

Exit Interview with Larry Gilson, Associate Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs

Interviewer: David Alsobrook, Presidential Papers Staff

Date: October 30, 1979; Location: Room 409, Old Executive Office Building

Transcriber: Lyn Kirkland

Alsobrook: Larry, first of all, when did you come to work in the White House?

Gilson: I have been here since January of 1977. When the President was inaugurated, I joined him on the staff.

Alsobrook: Who hired you?

Gilson: I was interviewed and hired the same day by Jack Watson. It was the second week of the administration. Actually, my first status was I was on loan from the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations of which I had been a director. They agreed to lend me to the White House staff for a period of time, and then when that period expired, I moved on to the staff in a regular fashion.

Alsobrook: What do you recall about that interview?

Gilson: Well, there were a couple of notable things. First of all, I had never been in the White House, physically been in the White House, before except on a tour. It was obviously a period of transition. There were people trying to figure out which way to turn---where the Xerox machines [Alsobrook laughs] were and that kind of thing. And I was struck by a couple of things: first, the casualness of the interview which reflected Jack Watson's style. I didn't know that at the time, and the apparent expectation that I had the job even before the interview took place. The discussion was what I would do, not whether I would do it. It was the first time I had ever met Jack and yet we were quickly in a discussion over what we ought to have our mission be over the next couple of months. It was striking in that regard because this was the only new senior staff position created in the White House at the beginning of the Carter administration. All the others had some kind of antecedent, and so we were really talking about what was meant by intergovernmental relations---what the President's role ought to be in dealing with state and local officials; how we ought to link up the cabinet's responsibilities with state and locals. It was the first time that those two functions had been blended in the responsibilities of one senior staff member.

Alsobrook: Do you remember some of the specifics?

Gilson: There was a concern about what we ought to view our constituency to be. Should Jack view himself as an ambassador for state and local officials to the White House? Should he view

himself as the representative of the President in dealing with the state and locals; should he get involved in the management of the grant process which at that time was 60 billion dollars in federal aid flowing each year to states and locals from the federal government; should he be an advocate for state and local concerns; should he be a neutral broker; should he be a convener? Obviously, the answer lies somewhere in there –it is not a pure option one versus another. But there was a real uncertainty at the outset as to which way to go. Should there be essentially a servicing function or a policy influencing function? It evolved that we felt we ought to clearly be the President’s representative in dealing towards the state and locals and not the reciprocal as our principle responsibility, but that was something that was clearly the product of a lot of discussion in January and early February and there had been some discussion in the transition, principally involving Jack Watson and Bruce Kirschenbaum, who was one of my colleagues on Watson’s staff who had the lead responsibility for thinking through this unit during the transition period, but this was a major point of debate at the time. There was also some question about whether we ought to deal in a principle way with the elected officials themselves or with their interest group representatives in town and it was my strong feeling that our principle orientation ought to be with the elected officials themselves. There was kind of a way you can get captive of the national organizations that purport to represent these elected officials and have an insulation between yourself and the officials and that is something we consciously tried to avoid. Obviously, dealing with the interest groups but not at the exclusion of direct contact.

Alsobrook: Going back to that first meeting that you had with Jack Watson, did he describe specifically your duties in addition to bringing up all these other aspects of the job there?

Gilson: He was clearly trying to learn the field himself. He did not have a personal deep background in federal, state and local relations, although he was studying it, talking to a lot of people, and what have you. He said that he wanted me to principally do several things in the first instance. One was frankly to help educate him to the technical aspects of the field. Second, was to focus initially on what I would call the intergovernmental management questions; how does the federal government institutionally relate, not only from the White House but across the departments, with state and local officials. What were we doing wrong? What had earlier administrations done wrong? How could we address those and how do we raise those to a presidential level of attention? The third thing he asked about was how we could make sure that the reorganization process that was then embarking would have an intergovernmental sensitivity, given that almost all the activities of the domestic agencies were in some way influential on the activities of state and local governments, and how do we make sure that that recognition was built into the reorganization process. Those are the initial kinds of things that he looked for me to do. I guess one additional thought; he had people on his staff who had long experience dealing with mayors and local governments and I think he looked to me to focus more on the state dealings, which in fact I did.

Alsobrook: Would you take each one of those areas that you have listed and tell me just briefly a little bit about what you did in each one?

