

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Press Secretary, Office of the:
Press Releases and Briefings: Records, 1981-1989

SERIES: II: PRESS BRIEFINGS

Folder Title: 10/08/1984 (#1211A)

Box: 31

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

Last Updated: 09/30/2024

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Louisville, Kentucky)

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JAMES BAKER

The Board Room
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky

October 8, 1984

MR. BAKER: Let me open with a -- first of all, what are the ground rules?

Q Ground rules?

Q On the record.

MR. SPEAKES: Background, and get on the record if you want to put something on the record.

Q Oh, come on.

Q Why not on the record? Everybody else is on the record all last night.

MR. BAKER: All right, we'll go on the record. We will go on the record. And let me start by saying --

Q Well, can we bring cameras in?

MR. BAKER: No. Let me start by saying that we think that last night's debate sharpened the differences between the candidates on the issues, and, if so, we believe it will serve us well because we think that those differences on the issues are why the President enjoys a rather significant lead in the polls.

We have seen press analyses both ways with respect to who won or who lost, but we think that in the end there's not going to be any fundamental difference in the polls. I think it's our view, admittedly biased, that the President more than held his own and that Mondale failed in his knock-out goal.

I think we would tend to agree with Dave Broder's piece this morning when he said the President refused to play Nixon to Mondale's Kennedy.

Okay?

Q Do you agree with the rest of it, because his assessment was that Mondale really did better?

MR. BAKER: We agree with the part of it that I just cited but we don't think that we lost the debate. In fact, quite the contrary. We think we won the debate and we think, as I indicated, that the polls are not going to reflect a lot of movement over the course of the next week or so.

Q You don't think that -- you don't think that if, as the Gallup Poll shows, that a more -- people, by about a 20 percent margin, thought Mondale won the debate, that it's going to

MORE

#1211A-10/08

make -- well, how much of a difference do you think it will make?

MR. BAKER: I think that poll, Lesley, was probably more on the basis of forensic debating points. I think it acknowledges that in the survey, itself.

Let me give you the final results of what we had a partial sample of last night. Wirthlin did a 976 sample that shows 41 percent for Reagan and 38 percent for Mondale.

Q Could I interrupt right here? Does it show they think they won the debate or shows that they're going to vote for them?

MR. BAKER: No, no. That's who won the debate. I was about to give you the ballot. Yes, that's who won the debate. On the question of the ballot, it was 54 Reagan, 36 Mondale.

Q This is who you're going to vote for, this last set?

MR. BAKER: The last is who you're going to vote for.

Q You were up 18 before the debate in your polls so it's --

MR. BAKER: That's correct.

Q You say it's consistent.

MR. BAKER: That -- with respect to that 976 sample. Now, I'll say one thing about it. That survey was taken -- that survey was begun with 15 minutes to go in the debate. And you probably saw, those of you who were here last night, saw that the numbers -- that the gap was wider between the two of them in the President's favor last night with respect to the first 376 because it was taken before the end of the debate.

Q Before the summations.

MR. BAKER: Before the summations, that's correct.

Q Tell me why you think the President won.

Q Well, that would say that --

MR. BAKER: I think the President won because he was clearly in command of the facts. I don't think -- as I said last night, I think that there were no major factual errors by either candidate. Perhaps some minor ones. I think the President won because, quite frankly, Mondale had to score a knock-out for this to be a major event as far as his campaign is concerned. And he didn't score a knock-out, clearly, even if you disagree with our view that we won the debate.

Q That's saying you won without winning. A draw in this case would have been a win in your view.

Q A draw was a win for us.

MR. BAKER: I'm saying even if we did as poorly as a draw, we win.

Q How do we know that he hasn't scored some sort of knock-out? The history of these debates is that for the first two or three days even, before things settle out, people are pretty narrowly -- the gap is pretty narrow as to what they think happened, and then after a week or thereabouts, sometimes you get major

shifts. You found that in '80.

