

The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “Nofziger, Lyn (Nixon White House/Reagan Advisor) - Interview, 1/5/78” of the A. James Reichley Interview Transcripts at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Interview with Lynn Nofziger, January 5, 1978.

Nofziger ^(recalled) that at a meeting at Camp David, President Nixon had asked him to take charge of the political operations in the administration. He said returning from the meeting with Bryce Harlow in a helicopter, Harlow told him that Nixon had given him carte blanche to direct cabinet officers to carry out the strategy he felt was required. He said that he set forth his understanding of what had been said at the meeting in ^(a) memo and Harlow routed it through Bob Haldeman, Haldeman called him to his office and told him that he had been completely wrong, and that he had not been given the authority that he thought he had been given. Later Chuck Colson played very much this role. Nofziger said that he was ^(not to) that close ~~as he said~~ to becoming Colson himself. He said that his mistake was ^(to) simply go ahead and do what Nixon had told him to do, ^(that it is) But he is not aggressive in that way in the way that Colson was. Nofziger said ~~that~~ that his view of politics is ~~being~~ primarily ~~a~~ matter of propoganda rather than organization, ~~and~~ ^H He thought that this what what had attracted Nixon.



HLD.

Colson.

politic PR

Nofziger recalled in his work in the White House one of his primary jobs was ^T try to get senators to stand up vigorously for the administration. He said that Chuck Percy and Howard Baker told him ^(that) that if he would give them something ^(it) they could say, they would be glad to say ^{he said} but somehow/they never got around to using ^(as a result) the material that he gave them, ~~and that~~ he has a rather a low opinion of Percy and Baker ~~as a result of this~~. Nofziger recalled that Harlow had told him that he had pleaded with W Spiro Agnew not to accept cash from some of his business friends in the way that he was, but Agnew could see nothing wrong ~~i~~ with this. Sometimes when he was playing golf with a business man, he would be given \$200 and he would simply keep ~~that~~. Harlow said that he had pleaded to no avail that Agnew abandon this practice. ^(Ford) Nofziger said ~~that~~ he had never been able to understand why Vice-Nixon picked ^H for/President, ~~he~~ he said they were not close, ~~but~~ ^(x) he attended meetings with the congressional leadership with Nixon and there was no close relationship between Nixon and Ford. In fact, Nixon was closer to Hugh Scott, Nofziger recalled, than he was to Ford. ^R Nixon regarded Bob Finch as the son he had never had, Nofziger said. In Nofziger's view Finch was a gutless wonder. Finch ^{is} / now practicing law

Supra.

Agnew.

Ford

Finch

at a small law firm in Pasadena. Nofziger recalled the occasion on which Finch had paralysis of the left arm at a time that he was to speak to protesters within the Department of HEW after the Cambodia incursion. He said that basically he thought that Finch had had a nervous breakdown, ~~and that~~ ~~he~~ theorized ~~the fact~~ that the paralysis of the left arm indicated that he was fearful he would be called a left-winger.



Nofziger recalled that Nixon picked John Connally as secretary of the Treasury following a memo that he had sent in to Nixon recommending that the Republicans begin building up a strong successor to Nixon ~~that~~ ~~they~~ bring some strong political figures into the administration with this in mind. He said that Bob Haldeman later told him it was ~~a~~ ^{as} result of this memo that Nixon decided to bring Connally into the administration. ~~Nofziger~~ ^R says that Ronald Reagan is now eager to run for President, much more so than he was in 1974. Nofziger said that Reagan will now let him do ~~a~~ ^d things that he would not let him do ~~a~~ in 1974. I asked Nofziger if he had thought that Reagan had a realistic chance of being nominated in 1976. ~~He~~ ^H said that he had, he had always counted on the incompetence of Ford and ~~a~~ of Ford's political staff to give Reagan the nomination. He said that the nomination had been saved for Ford by ^(blunder) the introduction of Stu Spenser into the campaign. The biggest ~~wonder~~ ^{wonder} of the Reagan campaign, Nofziger said, was not consulting Drew Lewis on the Schweiker selection.

Connally

Reagan

Nofziger had just ~~turned~~ ^{returned} from the Panama Canal when I talked with him. ~~He~~ ^H said that the briefing given by the military down there to himself and Senators ~~a~~ Dole and Laxalt, ^(or) was that the Canal was ^(completely) defensible against sabotage or mob violence ~~where~~ any sort of military action. The only threat feared by the military on the spot is ~~that that might come~~ ^(guerrillas) from urban ~~gorillas~~ or terrorists.

Panama Canal

Nofziger remarked that Reagan ^(remember) is a terrible politician in the conventional ~~sense~~ ^H He can never ~~names~~ ^{names}, he hates crowds. Nofziger says that they joke that after five days on the road they have to introduce him to his own wife.



Hld.
Nofziger recalled that Reagan at Bob Finch's urging had put Bob Haldeman on the Board of Regents in California. Some of the Reagan staff were against this, but Nofziger was for it because he said that Haldeman is basically a conservative, more conservative than Finch, and also they had an understanding with Haldeman that they could count on his vote if they needed it on the Board of Regents. John Ehrlichman, on the other hand, Nofziger said, is basically a liberal. The Student Unrest Commission was set up on Ehrlichman's recommendation and was an extremely liberal body and a major ~~worst~~ blunder from the standpoint of the Nixon administration. Midway through the work of the Student Unrest Commission in 1970, Nofziger was instructed by Haldeman to destroy the Student Unrest Commission. Haldeman told Nofziger that it was the President's direct wish that the Student Unrest Commission be destroyed. Nofziger then planted ~~xx~~ stories in the press which he thought effectively discredited the Commission so by ~~the~~ the time its report came out it was not paid much attention to.

Rgn.
Nofziger mentioned that Reagan is a very religious man, ~~he~~ he is always worrying about what God wants him to do. Nofziger ~~xx~~ says that he tells Reagan that God is not interested in the United States ~~or~~ for he wouldn't give us the Presidents that he gives us.