

Interview With Wolf Blitzer, Jill Dougherty, and Claire Shipman of the Cable News Network

August 25, 1996

Teenage Drug Use

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, first of all, thank you so much for spending some time with us.

You've asked the American public to give you credit for your achievements. The budget deficit has gone down; there have been millions of new jobs created; the crime rate has gone down. But are you also willing to accept responsibility for the dramatic increase in drug use among young people since you've taken office?

The President. Well, I'm certainly willing to say that our best efforts have not turned it around, and I'm very concerned about it.

I talked about this in the State of the Union Address. I've been telling the American people for over a year that—myself, before we had a study—I've been making full disclosure here that we had a crime rate going down but a youth crime rate going up; we had a drug use rate going down but a youth drug use rate going up. Now, finally, the youth crime rate has started to go down. So about the only trend in all of America, whether it's economic or social, that's going in the wrong direction is this youth drug use. And it began, apparently, with a change in attitudes about 1990. The patterns, interestingly enough, are the same in Canada and in several European countries where both drug and tobacco use are going up among young people who either don't think it's dangerous or think they can take the risks. And I'm very, very concerned about it.

Mr. Blitzer. Well, the accusation that Bob Dole and many other Republicans, of course, make is that someone was asleep on the job during these past 3½, 4 years while there's been this explosion in drug use among young people.

The President. Well, that's not true, because we were not asleep on the job. And that's why I've been talking about it. Like I said, I've been talking about it a lot longer than they have; they waited for a study and an election season. I have been telling the American people in all these community

stops I've been making for months and months and months, going back a year, that the one thing that's not going right in this country is that the drug use rate among young people is going up.

I don't blame them for it—Senator Dole and Mr. Gingrich—even though I think they're partly responsible for not supporting my safe and drug-free schools program and the other education, prevention, and treatment programs I've asked them for. But this is a very complicated thing. It's obviously going on in other countries, and it obviously started—all the experts say it began in 1990 with a change in attitudes about how dangerous these drugs are. We've done—it is true that we cut back the drug office in the White House, but I don't think anybody believes 100 people in a Washington bureaucracy control what happens in drug use.

We have been more aggressive at interdiction than previous administrations. We have tried to support—we have, in fact, supported more school-based programs like the D.A.R.E. program for law enforcement officials. I have tried to be as active as I could in lifting up these programs that work at the community level and in helping people. But whatever we've done has not worked, and we all need to face that. But I don't know that placing political blame helps us very much. If anybody has got a better idea, I'd be happy to look at it. We have got to do something to turn it around.

But it's clear—if you just talk to young people, it's clear that there has been in the last 5 years or so a real change in attitudes among a core of young people about whether it's dangerous or not, and that seems to be right at the root of what the problem is.

1996 Election

Ms. Dougherty. Mr. President, in his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention, Bob Dole indicted your administration for what he called, and I'll quote here, “a corps of the elite who never grew up, never did anything real, never sacrificed, never suffered, and never learned.” Do you look upon that as a generational attack or an attack on you personally, and how do you answer it?

The President. Probably a little bit of both. And a lot of it is just pure politics. Just

take the young people—he's attacking the young people in the White House. One of the young men who works for me lived in a house trailer when he was a boy. George Stephanopoulos' people were Greek immigrants and clergy. And they're not all young. Leon Panetta is the son of Italian immigrants, a walnut farmer—he's a walnut farmer.

I just think it's just another example of the kind of political rhetoric that's all too prevalent in our society today: If you can't defend your record and you can't run against the other person's record and their proposals, attack them personally, demean them, smear them, try to get other people to look down on them. I don't want to do that. And I have given our people strict instructions that we are to talk about the differences in our record and the differences in our proposal. We are not to attack them in that way.

Ms. Dougherty. But isn't age an issue in this campaign?

The President. Well, I don't know if he was making age an issue. You know, I've got a lot of older people working in the White House as well. General McCaffrey is part of the White House staff, and he's a four-star general and, before he left uniform, was the most decorated serving American soldier. So they're not all young. We're none of us as young as we used to be or nearly as young as we were when we showed up there. I think I'm the oldest man my age in America now.

