

Mayor Edward I. Koch's Favorite Photographs with Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama



*To Ed Koch
With best wishes,*

Ronald Reagan



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Richard K. Lieberman, Director
LaGuardia and Wagner Archives
LaGuardia Community College/CUNY
31-10 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101
Tel: 718-482-5065
www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu
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Prepared by:
Casey Babcock, Assistant Archivist
Douglas Dicarlo, Archivist
Joe Margolis, Editor and Researcher

Introduction

These are some of Mayor Edward I. Koch's favorite photographs from his personal collection. Interviews about the photographs were conducted by Richard K. Lieberman, the director of the La Guardia and Wagner Archives at La Guardia Community College/CUNY, for the purpose of creating an oral history about each image. Some of the more lively photographs and text have been selected for this publication. The texts on these photographs are from interviews Dr. Lieberman conducted with Mayor Koch on August 6th, 2008 and March 4th, 2009. The reader is asked to bear in mind that he or she is reading a verbatim transcript of spoken word, rather than written prose.

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Dr. Richard K. Lieberman and Mayor Edward I. Koch at Mayor Koch's office, August 6th, 2008.



*To Ed Koch
With best wishes,*

Ronald Reagan

(L-R) James Capalino, Robert McGuire, President Ronald Reagan, and Mayor Koch in New York City, November, 1981.

Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

KOCH: This would have been in relation to Westway, when he had come to New York City. The room shown is at Gracie Mansion, and he was delivering to me a mockup of the Westway check, which was \$100 million or something like that, for deposit. Actually, Westway never came to be. It failed, and we never got the money. But it was nice of him to come.

On the left is Jim Capalino. In the middle, to Reagan's right, is Bob McGuire, the police commissioner. Then it's Ronald Reagan, and me.

LIEBERMAN: And Capalino's title at that time was --

KOCH: He was a commissioner, the head of -- I think they called it GSA or something like that. The city housekeeping agency.

LIEBERMAN: And what was your role in Westway? Did you play a significant role?

KOCH: Yes. It was a very -- long story. I ran against it when running for mayor. When I won, this created havoc for people like David Rockefeller, Hugh Carey, and others who were committed to Westway -- a project which the environmentalists opposed, and which would have built a tunnel next to the Hudson River, and over the tunnel would have been 100 acres of new parkland. It would have been done at the cost of the federal government (90%), and all overruns would have been paid by the federal government. It would have allegedly eliminated traffic in Manhattan a great deal, by diverting it to this Westside tunnel, that went all the way down the west side of Manhattan, from, as I recall, 72nd St. to the Battery.

The left was against it. I didn't have strong feelings one way or the other, but my rule -- especially if you campaign -- was that if you don't have strong feelings and the community does, then, where possible, adopt the community's strong feelings. If you have strong feelings, based on expertise or facts, you have to be persuaded by argument to change your position. Otherwise, don't change. If it's a matter of conscience, you should never change because there are no arguments that are going to change you - again, if it's a matter of conscience. Those were the ways I looked at legislation.

So now I win, and the law requires that the state make a decision quickly, and the decision has to be agreed to by both the governor and the mayor of the city -- in this case, New York City. So Hugh Carey wants me to change. I had

actually concluded that it was, on balance, good for New York, but I had to find a way to change. So what I said to Hugh Carey was, "If you want to get me to change on this, you're going to have to insure that the fare (the MTA fare, the subways and buses) will not go up for four years, by providing state subsidies each year that will cover any deficits." He was aghast, as were his people. (Actually, his budget director was adamantly against my demand.) I said, "Hughie, there is no other way that I will change on this." We were in a private room. He had ordered everybody out. He and I were good friends. I said, "I can't change on this, without some tremendous savings to the people of the city of New York, and this would be such a savings." The fare was always going up, regularly, by a quarter every year.

So he said okay, and nobody thought it would happen -- that I would get that from him. He authorized the payments the first two years, and in the second two years -- at the end of the first two years he said, "I can't do it anymore." I called him up and I said, "Hughie, you gave me your ironclad assurance." His response was, "Next time, Ed, get it in steel. Iron breaks." Which I thought was -- [chuckles] He did the best he could. It cost the state tens of millions if not hundreds of millions to do what he did. Then, in the end, Westway was killed by the opponents of Westway through deft maneuvers in Congress.