MR. BAKER: Well, you found that in '80 only because there you had a situation where there was a major gaff which became an issue in and of itself and went uncorrected for a period of six days.

Q '80. You're talking '76.

MR. BAKER: I'm sorry, that was '76. That was '76. In '80, we found a situation where we won the debate, but we won it in the last five or six days of the election.

Q Jim, your own sample suggests that if you take the people who just saw the whole debate, your own survey shows that they thought Mondale won the debate because you had a majority saying that Reagan won among those who didn't see the end of the debate.

MR. BAKER: Who didn't see the end of the debate?

Q Yes. You had a big majority at 49-31, you were saying last night. And if you balance that off, they come out roughly even in your total sample. So the latter two-thirds who saw the whole debate must have thought Mondale won it, in your own sample.

MR. BAKER: Well, let's wait and see what --

Q Well, I mean your own sample -- by the figures --

MR. BAKER: What?

Q Those figures would suggest that.

Q But just taking your own figures, isn't that what your own figures say?

MR. BAKER: Our own figures say that Reagan won 41 percent to 38 percent.

Q But you also said that among the first third who did not see the end of the debate, Reagan prevailed 49 to 31. The only way you could get to a relatively even outcome is that the two-thirds who saw the whole debate thought by a significant margin that Mondale won it.

MR. BAKER: Well, you can put that interpretation on it, I suppose, if you want.

Q I'm just asking about your facts, not about interpretation.

MR. BAKER: I don't -- I don't think that necessarily follows.

Q That's the way the figures come out.

Q That's the way the numbers went.

MR. BAKER: That's the way -- you can put that interpretation on the numbers.

Q You are accenting that Mondale didn't score a knock-out punch, therefore, we won.

MR. BAKER: That's correct.
MORE

#1211A - 10/68

Q Isn't that kind of a negative approach? I mean, where did you win in terms of your own positive --

MR. BAKER: Well, as I indicated before, I think we won in terms of -- at least as far as command of the facts are concerned.

Q Well, Mondale had command of his facts.

MR. BAKER: Well, but we were --

Q I mean, don't you think there's a difference?

MR. BAKER: Everybody was suggesting that the President somehow was not in command, that we were going to see this --

Q Dolan said you loaded him down with too many facts.

MR. BAKER: Well, that's --

Q -- thought he probably --

MR. BAKER: Well, we disagree.

Q What about Sam's question which is, how do you know at this point, whatever the figures show, how this shakes down because it took even in the Kennedy-Nixon debate, it takes a few days.

MR. BAKER: I don't think we saw more than five or six points of movement in the Ford-Carter second debate, the Poland debate, Lou.

Q But that's -- you're saying that it couldn't move enough to damage you but you don't -- my question was really more, how do you know that it won't be that five or six, you know, in a few days from now?

MR. BAKER: You don't know for sure, but this is our opinion. I'm just giving you what our view is. We think that the President came across quite well to the viewers. We think that his answers on the questions -- and I'm not talking necessarily about forensic debating points.

Q Is that what he won on in '80?

MR. BAKER: We acknowledge -- no, I don't think that's what he won on in '80 at all, Sam. I think it's quite to the contrary. He won on the overall presentation in the way he came across to the voters.

I also think this. I think --

Q What do you acknowledge?

Q We acknowledge --?

MR. BAKER: I would acknowledge that his summation was not as strong as his summations in both debates in 1980.

Q Why not?

MR. BAKER: Well, I can't assign a reason to that.

MORE

#1211A-10/08

Q Do you think --

MR. BAKER: I might be able to but I'm not going to.

Q Was that pretty much what he had planned to say?

Q Oh, try --

Q Jim, was that pretty much what he had planned to say? I mean, obviously, he brought --

MR. BAKER: I'm not going to get into that, Chris. I mean, I just can't do that. I'm not going to do that.

