SL: So . . .

MS: . . . it's not over her, but I mean, she just says, "I'm not," you know. But you come—people come in our home and I—and she knows this, and I tell this story often about her art. We'll have something that she's recently done up on the wall, and somebody'll look at it and say, "My God, that's marvelous." "Well, do you like it?" "Yeah." "Well, it's yours." And she'll give it to them and . . .

SL: Oh.

MS: . . . and then [*laughs*] we'll go to their house three months later, and it's got strobe lights and everything—it's, you know, pointing on that. It's the centerpiece of their entire domain.

SL: Well, sure.

MS: You know, and . . .

SL: Sure.

MS: . . . and she just smiles and said, "Well, I'm glad you liked it," you know, it's just . . .

[02:25:20] SL: She oughta do a show sometime.

MS: Well, we have a great friend, again, from here—my best man in my wedding is Dr. Kenneth White. His father was Dixie White, who coached here and then went to LSU and then for the Saints and then to Northeast Louisiana. Kenny left here and went to Baton Rouge and then went to undergraduate school at Yale.

And he's a—and then went to Tulane Medical School, but he's the leading psychiatrist in the—America, and he was at Yale for thirty years. He married a woman who went to Smith who's a professional artist. [02:25:50] And they lived in New Orleans. They were there during Katrina and they—he had a hundred patients, most of 'em in straightjacket-type thing. And—but it's a marvelous story in its own right. But we've been connected with this woman, and she's had studios in New York, in New Orleans, and so we're very familiar with her expertise in art. And my—and it's a profession to her, and she's a—and so my wife compares her work to hers, and it's just not good enough, and she wouldn't even think about openin' a studio or—and I don't think she really wants the burden of it all, of getting involved and selling it. She—thrilled—enjoys it—you know, is very, very good at it and loves giving it away, you know. Just loves doing it.

SL: That's beautiful.

MS: And doing—yeah, yeah.

SL: That's beautiful.

MS: Yeah.

[02:26:45] SL: Well, maybe someday I'll get to take a look, take a peek.

MS: Yeah, if we don't—haven't given 'em all away.

SL: Yeah.

MS: You know, it's a . . .

SL: Yeah.

MS: The—there's a few in the house right now that are . . .

SL: Any up here in Fayetteville?

MS: [*Sighs*] I don't know. I have to think about that.

SL: Well, we need to fix that . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . if that's not . . .

MS: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . the case.

MS: That may be—there may be a few pieces sittin' in somebody's home around here. But anyway, she's very good at it.

[02:27:09] SL: Well, Marty, this ol' library we're in is about to shut down here in just a little bit. They gonna—they're gonna wanna chase us out. Now, we can let them know that we're gonna stay if we wanna keep goin'.

MS: No, I've—I'm . . .

SL: Is there—is . . .

MS: Well, I've got an event over at the Alumni House. It starts at six, myself, so . . .

SL: Oh. Well, you're . . .

MS: Yeah, so . . .

SL: You're about to bump up on that.

MS: Yeah, yeah.

SL: I'm pretty good at keepin' you . . .

MS: They all predict . . .

SL: . . . I'm pretty good at keepin' you . . .

MS: Well, no. They all predicted, by the way, that I wouldn't make it 'cause we would be here. [*Laughter*]

SL: We're getting' a bad reputation, aren't we?

MS: That—Heather Nelson, who you met yesterday here, she said, "You'll never make this event." [*Laughter*]

[02:27:43] SL: Well, let's get you to the event, but I do want to offer to you: is there anything else that you want to say before we shut this down?

MS: Well, for right now, Scott, I can't think of it. I know that the second we turn that machine off, I'll think of something that I would've wanted to say. But I—right now—I mean, some of the things that we've talked about this afternoon, like my philosophy of life and some of the things about today's world and my thoughts about the future, I'm really glad that we got to those. And I mean, you're getting the candid feelings I have and some

things that have been kinda the bedrock of my whole *raison d'être* as a human being and as a man but—and I—but I'm sure that soon as it's over, I'll think of somethin' that I wanted to say. I mean, last night even when we were at dinner, there were several things. [02:28:37] As I told you earlier, that I was talkin' to David Lewis about, my close friend, and I mentioned Mad Dog Cummings, and he, [*SL laughs*] I mean, and he knew of our relationship, obviously, but he wanted to know if I'd—how many other people—and I could talk about a number of things of people around here. I mean, I could talk for hours about Coach Broyles and Groundhog Ferrell. I mean, they were major influences in my life. I mean . . .

