

I interned in Governor Pete Wilson's office at the time, working as a liaison to the entertainment community, which obviously has a lot of influence in California. Just helping to organize some of the events that were there. And that's when I really got an inside look at how the political structure worked. Believe it or not, I had just graduated from UCLA and was at a party in Marina del Rey and ran into two guys who worked for President Clinton's campaign in 1992 and 1996. And those two gentlemen were convinced that they were going to get me committed to working for Vice President Al Gore and we spent 45 minutes at the party talking about politics – my experience interning, their experience travelling with President Clinton. They were advance guys, they sure did – and Vice President Gore was coming to Southern California that weekend. And they were having a training session at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. And they talked me into going over to the Biltmore and I shadowed an advance guy and we just walked around, and literally got to work with the Vice President on that trip. He walked down the hallway and my job was simply to tell him exactly where to go. I said, "Sir can you go to the left here?" And he stopped and said, "Do you know where the restroom is?" And I said, "I absolutely do!" And he's like, "Can you take me there?" And so that was my first experience in doing advance and that's kind of how the advance world works. And my excitement level was so high at that point; I was like, "I got to do more of this." So I had a really good experience and I joined the campaign doing advance that year.

Conventions are a great opportunity to get a party candidate's message out to the public. And so in 2000, I had a great opportunity to work on the 2000 convention for – I helped put together some of the events that were surrounding the convention. There was a Barbara Streisand event, there was a reception and then we did a couple other things in the local community and again my job was to make sure the path was set for Gore to walk along and was able to interact with folks. So that was my experience in 2000.

*Interviewer:* "So, 2000 ends. The result...we can move past it"

*Dredd:* We can move past the results of the 2000 convention. I still maintained a very high level of interest in getting involved in the political process. I moved to Washington, DC and I actually went to a

constituent breakfast that Senator Feinstein was having on the Hill. And I walked in that day and after she was done speaking, I had my resume in hand and I walked right up to the political director right afterwards. And I said, "Hey, my name's Travis Dredd, I was in the Marine Corps, I was on the Gore campaign, and I'm interested in moving to Washington, DC and Senator Feinstein, I hear is a great Senator and I'd love to work for her." And I got a call a week later and they said, "Why don't you come be a legislative aide in our office?" And from there, the year that I spent there, I was doing correspondence and learning about the congressional side of things.

It taught me that taking the initiative is sometimes all that's needed to take the next step on a lot of things. And being prepared... a lot of it is, Senator Feinstein in particular was very open and accessible to her constituents and she knew that a lot of Californians were travelling to Washington DC and she had the idea of doing these constituent breakfasts, and for me it worked out very well. I stayed working with her for a year, year and a half or so with California constituents and it was a great opportunity.

Technology at the time was two-sided, as you mention. It's two sided – it was a great way for people to quickly provide information, but sometimes it came too fast or it came from one particular interest group at the time or one particular part of the community. And you still had to get out and make sure you were representing all of – in this case California, the State of California.

*Interviewer:* So now, let's see. 9/11 has happened, 2004 campaign is underway and we've got you to maybe '03, so...

*Dredd:* Sure, so I – 9/11 happened and that changed things up on the Hill for me and I moved back to California for a while. And I got a call from the same gentleman that I met at that party back in 2000 who said, "Travis, we didn't win in 2000, but we've got the guy who can win in 2004 and his name is John Kerry. And we need you to come to New Hampshire and join the campaign in New Hampshire and lead our advance team to victory in the primary." And I of course said, "No, I've done that already, I'm okay. I'm excited about this but I'm going to stay in California." Got the call again. "Travis, we really need you to come to New Hampshire, we really need you to work for John Kerry;

he's the guy that's going to win it this time around. We're going to be able to get Democratic values and policies infused into our government right now and we really need your help." So I – another call after that, I decided I was going to pack up and move to New Hampshire and I moved there to work in the primaries and I went to Manchester, New Hampshire, which is the hotbed of political activity for any primary there. I worked for John Kerry, and John Kerry won the primary in New Hampshire and we were very excited at the time. And the team asked me to move to Boston, where the convention planners had already gotten to work for the 2004 convention and they asked me to work on the convention cycle again. So I did.

