

CONVERSATIONS

WITH BILL KRISTOL

Conversations with Bill Kristol

Guest: Mitch Daniels, President, Purdue University

Table of Contents

I: The Daniels Campaign 00:15 – 08:23

II: Governor of Indiana 08:23 – 30:33

III: To Washington and Back 30:33 – 42:05

IV: Office of Management and Budget 42:05 – 1:06:22

V: Change that Believes in You 1:06:22 – 1:15:20

VI: Intellectual Freedom on Campus 1:15:20 – 1:20:24

I: The Daniels Campaign (00:15 – 08:23)

KRISTOL: Hi, I'm Bill Kristol. Welcome back to CONVERSATIONS. My guest today is Mitch Daniels, an old friend. And I'm very honored to have you with us, Mitch. Such a distinguished and public life – recently the Governor of the great State of Indiana, now President of Purdue University there, before that Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I think we first met when you were a White House aide, when I first came to Washington 30 years ago. So thanks for being with us.

DANIELS: Appreciate being invited.

KRISTOL: Well, which of all these jobs was your favorite? Which did you enjoy the most?

DANIELS: Probably the one you didn't mention, which was the longest job I ever had, which was in private business. Actually, two of them, running that was then a contract research organization, but mostly a long tour with the company Eli Lilly & Company, a pharmaceutical business.

I probably learned more there. I'll say this, I've enjoyed each opportunity, but frequently I was asked later, "What previous experiences helped most to be an effective governor?" that sort of thing. People would always expect me to name something from public life, but probably the experience in business, trying to manage for results, trying to get large numbers of people aligned and headed in a common direction, these were probably the most valuable days I spent.

KRISTOL: When were you there at Lilly in the 90s?

DANIELS: From about 1990 to 2001.

KRISTOL: Wow, a long stretch. And what was the most memorable thing you accomplished? I mean, what – I've never been really in the private sector, the real private sector. Obviously, *The Weekly Standard* is a for-profit magazine, but not a profit-making part of the private sector. So what would I be surprised about? What's the most striking?

DANIELS: Well, you know, as in other jobs, I tend to remember the things that I wasn't satisfied with and didn't go well and there were definitely some of those. Made some investments in things were probably either before their time or maybe just ill-conceived. There were also some great challenges. Lilly, to this day, remains, as far as I know, the single company, which survived a huge patent expiration without a

company-changing experience. They didn't fold, they weren't merged, they weren't forced to acquire someone else. That was an assignment, I had to organize the company for the expiration of Prozac, which is a product you'll remember.

KRISTOL: And what – and how did you survive? What was the key?

DANIELS: Well, it was the combination of many, many things. Roamed the world. First, the course economies, trying to prepare for expense reductions at the right time. Licensing in products that could somewhat offset the revenue loss that we were going to have. And, you know, it was only achieved through literally a global effort to smooth what would otherwise have been a fatal dip.

KRISTOL: You're in the public sector; as you know people always say, or often say, it's so hard to accomplish things in government because of all the rules and regulation, Congress, the media, civil service rules. But in the private sector you can make things happen easily. Is that true? I've always wondered how.

DANIELS: Well, certainly more true. But we never, certainly in the gubernatorial experience, never surrendered to the idea that things were fated to be either impossible or impossibly slow.

I think, enjoyed a number of successes that people found surprising. We were very fortunate and instrumental in that becoming so it was that we brought a lot – we were bale to bring a lot of people who did have private-sector experience and I was told recently that at something just around 20 percent this current Administration has the fewest people with any, a day experience in the private sector of any in American history. And ours was quite the reverse of that. We followed a 16-year period in which the other team had been in charge.

We're able bring a host of people who didn't understand why things couldn't be done and were used to operating on a much faster clock speed.

KRISTOL: So let's go back to that. So you ran for governor of Indiana in 2004, and Democrats had had the governorship for –?

DANIELS: 16 years.

KRISTOL: And why did you run? You hadn't run for elective office before?