Mayor Koch with Governor Hugh Carey at Mayor Koch's first inauguration, 1978.



Dear Mayor Ed - To look at us you'd think we just
cut the ribbon to open Westway. All the
best to you & Warm Regards Ron

President Ronald Reagan with Mayor Koch in New York City, November, 1981. The inscription reads, "Dear Mayor Ed - To look at us you'd think we just cut the ribbon to open Westway. All the best to you & Warm Regards. Ron."

Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

LIEBERMAN: What was your relationship with Reagan? How did you meet? When did you first meet?

KOCH: Well, it was during the 1980 campaign, when he was running against Carter. His people called up and asked my people to arrange a meeting: "Governor Reagan would like to come and talk with Mayor Koch, and find out what the problems of the city are." And my staff, all of them, said, "You can't do that. That would be perceived as a betrayal of the Democratic candidate." I said, "Don't be nuts. The governor of California, who is running now for president, wants to know my problems. He may win the presidential election. Do you want him to think that I wouldn't see him, when he asked me to see him? And two, isn't it good for us that he knows what my problems are, in case he wins?" So I overruled everybody, and I said, "Set it up."

We had it at Gracie Mansion, in the dining room. In fact, for laughs, we put in front of his plate a big jar of jellybeans -- which he laughed about. He came with Lyn Nofziger, who was his major campaign person, and we discussed all my problems. They also said, in advance, "The Mayor and the Governor -- we'd appreciate it if they sat on the same side of the table. We don't want them to look adversarial." I said, "It's okay by me."

It was very cordial. I told him the problems, and he had come up with maybe 100 press people, and city press people all in a truck -- they were all out on the back porch -- and Nofziger said, "We've got to go." I said, "Wait a minute. Before we go, let's agree on what we will say at the press conference outside and what we agreed to." He said, "What do you want?" I said, "Well, there are three things that I want. First, there are movie studios that the Army owns, out in Queens. They make movies, and I'd like New York City to become a movie capital once again. I want those studios free." The President said, "You got it." I said, "The second thing I want is an assurance that the Federal Guarantee Account," which provides New York City with a federal guarantee of \$1,650,000,000, of which we have only drawn down, as I recall, about \$600 million -- and which, under the terms of the law can be stopped at any time by the government -- "that you commit yourself to giving us the entire amount." He said, "Done." "The third thing," I said, "is a commitment on your part that if you win, you'll take over Medicaid, all payments." He said, "Over my dead body. I'll never do that. Maybe if you were in charge of Medicaid, I might do it. But no, it's a terrible drain," and he began to explain why. Then Nofziger said, "Well, two out of three ain't bad."

We went outside, and I was the first to speak. I said, "I've briefed the Governor on the problems of New York City, he's agreed to two things," and I laid both of them out. Then the Governor speaks, and states he's agreed to these things. Then questions, and one question, directed at me -- "Am I concerned about the security of Israel?" -- one reporter said, "Whose position is better on Israel?" I said, "There's no question that Governor Reagan's position is

better." It was. It was just a simple statement of truth -- but it was very important to them. And there were other questions, which I don't remember.

Then he's elected.

LIEBERMAN: Did you keep in touch with him during the campaign?

KOCH: No.

LIEBERMAN: So that was it, until he was elected.

KOCH: Right.

One of the first things his treasury secretary, Donald Regan, did was to say that he was going to end the federal guarantees, and screw us out of \$900 million. He didn't like New York. He was from New Jersey. I believe he hated New York -- he made it very clear -- and this was going to be his revenge. So I called up Rich Richardson, who was the urban staff member at the White House, and I said, "Rich, you can't do this." I'd never met him before, but I knew who he was. "You can't do this. The President committed himself to this." And Richardson said, "Ronald Reagan keeps every commitment. Do you have it in writing?" I said, "No, we don't have it in writing, but we have it on tape."

