

The scheduling is to build a schedule of the plenary sessions, which when I started were about three hours long and when I finished, over time, were about seven hours long. And that means scheduling every person who is going to appear on the podium.

Then to coordinate with the television people, and whatever else is going on, and then work on the various timing issues relative to when the networks might be broadcasting so the most important things like the nominating, acceptance speeches etcetera were in there. And, it's a big operation in the sense that I would usually spend about three full weeks building the schedule. Coordinating with whoever the nominee was because the nominee would always select somebody to be my contact point to make sure that when the politics were such or if there was a circumstance, they would kind of sign off on who they wanted to be on there. Not on every single person because it would have taken them forever.

If you wanted to put extra phones in you kind of ran extra cords, tied the cords together and ran them down the hall, I mean it was a very different set of circumstances. Now you get whatever you want, and it's also affected campaigns so that in those early years when we would go out and schedule something, you could fly in a presidential campaign as many as three and four full crews from a network television broadcast network. Because what would happen is, if we were in Birmingham, Alabama, and we did an event, you had to have your event for the evening news done by 11 o'clock in the morning.

There is an extraordinary amount of money that is spent putting on an event that fewer and fewer people see; and my view is (and some of the communication people may disagree) that you could achieve the same level of coverage, so that if you decided that you were going to have this in some big convention hall, set it up like the NEA sets up its convention with its thousands of people, and on Thursday night you were going to have the nominee give a speech in front of a curtain, the networks would still be there. They would still provide that coverage. So, I began—and a number of years ago without much success—to argue for shorter and shorter conventions. Fewer and fewer cities are bidding for the conventions, because they're finding the economics are not as terrific as they thought they were, over time.

The basic structure of the conventions has not changed, the plenary sessions, until 2008, basically, four-day conventions. Well 2004 was also an exception; there was a hurricane and so the first day of the Republican convention, I think it was 2004, was put off. But other than that, it's been basically that same structure for both parties. Parties kind of follow along each other, the networks providing less and less coverage—PBS being always there, C-SPAN, CNN, C-SPAN being the kind of, network of record, if you will, because they do cover gavel to gavel, the only ones that really provide gavel to gavel coverage anymore. Except for most times the party itself has its own network that you can tie into if you want to.

We had a year in Minnesota, I can't remember what year it was, someplace in the 70's. We had these long, long platforms and the candidates in that year, in the general election, when asked about the platform, they'd say "well, I'm for 82% of the platform, or I'm for 79% of the platform." I mean it was that kind of thing. So, it's hard to understand, the argument, and I used to make this same argument, that it was useful for the party's elders and leaders to come together and be together. But the delegates are not necessarily selected because of their party leadership structure, they're selected because they're for somebody.

So I started obviously in the pre-rules day, when these were basically cash economies. We spent enormous amounts of money.

Off Camera: When you say cash economy you mean people would donate...

Cash. Sometimes checks, but they would, there were no rules, there was nothing wrong with it. And if you were running a particular you might get a, you know, paper bag full of cash to use, we used to call it walking around money, but that was kind of to pay people who would go on Election Day and go try to turn out the vote and a variety of things. Actually, not it wasn't, it wasn't particularly insidious; you could, you paid someone to spend their day doing "volunteer activity."

In 1972, April of '72, that started to shift, you started talking about contribution limits. And then by '76, we had put a public financing into place.

You had to agree to limit your spending. And in 2008, Obama blew that up. And so public financing is essentially over as an issue. There will be a few candidates that ask for primary matching funds even in this last...that go around. There was a few this time that are getting matching funds because they're, it's easy for them to recoup some of the funds and pay off some of their debts. But it's over, and now there's a limit on how much you can give to a primary campaign, \$2500 a person, but you're now raising money for the DNC or the RNC. And that's why you're seeing checks of \$60,000 and \$75,000.