DANIELS: No, I'll go to my maker saying, I only ever ran for one. Yes, I can't claim then or in any previous or following experience that I planned anything. In that case, I had left Lilly. To my own surprise, I was asked to come to the Bush 43 Administration. Did so and was grateful for that opportunity. When I had done what I thought was enough and I was eager to get back home where my family was –

KRISTOL: You were Director of the Office of Management and Budget, which is a very important job.

DANIELS: '01 to '03.

KRISTOL: Trying to keep the federal budget under control.

DANIELS: And regulations and was a momentous time, of course, 9/11 attacks and all that. But when I thought I'd done enough and went and got my honorable discharge at about that same time a number of people at home were very restless that they thought our state was not being as well served as it could be, not moving forward. And came and asked me to consider something I really had not ever thought taken seriously and I fell for it.

KRISTOL: So what happen? You went back – well, you were moving back to Indiana, anyway.

DANIELS: I was determined to move back anyway, and it was in the summer of '03. And so I agreed to give it a try, hit the road for 16 months. People back home still remember that as an unusual campaign. We got an Indiana-built RV, sort of the entry-level model and beat it to death, taking it places it wasn't meant to go to.

KRISTOL: Didn't you stay in people's houses?

DANIELS: Started doing that to save money, discovered it was a great way to learn more, develop stories, and things you could share with other people. And I continued that through all eight years I was Governor by the way. Would have been a good book, if I'd kept better notes of those. 125 nights in strangers' homes is an interesting way to learn your way around the state.

KRISTOL: Any one or two memorable moments?

DANIELS: Dozens. But you know couldn't get the – couldn't make the shower work and had to take the first bath since I was eight years old and things like that.

The serious thing I recall about that was I thought, first of all, I would need to do that as a no-name, first-time candidate, but second I thought it would be an important thing to do as a Republican candidate to confound the stereotype, which in most cases is unfair and inaccurate, that you know Republicans don't understand and connect and empathize with average people.

And I had told a lot of friends who had been office-holders or candidates – “Don't just complain about it, go out and refute it.” But, most of them didn't take me upon that advice, but anyway when, to my surprise, I found myself a candidate, we went out and did it. I think it worked very well. I will say this, Lamar Alexander gave me a good point, I told him a few months in what I was doing and he said, “That's really good,” he said, “It'll probably make you a better candidate, but it will certainly make you a better Governor.” And he was right.

II: Governor of Indiana (08:23 – 30:33)

KRISTOL: So you're Governor of Indiana, it's January 1st or whenever the term begins in Indiana of 2005, and slow recovery from the recession, I suppose, there as elsewhere in the country. What do you do? I myself would be fascinated – how did you decide what to do as Governor?

DANIELS: Well, let me start with a confession. I can still remember to my embarrassment in the early days of '03 when we hit the road I said to people, “Look, we're going to keep this simple, stupid.” We're just going to say, “16 years is long enough, state's going nowhere, it's broke,” which it was, “Things are broken,” which they were. “Time for change.” Fin.

It didn't take me very long, Bill, to realize that was not a responsible way to go about it. And along the way I began to collect some ideas, my own thoughts became better formed as I became better informed and we began to enunciate things we would do if elected. In fact, by the time we got elected, it was a list longer than any sensible citizen would want to study, but we took that very seriously, and it was a lesson I carried on for eight years, which was that if you want to make big change, if you really want – first of all, don't seek public office if it's not something you really want to do. President Reagan used to say, “Some people run for office to be something, and some people run to do something.”

Still an important place to start. And, so we in January of 2005, we had a very explicit program of fiscal change and reorganizing the state's – all the furniture we could to make us the most job-friendly, investment-friendly, business-friendly state in America. The state needed huge improvement of its ethical rules of the road. And a host of other reforms.

And so I took out of that and tried to continue there on the lesson that much better to be very clear with people about what you intend to do, play with the cards face up, and then if you happen to win an election, you have every basis on which to proceed and try to make those things real.

KRISTOL: You were so successful as Governor, and you have such a strong record, by the end of accomplishments that I think people have forgotten, and I myself don't even remember in every case the hurdles and the challenges. It's not like Indiana, in 16 years of Democrats in power, sort of a lot of entrenched interest in the state legislature, that didn't automatically bow because you were the newly elected Governor, right? There were plenty of Republican legislators that had been there when you were – gallivanting around Washington.