Ms. Dougherty. But is the age of Mr. Dole an issue?

The President. No. I think the age of his ideas should be an issue. I think that people should evaluate which one of us can best lead them to the future. But there is no evidence that he is not in good health. There is no evidence that he was not able to physically discharge the duties of the Senate majority leader. He was in the Congress for 35 years. There was never any evidence—he had one health problem, and by all accounts he seems, thankfully, to have completely rebounded from it.

I think he would have to govern in a different way, perhaps, than I do. But you can be an effective President without putting in the hours I do. You don't have to do it exactly the way I do. And he wouldn't have, probably, the same agenda I would; it might not

require that kind of time. But I think—I have no evidence that he could not serve effectively. I want to run on the differences in our ideas and our records, not on his age.

Ms. Shipman. Mr. President, how do you assess Bob Dole as a politician? Imagine yourself for a moment a political strategist working for Bob Dole's opponent; how would you assess his strengths and weaknesses as a politician?

The President. Well, that's hard for me to do. But I think that his strengths are that he was in the Congress for 35 years and he knows how the system works. And he has a certain, probably, credibility and acquaintance with the people with whom he'd have to deal with if he were President and who would communicate him to the rest of the country. So I would say that is a strength. I also believe, as I've said many times, I think he genuinely loves our country and is often, not always but often right on his foreign policy instincts. Sometimes I think he's dead wrong, but a lot of times he's been right—not nearly as isolationist as some members of his party, some of the leaders.

I think that the weakness I think he has is that I don't—from my perspective, I think his—I don't know that he thought through why he wanted to be President, what he wanted to do. So that here, right before the general election, long after he was the nominee, he adopts an economic theory that he had rejected all of his public life, this big tax cut which we can't afford, which will cause a big increase in the deficit and also cause bigger cuts in education, the environment, and the medical programs than we can afford. So I would say the idea, the theory of his campaign is the biggest weakness.

The other weakness, I think, is the record that he and Mr. Gingrich established in the 2 years when they were in control of Congress. I think they were wrong on a lot of things. And in the 2 years when I was—the first 2 years of my administration, the things they fought me on, I think the evidence has proved that I was right and they weren't.

The economic plan, they said it would increase the deficit and break up the economy; it reduced the deficit by 60 percent and cut interest rates, and we got 10 million jobs. The crime bill, they said we were going to

take people's guns away and the 100,000 police was a bad idea; and the crime rate is going down for 4 years in a row. They fought the family leave law; 12 million people have taken family leave, not lost their jobs, and taken care of their families and no harm to the economy. So I'd say those are the weaknesses.

Ms. Shipman. But you mentioned as a weakness, for example, his economic plan that he just announced. And the polls show that his numbers have gone up after he's been talking about the tax cut.

The President. Oh, no, I don't mean that it's bad politics, but I think it's bad for the country. Although I think the country will figure it out; I think they'll figure it out.

You know, we did this before, and it didn't work. As I told the people here, there's not any individual watching this interview that would go to the bank and borrow money to give himself or herself a tax cut. And why would they hire someone to do it? Most middle class people will pay almost as much money as they get in tax cuts in higher interest rates.

The Republicans—not me, the Republicans—last year put out a document which said if we don't get under a balanced budget plan, interest rates will be at least 2 percent higher. So if their plan prevails over mine, their interest rates will be 2 percent higher. We already know that. Wall Street doesn't believe in this plan. None of the business magazines believe in it. None of the commentators believe in it. Everybody knows that it's not going to do anything but blow up the deficit.

If interest rates go up 2 percent, by the time people get through paying their home mortgage payments, their car payments, their credit card payments, they're going to eat up almost all the tax cut they get. They'd be better off under my tax cut, which is targeted to education and childrearing and IRA savings for first-time home buying and health care, and is fully paid for, and will keep interest rates coming down and the economy going. That's my answer to that. His is popular at first blush, and a lot of the component parts of it I like immensely myself, but we cannot afford it. It's more than we can afford. It's better to do my targeted tax cut and bal-

ance the budget and grow the economy than do his big old blown-up tax cut and blow up interest rates and wreck the economy. That's the choice.

