

*Part of the Richard Nixon Oral History Project*

# An Oral History Interview with FRED ALTSHULER

Interview by Timothy Naftali  
October 28, 2011  
San Francisco, CA



The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum  
18001 Yorba Linda Boulevard  
Yorba Linda, California 92886  
(714) 983-9120  
FAX: (714) 983-9111  
[nixon@nara.gov](mailto:nixon@nara.gov)  
<http://www.nixonlibrary.gov>

## **Descriptive Summary**

### ***Scope and Content***

Fred Altshuler served as an attorney on the Impeachment Inquiry staff of the House Judiciary Committee in 1974 under Chief Counsel John Doar. In the interview, he discussed his early career with California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) and the controversy between CRLA and then California Governor Ronald Reagan about improper collaborations with farm workers. Mr. Altshuler discussed his role on the Impeachment Inquiry staff which included doing fact checking of political improprieties in the dairy industry (milk fund), working with the White House tapes and working with Hilary Rodham (Clinton). Other topics included a comparison of the impeachment process of President Richard Nixon to those of Presidents Andrew Johnson and William Clinton and Mr. Altshuler's personal reactions to President Nixon's resignation and the pardon issued by President Gerald Ford.

### ***Biographical Note***

Fred Altshuler was Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives Impeachment Inquiry Staff in 1974. A graduate of Stanford University and the University of Chicago Law School, he was also Articles Editor of the University of Chicago Law Review. After graduating from law school, he worked for the California Rural Legal Assistance program. Before his work for the Impeachment Inquiry, Altshuler served as a law clerk to Judge John C. Godbold of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and from 1969 to 1973 was a Directing Attorney for California Rural Legal Assistance. After President Nixon's resignation, he practiced with the San Francisco law firm of Howard, Prim, Rice, Nemerovski, Canady & Pollak from 1975 to 1978. In 1996, he was a delegate at the Democratic National Convention, and in 2004 he was California State Counsel for the Kerry/Edwards Campaign. He also became a partner with Altshuler Berzon LLP, a San Francisco law firm that specializes in labor and employment, environmental, constitutional, campaign and election, and civil rights law.

## **Administrative Notes**

### ***About the Richard Nixon Oral History Project***

The Richard Nixon Oral History Project was created in November 2006 at the initiative of Timothy Naftali to preserve the memories and reflections of former Nixon officials and others who had been prominent in the Nixon era by conducting videotaped interviews. Naftali insisted from the project's inception that it be a serious, impartial and nonpartisan source of information about President Nixon, his administration, and his times. A second goal of the project was to provide public domain video that would be available as free historical content for museums and for posting on the Internet. Donors to the project neither requested nor received a veto over interview questions or interviewee selection. Accordingly, the project includes interviews with former staff members of the Nixon administration as well as journalists, politicians, and activists who may have been opposed to the Nixon administration and its policies. Taken as a whole, the collection contributes to a broader and more vivid portrait of President Nixon, the Nixon administration, and American society during the Nixon era.

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The following is a transcript of an Oral History Interview conducted by Timothy Naftali with Fred Altshuler on October 28, 2011 in San Francisco, CA.

Naftali: Hi, I'm Tim Naftali. I'm Director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California. It's October 28, 2011. We are in San Francisco and I have the honor and privilege to be interviewing Fred Altshuler for the Richard Nixon Presidential Library's Video Oral History Program. Fred, thank you for doing this.

Altshuler: I'm happy to do it.

Naftali: Let's start with California Rural Legal Assistance. Tell us how you got involved with CRLA, please.

Altshuler: Well, I after I graduated from law school I had heard about the farm worker movement and was very interested in it and legal services for the poor was an exciting and developing field back then in the 60s and a lot of very committed lawyers went to law school because they were moved by the civil rights movement and the farm worker movement and other movements.