SL: Well . . .

[02:29:02] MS: . . . Frank Broyles was my Little League baseball coach here when he first came to Fayetteville, and I could—you know, today we still have this remarkable relationship, you know. And again, you know, the ebb and flow of the Broyles legacy here and different opinions and what's happened and the university and nothing about the new leadership or Jeff Long or whatever but for me, you know, there—Frank Broyles and what he gave to the nation, Arkansas, and to this university, you just can't quantify it.

SL: That's right.

[02:29:35] MS: Whether you like him or not. And I happen to love him, but I could talk about him all day. And people are—you know, we could pick out anybody that you and I both have the same, you know, understanding of or knowledge of or experience with, that I could make one comment about you name their name, and I would say, "Well, this is the event that happened with me and them," that—from . . .

SL: Well, let's do this. Let's just pledge that we'll stay in touch.

MS: Good.

SL: And we'll have more conversations later.

MS: Great.

SL: We don't have to solve the world's problem . . .

MS: That's right.

SL: . . . at this moment.

MS: That's right. Thirty minutes with two commercials. [*SL laughs*]

Or twenty hours and [*SL laughs*] and ten—eight tapes.

[02:30:16] SL: Well, I bet you and I are gonna continue to cross paths.

MS: I hope so.

SL: And . . .

MS: I hope so.

SL: . . . you will be . . .

MS: [*Unclear words*].

SL: . . . certainly hearing from us 'cause . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . you've given us a bunch of work to do.

MS: Yeah, I—again, I'm—it's—I'm mixed in my feelings about that, but I wanna commend you, Trey, all of your staff. You got a remarkable group of people here.

SL: I do.

[02:30:38] MS: And you've got a great mission. I think that you're headed in the right direction, and I wanna wish you the best, but I really would like to be a part of your future and the success that you have in of your endeavors, to be a part of all that, because—not just that now that I've experienced this, but I'm a believer in what you're doing and the significance of it for our state and its citizens and in honor of Senator Pryor. [*Clears throat*] And this, you know, this is needed at this juncture in our life, in our history, in our development and evolution. These kinds of things need to be preserved. We didn't—haven't done it adequately enough, historically, in America. I mean, just in Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*, you know, tryin' to get people's stories, if you will, who've experienced the Depression,

World War II, before they passed on, we didn't do a very good job of that. And you have an opportunity now for generations to capture not only those survivors of those periods and my generation, the Boomers, if you will, but everybody that's coming up. And I just think we need to leverage the technology, the talent that's in this room, the passion for doing that. But the product or the outcome of it all is gonna be not quantifiable with the impact it's gonna have because it'll touch people's lives, I believe. Not necessarily what happened here because a lot of this'll be Greek to people. But Arkansas stories and the great people that you have interviewed today, like Sid McMath and J. B. Hunt and all the ones that you were able to capture before they passed on, it's a tremendous legacy. It really is. And I wanna wish you the best with all of it.

[02:32:23] SL: Thank you. And I can promise you you'll continue to be a part. You are a part now.

MS: Yeah.

SL: There's no escaping it.

MS: Thank you. We got a secret handshake, *[SL and TM laugh]* or we have to put the . . .

[02:32:32] SL: I can show—I'll show you one that Porter showed me at one point in time. *[Extends hand toward MS]* Do you—let me

see your arm. It's like we do this . . .

MS: Yeah.

SL: . . . and it—very slowly.

MS: Okay.

SL: You have to, you know, be in the moment.

MS: Yeah.

SL: You have to feel the moment, and you bring your—and you take the thumb, the top of the thumb, and you come back around and you just—no . . .

MS: Oh, oh. Okay. [*SL laughs*] Let's try it one more time.

SL: Okay. Okay. Here we go. [*Laughter*]

MS: I love it.

SL: I don't know where he got that . . .

MS: That's good.

SL: Probably down . . .

MS: Yeah, it's a good one.

SL: . . . at Sherman's. I . . .

MS: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . I don't . . .

MS: Yeah, it's a good one.

SL: I don't know.

MS: Yeah, it's a good one. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay. Well, thanks.

MS: Thank you.

SL: I'll give you [*unclear words*].

MS: Thank you very much.

SL: Okay.

[02:33:12 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]