President's Record

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, a lot of the criticism, though, that he and others have lashed against you is that there was one Bill Clinton the first 2 years of your administration, more traditional Democrat with a Democratic majority in Congress, and that another Bill Clinton emerged these last 2 years—a new Democrat going back to your campaign of '92.

The President. There's a huge problem with that argument. You can't marshal facts to support it.

Mr. Blitzer. Well, the health care initiative seemed—the accusation is that it was a Federal takeover of the health care system.

The President. Wait, wait. Let's take the health care.

Mr. Blitzer. That's the accusation.

The President. Yes, and when did that accusation gain concert? After the interest groups that didn't want anything to be done to the health care system and spent \$300 million against it.

When the health care plan was first—first—released and only experts who knew something about what they were talking about commented on it, there wasn't a single, solitary soul said it was a Government takeover of the health system. Everybody says, "This is a moderate plan; this is a mainstream plan; this is a market-oriented plan."

Mr. Blitzer. But your enemies succeeded in creating the impression—

The President. Well, they had lots of money on their side. They had—all the vested interest groups were campaigning against us because they didn't want change. So I just point out—you can't give me another example. Let me give you some examples.

First 2 years, Democratic Congress, we reduced the deficit; gave 15 million working families a tax cut; radically reformed the student loan program to lower costs and improve the repayment terms; passed the national service program, something I campaigned on. We passed the Brady bill. We passed the family and medical leave law. We

passed the toughest crime bill in American history, with the Republican leadership fighting against us. It had 60 death penalties; it had 100,000 police; it had a ban on assault weapons. They were fighting against all that. That is what we did. We passed a bill to protect the pensions of 40 million workers; it was all private sector stuff.

So if you look at our record in the first 2 years, it was a moderate, mainstream, progressive record. And the economy is in the shape it's in today mostly because of what we did in the first 2 years, not what we've done in the last 2.

Education and Job Creation

Mr. Blitzer. All right. Very briefly, if you had to pick two or three priorities, unfinished business for a second term, what are the two biggest—two or three biggest priorities, specific ones?

The President. Okay. I'll give you one big one with two component parts. We've got our economic house in order today, and we're facing our social problems. That is, welfare is down; child support collections are up. We've already stipulated the only bad social indicator is teen drug use. The other things are moving in the right direction. But we don't have a country where every person can take advantage of this new global economy.

So my first priority is education, is making community college as universal in 4 years as high school is today, with a \$1,500 refundable tax credit for the first 2 years of education after high school, and making college available to everybody by a \$10,000 tax deduction, hooking up all the classrooms to the information superhighway, and passing our other educational initiatives.

My second priority—for the same purpose, to hook everybody into it—is devising ways to move people from welfare to work, so that this doesn't turn out to be just a cruel budget cut—welfare reform—but we actually create jobs for people to move from welfare to work and other unemployed people, and creating incentives to focus on the inner cities and the isolated rural areas which have been left behind. Those are two big priorities we have to focus on, and we can make a real difference if we do.

Russia

Ms. Dougherty. Mr. President, we wanted to try to get an international question in here and, quickly, one concerning Russia. And the essence of the question is, who is in charge in Russia right now? And there's a quick incident last week, where you had General Lebed, the security adviser, getting orders, some very important orders on Chechnya, and he said he didn't think that those orders had come from the President at all, that perhaps they came from somebody else. Now, do you have any explanation for that, and who has their finger on the button in Russia?

The President. Well, I believe that President Yeltsin is in charge in Russia. That's my best information. I think we all know that he was exhausted after the campaign, that he's had some health problems. But I want to assure everybody that's what they are, they're health problems. Keep in mind, when he was not in the best health he waged a campaign for President through 11 time zones. We in America have three, except in Alaska and Hawaii. So he is clearly in charge.

Now, the Russian system has always been, for the last 2 or 3 years, somewhat chaotic compared to what we normally think of as ours. But I believe that they're making—and they seem to be making a little progress in Chechnya now. But what we all want for President Yeltsin is to get the rest he needs, get the medical treatment he needs, and return to full health and full steam. But there's no question that he's making the big decisions there.