Q Was it, Jim, in what he said or the way he delivered? Is it delivery? Is it performance that you're looking at in this case rather than --

MR. BAKER: Well, you all are the ones that have said you don't think it's up to par, so you determine why you feel that way.

Q You said you weren't --

Q You said acknowledged.

Q Go on background for this one point.

MR. BAKER: I do acknowledge that it was not as strong as it was -- the two summations were in '80, in both those two debates.

Q Why can't you tell us why --

MR. BAKER: Well, I'm not going to do -- I'm not going to get into that.

Q Can you go on background?

MR. BAKER: I'm not going to get into that on the record.

Q Do you think he --

Q How about on background on this --

MR. BAKER: I'm not going to get into that on background. I'm not going to get into it.

Q You were saying earlier that it took -- that even in the Ford-Carter debate, there was no more than a four, five, six point shift in the polls. If that's the case, you're, in effect, saying it's impossible to score a knock-out in a debate. Therefore, your point about Mondale's not scoring --

MR. BAKER: No, no. I think it would be possible to score -- I'm not saying that you could -- I suppose that you could never have greater movement than five, but that's the greatest we've had so far in any debate.

Q Well, if that's the case, then if -- then how is it possible for anybody to have a knock-out as a goal?

MR. BAKER: I'm not saying that you couldn't see more movement than that, but that's the greatest that's occurred so far. And under the circumstances that existed last night, I don't think you're going to see that.

MORE

#1211A-10/08

Q Okay, Jim, five or six points here, five or six points Mondale-Ferraro, five or six points on the 21st -- or I'm sorry, Bush-Ferraro. You've got a dead heat. What are you going --

MR. BAKER: We've always said the polls were going to close, Mick.

Q Is there anything --

MR. BAKER: We're not predicting that right now.
(Laughter.)

Q What are you going to have to do differently -- what is the President going to have to do differently on October 21st? Or what did this show you tonight about what Bush will have to do on Thursday?

MR. BAKER: Well, I think, though, that's an entirely different situation and two entirely different --

Q The first part of Mick's question.

Q What one?

Q Yes, the second Presidential --

Q What are you going to have to do differently the 21st?

MR. BAKER: Well, I'm not -- I don't think I want to sit here and talk about what we might or might not do on the 21st, just like we didn't feel it was appropriate to lay out our strategy or our tactics for this debate.

Q Will you acknowledge that he has to change something on the 21st? He has to prepare better or do something differently on the 21st than he did last night?

MR. BAKER: I'm not going to acknowledge anything beyond what I said about the closing statement, Lou.

Q Then let me ask you this --

Q Well, do you think he might be looser in the second debate, more relaxed, more confident?

MR. BAKER: I didn't think that the President was in any way uptight. I did not think that the President was any more nervous, if, indeed, he was nervous at all -- any more nervous than Mondale. In fact, I thought the President was more relaxed, particularly at the beginning of the debate. But that's my own view.

Q I think it's a legitimate question to ask what happened. I mean, we've all seen Reagan in Presidential debates. We've seen him perform. I think some of us probably think it's the worst performance we ever seen of him. Maybe you think not, but maybe you can tell us what you think happened last night because it resulted --

MR. BAKER: Well, what I think you had was a good debate, George. I think -- frankly, I think both of them did a pretty good job.

Q What was -- I'm sorry.

Q Do you think that you underestimated Mondale --
MORE

#1211A-10/08

MR. BAKER: No.

Q -- in your debate preparations, or did he perform much more spectacularly than you assumed?

MR. BAKER: No, I don't think either of those. We had extensive tapes of his debate performances and we knew that he was a good debater, and I think we said that.

Q Wasn't it true that if you looked at the tapes of his debates this year that you was -- I mean, with the Democrats, you saw a more strident, more aggressive, maybe even more whining Mondale than you did last night?

MR. BAKER: Absolutely, because the format led -- those formats led them -- led you to that result, Rick. I mean, the strident, direct exchange type of --

Q What do you think happened?