DANIELS: They thought they were the adults running the place, they weren't interested in really any Governor taking too much of a hand.

KRISTOL: Was there some moment of first few months, the first year, where you really sort of, you know, kind of air-traffic-controller moment or a moment of truth where you really felt like you shown you could get your way and make a fundamental change and it was working? How does all that work?

DANIELS: Couple of them. First of all, we acted as fast as we could by executive order, those are I think under some deserved ill repute, these days here. But I think we used it responsibly. In one of the first ones for instance, I created the new economic development agency, then we went to the legislature and asked them to codify it, which they did. Also on that first day I struck down the existing executive order, which for 16 years had compelled state employees to pay union dues. That got people's attention.

I've freely confessed over the years since I almost flinched from doing that because I was worried that we might have a Madison-like explosion, referring to the one more recently in Wisconsin. That might obviate or get in the way of all this other agenda that we'd were so hopeful of enacting. But that did not occur as it turned out, and we were able – that was really important, because we were able to start reorganizing state government.

KRISTOL: And why didn't it? I think you're too modest when you put it in the passive tense. Why didn't you go about as a matter of political governance to try to ensure that it doesn't occur that you don't get an explosion – Did you make it work with different media? Legislators?

DANIELS: Not in this case. What I did talk to everybody right as the election got closer and then particularly in the interval before inauguration, and I must say, I've admitted it elsewhere, on this particular one, I was very torn. I thought maybe I should at least postpone any action, or maybe we can find some halfway measure, we'll do it in these departments and not these. In the end, I was persuaded that in order to make government work effectively, and it was very dysfunctional, I have to say, at the time. I used to say, "You couldn't move this coffee cup from here to here without a 60-day consultation, 160 pages of do's and don'ts."

That was very important. We began immediately to consolidate departments that should be, pull other departments out for individual focus and attention, and get started on the, on the path to really making government work. I've always felt strongly that we can argue about the proper sphere of government, and obviously, I believe it should be dramatically more limited than it usually is these days. But inside that sphere, I think there's a responsibility to make it work effectively, and that I think was really important.

But no, I told the union leadership myself, I thought I owed that to them, signed the order, pulled up the covers, held my breath and nothing happened, except over the first 10 months, 90-plus percent of the employees, stopped paying the dues. Which told you something.

Another one, which only I suppose people from Indiana will fully understand, but well down the list in that first, that big first agenda people were writing stories about "Hurricane Mitch," it was much busier than

anybody had remembered, government being. Well down the list was a bill to place Indiana on Daylight Saving Time. We were one of two states in the country where you never knew what time it was.

KRISTOL: It was confusing going to Indiana.

DANIELS: Totally confusing. You know, “What month is this? Are you on Eastern Time?” And by the way, the state was in pieces, some was one, some were the other. That was only mildly irritating in the pre-digital era, but in a wired world, a global communicating world, it was a material – I won’t say huge, but it was a material business detriment. So that one of many things but it had enormous symbolic importance.

And it just, if it were in my judgment, five percent of the agenda, it got 50 percent of the attention. Everybody had a viewpoint. But the reason it was, I thought, significant was that the biggest obstacle, you asked about, I would say was cultural in that Indiana was not accustomed to change, was not accustomed to innovation or leadership. If you read any of the histories of our state, whatever else they say they will tend to say we’ve been conservative in that sense. Let someone else try it, good enough is good enough, and our entire appeal from the first campaign to the last day was that we want to be a leadership state, a vanguard state.

And, I think when we passed that silly bill on Daylight Saving Time, I say silly in the sense that it wasn’t as important as people treated it, it woke people up. They said, well – people said they’ll never change that and I think that little breakthrough which was by one vote.

KRISTOL: Oh is that right?

DANIELS: Was very dramatic. Probably sent a signal that said things are really different, and then we tried never to slow down after that.