Ms. Dougherty. Do you think he should come to the U.S. or maybe to Europe for some treatment?

The President. Oh, I think that's entirely up to him and his doctors; they can make that decision.

Whitewater

Ms. Shipman. Mr. President, for the last 2 or 3 years you and the First Lady have been under almost constant attack for Whitewater, to some extent, Travelgate. You have made the case that there has been no evidence, no proof of any criminal wrongdoing on either account to this point. But putting that aside for a minute—

The President. No proof of civil wrongdoing. The Republican law firm hired by the Resolution Trust Corporation, at a cost of nearly \$4 million of the taxpayers' money, said that there was no ground to believe—not criminal but anything you could even bring an ordinary lawsuit against me or the First Lady or her law firm. It was not her law firm that was fined by the Resolution Trust Corporation; it was Kenneth Starr's law firm, the special counsel, who did not reveal that his law firm was under investigation by the RTC at the time he took over.

Now, nobody in America knows that, for reasons I—I would have thought that was big news when this big Government agency comes out and says we didn't do anything wrong.

Ms. Shipman. But we're still waiting for the special counsel's report, so we'll put—

The President. Well, we may be waiting a long time for that.

Ms. Shipman. Put all of that aside for a minute.

The President. That's why we got a new special counsel, so it would go on past the election and into next year. That was the whole purpose.

Ms. Shipman. Putting that aside, at least a dozen or more of your close friends, people you've worked with, your staff, have been pulled into this, have troubles because of the investigations into this. Some have lost their jobs; some face financial ruin; some are serving time. What do you think about that? How does that make you feel? And do you feel in any way responsible for their fate?

The President. Oh, sure, I feel terrible about it. And I feel terrible that the abuse of the special counsel law that we have seen has taken place. I sure do.

And Senator D'Amato—Senator Dole's national cochairman and Senator Dole's choice to be the ethics spokesman of the Senate—I feel bad that he could say the kind of things they said to a woman like Maggie Williams, who passed two lie detector tests, and still they stand up and smear and smear. I feel bad that totally innocent people can have their lives upset and have massive legal bills, only on a bunch of charges, and that now we've turned everything upside down in our legal system. Now you have to prove

yourself innocent. There's no presumption of innocence. Somebody makes a charge; you prove yourself innocent; the next story is the new charges, not that you've proved yourself innocent.

And I think this whole thing is turned badly upside down, and I think it has distorted America's system of government. I think a lot of injustice has been done. I certainly do. I have continued to cooperate. I have done everything I could. But this is not good for America. And there are a lot of Americans who will not serve in public life, I'll bet, because they've seen this now.

Ms. Shipman. You don't feel any personal responsibility for their fate, that—

The President. Of course I do. How could I know when I ran for President that the Republicans would actually get the press, some people in the press, to go along with the first special counsel in history that had nothing to do with the President's campaign, nothing to do with the President's administration, and where there was no evidence of wrongdoing by the President or the First Lady, and then proceed to report things so that half the people would think we had done something wrong and were covering something up? How could any person in their right mind have known that?

Yes, I feel terrible about it. And I'll tell you what I'm going to do—

Ms. Shipman. Some of these investigations have turned up wrongdoing on the part of some of the people.

The President. Well, let me tell you something. If you go to any town in America and you would give a special counsel no other job but to look into a person and anybody that person ever knew and you gave them more FBI resources than were used in the World Trade Center bombing—more FBI resources than were used in the World Trade Center bombing—and an unlimited amount of time and an unlimited checkbook, I'll bet you they could find some things wrong elsewhere, too. I'll bet you could.

And I think everybody—sooner or later, everybody is going to know that. But there has still not been a single, solitary shred of evidence of wrongdoing by me, by my wife, by her law firm, by my administration. And if you look at the evidence in the D'Amato

committee of my record as Governor, witness after witness after witness after witness said, "This man did not do wrong. He went out of his way to do the right thing, the ethically right thing, even when he had to tell his supporters no."

Now, that wasn't news. So we have created a climate here where any old charge goes and you've got to prove yourself innocent. And then when you do, you don't even get credit for that; there's a new charge there. Now, that's the climate we're living in.