Q Wait a second. Can I follow that up? Then what is the impact of Mondale's image? I mean, there was more humor, there was more deference to the President at times, saying that he liked the President -- the kinds of things that you didn't see him saying about Gary Hart, which had nothing to do with format.

MR. BAKER: It seemed to me he handled that part of it quite well, that he would have lost had he come across attacking -- as attacking or as strident. I'm not sure, again, that that does anything to soften the clear difference between these two candidates on the issues. If this debate did anything, it sharpened those differences.

Q Did that throw the President off at all? Was he expecting a more aggressive, hard-hitting --

MR. BAKER: I can't say that he was expecting it. I think it would be fair to say that he was prepared for it had it come.

Q Was most of the preparation, was most of the Stockman back-and-forth more on the other way than --

MR. BAKER: It was both ways. We did it both ways.

Q Jim, was the President perhaps thrown off by some of --

MR. BAKER: We prepared both ways. That is, we prepared for a strident opponent and we prepared for a non-strident opponent.

Q Did some of the questions, particularly sharply focusing on his religious beliefs and on the abortion, did that catch him in any way? Did you sense that he was less confident being sort of pinned down by rather -- almost one-sided questions directed at him?

MR. BAKER: There were only two questions out of all the questions asked that we had not specifically prepared for, and I don't suppose I ought to name those two but --

Q Sure.

Q We were told the coalition was one.

MORE

#1211A-10/68

MR. BAKER: Coalition was one and the -- I'll go ahead and name it -- coalition was one and the specific question on abortion was the other. That is the entire question on the issue of abortion.

Q Well, what do you think really happened? What happened to make Mondale --

MR. BAKER: Well, an incumbent is always at a disadvantage in these situations. The mere fact of stepping on the stage with an incumbent President gives a challenger a leg up, as we learned from experience as challenger. That's what --

Q What impact does rustiness have? The fact that the President hasn't had many news conferences, the fact that he had no debates this year, the fact that he doesn't have people, as Mondale had all year, attacking him and pinning him down on issues? I mean, what impact did that have?

MR. BAKER: I don't think it had any impact.

Q Zero.

Q Pardon?

MR. BAKER: I think it didn't have any, Chris. I'm quite honest with you when I say that we sat there in that room and watched this debate and we were very, very pleased with everything up to the summation, which, as I said, was not as strong as it was in '80.

Q Jim, do you think you over -- perhaps in the preparation -- over-compensated to make sure Reagan made no mistakes and took away from him the sort of geniality and spark that he's had in earlier debates? Some of his personality, in other words.

MR. BAKER: I don't think so, Fred. I do think that he showed a very complete grasp of factual detail, which, after all, is one of the areas in which he's being -- he was being criticized by the opposition and by some in the press. And I don't see how anybody could doubt after last night that he has that grasp. And I really don't think that it was a case of overloading him with facts, if that's what you mean.

Q Did he overstudy? I mean, you mention the close several times. One of the things that was in the close was a fair amount of statistical material which is not typical of the way he normally winds up. Did he overstudy?

MR. BAKER: I'm not going to -- I'm not going to go beyond what I've said on the close, which is that it wasn't as strong as it was in '80.

Q In the statement, in your metaphor, you said that Mondale didn't deliver a knock-out punch, but he seemed to have him down for an 8-count on this "there you go again". I was under the understanding that the President was advised not to use that line in this debate, that Reagan would be ready for him.

MR. BAKER: He was not advised not to use any particular line.

Q Did he seem to you to be -- an incumbent is attacked on his record and I suppose has to be on the defensive to

MORE

#1211A - 10/68

some extent. But I think, to some of us, we were surprised that the President seemed to stay on the defensive a great deal during the debate rather than take some sort of offensive against Mondale.

Q Right.

MR. BAKER: I thought he -- I thought the President took the offensive very, very well on the issue of taxes. I thought he took the offensive extremely well on the issue of the record. Here's what --

Q What?