Gilson: Sure. With regard to the.....I don't mean to sound presumptive..... the education process of Jack personally, he and I had a series of scheduled discussions which I prepared for maybe a week at a time over the first several weeks. In each one I tried to bring with me or send to him in advance the basic information on a discrete intergovernmental problem area and then we just had kind of a ranging discussion about that problem area, usually key to some policy area that was eminent. It wasn't just a theoretical discussion, but giving him, and my being more acutely aware of the need to give him more background than he would need later on. And we had several of those discussions in the first few months and they ranged from such topics as the question of the history of general revenue sharing to the role of grant consolidation to the institutional relationship between the cabinet officers and their elected counterparts, both governors and then state department heads. We talked about how earlier administrations have handled the intergovernmental functions, at what level, through what officials. Those would be the kind of things we would talk about and I would try to give him a historical perspective, some sense of the numbers, that kind of thing. And I really kind of was looking for opportunities to do that really through the first year, although it was a concentrated effort for the first few months.

With regard to the reorganization involvement, we monitored, and I personally had the responsibility to do this, the development of the work plan of each of the major reorganization teams housed at OMB in the first year to test their likely impact on the state and local sector to determine whether the state and local folks were adequately involved in the development of those work plans and if they were not to see that they got involved. Several of those early reorganization initiatives obviously had a potential impact---everything in the economic development field; everything in the human service field, and then there were others. So I was really bird-dogging that. So, there was also another reorganization initiative which caused a lot of flailing around and that was the executive office of the President and I had the principle responsibility on Jack's behalf to keep track of that and that, in my view, was not the proudest hour of the early Carter years. Here we were new, trying to get off the ground quickly. A lot of people who had not been in Washington before and really were going to school on how Washington worked and yet at the very time there was a need to be kind of mindful of this other entity over there somewhere at OMB that may be eliminating your job or function, [Alsobrook laughs.] or redefining it, or what have you and I thought that exercise was ill timed frankly, and was highly theoretical in terms of its approach to the problem. It was more conscious about avoiding duplication and clarity of role and of decision making than it was about the fact that there were existing relationships among these key senior staff members that dated back for years and that we didn't need to institutionalize the relationships quite as arbitrarily as, or according to public management theory, as we had done. The people who were conducting these reorganization efforts, that particular one especially, were people who, as far as I could tell, had never run anything themselves and therefore didn't bring a practical experience to it as much as

would be ideal.. For the first 90 to 100 days that was a major distraction and I spent a good deal of time on that when I would rather not. Those are some of the things we were doing.

Alsobrook: Did you make your views known in memo form or face to face with Jack Watson, in terms of the reorganization?

Gilson: Oh, yeh, I was routinely critiquing for him all of the drafts that we could get our hands on of the executive office of the President reorganization. I put it in those terms because there were some boot leg drafts, there were some official drafts, there were early things that you would hear about. We were reacting to rumors in some cases and really working with other people on the staff to develop a strategy on how we would relate to that whole kind of morale. I was communicating with him mainly orally because I didn't want to be a party to the illicit paper flow [Alsobrook laughs]. But there were two or three cases where kind of overall alternate proposals were developed. I had the lead in doing that and we presented those to Jack mainly in the form of draft memos which he would then pass on to OMB or over to Hamilton or to the President.

Alsobrook: Larry, I wanted to ask you about something you mentioned, your role in terms of dealing with state governments around the country. Could you give me some specifics of the type of work you did in that area?

Gilson: Yeh. I'll respond by anecdote. The week-end the President took office there was a tremendous snow storm in the Northeast and we knew by reading newspapers of past administrations that there was supposed to be some sort of federal response to this and the request for disaster relief and all kinds of help. No one really was an expert on where the disaster response ought to come from, who the players were and that kind of thing. The states, mainly the governors, were obviously seeking some help. The disaster requests emanate to the federal government from the states and that was kind of our first experience at case work at a policy level or with senior political officials from the states and we had to put together in quick order a coordinated response to this really severe weather problem. Then we moved quickly into the drought. We had a drought throughout the entire summer of 1977 and we developed a special drought response unit in our office reporting to Jack to deal with that cluster of concerns, so we had that kind of case work problem that was not of our own making but where we were obliged to respond and frequently before we would have ideally liked to get into those kinds of things and that was one cluster of work.

I would call it kind of responsive case work. We also were trying to involve state and local officials more than previously, especially governors, in the policy making activities in which they would have a principle concern. That would deal with welfare reform, national health insurance, extension of general revenue sharing, form and substance of the community development block grants that HUD administers; programs like that. And we had a series of meetings which will continue on those kind of subjects involving people around here.