Do I feel terrible about the completely innocent middle class people who have been wrecked financially by this? I certainly do. But I didn't abuse them. And it's high time that the people who abuse have to take responsibility for what they do. I will take responsibility for my actions, but the people who have abused them should be held accountable by somebody, somewhere, sometime.

Meanwhile, I'm going to help them pay their legal bills if it's the last thing I ever do and I stay healthy.

Mr. Blitzer. You're going to pay legal bills out of your pocket?

The President. I'm going to spend whatever. When I'm not President anymore, if those people have legal bills, when I can, I'm going to do everything I can to help raise the money or to earn it myself and pay it. I think it is outrageous that these middle class people have had their lives wrecked by pure, naked, raw politics. It is wrong.

White House Travel Office

Ms. Shipman. Mr. President, do you want to see then some sort of legislation your staff has indicated similar to the legislation they're drafting in Congress that would pay the legal expenses of Billy Dale?

The President. No. Well, see, here's the deal. Some of the people actually, ironically, can get their legal fees paid. This is an interesting thing. Some of the people can get their legal fees paid if they've ever been a target of the investigation. But the people that they're really working over are people they just keep calling as witnesses, just over and over and over and over again; they've never accused them of doing anything wrong. They're just playing with them, just having

a big time, letting them run up 100, 200, \$300,000 in legal bills. They don't care; they've got all the money in the world. They have no evidence they did anything wrong.

I mean, if the American people really knew what had gone on in this thing they would be appalled—appalled. But they haven't found out what's going on, and I don't know that they ever will.

Ms. Shipman. But you don't support legislation to help pay those sorts of legal bills?

The President. It depends on what the facts are. Yes, if people have never been accused of doing anything wrong, there's no evidence that they did anything wrong, they never agreed to plead guilty to any crime, they never agreed to do anything, and they got big bills just because Mr. D'Amato's committee called them three or four or five times, you bet, I would support legislation to pay their bills.

But I think you have to be very careful about whose legal bills you reimburse for what purpose. You have to be very careful that you're not reimbursing the legal bills of people who admitted wrongdoing, I think, in this case or any other. But I think that there is a strong case to be made when these people—you know, I don't know how people defend themselves. The American people can't be sure that some people now don't plead guilty to crimes in the face of a special prosecutor because they can't afford to defend themselves.

Teen Pregnancy

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, let me switch gears a little bit. I think we've exhausted the subject for now, but I'm sure we'll get back to it at some point in subsequent interviews.

A very interesting conversation I had this morning in Chicago on the way to the airport—an African-American cab driver from the inner city in Chicago knew I was about to interview you. And he said, "You know, I have one question I'd like to ask the President." And I said, "Go ahead, what is it?" He said, "You know, I dread every day. I have a 13-year-old daughter—I dread every day this conversation that I'm going to have with her—one day she's going to come home and say to me, 'Daddy, I'm pregnant.' I know it's going to happen, and I don't know what

to tell her if she tells me that. I know he has a daughter.”

If your daughter were to come home from school some day and say, “Daddy, I’m pregnant,” what would you do? What would you tell her?

The President. Well, first of all, I want to compliment you and the other members of the press corps for permitting me to have a private family life and permitting my daughter to have a private life. And I think if I were to answer that question in just the way you asked it, I would be violating the very thing that I’ve asked you to give her. So I can’t do that.

But I can tell you this—two things. One, I’ve worked as hard as I know how to try to reduce the teen pregnancy rate with things that I know work and by promoting things that I know work. And we now have this national commission that’s going to try to make it outlive my administration and go on.

And secondly, I would hope that every daughter would feel that she could come home and tell her father that. I would say to that cab driver that he should be talking to his daughter now about all this in the hope that she never will get pregnant, but that if she ever did, God forbid, he should be able to thank his lucky stars that she wanted to come home and tell her daddy that. And they’ll figure out what to do. They’ll do the right thing. That’s what families are for. And he ought to look his daughter in the eye and say, “I don’t want this to happen to you, and we ought to talk about it. But if it ever does, please come home and tell me. I’m the first person you ought to come to.”