LIEBERMAN: You had taped the -- ?

KOCH: We didn't tape him inside, but there was a tape of the press conference, and he said it at the press conference.

He said, "Send the tape down. If it's on the tape, you get your money." So we sent the tape down with two cops, and we got the money.

LIEBERMAN: What about the buildings? The Astoria studios?

KOCH: We got that without any problems. That didn't involve Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Treasury. That belonged to the Army.

LIEBERMAN: So after he's elected, when is the next time you meet face-to-face?

KOCH: I had said to him at the breakfast meeting at Gracie Mansion that I have a policy, which I did with President Carter -- I offered it to Carter, and I want to offer it to you, in case you become President -- that you should think of Gracie Mansion as your home away from home, and when you come up here, stay here. Don't go to a hotel." He said, "I'll consider that." So now he comes to New York for the first time, and he stays at the Waldorf, and he asked me to come and see him. He also asked Al D'Amato, who was a Republican senator from New York (separately) to have lunch with him, in Little Italy. My appointment was at 3:00, and I'm always a little early. I'm waiting for him, in the Tower building, where the elevator is, the private elevator to the Tower. He comes in, he sees me, and, on the whole, a very warm greeting. Then he says, "Come on up with me." So I walk over to the elevator -- and I think I've described a similar situation with President Carter, where I met him at the Waldorf Astoria, when he needed me to support him, in that very same year -- 1980 -- for re-election, and he had asked me to come down to see him at the hotel. When he comes in, with one security guard, and I walk with him to the elevator, he gets in, I start to walk into the elevator, and Carter says to me, "You can't ride in this elevator. Take the other elevator." I thought to myself, "You're nuts." But -- that's what he wanted, and I took the second elevator and went up to his apartment.

Now Reagan says to me, "Come on," so I let him get into the elevator. He says, "Get in," and I said, "No, I don't think I'm supposed to be in this elevator, Mr. President. I don't think they want it" -- referring to his campaign or whatever, his people. He said, "Don't be ridiculous. Get in." The difference between two men! [Chuckles] So I went upstairs.

So when we go upstairs, his security guard (only one) is carrying a box from the famous pastry store on Grand Street -- Ferrara's. Yes. -- and when we get just outside the door, he takes the box from this security guy. Nancy opens the door, he kisses her -- it's very warm. Clearly, they loved one another -- and she says, "What do you have in that box?" He said, "Well, I don't really know. D'Amato gave it to me." A huge box. They open it up, they both look in, and they don't know what it is. "What is that?" So I said, "May I look?" So I look, and I say, "Cannoli!" [Laughs] I don't understand it myself. They don't have cannoli in California? But who knows.

LIEBERMAN: There are plenty of Italians in California, that's for sure.

KOCH: Oh. So then he invites me in and we chat, and, you know, it's hard to talk to a President about non-business matters. You don't know what to say. [Interruption] So we chat, then I say to him, "Mr. President, you remember, I told you that when you come to New York City you should consider Gracie Mansion your home, and here you are,

instead, at the Waldorf Astoria. It's distressing." He said, "I couldn't help it. They put Nancy's and my initials on the towels -- so we had to come here." [Laughs]

LIEBERMAN: After you met him the second time, at some point did you start corresponding with him, having more than just -- ?

KOCH: We didn't have an outside relationship, but it was very warm when we were together. He clearly liked me, and I liked him.

LIEBERMAN: And did you have direct access to him, in terms of picking up the phone, writing a letter, or in any way have direct access to him?

KOCH: I never called him directly, on the phone, but there was some correspondence. They were very nice, I must say. They treated me better than Carter treated me.

LIEBERMAN: Then when he ran for re-election -- ?

KOCH: I didn't support him, but I was not unhappy when he won. [Laughs]



*To Mayor Edward Koch
With best wishes,
Ronald Reagan*

Mayor Koch with Ronald and Nancy Reagan at Kennedy Airport, circa 1981.

Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library



To Ed - From one penguin to
another with friendship - *Ed Bush*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 5, 1991

Dear Ed:

Many thanks for your thoughtful letter enclosing copies of your columns and the articles by Gene Rostow.