Sometimes Stu Eizenstat would have the lead and we would encourage him to have such sessions and sometimes we would have the lead. That was a second kind of category of data involvement. The third would be political. We obviously were trying to develop a relationship to our mutual political advantage with some governors whom the president had known from his tenure as a governor and many who had not been in office when he was governor of Georgia. I must say I think we should have devoted more time and attention to that earlier than we did. Although I think it is fair to say that our relationship with democratic governors is about as good at this point as with any category of public official. There are a variety of reasons for that. But there was some political dealing, even in those days. And there was kind of a fourth category and final one which is kind of specialized care and feeding, I guess you would say, of people who had been our friends who we wanted to go the extra mile for, and that could go from anything as small as where they would request a cabinet officer to appear at some function and that person might be disinclined to do it. We might make an extra effort to help them secure a speaker. We couldn't become a speaker's bureau for everybody but we would try to do it for some. That would be one end of the scale. On the other end there might be a really major problem where a governor was seeking funds from some agency. We would not be in a position as far as a decision on the funds but we would help them get a good hearing and get an expedited decision from the agency. Those would be the kinds of things we would be doing more or less routinely. The pattern has changed a little bit from those early days but the categories are still there.

Alsobrook: Larry, are there specific special assignments or projects that you worked on that have given you a great deal of satisfaction over the last two and half years or so?

Gilson: Well, there have been three or four kind of major areas in which I have worked that would fit that description. In the summer of 1977 I had the lead to put together what we called the President's federal aid reform initiative. This was an attempt to look at the way this federal government disbursed the roughly sixty billion dollars to state and local governments each year in the forms of grants-in-aid through a variety of grant devices ranging from revenue sharing to block grants to categorical grants. We were disbursing that kind of money. There had chronically been problems about over burdening local governments on paper work, both at the application and reporting stages; problems about accounting procedures, audit guidelines and compliance with various national requirements dealing with citizen participation, affirmative action, Davis-Bacon, endangered species, and on down the list. What I did was to recommend in about June of about 1977 that Jack asked me to take on as a major assignment an effort to try to rationalize this process. And I did that. I brought together a team of people from outside of the White House-----one from a federal regional office, one from Mayor Washington's office in Washington, D.C, and one from a state government, working at that time for Governor Pat Lucy of Wisconsin and coordinating that team, three months stand, we did develop a series of presidential directives and initiatives intending to streamline the operation of that federal aid system. (18:05)

The President announced that on September 9 of 1977 and that was really the first major area of identifiable responsibility that I had apart from normal routine business. In January of '78 I went to Jack with a suggestion that flowed out of that experience for an additional piece of work and that was that the smaller jurisdictions around the country, small towns, rural counties had an especially difficult time competing for grants and other assistance for which they were legally eligible and I suggested that we undertake a special rural development strategy. This was at the time that the urban policy was being put together so it was a combination of both experience of putting together the federal aid reform and seeing the urban policy unfold that I saw a gap that needed to be filled and I then developed a specific work plan which I presented to Jack and which we then forwarded to the President for his approval, which he did approve, of how we ought to proceed to deal with rural development problems. I was working on the urban policy at the time also but this was a major initiative which came from me and was not an assignment made by others to me. What that triggered, once the President signed off, was a sustained effort, continuing today, to make a major White House rural effort on a level that had never been experienced before.

Alsobrook: At that time, Larry, were you working closely with members of the domestic policy staff who were putting together the urban policy?

Gilson: I had some dealings with them. I was dealing with them routinely all the time. I wouldn't say it was a totally harmonious relationship, but it wasn't utterly acrimonious either. It would not be hard to tell we were not on the same staff. I guess that is the way to put it. In urban policy there were a couple of pieces which Stu Eizenstat asked Jack to take the lead on. One was the state role and how the states ought to be induced to become more active in dealing with urban problems in their own area and it was in that respect that I had the most direct involvement. We put together various alternate incentive programs to try to provide inducements for the states to become more directly, intensely involved while allowing them some flexibility about how they would go about doing that and there would be money that would flow to them and various other kinds of carrots that would be available to provide that inducement. And that sense I was involved in urban policy and that is the main area in which our office was involved. The rural, on the other hand, was different. There had been no one on Eizenstat's staff who had the clear lead responsibility for rural development. Lynn Daft had the overall responsibility but it was mainly focusing on agriculture, not on rural development, which had a heavier component toward human services, economic development, social services than it did on farming. In the course of developing the work plan on rural, I worked closely with Lynn Daft and in fact there's been a collaborative effort between the two staffs heavily ever since. I think the bulk of the work, it is fair to say, has emanated from Jack's office, but it has been a total collaboration in terms of policy development. That rural effort produced, over a year or so, a series of six light house rural development initiatives all involving the packaging of existing resources, the streamlining of procedures, building on the federal aid reform as the base, and was kind of a policy document,