Adoption

Mr. Blitzer. As a father, I can totally relate. Now, let me follow up a comment that the First Lady made. She mused recently about possibly adopting, now that Chelsea’s getting ready to go to college. Is that something you’ve seriously thought about, a man 50 years old?

The President. Yes, well, we’ve talked about it on and off over the years. I’ll bet you we first discussed it, oh, probably 10 years ago, 10, 11, 12 years ago, just the two of us, because we always wanted more children. Although we’ve been immensely happy

with Chelsea, we’ve always wanted more children, and it just never worked out.

We also are both intensely committed to adoption. Hillary was ecstatic when, in the minimum wage bill, that \$5,000 tax credit for adoption and the bill banning cross-racial adoption prejudice, you know, all that passed. She was so happy.

So we talk about it. But I think we need to, first of all, get this election by us, and then we need to really sit there and seriously think about what the implications of this would be for a child. Do you want to bring a child into the White House? I mean, adopted kids have enough trouble adjusting as it is, unless they’re just infants. And I wouldn’t want us to go in front of anybody else. I wouldn’t want any kind of special treatment. We’ve got too many young couples out there trying to raise a family. And then if we decided we ought to wait until we get out of the White House, would we be too old—me especially; she’s younger than I am.

So those are the things we’d have to think about. But in general, I find it very appealing, and I think that—you know, we talk a lot about abortion and what could be made to make abortion more rare. And I think if we had a climate in this country of really—an adoption climate that was trusted by people, and we didn’t have these hundreds of thousands of kids just trapped in foster care forever and a day, that the whole idea of adoption as an alternative to abortion might gain a little more currency in our country.

Democratic Party

Ms. Dougherty. We have just a very short amount of time, Mr. President, but a quick question. You’re off to Chicago, and when the Republicans were out in California they were depicted as a party that was split down the middle over the issue of abortion. And here you are, off to Chicago, facing, we think, demonstrators from your own party who will be angry about welfare, about same-sex marriages. Here in Kentucky, there was some demonstrators today angry about—tobacco people angry about your decisions on smoking. Aren’t the Democrats as divided as the Republicans?

The President. No, no, no, not nearly. First of all, I think that there will always be

issues, some cutting edge issues that will divide political parties. I think we all understand that. And the three you mentioned have caused us some division, I think particularly the welfare issue.

I think most of our Democrats—even a lot of Kentucky Democrats came up to me today and said, “You did the right thing. You’re just trying to protect our children; we can live with this.” It was really touching to see these people from Kentucky say that. So I think it’ll be all right. And regardless, I did it because I thought it was right, so we’ll just see.

But on the welfare issue, we have Democrats, good Democrats, who are genuinely concerned that the way this bill is written, the States may be just trying to pocket money and walk away from the poor and their children and that they will be able to do that. Now, I just don’t believe that. I think the same people that vote for us in Washington vote for these people at the State level. I think that—you know, we’re putting up half the money, the Federal Government is, so we have the right to monitor this. We’re going to monitor it very closely.

And I think what this welfare reform bill does, because we put more money into child care and because we saved health care and because we saved aid to disabled children and because we saved the food stamp program and the school lunch program and because we’re going to have other training funds that welfare people will now be eligible for, other Government funds that are already in the budget—I think that if we really work at it, we can create millions of new jobs for people who are hard to place and it will be wonderful.

But I don’t mind those people being there if what they really want is to take care of those folks, because I’m going to say to them, okay, who do you trust to implement this, Bill Clinton or Bob Dole?

Terrorism

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, we only have a few minutes, a quick question. You promised the American people that once you found out who was responsible for the bombing of the U.S. barracks in Saudi Arabia and, if it was a bombing, the TWA Flight 800,

they would be held accountable. Are you any closer today to knowing who was responsible for either one of those incidents?

The President. Well, I think it’s fair to say we’ve made some significant progress in working with our friends in Saudi Arabia on the Khobar bombing. What we do not know is what all the connections are. We can’t answer all the questions yet. So all I can tell you is, when I know what I believe the facts are, I will take whatever I think is appropriate action based on the facts.