This is a complicated time, but your words of support strengthen my resolve to meet the challenges of the conflict in the Persian Gulf. As you indicated, Saddam Hussein's disregard for international conventions regarding the treatment of noncombatants and prisoners of war and the launching of indiscriminate attacks are indeed sickening. Rest assured, we will stay the course, and we will succeed. I, too, pray for the safety and well-being of those courageous men and women of our Armed Forces who are facing this historic challenge.

Barbara is doing much better, and she welcomed your words of advice about her sporting activities. I'll try to keep her off those sleds.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

*Ed - since you
wrote new battles
in the Gulf, new battles
The Honorable Edward I. Koch
Robinson Silverman Pearce
Aronsohn and Berman
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10104*

*in N.Y. - we've
followed thru a little
Barbara sends her
love. GB,*

Mayor Koch with President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush at the White House, circa 1991.
Courtesy George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

LIEBERMAN: It's a White House reception --

KOCH: Well, it would have been a reception -- there's tails.

LIEBERMAN: Tell me a bit about your relationship with Bush, Sr. -- how you got to know him, when did you meet him?

KOCH: Bush, Sr. was a member of Congress when I was a member of Congress, so I got to know him then, too. I like him. He's a very decent man, a very decent man. Then I had another exchange with him when he became CIA director. One day he called my congressional office, in New York actually, and he said, "Ed, one of our agents has learned that there's a contract on your life, and I'm calling to alert you." It related to the fact that I had stopped, in my capacity as a member of the Appropriations Committee Foreign Affairs, money that was appropriated for Uruguay -- it wasn't very much. It was \$3 million for arms -- when Uruguay was considered the charnel house of Latin America in those days -- locking up everybody on the left. I was subsequently going to take on (as I did) Nicaragua, but I thought I would first start with Uruguay, because Uruguay only received \$3 million in arms support from the U.S., and Nicaragua received \$50 million, and would draw more attention and resistance.

So I won the battle, and Uruguay lost the military appropriations -- which was remarkable! Two things came out of that. One relates to Jack Murphy, which I'll tell you about as soon as I finish the first story. Bush says, "Uruguay, and Chile, and Argentina are part of an organization called The Condor. We think the secret services of the three work together, and are angry with what you did, and are going to kill you." It sounds like a movie. So I said, "George, you're going to provide protection, aren't you?" And he said, "The CIA does not provide protection." I said, "But George, I'm being threatened because of an official action that I took, as a member of Congress. I deserve protection!" He said, "Ed, the CIA does not provide protection." So I said, "George, what should I do?" He said, "Be very careful." [Laughs] I wrote about this.

Then there was a non-fiction book on this whole thing, in which I was a small character, and they mention the fact that they did, indeed, send up assassins and they killed, either in D.C. or Baltimore, a guy -- Orlando Letelier -- whom they also believed to have, in some way or another, injured those Fascist countries. They put a bomb under his car and blew him up. But they never got me, for whatever reason. I asked the commanding officer who was in charge of the Criminal Section of the New York City police (I think that's what it was called) to come and see me and told him the same story, at the time, and he said, "Well, I'm sorry. We don't have cops to provide protection, but you can always

call me -- here's my card -- twenty-four hours a day." One night I'm home, and I hear the door to my patio -- it's sort of like a penthouse, in a very dark, commercial area of the city, on Washington Place -- and I hear the door open. I didn't know, but it was probably swept open by the wind. I'm saying to myself, "Oh, God, they're here. What do I do?" So I put the phone under my cover, and I was able to dial this number. No answer. I thought to myself, "How can this be?" [Laughs] Then I got out of bed. I said, "I don't want to die in bed. I'll go and confront them." I go into the living room, and there's nobody there. The door is open. But, as I say, it was probably the wind.

Well later when I became mayor, I had to pick a police commissioner. It was not going to be the guy who told me he's not going to provide me with protection. In any event, I picked the best of those who were vying for the position.



Mayor Koch and President George H.W. Bush at the White House, circa 1989.