but where we were trying to achieve practical improvements in the way services were delivered in a way that people in rural America could actually see in short order, and not just continue the promise that sometime in the future nirvana would arrive [Alsobrook laughs], so it was very practical oriented.

Alsobrook: Why was it that your rural program came up at the same time that they were working on the urban aid bill?

Gilson: Well, there are a couple of reasons. There are about 50 million people who live outside of the urban areas and they were feeling decidedly left out. The urban policy, both in its advance billing and in the method of its promotion and announcement by the President got tremendous press. In fact, I think the polls showed by the summer of '78 that more people were aware of the urban policy than any other Carter Administration initiative and also more people had a higher opinion of that than any other initiative that he had undertaken at that point. There was a feeling among rural people and rural advocates in the congress and around town that they had been left out and that somehow all these goodies were being handed out and they weren't in line. This was, of course, akin to what they had been feeling for years. There was always kind of a second class citizen mentality about rural folk that somehow the money goes to urban areas, notwithstanding the fact that according to most objective distress criteria, rural needs are greater than urban needs. That was one area of concern. Second, I was concerned as well about the politics of it. The Carter constituency in 1976 was much more heavily rural than the average democratic presidential candidate; that, coupled with the fact of decline in voter turnout and the decline in population in the Northeast industrial cities, meant that the urban vote was going to be a smaller share in succeeding presidential elections than it had been in the past, so you had to look for democratic votes other than in the big cities. Coupling that with his natural affinity for small places, and vice versa, I thought for political reasons it was very important that we pursue a rural policy, plus the needs just dictated it. You had a much higher infant mortality rate, a much lower incidence of number of doctors per thousand of population, much poorer housing stock. Almost all the criteria suggested that we needed to address these problems. On the merits, it was key we focus on it.

Alsobrook: Larry, were there other people within the White House and within the administration who were strongly with you on your rural...?

Gilson: Everyone was focusing on urban at that point. There was, in a sense, almost a vacuum which I was able to move to fill and I don't mean to sound as if I was doing this unilaterally, but having identified a need, it was possible to move much more easily in the rural area than it would have been in the urban area where everyone wanted to play in the game, especially so since the urban folks were all focusing on the urban stuff and we were able to get some momentum up and get some successes behind us before the urban policy attention had been diverted. So, in that sense I think there was almost an open field. We really worked to nurture the relationship with Stu Eizenstat's staff, partly growing out of the urban experience, I think it's fair to say, where

there was some view early on, I think some misunderstanding about Jack's policy role. And I didn't want to duplicate that understanding and reproduce the hard feelings and the wasted effort that sometimes resulted from a view on Stu's part that Jack was intruding into his legitimate policy priorities and concerns and so we worked with Stu from the beginning, and I think that has paid dividends throughout. And we also work with the agencies, particularly with the Department of Agriculture.

Alex McGuriss, who was the assistant secretary for rural development, was with us throughout and we tried to build a constituency for this around the government, around town. Part of the problem was that there was a built in urban constituency. There was an expectation flowing out of the democratic platform that there would be a major urban effort in this administration. There was no comparable expectation on the rural side, so we tried to do things which would involve people, which would give them a sense of movement on our part which would show them that things were actually happening, that results were occurring so that we would lend some credibility to an effort that did not have a built in constituency. And that was an early emphasis. It was reflected in the types of issues we took on first, focusing on rural health early because we thought we could win an early victory there, which we did. We had Jack go on the road and make a lot of rural trips. The mere fact of going into small towns was significant in terms of the constituencies' view of how seriously we took this. We made, I think, five or six two or three day swings through different parts of rural America and the rural network began to work and they said "ah ha, here is a guy who is not kidding. He's coming out to see us rather than making us come to see him." So, in those ways we tried to build a constituency and I think it has helped us out.