So it started in late 2003 on the primary in New Hampshire and then in 2004 I moved to Boston to work as a deputy hall manager inside the hall. And what that is, ultimately, is you've got all these different entities coming together, but there's a focus on the hall, where people are going to come – where you've got the television cameras, where you've got the stage set up, where you've turned, at that time the Fleet Center, into a full arena for a convention. You know, it's built to be a basketball arena and we turned it into a place where 30, 40,000 people show up, including 15,000 members of the press, to watch a candidate speak; where constituencies or what have you come to get on the stage to get the party all excited about its candidate and its values. And my job, as a deputy hall manager was to work on two main things. And that was construction and production. So I managed the team that built the stage, built the set. And I also managed the team that turned the hall into a place where you could have a convention. So like I said, it's built for a basketball game, its not built for 15,000 people or 20,000 people to be walking around all day long, its built for people to be sitting. So we had to build air conditioning; we had to reinforce the ceiling in order to build the stage; we had to develop a new access management plan detailing where people could come in.

*Interviewer:* This was the first convention after 9/11

*Dredd:* This was the first convention after 9/11 so that was a big difference between the conventions from 2000 and 2004, was the security piece of it. We had a new focus on security and a new responsibility, because it became a National Special Security Event,

which means the Secret Service get more involved in the event. They'd always been involved, but this time they got really involved. And we had to have a team to deal with that. And one of the responsibilities I had was to work with the local Secret Service as well, in order to make sure that the arena – the Fleet Center at the time, was secure as well. I had a great experience working with the staff, team, and all the folks that were there.

Watching State Senator Obama speak on the stage in 2004 was – it was so exciting to be there and to watch it. In hindsight, you look back and realize how important it was for him to have an opportunity to speak at the convention. But either way, I stayed so involved in politics and convention planning, at the local level, even at the national level on Capitol Hill that in 2008, I really wanted to do it again. So in 2008, I became the deputy CEO for hall operations.

*Interviewer:* So tell me about how that differs from your role in 2004.

*Dredd:* So ultimately, it was more like a Chief Operating Officer. So I was in charge of the build out, we had a greening operation 2008; that fell under my department. So it was production, it was construction, as well as managing the media logistics. So the 15,000 members of the press that would come out, we had to organize that team. And then, the overall management of the hall, which is called hall management. Where are all the people going to go when they get there? And I was the primary liaison to the CEO for all of those operations in 2008.

We actually did three days in the hall and one day at Invesco Field, which was a magical moment when Senator Obama finally made it to the stage and introduced himself to the world and introduced himself as a candidate for President who ultimately won at the end of the day. There was a moment in time where I think everyone in the Invesco Field just got chill-bumps. There was this incredible silence, this magical moment when we all feel like we had really accomplished something. And I helped to pull it all together. And so I was sitting in the arena, watching this, culminating over many years working on conventions. And then now seeing President Obama, then-Senator

Obama provide this moment of excitement felt really good. It felt really really good.

So now I'm the Chief of Staff at the 2012 Democratic National Convention and I got here by really staying focused on the task at hand. And that was what the President was trying to accomplish, and making sure that he had the infrastructure he needs to do his job. And of course, I was doing that from the Department of Energy. But at the end of the day, when I was trying to make sure that he was going to get reelected, I decided that I wanted to come work for the convention one more time. And I get to work with this group of folks on this convention and one of the things that we are obviously focused on is making this the most open and accessible convention. We want all Americans to be able to participate. Whether it's by coming to Charlotte or just by participating online. Whether it's going to meet-ups online, etc. As Chief of Staff, its my responsibility to make sure that we pull together the right team and bring in some of the folks who helped make 2004 and 2008, making sure we have the right folks in place. And just making sure we have a very successful and fantastic 2012 convention for our President.

It's so important for young people to stay involved, because at some point in time, the decisions that are made now are going to impact you. And as a young person, if you get involved now, and have a better understanding or how those decisions are made, you can not only participate now, but also then be one of those decision-makers later on and be very effective at making them work for you, your community and the country overall. It's really important for young people to stay involved now because President Obama has really put a lot of energy, time and a lot of effort into making sure our country is a better place, and that's what we're all here for, is making sure he has a chance to continue doing that. And that's one of the reasons I've taken the job that I have now is to support that effort. And I started back when I was young, stayed involved and will continue to stay involved for years to come.