Courtesy George Bush Presidential Library and Museum



To: Ed -
my former House Colleague and a Great Mayor.
Warm Regards, G. Bush

(L-R) President George H.W. Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, John Sununu, and Mayor Koch at the White House, circa 1989.

Courtesy George Bush Presidential Library and Museum



Ed
Looks good at the White House

Cy

(L-R) John Sununu, Vice President Dan Quayle, President George H.W. Bush, and Mayor Koch at the White House, circa 1989.

Courtesy George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

KOCH: I was called by Mr. Sununu, who was his Chief of Staff, and they wanted me to come down and help to get some legislation through (I was out of office). It related to (my recollection is, although I'm not really sure) eliminating quotas for federal programs -- which I've always stood for (which the radicals on the left and the black leadership didn't like me for, but I always stood for that). I was considered a factor in this battle.

So Sununu invited me down to see their general counsel, which I did. Then Sununu said, "Would you like to see the President?" I said, "I'd love to see the President." So he said, "Come, we'll go over." We went into the Oval Office. There was nobody in the Oval Office, so we went further into the White House. Then somebody told Sununu that the President and Quayle, the Vice President, were out on the tennis court (it was being repaired), and there they were. Also there was the President's dog, Millie.

So I looked at the President's dog and I said, "Mr. President, your dog is sick." I could tell -- not that I'm a maven -- but I could tell. His dog was sick. And it was. Sure enough, it had a medical problem -- lack of iodine. When they tested the water or god knows what -- it affected them, and they were afraid maybe it affected the people at the White House, too. But it didn't. So the President said, "Let's go back to the office," and these three pictures -- the bottom two are walking back to his office.

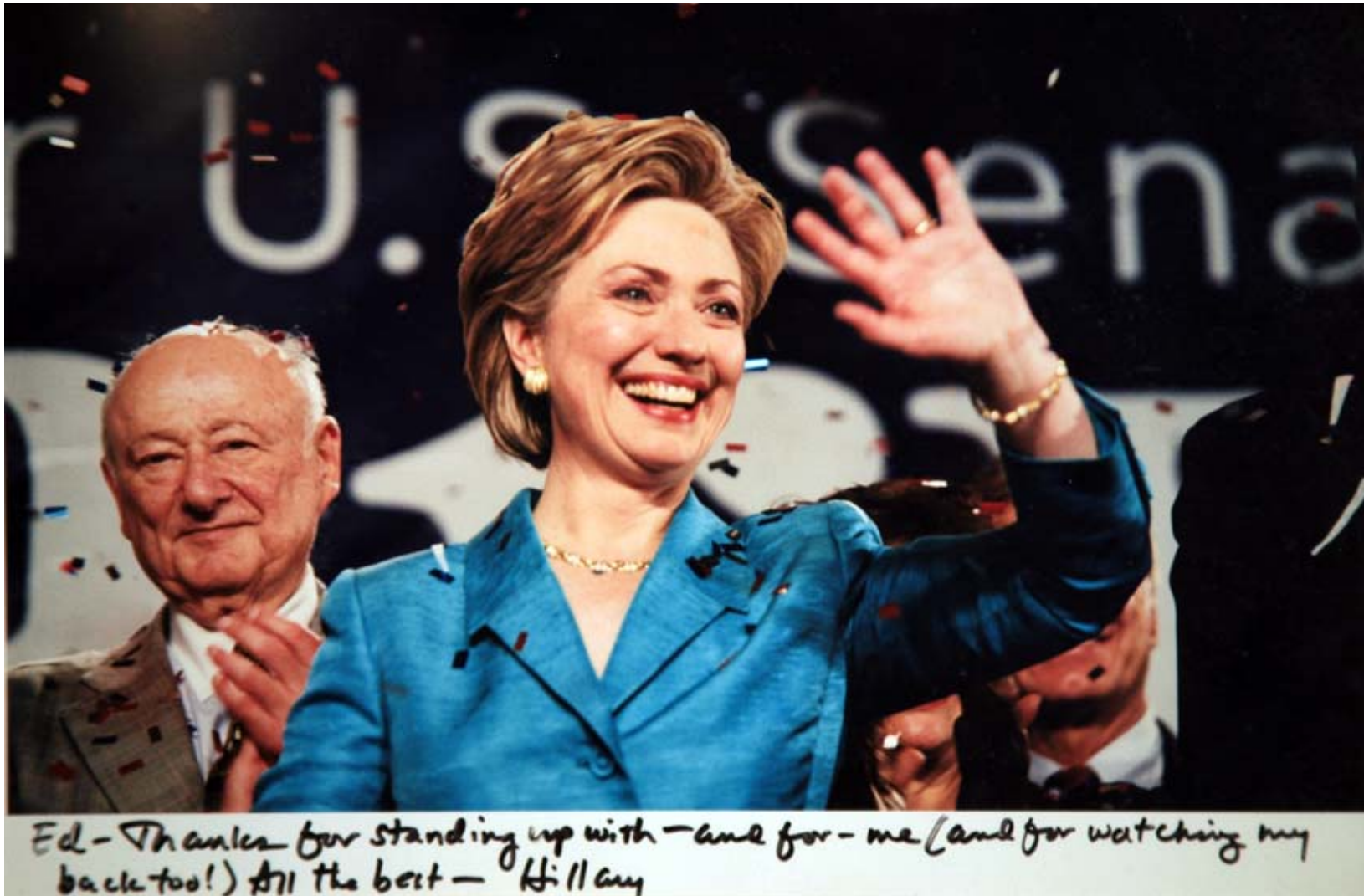
KOCH: Quayle is behind us, and Sununu, and I'm thinking to myself, "If they're taking pictures all the time here, I want to look like Bobby Kennedy." So I looked very casual, walking with my hands in my pockets and jacket open. It was deliberate. Now we go inside --