Alsobrook: Larry, you mentioned the President's obvious affinity for rural America and things rural in nature. Was there direct presidential involvement during the time that you were working on this?

Gilson: Uh, presidential involvement took two forms. We went to him with the proposal in the first instance to get into this area and said here's about what we think we can do in the first year, here's our plan of attack, here's about the resource allocation we would propose to make to this; *whadya* think? And he signed off on that proposal. That would have been in the spring of 1978 and then as the White House rural development initiative got ready for announcement, he was personally involved in announcing several of them and those announcements spanned the summer and fall of 1978 and into the spring of 1979. Those have been the two things. It would be stretching to say that he called us up one day and said, "you know, I'm from a small town and I wish you would do these things," [Alsobrook laughs] but it was clear from the notes on the memoranda we got back from him and in his personal comments at the announcement that this had struck a responsive chord. We had talking points, of course, for each announcement he made and he used the substantive *announcables* from the talking points but he wove it in with his

own personal experience in a way which reflected kind of his orientation and his personal commitment to it.

Alsobrook: Larry, I think you were going to tell me maybe about some more special assignments that we can categorize.

Gilson: The rural ones kinda have dominated my attention over the last 18 months or so.

Alsobrook: Along that same line, before we go on, I was curious, is there anything in your background that would make rural things a special interest to you?

Gilson: I grew up in Los Angeles. [Alsobrook laughs.] I guess I have a bias for how I wanted to spend my time at the White House and that drove me to the rural issues, in addition to the other reasons I mentioned, and that is that I have an orientation towards problem solving, towards specific actionable items which we can take on and reach a conclusion on-----closure on, you might say----rather than some blue sky, long term, maybe it will happen, maybe it won't, kind of approach. And it seems to me that what is unique about the White House is the ability to put together resources, to capture national attention and the attention of the agencies and the bureaucracies that run them and get something actually done, and there seemed more of a ripe opportunity to do that in the rural areas than in any other field, so I guess that was another motivating factor.

End of tape one; start of tape two.

But an additional area in which I have had special assignments is in the field of energy. This is one of those fields that everybody and his grandmother has been involved with around here. I went to Jack, and I guess there may be a pattern developing here. It's obvious. In almost every one of these special areas, I have gone to Watson and taken the initiative and said "here's something I think you ought to get into and he's responded to that and we have discussed it and maybe refined the idea, but the initiatives have come in many cases from me or my colleagues and peers and then we have approached Watson and ultimately the President, rather than the other way around, and I think that is as it should be, but it is not always the way it is around here. The energy field, I felt that there was such a preoccupation with the legislative program that we were missing opportunities for the President to appear to be a decisive decision maker and action taker in ways that could be handled administratively without requiring new congressional action. I had that view for some time. I was kind of keeping a score card of things I thought we could do that did not depend on new law. Right about that time, and now that is several months ago, Pat Caddell wrote a memo to the President in which he laid out strategy for how the President could move in the energy field that was along similar lines. I hadn't been aware that he was working on it and he was emphasizing, again, the notion of the President coming across as a personal leader not dependent on Washington for the actions he would take, but allowing him to address tough problems on his own.

Well, the President got that memo from Pat and he asked Jack to review it confidentially. Jack and I happen to have been discussing this area of concern that I had right about that time and Jack asked me to take a lead in reviewing the Caddell memorandum and suggesting a specific action plan to the President. And we did that. I must say, we went to the President twice. The first time we went back to him, the President was not happy about it. He said that it was too general, that it was less specific than what Pat Caddell had provided and that what we didn't need was another committee to study this. What we did need was to get on with it. And I developed a 21 page memo which was far longer than anything that I had been responsible for sending the President up to that point and it suggested five or six areas in which he could take the initiative without congress being required to act, and then a series of very specific initiatives within each category. And that was that so-called energy action agenda went to him in I think it was August of '79 and that produced a series of follow-up steps in which I have been engaged both on the energy conservation side to deal with specific things such as home weatherization, expansion of ride sharing, improved auto efficiency, modifications in the way the federal government made loans and grants to people to be energy efficient, and then some alternate energy production options which he could pursue, again, without legislation, dealing with small scale hydroelectric facilities, coal bed methane gas that could be recaptured, use of wind, geothermal, and other things where we had existing authority that we were not exercising fully.

Alsobrook: And during this time were you looking into some of these various projects? I think there is one in Davis, California?