I had heard about California Rural Legal Assistance, which was then a relatively new organization and I applied for it and got sent to El Centro, California, which was one of the more remote areas. The headquarters of CRLA was in San Francisco and there were four of us who went to El Centro – four brand new lawyers – and for some reason, I guess because I had clerked for a federal appellate judge, they thought I knew something about running a law office.

So I and four other,, and three other lawyers went to the El Centro office and I spent three years there and then I went to the San Francisco office. In what was called the back-up center, which was helping the other offices on major litigation.

Naftali: Could you please tell the audience and viewers a little bit about who ran, in the sense, who managed and paid for CRLA.

Altshuler: CRLA was funded by the federal government under a grant from what was then the Office of Economic Opportunity and they had a program of giving funds to legal services programs throughout the country and CRLA got its funding from that.

Naftali: In the period when you were at CRLA, there was a lot of controversy some of which was generated by the Governor of California, Ronald Reagan. What do you recall of that controversy and how it affected your work?

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Altshuler: Oh, it affected the work of the organization very dramatically because Governor Reagan tried to cut off our funding and that was a big *cause célèbre*. There was eventually an impartial commission of three out-of-state Supreme Court justices that was convened to hear the charges against CRLA.

The charges involved mostly being improper collaboration with the Farm Workers Union, Cesar Chavez, which was at the height of its organizational activity at that point and the commission held hearings in San Francisco. There were witnesses and the result was a complete exoneration of CRLA from the accusation that it had improperly collaborated in support of the Farm Workers Union.

Naftali: These allegations, they actually would they not come from the office of the Governor? What didn't he have one of his colleagues, one of his friends, do this?

Altshuler: Yes. The Governor had a staff person who was very vocal about it and I think he was the one who was in charge of mustering the charges against CRLA.

Naftali: What did you ever meet Frank Carlucci?

Altshuler: I never met Frank Carlucci.

Naftali: Did anyone come from Washington to advise your group on how to respond to these charges?

Altshuler: Not to my knowledge, but I was not in the leadership of CRLA at that point. I was the head of the El Centro office and we were the seed of some controversy.

Naftali: Tell us about your interactions, if any, with the Chavez with Cesar Chavez and the California Growers...Farm Workers' Union.

Altshuler: We certainly never had any kind of collaborative activity. I mean, we didn't organize it. We did set up a farm worker clinic in the Imperial Valley and Cesar Chavez was not very supportive of that because Cesar had the view that the Union should be the source of helping farm workers and if there was a clinic it should be a Union clinic and we met with him in Delano and had an interchange with him about what the clinic was about and that's the only interaction I had with him.

At one point, there was a strike in the melons in Imperial Valley and the Union was very active in trying to mobilize the resources that it had in Imperial County. And there are some Union lawyers who attempted to come in and use our law library and use our facilities at the CRLA office

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and I had to kick them out because I said that you know CRLA can't be associated with the Farm Worker Union. And so that ended our contact.

Naftali: The term 'legal assistance' is seemingly abstract. Maybe abstract to some of those who are listening. Could you just give us a couple of graphic illustrations of why it was felt that there should be that office. What were the kinds of things that people needed from the CRLA?

Altshuler: People needed day-to-day legal representation on things like welfare cases. Someone's welfare was cut off and they obviously needed the support and the lawyers could help them in that. The lawyers helped them in other kinds of situations where their rights were affected. We didn't take personal injury cases and we didn't take the kind of cases that the private bar would handle on a pro bono basis, but we undertook cases including a big class action against the Imperial Irrigation District, which was controlled the water and power in Imperial Valley.

It was the most important governmental...I had to take that and we had a very big employment discrimination case against them, which we brought to trial in federal court in San Diego and won and we also CRLA did a lot of what's called the impact litigation – cases that affect a lot of people. The theory behind a lot of legal services activities is if you bring those kinds of cases to reform a system you'll be helping more people in the long run than you would if you just represented the individuals in particular cases.

So we had that and we had some other pretty major cases that we had that were law reform and very exciting and the kind of things that lawyers like me went to law school to try to do.