LIEBERMAN: "Deliberate" because you thought this was going to end up in the newspapers?

KOCH: Yes, or on my wall -- which it has. It's on my wall today. I wanted to have that boyish, Bobby Kennedy look. If I had had a sweater, I would have thrown it around my neck. [Chuckles] Anyway, we're sitting down, and in the picture is the President, then to his left is Quayle, and then to his left is Sununu, and then me. It was rather warm and nice.

LIEBERMAN: And were your efforts successful, in terms of their purpose in inviting you there?

KOCH: No, I think they lost the bill -- though I'm not really sure anymore. But the Supreme Court made that decision not very long ago -- "No racial quotas."



Senator Hillary Clinton celebrating her election with Mayor Koch, November, 2000. The inscription reads, "Ed - Thanks for standing up with - and for - me (and for watching my back too!) All the best - Hillary."

*Photo taken by Cynthia Johnson
Courtesy of Getty Images*

LIEBERMAN: When did you first meet President Clinton, and what was your relationship with him?

KOCH: I never really had a close relationship with President Clinton. In fact, the only discussions I ever had was when I was part of his wife's campaign, when Hillary ran for different things. When she ran for senator of New York, I was deeply involved in her campaign and did a commercial, which won a national prize, because she was attacked by her Republican opponent, Rick Lazio. He accused her of being supportive of Arafat and Arafat's wife, because she had embraced Arafat's wife at a demonstration, where they were on the same platform, in the West Bank, and the news reports were that Mrs. Arafat made a speech, then broke down, and Hillary went over and embraced her. Then the attacks on Hillary, by the Israeli opponents of Hillary -- and others, I suppose -- were that didn't she realize that she was embracing a supporter of terrorism? Because Mrs. Arafat's speech had been an attack on the Israelis, alleging that they had used tear gas, or maybe poison gas, to injure Palestinian children. The speech had been delivered in Arabic, but there was an English translation, simultaneously. Hillary said, "I didn't hear a translation."

I made a commercial and talked about it in the commercial -- and elsewhere -- saying that it's ridiculous. A woman is crying. I would go over and comfort her, whether I knew what she was saying or not. It's the decent thing to do. I attacked Rick, saying, "You're attacking Hillary for embracing this woman who had broken down, and was in tears? What about you, when you grabbed Arafat's hand, in not only a handshake, but you were all over him, with both hands on his hand!"