I think it's not particularly relevant, first of all there have been huge contributions made in the past by individuals, we just didn't know about it. So I went back and did some checking, just on public records because there were no financial records, but in 1968, Gene McCarthy had a contribution from one individual that in today's dollars was 4.7 million dollars. And if you look at 2004, there were four or five guys that spent well, almost close to a hundred million dollars.

Ordinary PAC, there's a contribution limit of \$5,000 per year that you can give to a Political Action Committee. Super PAC, and it's all disclosed to the Federal Election Commission. Super PACs were created as a result of the *Citizens United* decision of the Supreme Court in 2010, and a Super PAC does disclose to the FEC but you can give an unlimited amount of money so if I decide to give a million dollars to a Super PAC, I can give it. It will be disclosed, but I can give that kind of money so it's huge amounts of money that are flowing through the system. But Obama and Romney will both have enough money, whatever the number is. Obama probably won't raise as much as he raised last time, but he really doesn't need to because he didn't have a primary fight, and Romney will have plenty. The place where the Super PACs may have an impact this time are some of the congressional races. So if a Super PAC can go in and spend 2 or 3 or 4 million dollars, in a congressional district that's got maybe 750,000 people in it, you may in fact affect an election. But I think at the national level it's not going to affect anything, and I'm for transparency, I'm for disclosure, and I think the public really doesn't care.

What happens is there's always an arbiter, and often some AP reporter, and so what you do is, when you've secured a delegate or a group of delegates, I remember this specific example was '84, when we lost the California primary to Hart which we were supposed to win. There was a

group of superdelegates, about 32 of them, that were basically controlled by a Congressman from Louisiana whose name I'm blanking on right now, but very well-known. Louisiana or Arkansas, I can't remember for sure. And, so we had announced that Mondale would be the nominee by noon the day after California, that got along, so there was a little fast-moving movement, during that early morning hours, and that group of people, led by that one member. He had, he was in a position, I think they're mostly members of Congress, to commit them all. And so he agreed to commit them so we were able to say that Mondale had gone over the line.

I think the capacity of the right and left to organize itself in a way, and communicate with each other, in the old days you had to communicate, it was a real, really a laborious process. Now you communicate instantly, and we also have channels of communication that are less neutral. So we all think that Fox is more conservative, and we all think that MSNBC is more liberal, and then you could have an argument about whether CNN is in the middle or leans a little bit to the left. So we now, instead of being forced to all look at the same channels of communication where we see roughly a neutral purveyance of information, you've now got a situation if you listen to Fox you're going to get a very conservative point of view. Thoughtful people, and if you listen to MSNBC you're going to get a liberal point of view. And so people are congregating there and are really not exposed to other points of view, and so...

Off Camera: the echo chambers

Yes, the echo chambers, exactly the right word for it. So, that's become problematic.

The other thing that has happened in the communications side of the world is that there are no secrets anymore. So, if a person on the left or a person on the right, my favorite example is the change in the filibuster rule that was authored by Mondale when he was in the United States Senate and a fellow by the name of Pearson from Kansas. And, they got the body to change the rule from 66 votes to end the filibuster to 60 votes.

Off Camera: From two-thirds to three-fifths...

Right. And, they worked on that for months, quietly, small meetings, meeting with the, it was the Democrats from the South that were the

biggest problem, actually, they really liked the filibuster. And, but they, they quietly worked at it, both of them, and Mondale in particular, I knew more about his work obviously because I worked with him, and then they brought it to several votes, and there's a whole history about it. Today I think that'd be impossible, because by the time you left your office in the morning and walked into Pearson's office, some blogger would be taking a note asking "What's Mondale doing in Jim Pearson's office?" And so that, I think the change in communication in many ways, for those who are interested, is terrific, but I think it is one of the things that has happened with communication is that the providers of communication are working on moving information with less and less accuracy because it's all about who's going to get out first.

I think they're not relevant. I think we don't need them as the gathering of the party faithful. I think we clearly don't need them to nominate someone. I suppose it is possible that we will have a contested primary sometime in the future, [but] I doubt it. But we can do it for a lot less money and a lot shorter period of time, with a lot less inconvenience.