MR. BAKER: The record. The records or the record. Here's what we found when we got here, here's what we've done about it. I don't think that the President was on the defensive any more than the opposition was, Sam. Social Security -- we were very pleased with the way the President handled Social Security. Some say that you're on the defensive if you simply have to discuss it because it's an issue that's always being used against us. But I thought the President did a very good job with it last night.

Q Didn't it -- because it seemed that Mondale kept coming back to it and coming back to it and coming back to it, and our CBS poll shows that's maybe Mr. Mondale's -- Mr. Reagan's only serious weakness.

MR. BAKER: Well, I've said that -- I just said in my earlier answer that Social Security generally cuts against us. It's not an issue that we easily prevail upon. But what I thought the President did last night was set the record clear once and for all. He looked the American people in the eye and he said, "I'm not going to cut your benefits."

"A President should never say never. But tonight, I'm going to say never."

Q He's said it before --

Q He said it exactly the same way many times.

Q He's not going to cut present benefits, and everyone understands that it's not the present benefits so much as the future benefits that's at stake here.

MR. BAKER: He hadn't said it to 110 million Americans.

Q But he didn't make clear from that statement, did he, that he would not cut the growth rate of future benefits? I mean that doesn't stop him from being part of a group that --

MR. BAKER: He made it clear, I thought, that Social Security is a -- it was in trouble when he became President, and during his administration, its fiscal integrity has been restored and it is fixed well into the next century. And there is no need to do anything with Social Security.

Q Jim, where do you go from here, and do you do anything differently in the campaign as a result of the debate?

MR. BAKER: No. We will continue the schedule as we have -- as we've laid it out and we won't make any changes.

Q What is the schedule?

MR. BAKER: Well, I don't have mine right here. How far have we announced?

MORE

#1211A - 10/68

Q Announced the Ohio --

MR. SIMS: Through the Ohio trip.

Q On campaign trips -- he's been making one or two a week. Is that going to increase now?

MR. BAKER: He's been making roughly three days a week, I think, Sam, and I think we'll continue that.

Q Can you tell me how the President --

MR. BAKER: No more over the course of the next ten days -- three days a week.

Q How did the President feel personally after it was over? Did he say anything that --

MR. BAKER: Well, I came straight here, so I didn't talk to him. I understand from some who did --

MR. SPEAKES: He's satisfied.

MR. BAKER: Larry -- you've got Larry's quotes on that. He walked back here with him.

Q He what?

MR. BAKER: He came back here with him, so take that from Larry.

Q Will you rate Mondale's performance last night in terms of what he was like when you studied your tapes? Was he better than he was in previous debates?

MR. BAKER: We thought that he was very, very good in 1976, and he clearly was good in some of the 1980 primary debates.

Q What about last --

MR. BAKER: And last night, he -- I think I said it's our view that he performed pretty well.

Q Was it a mistake to debate him, Jim?

MR. BAKER: I don't think so, Lou, because it puts a lot of -- the fact that the President is there debating puts to rest all these charges that somehow he's out of touch, that he's not accessible, that he lives in a show business cocoon. I mean, how can you say that when an incumbent President with a 20 point lead in the polls debates his opponent?

Q Was that that serious that you had to deal with that? I mean, that's sort of the question, is that when you add up the possible damage versus --

MR. BAKER: No, I'm just saying that's one part of it. Another part of it is, if you don't, you then spend a number of weeks with the issue of ducking debates as well. But, primarily, we debated because the President believes in the principle of debating. And I think he's debated in every race that he's ever run.

And he said as early as July that he was going to debate. It was never an issue.

MORE

#1211A - 10/08

Q On the specific last night about why he doesn't go to church, I don't think he's ever said before that if he went into a church -- there was a serious threat, that the church --

Q Yes, he did.

Q Oh, yes, he has.

Q That the church might be blown up?