LIEBERMAN: What was your sense of President Clinton's role in the campaign, and what discussions do you remember having with him about her campaign?

KOCH: Well, I don't really know what his role was. I was not involved with him. But they had a fundraiser on one occasion, at a Broadway theatre, and on that particular occasion I was suffering from an enlarged prostate, which meant that I had the urge to urinate every fifteen minutes, and it was enormously aggravating, tension-producing, and painful at times. I'm sitting in the audience, about ten seats in front of Hillary and Bill, who were behind me, and suddenly the urge comes upon me and I'm waiting for the curtain to go up, so I can rush to the bathroom. Finally it comes up, and I rush down the aisle to get to the bathroom. Bill Clinton rose behind me, steps out into the aisle, and prevents me from going by putting his arm around my shoulders, and saying, "I can't tell you how much I appreciate all you've done for Hillary." I remember thinking to myself, "If you don't get out of my way, I'm going to knock you down!" [Laughter]

LIEBERMAN: He's a big guy.

KOCH: Under those circumstances, believe me, I would have knocked him down, like a caged animal. [Laughter]

LIEBERMAN: When you think about the Clinton years and New York, does anything come to mind in terms of his presidency, and being good for New York City?

KOCH: I thought he was a good president, and I supported him. I opposed the efforts to impeach him for his personal immorality, which I didn't think permitted impeachment; it wasn't a public matter, in my judgment, sufficient to allow such proceedings. So my comments about him were supportive, on that issue. Then when he left office, and signed pardons for a number of people, including Mark Rich, "I'll never talk to him again. I'll never shake his hand again," it was so disgusting.

Then, on one occasion -- I have the picture here, don't I? We had an event, and they were taking pictures of everybody with Bill Clinton. I thought to myself, "Eh. Forget about it," and I took a picture with him. And that ended it.



Mayor Koch with President Bill Clinton and David Dinkins at an Association for a Better New York event in 2004.



Mayor Koch with President Bill Clinton at a White House Dinner for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, July 18, 1999.

Courtesy William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum

The New York Times

Thursday, February 1, 2007 NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2007



Bush Weighs In on Executive Pay

President Bush greeted former Mayor Edward I. Koch and David N. Dinkins, left, after a speech to members on Wall Street. Mr. Bush's call for curbing CEO pay comes as the nation's top executives are being paid for the first time since the 1970s. Pages B8 and C1.



Mayor Koch with President George W. Bush and Mayor David Dinkins in New York City, January 31, 2007. Published in the *New York Times* on February 1, 2007.

*Photo on left taken by Todd Heisler
Photo on right taken by a White House photographer*

KOCH: These are two very important pictures of the same event - President George W. Bush's visit to Wall Street.

I got a call that the President was going to speak at the sub-treasury building at Nassau Street and Wall, would I come? So I said sure. I go in, and they have me in dead-center, front row, in front of the lectern. My leg was bothering me, so I sat down. I went upstairs, and I sat down. A little while later, in walks Pete King and four or five members of Congress who had flown up on the plane with the President. Peter King -- who's a very good friend of mine, and is a Republican but I support him -- said, "You know, we were on the plane and I told the President of our conversation where you" -- meaning me -- "had said that you worried that the President may become upset by all the attacks made upon him, and that he should not worry about it and stand up, and not let it get him down. The President said, 'My mother says the same thing! But you can tell Ed, they're not gonna get me down.'" That was that message.

Then the President come in and makes his speech. His opening line is (and it was in the text; that is, when they published it), "Oh, there's my pal, Ed Koch." Rather sweet. So I listened. I didn't think the speech was such a terrific speech, except for the opening line! Then he did something that he tends to do -- which other politicians/public officials don't. They generally leave immediately. Cheney. Cheney would leave immediately. He, the President, went down to the perimeter of the first line. Everybody stood up. They wanted to shake hands with him. He went down the line, shaking hands with everybody on the perimeter. Then he got to me. He pulls me in, and he whispers to me, "Don't worry about me. I'm okay."