Naftali: How is it you find yourself going from that work to working on the staff of the Impeachment Inquiry?

Altshuler: One of the lawyers in the head office of CRLA had worked for John Doar in the civil rights division of the Department of Justice when John Doar was the head of that and that was the contact I had with John Doar, who was the counsel on the Impeachment Inquiry staff of the House Judiciary Committee.

So I went and I interviewed with him and it was either there or one of my days on the job that he came very close to firing me because I referred to something as a political issue and it was very clear – he's very strict about that – that you can't do anything partisan and when I used the word 'political,' his face lit up and you can see he was really, really very sensitive to that and I had to explain that by political, I didn't mean partisan. I meant what the system would be in terms of adjudication by the Congress about the role of the President.

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Naftali: That's one illustration. Can you give us some other illustrations of how Mr. Doar tried to set a non-partisan tone because, of course, a number of you... there were Republicans and Democrats on the staff. Some of you have been politically active, some not. How did he try to set the right tone?

Altshuler: Well, he was very, very meticulous about doing that. The staff was an integrated staff in the sense that the both... there wasn't a minority staff and a minority staff at the staff level. I'd had an office that I shared with someone who was a "Republican appointee" and the staff was structured that way on a complete level. Everything was intermingled – the appointees, but you also had really very careful separation from the political climate that was going on.

You couldn't talk to people outside the staff about what you were doing, in the sense of a lot of people were very interested in it from a partisan viewpoint, both the Republican and Democrat and we just couldn't even talk about our work with them and I think we were very scrupulous in that. The staff was housed in a separate area in the old congressional office building. So it wasn't on the hill.

It was a pretty confined group of people who stuck together because we weren't at liberty to talk a lot about – at all – about what we were working on. And there was - you know - I think in the whole history of the Impeachment Inquiry there were no leaks from the Judiciary Committee's impeachment staff and virtually no leaks at all until the hearings became public and people started talking about it.

And I think that the non-partisan character of the staff influenced the Committee itself. Remember at the end of the hearings there were a number of Republican votes for impeachment and I think that my perception of the public image of the whole Impeachment Inquiry was very supportive and very favorable.

You know there have been three impeachments in the history. There's Andrew Johnson, there's Richard Nixon and there was Bill Clinton. There were Impeachment Inquiries and I think the impression that history has of those is that the only one that was really legitimate and successful was the Nixon impeachment.

And I attribute that to the fact...well, two facts. First, it was done in a very judicious fashion, but second, the issues in the Nixon impeachment were really different. They went to the core of the presidency. The issues were whether he had abused the presidential power by using operatives against the opposing political party by having tax investigations made of his political opponents and by doing other things using the implements using his implements as a President to harm his political opponents.

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There's just a huge difference between that and Bill Clinton, which was about an alleged personal impropriety with a female and Andrew Johnson, which as I know about it, was also very, very partisan in its character and I think the legitimacy of the impeachment process that ended up with his resignation is something that the country can be very proud of.

Naftali: When do you join the impeachment staff? What month is it – January, February of '74?

Altshuler: I don't recall. It was early in '74.

Naftali: When you accepted this assignment, how long did you think you would be in Washington on the staff? Was this going to be six months, a year? Did you know? Did they give you a sense?

Altshuler: I don't think we really had a sense of...at least I didn't have a sense of that. I mean, people had to uproot themselves and move there very quickly. You know I didn't have a family, but people with families were very rushed and had to find housing and do all of that, but I didn't have any idea how long it would last.

Naftali: How long had you been with CRLA?

Altshuler: Four years.

Naftali: Four years. So what tasks were you given when you arrived in Washington?

Altshuler: Well, as I recall I was assigned to the group that was investigating allegations that an organization called AMPI, which had deals with milk price supports, had received improperly political favoring consideration by the Department of Agriculture and there were allegations that this was a political payoff to the milk industry and whatever it was just didn't pan out.