Q He said they'd have to go through magnetometers and --

Q Yes, but that's not the same as the -- I always thought that the reason he didn't go to church is he didn't want to put the parishoners through the hassle of going through magnetometers and it would disrupt everybody. But I've never personally heard him say that there was a threat the church would be blown up, as in Beirut.

Q It's both.

Q But that doesn't account for Camp David --

Q What's the difference between that and a hotel?

Q -- the White House? Why not have services there?

Q I mean, is that a new explanation of why -- I've never heard this before?

MR. BAKER: It's not a new explanation. I've heard him say -- I've heard him give that explanation several times before.

Q That a church might be blown up, as in Beirut?

MR. BAKER: Well, and that it puts people to a great deal of inconvenience. They've got to go through magnetometers, the whole thing.

Q What was the answer to the rest of Fred's question last night, that why he doesn't have the Sunday services in the White House?

Q Or Camp David?

Q Camp David. The President never got around --

MR. BAKER: I think he answered that by saying that the Man upstairs doesn't have any question about his faith.

MR. SPEAKES: And Nixon was criticized -- you guys were all over Nixon for bringing preachers to the White House. Remember?

Q The President had his statistics at his command almost to the point of dreariness. He had every statistic that I've heard in the last three years and he got them all right for the most part.

MORE

#1211A 10/08

All right. That has to do with remembering the script. But in show business and politics, there's that great performance that comes from the heart, the natural man, which has nothing much to do with whether he follows the lines or not. And that's hard to describe. And --

MR. BAKER: You mean, you want more bands and balloons?

Q No -- (laughter) -- I'm talking about his persona. He was not the relaxed, easy-going fellow up there that I've seen on a thousand bandstands.

MR. BAKER: But, Jerry, I think that the difference there is simply that in 1984 he's an incumbent President, and an incumbent President always gives up something when he shows up to debate a challenger. And that's the difference.

Q You ought to give up the statistics. (Laughter.)

MR. BAKER: Well, fine.

Q Did Mondale out-Reagan Reagan? I think that's the question now.

MR. SPEAKES: Let's take one more. Mr. Baker's got to get upstairs.

Q -- debate on Thursday -- what does this experience suggest for those tactics or what do you expect out of that? Will you be happy with a wash there?

MR. BAKER: Well, I think there George Bush goes in with much lower expectations. And I suppose that that's --

Q Why?

Q Why?

MR. BAKER: Don't ask me why. You're all the ones that set expectations, but ours were very high going into this.

Q Well, I get the impression you're saying he goes in with lower expectations.

MR. BAKER: No. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that's what --

Q Press expectations?

MR. BAKER: -- I think that the -- Helen, that's what I think that the press expectations have been, at least based on what I've been reading. So, from that standpoint, I think it's somewhat advantageous to --

Q What do you think --

MR. BAKER: -- not be considered the favorite going in.

Q Well, do you think Ronald Reagan is?

MR. BAKER: Do I think that he's considered the favorite?

MORE

#1211A-10/08

Q Yes.

MR. BAKER: I'm not saying I think he is the favorite. I'm saying I think he is considered the favorite. Yes, sure.

Q Are you sorry you're having a second debate now? Or do you think that's good?

MR. BAKER: Are we sorry? Sorry? No. No, I think --

Q Do you want to go on background on that one?
(Laughter.)

Q Jim, tell us --

Q No, on the record.

Q Jim --

MR. BAKER: Put that one on the record.

Q Tell us what was the problem in the selection process of the panel?

MR. BAKER: I'll tell you what the problem in the selection process was in my view, and I agree with Jim Johnson on this, and that is that this process that was used is exactly the same process that was used in '76 and in '80. And the difference this time was that the League didn't get everybody together in one room and sit there and get agreement on panelists. What we were doing was shipping lists back and forth. And one campaign would say, "We're not going to have anybody who travels with the other campaign." The other campaign then said, "Well, we're not going to have anybody who travels with the other campaign." And you got into that kind of a --

Q So, you both did strike anybody from the other campaign?