KRISTOL: It seemed to me watching from a distance that you went against what I would say was the conventional wisdom among some political advisor types and friends of ours, which would have been, “Focus on two or three things that you know, don’t try to do everything, you really need to save your capital and really go after two or three big changes,” but the “Hurricane Mitch” thing really referred to the notion that you were doing 30 things at once.

DANIELS: Well, we did a lot. I mean, there’s obviously, some were much more important than others.

KRISTOL: You did not do certain things on the theory that, you know, “I only have so much time and effort.” It seems like you did try – was it easier almost to do everything, in a funny way, than to be selective?

DANIELS: Maybe so, and I could cite you examples from later on in which we did things in a sequence or waited a year on some things. Right to work’s the best example of that. But I came to the following view of the very useful metaphor, political capital.

Political capital, in my opinion – I think the metaphor is even strong in the way most people use it because it, capital, is not something to be husbanded and parsed out and then it’s gone. Capital is something you invest, if you invest it widely it brings a return, and then you have more capital and you try to invest on the next round and that’s the way we looked at it. And I think that’s the experience we had. We did a number of things that were controversial at the time, some were highly unpopular for a time, but –

KRISTOL: What was the most unpopular?

DANIELS: Possibly the least of – the Indiana toll road.

KRISTOL: Why was that unpopular?

DANIELS: Well, it was misunderstood and, you know, actively used by the opposition to suggest to people we somehow forfeited some of the state's sovereignty or something.

KRISTOL: Well, you leased the tolls?

DANIELS: We leased the existing toll road and got a spectacular deal.

KRISTOL: Was it a foreign company? Was it part of it, as I recall?

DANIELS: Well, the financial consortium was organized by an Australian bank, the dreaded Australians, but most of the investors were American pension funds and universities and things like that. But you know some people misunderstood and thought maybe we'd somehow turned over a piece of our sovereignty.

But over time people saw the biggest road build, transportation infrastructure in America without a penny of borrowing, without a penny of taxation. Saw roads that people had said, "That will never happen," roads and bridges and other facilities being built.

And we're fair-minded enough about it that later on it simply wasn't an issue, except a positive issue for us. And so to me that was an example of an investment of capital and something that worked out very, very well and paid off.

What you hope is that you can build confidence, enough confidence. I think is true whether you believe in very limited government as I do, or if you believe honestly in more expansive government, who's in favor of incompetent government? And if you are able to demonstrate a degree of effectiveness and success, then people cut you a little slack when you come along with the next new idea.

KRISTOL: You need to succeed somewhat early on, I think.

DANIELS: Well, we thought so, it's clearly true –

KRISTOL: Was it clear to you – when was it clear to people? Was there a moment where you thought to yourself, "You know what we're winning, we're going to be able to pull this off?"

DANIELS: It was probably – I mean, there were some glum days. I will say when this or somebody takes a poll here and there and it doesn't look too good, but I would say as we got into year four many, many things were strong enough.

I mean, the state had been broke and now we got our first AAA credit rating ever and – oh, a favorite example is we worked very hard on the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, brought in one of these private-sector people, he'd been running a big sporting retailer operation and it got sold and it was in between, tricked him into coming in and he'd never imagined being in government.

KRISTOL: So he had no experience running Bureau of Motor Vehicles?

DANIELS: That's right but he had run – we looked at and we said, "What is that?" It's 170 retail outlets, walk-in traffic, cash transactions. Well, I was really determined – first of all, we must have and the worse one in the country. Everybody hates their DMV but on top of interminable waits and lines, I used to say people took a box lunch and copy of *War and Peace* in and hoped they didn't finish them both before their number came up. But on top of that there was the biggest phone ID ring in America was running out the backdoor of Indiana license branches so there was fraud problems, too.

But that's something that every citizen deals with and so we said, "Let's put a huge priority on that." After a few years, it was winning the international award; it did it two or three times in a row. I'd get a report every month, average total visit time every month fell below 10 minutes by our sixth or seventh year, if you had to go at all. And so, I could give you many other examples but we were very fixed on the idea of showing real progress and I think by the time we got into that fourth year, the story was a pretty strong one. That began to reflect itself politically.