There was really no basis to see any presidential misconduct in whatever happened and that was what I did initially. Later on, I don't remember exactly what I was working on. I mean, people were doing things like editing and fact-checking and site-checking and doing other things, but that was my first assignment when I got to the staff.

Naftali: Tell us a bit about the effect of secrecy on staff cohesion and morale.

Altshuler: Oh, it built a lot of cohesion. We really couldn't talk about anything political with anyone else and in Washington it's all politics. So I think people stuck together very closely and there were a lot of close bonds that were formed by that and again it's Republicans and Democrats together because the staff was integrated, it was treated as a whole and you know I wasn't aware of the party affiliation of the person in the desk next to me



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for several weeks because we just never talked about that. It wasn't a factor.

Naftali: Who was the leader of the group that you were working with - when you were working on the milk fund matter?

Altshuler: Well, John Doar was the head of the whole thing and I think it may have been Bernie Nussbaum who was in charge of this issue that really turned out not to be an issue. I don't recall. It wasn't it didn't rise to the top level of scrutiny.

Naftali: When... Would you like some water?

Altshuler: Yeah.

Naftali: Go ahead. We'll stop for a moment.

Once it became clear that this particular line on inquiry was not going anywhere, what did you start doing?

Altshuler: I can't recall. I think I worked on miscellaneous things that came up. The format of the staff's presentation to the Committee were what's called Statements of Information, which I think is significant because the staff didn't come in with briefs on one side or another. Its role was to present the Committee with a list of facts, usually in chronological order, of underlying what the issues were and we didn't take positions, we didn't make recommendations.

So there was an incredible amount of very thorough fact-checking because you would have a sentence saying, "On August 14<sup>th</sup>, the President telephoned Joe Smith," and you had to make sure that there was evidence underlying the facts and you basically that fact, which was listed on a list of facts, was supported by documentary evidence all collected in loose-leaf binders and one thing that had to be done was a tremendous amount of fact-checking to collect any substantiation that you had for a statement that was made and to organize and present it in a way that the Committee could go and see it by flipping through a notebook.

Naftali: So did you help craft some of those?

Altshuler: Yeah, I did. John Doar was very meticulous that every sentence had to be not only clear, but substantially justified and so you would pore over loads of documents to make sure that anything you said was supported and to present the supporting information. So that just took a lot of work.

Naftali: What do you remember of -? Would you like some more?

Altshuler: Yeah. Sorry, I've got a real cold.

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Naftali: That's alright. Take as much time as you need.

Altshuler: Yeah. I think I'd like some more actually.

Naftali: Let's stop for a moment.

We were discussing crafting the Statement of Information and you were mentioning how meticulous Mr. Doar was and how he wanted that meticulous to pervade your work.

Altshuler: That's right. I think I learned a lot of my legal writing skills through that process because it was simple declarative sentences that are very sound in their factual support.

Naftali: I wanted to ask you about what you remembered of staff thinking just before the votes. Was there a sense that there would be bipartisan support for some of the articles of impeachment by the time the votes came?

Altshuler: Well, that was the hope – that one way or another it would be bipartisan and I think that first, the facts themselves spoke very clearly, but the way it was presented in an objective manner I think helped create the atmosphere that existed for the Committee itself and its deliberations.

The hearings were closed hearings in the sense that they weren't open to the public and I was impressed with how many of the members actually focused on what was being presented to them. A lot of congressional hearings are places where people make a lot of generalizations and you don't have a lot of precision in much of what goes on in congressional hearings and these were very clearly capturing the Committee's attention.

A lot of the members would ask you questions. Here I was, a junior staff member and I had to field questions from some political figures who were very able politicians, but also very smart, at least when they were thinking in empirical terms and I think it was a real sound deliberative process that the Committee went through and I think that the tone that the inquiry staff set was important to that.

Naftali: Can you recall any personal interaction that you had with any members of the Committee?