MR. BAKER: Well, I don't know that --

Q Why is that?

MR. BAKER: I can't really say that -- Let me say this
ON BACKGROUND:

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Barbara Walters' statement --

Q Do we all agree --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This one statement. Barbara Walters' statement last night was factually incorrect, where she said we went through 107 journalists and we only came up with three. Not so. Two people were agreed upon who took themselves out. Others were agreed upon who decided for one reason or another not to sit, including people in this room. So --

Q How many?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Several.

MORE

#1211A-10/08

Q Two people --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not people in -- not two people in this room. A person in this room.

Q Why is it that John Mashek, who was initially selected for this panel --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And they know who they are, don't they? (Laughter.)

Q Why is it --

Q Stand up, damn it. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Why is that John Mashek what?

Q Well, why is that Mashek, who was selected for this panel last night initially, at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday night, supposedly, was called Thursday and said, "No, you're off. You're on the Ferraro-Bush ticket" --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't answer that.

Q Did you have an all-white, male panel --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What?

Q -- to deal with or something?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Wasn't from our staff.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We turned down women -- I mean, we accepted women, Hispanics, blacks that they turned down.

Q Or --

Q No, but --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm sure they did the same that we may have turned --

Q Are you saying --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There's no --

Q What was your criteria for turning down --

Q Are you back on the record again?

Q -- Jim, let's get this straight.

MR. BAKER: Oh, yes.

Q You back on the record?

Q Let's get it straight, this business about her statement being factually inaccurate because I was told that there totally -- roughly 100 -- 96, 97, 98, something like that --

MORE

#1211A-10/08

reporters who were turned down at one point or another including me before the situation --

MR. BAKER: Including whom?

Q Including me before the situation that turned around. Are you saying that she was off by a few or -- I mean, what is it you're challenging?

MR. BAKER: I'm saying -- here's the factual inaccuracy as I understood what she said: She said that we went through roughly 100 to get three that were agreed upon.

Q -- three --

MR. BAKER: That's wrong. There were more than three agreed upon.

Q But how many --

MR. BAKER: Considerably -- well, at least double.

Q Well, six --

MR. BAKER: Okay. Both campaigns agreed on at least six people.

Q So, what did you do with the six, start eliminating three?

MR. BAKER: We didn't do anything. They took themselves out.

Q What was your criteria?

MR. BAKER: The journalists took themselves out.

Q What was your criteria for selection?

MR. BAKER: I don't think I'd answer that question --

Q Why? You're talking about elimination. You --

MR. BAKER: Ask them what their criteria --

Q Does this --

Q -- 100 --

MR. BAKER: Look. The way to do it for the next go-round, at least it seems to me and I still want to be on -- I want to --

Q You're on the record --

MR. BAKER: -- all right -- we're on the -- is for us to sit down in the same room and agree the way we did in '76 and the way we did in '80.

Q -- what you're going to do, isn't it?

MORE

#1211A-1068

MR. BAKER: I hope so.

Q What would you have said, Jim, they -- if Barbara Walters had asked questions? Because they offered that to her.

MR. BAKER: We agreed --

Q She said no.

MR. BAKER: We agreed to that.

Q You agreed to that.

MR. BAKER: We want --

Q Does this make you both look bad -- this difficulty you've had and the big -- the publicity it's gotten?

MR. BAKER: No.

Q It doesn't? (Laughter.)

Q Does it --

MR. BAKER: I don't think --

Q How about the press?

Q What was the answer --

Q It means because we travel with the President we're supposed to be pro-President --

MR. BAKER: I don't --

Q -- able to travel with Mondale --

MR. BAKER: No, it doesn't taint anybody. It doesn't make anybody look bad. I think administratively it wasn't handled in the way it should have been handled.

END

#1211A-10/08/84