Gilson: Yeah. All these initiatives kind of knit together. One of the rural initiatives we undertook was a rural energy effort. And what we had in mind there was to help as many small communities approach energy self-sufficiency with regard to their commercial, industrial and residential needs, as possible and we actually developed small scale hydro, coal bed methane, gasohol, and a few other initiatives specifically targeted to rural, so we had a base of experience and some modest initiatives on which to build and the energy initiatives really flowed from those rural ones. That was in regard to the production side. You mentioned Davis, California. On the conservation side, which is mainly what Davis did, we did look both at site visits and through contacts that we already had, at about half a dozen examples, nationally known examples, of communities that had done extensive work themselves, and that would include Davis, California; Portland, Oregon; Seattle; Denver, in regard to commuter patterns; and others. Baltimore would be on that list. We really developed our proposals based on those real life examples.

Alsobrook: Were you working closely with Ester Peterson's staff at some point because it seems like I remember some press that mentioned energy conservation?

Gilson: What Ester's people were doing was to try to provide a catalogue of what non-governmental energy conservation efforts were under way. What were citizens groups doing? What was the voluntary sector doing? And we did work with them in trying to get a sense of what the universe looked like so that we could be encouraging and facilitating those efforts and

relating to them as much as we could. It was not a sustained relationship, I wouldn't say, but it is a case where they were in the same field mucking around that we were mucking around in [Alsobrook laughs] and we bumped into each other from time to time. There was one other respect with which we dealt with Ester Peterson's office on energy and that was that I frequently had the lead to develop the subject matter for presidential domestic trips. This has been true for some time, but it became a more regular pattern when the President was more regularly talking about energy on domestic trips and I was almost always involved in deciding what he should focus on, whether there was an announcement he could make, whether he ought to make a site visit to showcase some particular notable achievement of initiative and because Ester Peterson's folks had a catalog of some of those local initiatives I ended up working with them on that.

Alsobrook: Larry, we have almost approached our time limit so I have couple of real specific housekeeping questions to ask you, but I want to add this. Someday somebody from the future library may want to interview you in greater depth than we have done today. So, I want you to understand that.

Gilson: That would be fine.

Alsobrook: Let's see, I need a permanent address and telephone number for you.

Gilson: OK. Home address is 2110 Light Oaks Drive, Alexandria, Va., 22306, and the phone number is 765-1645

Alsobrook: Is there an alumni organization that will always know your most current address that we could contact?

Gilson: Well, I am an alumnus of Claremont Men's College in California and they have more or less kept track of me. I have tried to avoid it but it doesn't seem to work.

Alsobrook: Could you briefly tell me about your future plans?

Gilson: I am leaving the White House to become Vice President of Government Affairs for AMTRAC. I will have the responsibility for coordinating AMTRAC's dealings with the congress, with the executive branch, including the White House, with state and local governments, and with the private sector, both the rest of the transportation industry and the business community at large, and that will begin on Nov. 1, 1979.

Alsobrook: I think we have sketched in all of your involvement in the White House. Is there anything briefly that you think you can touch on that we may have missed?

Gilson: Well, we haven't spoken about political involvement very extensively and in the course of being at the White House obviously there is always a backing and *forthing* between substance and politics and I feel fairly comfortable thinking that is a good idea, that there should be that connection. Obviously, as the election approached, and to a lesser extent when the 1977 off-year

election took place, our office was involved in relating institutionally to both democratic office holders and democratic candidates. With an on-coming 1980 elections, in the evenings, on lunch hours, and that kind of thing, there were discussions about strategy; how we ought to relate to state and local officials; how we ought to make them part of the constituency; how we ought to lock them in in terms of endorsements and help; and I was involved in a fair number of those strategies sessions spanning much of 1979.

Alsobrook: Where there certain people who were always there?

Gilson: Well, Tim Kraft was the convener of these discussions in most cases but I guess you could say there was a sub group with which I would most frequently deal and that would be David Rubinstein of Stu Eizenstat's staff, Paul Maslen, who was Pat Caddell's main assistant, and Stav Burnett. The stuff I was focusing on was specifically how to make sure that we were packaging our accomplishments in a way which would be well understood and appreciated, how to anticipate the political implications of the decisions we were making, and how to translate our small town rural efforts into political benefits, as well as substantive ones.

Alsobrook: Well, I really appreciate your taking the time from your busy day.

Gilson: My pleasure.

Alsobrook: And I hope to talk to you again someday maybe.