Mayor Koch with the Democratic nominee for President Barack Obama. Behind Senator Obama is Archbishop Edward Egan. Behind Mayor Koch are the Republican nominee for President John McCain and his wife Cindy. This photo was taken at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner at The Waldorf=Astoria on October 15, 2008.

LIEBERMAN: I know you took your time in thinking about supporting Barack Obama, but what led you to the decision to support him?

KOCH: I crossed party lines, on occasion, prior to 2004. I supported Lindsay for mayor, I supported Giuliani for mayor, because of local matters. And in 2004, for the first time, I supported Bush. I had not supported him in 2000. My rationale was that, of the candidates running, he was, without question, the only one, compared with his Democratic opponent, John Kerry, who understood the threat of Islamic terrorism -- and I said it at the time -- "All the issues are finessed, and I will be supporting him, even though I don't agree with him." I said this in public, in writing, on the air, to his campaign people, when they asked me to campaign. I said, "You have to understand, I don't agree with him on a single domestic issue. But I'm doing it because I believe that no other issue matters, if we don't win on the issue of Islamic terrorism and give it the attention it needs. George Bush is willing to do that. That's okay." They understood that, and I campaigned in Florida. They always send me to Florida, because it's Jewish. They believe (and they're correct) that I have some clout with the Jewish communities. They also sent me to Michigan and Iowa. I said, "Why are you sending me to Iowa? There are no Jews there." They said, "There are two Jews, and one of them is a major contributor and county leader, and he asked for you, specifically." So I went. And Pennsylvania. A number of states.

I enjoyed it, and I like George Bush. I think he's far better than the press that he gets, or got, and that history will recognize him fifty years from now as they recognized Harry Truman, as having provided something special in office.

LIEBERMAN: And then Obama -- the decision to support Obama. I know we've talked about it. You gave it a lot of thought.

KOCH: I did. Once again, the only issue that caused me to support George Bush was his attitude toward Islamic terrorism. I examined the position of the two candidates, Obama and McCain, on the issue of Islamic terrorism, and there's no question that, with respect to all other issues, domestic and otherwise -- particularly domestic -- I was for Obama, not for McCain. I concluded that on the issue of Islamic terrorism, that Obama would stand up to Islamic terrorism, and I concluded that I would support a natural ally as a Democratic candidate. It would be unusual for me to cross party lines, although I've done it before. But there was a rationale. There wasn't a rationale here. But I wanted to drag it out, to get the maximum attention paid to that decision. I had already made it, when I got a call from Obama saying, "I understand you're making your decision, and I'm calling you to say I stand ready to respond to any question

you have." I think he was calling from Florida. I said, "Senator, it's very nice of you to do this, but it was totally unnecessary for you to call me -- although I'm very appreciative of it." And the tone, when I continued, was, "You have nothing to worry about with respect to me." Then his next line was, "And will you campaign for me?" I said sure. Soon thereafter I announced publicly I was for him.

Then I went to Florida for him, and got a very good response -- a surprising one -- which was that the Jews that I met, when they sent me to meetings (there were actually three meetings, 250 Jews at each meeting), and what I did was say, "First let me ask how you're voting. How many here are for McCain?" Six or seven [unclear]. "How many here haven't made up their mind?" Another six. "How many here are for Obama?" All the rest. So I said, "Well, then I don't have to make my pitch. Instead, I'm going to give you the oath," which has become famous in my own campaigns and elsewhere, I said, "Raise your right hand and say after me, 'I solemnly swear that on election day, on November 4th, I shall rush to the polls and bring ten people with me to vote for Obama.'" As I say that, one woman shrieks, "Nooooo!" So I say, "No? Why no?" And she says, "You mustn't say 'I swear I will bring ten people,' you must say, 'I will try to bring ten people.'" So it shows you the effectiveness of that oath; because if you swear you're going to bring ten and if you don't, you're going to hell! [Laughs]

I told Obama this story, and he laughed. He said, "No, no, no. They did it because of you." And I said, "No. Believe me. They had already decided they were for you."