Altshuler: I don't recall the details, but I know I was questioned about one thing quite vigorously, but I can't recall at this point what the subject matter of that was, but the members had studied the facts. They had information of their own. They had their own staffs. So they would come up with things that they would have expected us to address and I think we were pretty good at addressing those.

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- Naftali: I recognize that it's been a long time so I'm not looking for the details, but would this request have...were you at one of their meetings, at a hearing or was this a request that came by mail?
- Altshuler: No, no, no, no. Everything –
- Naftali: Or by letter, I mean.
- Altshuler: Everything that I was familiar with was done in these closed session hearings, the executive session hearings with the Committee up on its benches and the staff sitting down there at a table.
- Naftali: And that's when the question would have come to you.
- Altshuler: Yeah.
- Naftali: Do you recall your feeling or the feeling of the staff after the votes? Did you feel, did the staff feel, that it had done a good job that it had laid out the information in a way that had been useful to the Committee?
- Altshuler: I think the staff felt very good about its work and it wasn't just sort of a political reaction by the Democrats or the Republicans that one way or another favorable or unfavorable, but I think we felt that we helped the Committee really understand what was going on factually.
- Naftali: Did you listen to any of the tapes?
- Altshuler: Yes.
- Naftali: Can you recall your experience? What it was like to listen to those tapes?
- Altshuler: Well, some of them were difficult to decipher. You'd sit there with earphones on, but no, it was pretty thrilling and that's another thing. We always referred to him as the President. You couldn't say Nixon. You couldn't use any derogatory terms. You referred to President Nixon as the President in your conversations. It was just part of the culture, but I think the President had –
- I remember one tape, listening to it, where I think he had had one too many to drinks and started rambling. That was pretty interesting to listen to, but I didn't listen to a lot of them because the issues that I was working on were not ones where the President was sitting down with Haldeman and Ehrlichman and planning some action or anything like that and you get a little bit of feeling for what he was like even in brief conversations.
- Naftali: Do you recall the Committee's reaction when it started to listen to tapes?
- Altshuler: Well, I really can't speak to others' –
- Naftali: But were you in the room?
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- Altshuler: They...pardon?
- Naftali: Were you in the room?
- Altshuler: No, no, no, no. No. As I recall there were very few recordings played to the Committee. The Committee had access to a lot of taped material and they could listen to it – the members of staff could listen to it in a separate room – but I don't recall much about the playing of tapes before the whole Committee. It might have gone on, I don't know. I just don't remember that.
- Naftali: Do you recall your reaction when you heard that the President was resigning?
- Altshuler: Well, yeah. I think we all felt that justice had been done in the sense that the President, in our view, had really committed what was known as impeachable offenses and that's an important part of what I think makes the Nixon impeachment an exercise in the validity of the impeachment powers because what he was impeached for, the articles that he was found guilty of, involved a misuse of presidential power.
- He had tax investigations made against some of his opponents. He had a lot of government FBI investigations. He used the power of the office of President for political purposes that were, I think, impermissible and that's what makes this different from the other two impeachments – the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton, which dealt with a personal affair.
- I mean, there were allegations of perjury and the Andrew Johnson impeachment also was a really political kind of process to try to remove a political opponent and with President Nixon you feel that he really abused the powers of his office for his own political purposes and that's what I think made that a valid exercise of the impeachment power.
- Naftali: Looking back at your experience, what did you learn over the course of your work besides perhaps how to write better legal briefs?
- Altshuler: Yeah.
- Naftali: What did you learn? What did you learn that surprised you or that has sort of stuck in your mind as significant about President Nixon?
- Altshuler: About –?
- Naftali: About President Nixon.
- Altshuler: Personally?
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Naftali: Not personally, but as President and the use of power by the President that you didn't know before you started.

Altshuler: Well, I think in a lot of respects, he was a tragic character. He just had a mean streak in him and a lack of sense of responsibility for the limits of presidential power that I thought was actually very sad. I think he had a lot of intelligence and certainly he was a careful, thoughtful, planning person, but I thought he had a lack of character in the sense that he was willing to use the Presidency against his political opponents.