KRISTOL: I mean, you have great statistics, some macro-statistics on how well Indiana, which you should probably give our viewers some sense of since 95 percent of them don't live there. I mean, I know the story, but I'm also struck by how much to – I guess your point it's the actual experience of the citizens that maybe is as important as them hearing that the economy's better or the government spending is –

DANIELS: Most citizens don't have the time to parse through all the statistics, and they'll hear conflicting things but they can see with their own, with their own eyes. As in many cases they can. If their tax refund comes back twice as fast as it used to, then maybe they think something real is going on.

KRISTOL: But actually under your Governorship for eight years, as I recall, state employment went down by quite a lot. State spending maybe was –

DANIELS: Well, Indiana has the – far as I know, still has – the fewest state employees per capita in the country. That doesn't mean it's necessarily doing so many fewer things, we had a case-by-case philosophy of looking to see whether we could operate through private means, always case by case.

I can cite instances in which we added to the workforce of existing government. Child protection is a good example. We added 1,000 case workers so that the caseloads would be small enough and children could be better protected. We added state police.

But on the other hand, if we found that, I said, "If we can hire Hoosiers in the private sector to do something as well or better as and less expensively, why wouldn't you?" And we did.

KRISTOL: And state spending, as I recall, you didn't go up as nearly –

DANIELS: Depending how you measure it, clearly one of the least expensive states, consequently Texas as lower than elsewhere.

You know, I never – I think fiscal responsibility is a basic judiciary task. It's not the be-all and end-all. For us, the central goal, when that group of newcomers I talked about – we first assembled them in a hotel room, the first 80 or 90 people that had agreed to come in and serve, and again, almost none of them had any governmental experience.

KRISTOL: And these were very senior levels?

DANIELS: Sometimes. We had early retirees, we had 40-year-olds who had sold a company and were in between, we had some young tigers. But I said to them, "Look, any great business or endeavor I ever saw had a very clear purpose, and everyone in the organization knew what it was. It was on the laminated ID card, or it was on the wall, it's on the annual report, everybody understood it, and their role in producing it." I said, "Okay, here's ours: We want to raise the disposable income of Hoosiers."

In falling for 40 or 50 years, at least in relative terms, and so wherever you're working we're going to be asking, "What can you and your unit do or do faster or do better or maybe stop doing that makes it more likely the next job comes here or not Illinois or somewhere else and overtime that those jobs pay better than the jobs of today?"

And then we're going to try to run the people's business and all these agencies we're asking you to clean up such that we leave more of those dollars in the pockets of the people that earned them, the disposable perk. I said that's it. Well, for eight years that remained our objective, progress was slow, and recessions get in the way, and it's hard work.

But I, but we never lost – that was always our purpose and if you believe that maybe government's central purpose, after public safety, is to enable the private world that mattered, the one that matters, to flourish then that was, I think, a defensible way to organize things.

KRISTOL: That's great. Any one achievement you're most proud of or you sort of wouldn't anticipated achieving? Any big disappointment?

DANIELS: There are some things that worry me a little. The achievement I always hoped would endure, gave a lot speeches about it, my second inaugural, which I tried to make as short as Lincoln's, I missed by about six words. I later decided that's just fine, I can't match his wisdom, I can't match his eloquence, why should I match his brevity?

That was entirely devoted to the theme of "Can we become a state which not only accepts innovation and looks for opportunities to change but is determined, will hold it's public leadership to that standard?" I can't tell if that's happened. It could be that our approach will not be the pattern in the future.

Also, in '11, 2011, we passed a sweeping set of education reforms, and we'd done some things along the way, anything we could find, we were dealing with a divided legislature, and there were some things our Democratic friends just wouldn't go for but we got a few good things done. But in 2011, having had a big victory we were able to pass a lot of things, and people continued to praise that package as the most far-reaching, but it's not clear to me that it will be implemented. The system still resists change and can find ways evade it even though good laws are on the books so we'll see.

KRISTOL: People forget also that one thing – Indiana is a Republican state, but you say, 16 years of Democratic governors before you, and what a divided legislature for most of your tenure?

DANIELS: Half of it.

KRISTOL: Half of it.