With the TWA, the press reports I’ve seen are fairly accurate. We have some indication, limited, that there may have been an attack on the plane, but it is not conclusive. And the experts are working as hard as they can. They generally have a very good record of, in the end, being able to determine the cause. We’ve still got divers down there working, trying to bring up more wreckage. They believe they’ll get it worked out.

But I know it’s an agony for the family members of the people who were killed, and it is certainly frustrating for me, too. But they’re good people; they’re working hard; they’re doing their best. And I just don’t think it would be responsible for me to jump the gun on this deal. We’ve got to know what the evidence says.

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, we have to take a quick commercial break. We’ll be back with some final thoughts from President Clinton right after this.

[At this point, the network took a commercial break.]

President’s Future Plans

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, you’re either going to be a 50-year-old ex-President or a 54-year-old ex-President, and you’re still a young man. Have you thought about what you’re going to do?

The President. Only a little. And I say that because when I ran for President, I ran knowing that this was a time of big transition and understanding fully that there was no way I could do what I needed to do in 4 years. So I just have always in my mind planned about what we would do over 8 years. And I planned it out that way, not taking my reelection for granted but just knowing that we’re going through this huge transi-

tion in how we work and live and relate to the world.

So I haven't given it a lot of thought because I want to get America in good shape into the 21st century. But there are a lot of things I considered doing. I've considered practicing law with Hillary again, just hanging up the shingle and doing the things we wanted to do just for kicks. I've considered writing. I've considered teaching. I've considered trying to be useful in dealing with select problems at home and around the world that seem somehow intractable, that we don't show the kind of progress on I think we should. I just want to try to be useful to my country for the rest of my life without getting in anybody's hair. And sometimes on my real dreamy days, I even think I might get good enough at my golf game to play on the senior tour. But I think it's highly unlikely. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Blitzer. Yes, I think you're probably right. It is highly unlikely.

Mr. President, thank you so much for spending some time with us on your train trip on the way to Chicago. For my colleagues Jill Dougherty and Claire Shipman, we're very grateful to you in making this stop, and I hope we'll do it again.

The President. Thank you. Me too.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:19 p.m. aboard the 21st Century Express. Interviewers referred to former White House Travel Office employee Billy Dale and Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed of Russia.

Remarks in Chillicothe, Ohio

August 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very, very much. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. It's great to be back in Chillicothe. The last time I was here it was 3 degrees, and we still went running in the park. And I'm amazed I can move. But I survived it, and I'm glad to be back. It's a wonderful place. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Thank you, Senator John Glenn, for your heroic career, your magnificent service to

Ohio and to the United States. Thank you for your leadership in defense and foreign policy and in helping Al Gore and me to give this country the smallest Federal Government in 30 years and the most efficient since John Kennedy was President of the United States.

And thank you, Ted Strickland. I want to thank you for a couple of things. I want to thank you for coming to me personally and riding with me on Air Force One and pleading with me to help you keep open the gaseous plant in Portsmouth. I want to thank you for helping work with me on the enterprise community designation for Portsmouth. I want to thank you for having the courage—and I think it cost you your seat in '94—to vote for that economic plan when our friends in the opposition said it was tax-and-spend. And of course, it wasn't. We cut taxes for 15 million of the hardest working Americans. We made 90 percent of the small business in this country eligible for a tax cut.

But we did cut the deficit. And our friends in the opposition said, "Give us the Congress. Bill Clinton's plan will bankrupt the country, increase the deficit, cost us jobs." Well, the verdict is in, friends. Four years later, we have 10 million more jobs, the deficit has gone down 4 years in a row under the same administration for the first time since before the Civil War. Ted Strickland was right, and his opponent was wrong.

I want to thank you for voting for the family and medical leave law. Twelve million working Americans have been able to take some time off in the last 3½ years when there was a baby born or a parent sick without losing their jobs. And we just got a bipartisan study that said 90 percent of the businesses said it was no problem.

We have grown jobs faster in this economy in the last 4 years than, as Senator Glenn said, any Republican administration since the 1920's. And we still passed the family and medical leave law so people could succeed at home and at work. Thank you, Ted Strickland. You were right, and they were wrong.

And let me say one other thing. After Ted left the Congress, they had a chance to implement their "Contract With America." Don't forget that either, folks. I'll have more