I mean, there was an enemies list and it was sort of a vindictiveness and underhandedness that I didn't find admirable. On the other hand, it was a tragic event for him. I know he's crestfallen by it and that's never a happy sight to see in anyone even if you think they may not have acted the way they should have.

Naftali: What do you remember of your reaction to the pardon?

Altshuler: Well, I know there was a lot of outrage at it and I think President Ford suffered from it. I disliked it at the time, but I think it brought some relief to the country in some respects. I mean, it was a great boon for the Democrats politically, but I'm glad the country was spared the process of going through an impeachment trial and a criminal case too. I mean, I think it was an ending that probably, in overall historical terms, is sort of an anomaly in the fall of Nixon.

I wasn't pleased by it, but on the other hand, I was not totally outraged by it because I thought that Nixon had been shown to have done bad things and was removed from office and was no longer in office and the country needed to move on. I'm curious what other people thought about it, other of my staff members. Maybe we can talk off camera about that.

Naftali: Also, you'll be able to see the interviews.

Altshuler: Yeah.

Naftali: When was your last day at the staff?

Altshuler: I don't remember the date.

Naftali: But, I mean what month? Did you stay through August or -?

Altshuler: No. I wanted to get home. No, I stayed around for a few days and then had to pack up and move out.

Naftali: Do you remember what last tasks you were working on before you left?

Altshuler: Before I left?

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- Naftali: The staff.
- Altshuler: No, not really. I mean, we wanted to archive everything and make sure that all of our records were in order and whatever.
- Naftali: Did you make any friends, sort of long-lasting friends, in those six months?
- Altshuler: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, I mean, we were in this dinky little office building in the Congressional Hotel. We couldn't talk to anybody about politics so we spent time with each other and we got to know each other. No, I have a lot of lasting friends, friendships come out of that.
- Naftali: Did you have any reunions?
- Altshuler: Gosh, I don't think so. I don't think so. I mean, you run into your former colleagues a lot and sometimes we've gone to common functions, but no, I don't think we had any reunion. I'm not sure it would have been appropriate, actually.
- Naftali: You've given us one very dramatic story about Mr. Doar. Do you have any other recollections of working with him that you might want to preserve?
- Altshuler: Oh, just that he was very meticulous and very strict about the tone that you had, the respect of the office of the Presidency you had and he's a very noble character. So I had very a favorable impression of him. Yeah, I've seen him occasionally. He's come out and there have been various events that he's been at. He wasn't like a warm, friendly kind of leader, but he was a leader you could really admire and respect.
- Naftali: Did you meet Hillary Rodham during that period?
- Altshuler: Yeah, mm-hmm. We were pretty close actually because we were both junior staff members. We had both come from non-conventional backgrounds. I mean, other than corporate laws firms. We had a lot of the same values.
- Naftali: So she would work on family service, right, children's defense?
- Altshuler: Children's Defense Fund, which was a very good non-profit, somewhat akin to the one I worked for, California Rural Legal Assistance, in its mission and its funding and she stayed with the Children's Defense Fund. She was very loyal to it afterward, as I've been to CRLA.
- Naftali: Mr. Woods, in describing his work yesterday, referred to the fact that he had to give Hillary Rodham, later Hillary Rodham Clinton, some grunt work working on figuring out how to organize information. This is a pre-digital, pre-computer era. Do you remember her ever...and he said that
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she had taken this task despite having worked on much more important things before coming to the staff and took it in good spirit. Did she ever express her initial frustration at this task that Mr. Woods had given her?

Altshuler: Yeah, a little bit. I mean, it wasn't a big deal. We all had grunt work of some sort or another to do. No, I mean, she didn't rile at it or anything that she wasn't happy with.

Naftali: Because later Mr. Woods gave her much more interesting work and she worked with him on the whole issue of the procedures that the Committee would follow in accessing and evaluating information. Did she express to you her pleasure at now having something really meaty to get her teeth into?