DANIELS: We had a unified legislature for the first two years, divided for four, and then recaptured the House we didn't have for the last two. One thing that I do remember fondly about the experience, I was very apprehensive that we would run out of gas, either ideas or the political wherewithal to achieve them. And I'm very happy that that did not happen.

We were still doing very big things in year seven. Education being part of that. And year eight. We passed Right to Work in year eight, we repealed the inheritance tax in year eight, we fixed the unemployment system, which was suffering the effects of the recession in year eight and several other things. The duck never got lame, and that was a good way to finish, I thought, our time and our chapter.

III: To Washington and Back (30:33 – 42:05)

KRISTOL: I remember coming to Washington in 1985 and asking people, "Who can I talk to to really learn something?" I was totally bewildered obviously, how Washington works, how politics works, the interplay of policy and politics, ideas – everyone said you should talk to Mitch Daniels. So you were kind of *eminence grise*, by the time I showed up.

DANIELS: They must have been the bewildered ones if that's the best answer they could give you.

KRISTOL: Not at all. But so how did you, and you were then in the White House, as I recall, but how did that all happen? What's the backstory of your entry into politics?

DANIELS: Well, I was interested in it as a young person and in a very general way. I don't think I didn't have well-formed views really. My folks weren't political. But an exciting young man won a big upset election in my hometown while I was in college, his name was Richard Lugar and he became the Eagle Scout, 34-year-old boy-wonder Mayor in my hometown and began shaking the place up.

KRISTOL: This is Indianapolis?

DANIELS: Indianapolis. And I sought an internship at his office and it happened and I worked for him for two years and then he decided to pursue national office the year he was finishing Mayor, about the time I got out of college and I continued on an association with him. He came to Washington, I came with him.

KRISTOL: So you really as an intern kind of worked for him and just – I'm sure you must have been a very competent intern if he decided to keep you around for something.

DANIELS: I guess he thought so. It wasn't a straight line. There was sometimes people ask you, you know, "Was there some pivotal moment?" and so forth, and in my case there probably was. Because at – early on in the tenure there was a political leader who was Mayor Lugar's mentor, so to speak, and you really had to have his approval for a full-time job in the mayor's reelection campaign. And someone suggested me so that's when I'm just getting out of college and I go over to meet this much-feared man and with my sponsor sitting there after a pleasant conversation he says, "Well, P.J., the kid seems pretty smart to me. I guess you've checked his criminal record, ha ha ha."

I had thought ahead to this and I said, "Well, if you haven't you should." Because it turned out I had gotten in a scrape in college and had a misdemeanor or public nuisance thing on my record. And so he says, "Oh well, just when I thought we had the right guy. We'll get back to you." They finally hired me, and so forth. It was months or maybe a year later when I found out that, being a thorough person, he knew this already. It was a test.

And he had said to the sponsor, "Okay, P.J., if I like this kid I'm going to ask him. If he volunteers the information, we'll hire him, if he tries to let it slide, I don't want him." So what a useful lesson. Not to be melodramatic, but I think it's true. If I had not volunteered the truth at that moment, some good would have happened in life but it wouldn't have been what did occur. I wouldn't have been hired full-time to work for Lugar. He wouldn't have invited me to come organize his affairs in Washington. I wouldn't have met, as I did through that experience, people in the Reagan White House, and then been invited to that next job so you know I don't generally think of life in terms of fateful moments but if I ever had that's probably it.

KRISTOL: So your advice to young people is get in scrapes, have a misdemeanor, and then tell the truth about it.

DANIELS: Just the last part.

KRISTOL: So you come with Lugar, who's elected to Senate in '76.

DANIELS: He actually runs and loses in the Watergate year, comes closer than any Republican challenger in the country. No Democratic incumbent could lose in that year. But then he finished up as Mayor, ran a second time. Indiana had two Democratic Senators at the time so he took on the second one, beat them, and on he went to a great, great career.

KRISTOL: So you came and worked in the Senate for him as his Chief of Staff?

DANIELS: Yeah, for six years. The first term – '82 was a tough year, recession year, the first Reagan off-year. And but Lugar outperformed really, I think, all his classmates in a tough, tough environment. And then he became the head of the Senate Campaign Committee for the next two years. I went over and ran that. Got to see politics in 34 states. And it was through that experience that I became well-acquainted with people in President Reagan's team.