Altshuler: I remember something of that sort, but I don't remember any details.

Naftali: Given her later prominence in our country's history, do you have an anecdote or two you'd like to share of what it was like to work with her?

Altshuler: Oh, she has a great sense of humor. She's also very meticulous and she was delightful to work with. I've seen her over the years and we went and visited them at the White House. She's very loyal to her friends. Very supportive of her friends and she's a very pleasant person.

Naftali: Did she at the time introduce you to her boyfriend, Bill Clinton?

Altshuler: Well, I know she had this boyfriend from Arkansas and I don't remember if she introduced me to him or not. I think she may have gone to visit him or something, I can't remember. He did stay... and they were connected. I think Bill might have come up to see her once or twice and I can't remember when she introduced me to him, but we certainly connected up afterward and I guess Bill had lost one election and it was a bad time for them. I think I visited them then.

Altshuler: Fred, are there any vignettes, anecdotes, that we haven't touched on, that I haven't evoked that you'd like to preserve for the record?

Altshuler: Oh gosh. Well, I do feel that I can be very proud of what the work was that I was doing there and that the process was a collaborative one that I think all of the Impeachment Inquiry staff can see as a badge of honor. I mean, I think we really did what lawyers aspire to do, which is to do meaningful legal work that results in the benefit to the country of our abilities and knowledge of the law and I feel very happy about having done it, as I'm sure all of my former colleagues do, too.

Naftali: What was it, given the peculiarity and coincidence of your having been friends with someone who would later be First Lady to someone who'd become friends with someone who'd become First Lady and be involved

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in another impeachment? The coincidence must have been peculiar, to say the least.

Altshuler: Oh, it was. As I mentioned, I wrote a law review piece about the differences between the Clinton impeachment and the Nixon impeachment and they're a world apart. I mean, the Clinton impeachment was an overtly partisan effort with a political head that was not aimed at an objective, analytical analysis of what the underlying facts were.

It was an attempt to capitalize on an alleged personal failing of the President that really did not affect the conduct of his office and I think Kenneth Starr is seen historically as someone who was just a political operative, essentially, and I think that it's to the benefit of the country that impeachment does not become a tool of political partisanship and I think it's reserved, as it should be, for serious presidential misconduct involving the misuse of the powers of the President. I think that's all for the benefit of the country.

Naftali: You mentioned Kenneth Starr and so I'll ask you, in terms of your work, how useful was the material from the Senate Watergate Committee and how useful was the material that came from the Watergate Special Prosecution Force? What kind of material were you using for your own research and work?

Altshuler: Well, we looked at what the Senate Committee did and I don't think it was all that helpful, in that it wasn't as factually specific as the kind of material we were looking for. What was the other part of your question?

Naftali: Well, the material from the Watergate Special Prosecution Force.

Altshuler: I wasn't a party to whatever material we got from them. I don't know. I don't think it was very relevant. I mean, I know that we dealt with issues of the plumbers and there was some analysis of that in the Impeach Inquiry Commission's findings, but I don't think that that appeared as a major thing. At least not within the scope of the work I was doing.

Naftali: I know that the Inquiry didn't do much investigation of its own, but it did some since the Senate material wasn't factually specific as you required. Did you do some additional investigation or research?

Altshuler: I wasn't involved in that to the extent that we did.

Naftali: But I'm saying just on the milk fund issue or the --?

Altshuler: Oh, on the milk fund issue. No, that didn't involve the plumbers at all.

Naftali: I know, but how did you do the research on it?



Altshuler: There had been, I think, some other congressional investigation about that and I think that maybe the Agriculture Committee...I can't remember where we got the background information from, but as I say, it turned out very quickly to not lead to any presidential action that was at all questionable.

Naftali: Well, Fred. If you don't have anything to add, I want to thank you very much for spending this time with us and contributing to the library's collection.

Altshuler: Okay. Well, I'm very appreciative of your work on this very important project.

Naftali: Thank you, Fred. Thank you.