KRISTOL: And your judgment of Congress? And working with Congress? Do you recommend for young people? I think you had a reputation later on in the Bush White House as sort of the tough guy in the executive branch who didn't like to give Congressmen their pet programs –

DANIELS: Well, somebody had to take that on so that the President could be the Mr. Nice Guy, you know how that works. No, I have the highest of respect for the institution. We have to have a functioning, a well-functioning legislative branch. By the way, I think there are good signs now that Congress is actually doing things again. They passed some meaningful legislation, even as we sit here, more than they're getting credit for and that's good.

No, I would absolutely recommend it. Now, I have a personal view that public service is something that one should do if a chance presents but I never wanted to be a lifelong pursuit. So went in and out and back in and now I'm out. So there's an old line that it's a good idea for young person to go to Washington to get inoculated but not infected.

KRISTOL: Yeah, I got infected.

DANIELS: But not in the sense of locking into the, either to the Congress or to the orbits of lobbyists and so forth who circle around it.

KRISTOL: You're there, you've run this Republican Senate Committee, it's a big victory in '84 for the President. The Republicans hold the Senate. Is that when they asked you to come to the Reagan White House?

DANIELS: Yes, I was actually on my way home. I had accepted a job – we had at that time, three of our four girls had been born so we had a one-, three- and four-year-olds, and was desperate to move home. I thought it would be the best place for them, and I wanted to pursue a business career and had accepted a job when the phone rang and I thought, "Well, that was a call one should answer and an opportunity not to be missed." And so I went down and spent about three years for President Reagan.

KRISTOL: People sort of had this vague sense that you're Assistant to the President but how does that really work? Was it Ronald Reagan calling you? Who calls you? Who recruits you? Who do you work for? How does it work?

DANIELS: Well, first call came from, came from Ed Rollins, a name that you know well. And he was, he had just come off the campaign. That's where I guess we'd gotten to know each other a bit. They had asked him to take over two offices, one of which was called Intergovernmental Affairs. I was one of the few people I guess he could think who had actually worked in local government.

For whatever reason, I got that invitation and went in and did that and eventually had my duties expand. But rare opportunity, of course, to see great leadership close at hand.

KRISTOL: What was that like being in the Reagan White House in the second term? Did you see the President often?

DANIELS: Yes, pretty often. For two reasons, at that time anyway, we had a senior group that would have lunch with him on Mondays and then there would be events occasionally through the week. And in

'86 when that set of crucial Senate elections came up, he was on the road a lot and I would be responsible for that so I traveled a lot that year when he did.

But, you know –

KRISTOL: Did he like the political campaigning and stumping or did he just kind of at that point –

DANIELS: I think he accepted it as, first of all, part of the job and second of all, pretty important in hoping to continue his own forward momentum. But now many people then and since like to exaggerate their closeness to President Reagan or to another people in like positions but I would never do that. I was around him a lot, and he was absolutely as affable and as unaffected as he appeared to be, but with the possible exception of Mrs. Reagan, almost nobody who could say they were an intimate friend of the President's.

He was, he kept a distance and that was fine. We all understood that what we were there for wasn't to be his best friend.

KRISTOL: And then you left government after years –

DANIELS: Then I finally went straight. And went home in the mid to late '87. And into what I thought would be the rest of my career.

Business experience, it occurred to me a lot over the last year and this is for anyone listening who thinks life can be planned and mapped out way in advance. If you'd asked me right up till December whatever it was when the last chad fell in Florida and the Supreme Court decided who won, second week in December maybe. Right up to that night when the phone rang again, "What will you be doing in June of 2015?" I would have said, "Well, let's see, I'll be getting to retire from Eli Lilly & Company."

This is what I do and this is what I enjoy, and life changed three times since then. So that tells you what kind of career planner I am. But I think it probably tells you that there are limits to what anybody can do in this world to game out and map out their future.

IV: Office of Management and Budget (42:05 – 1:06:22)

KRISTOL: How did that happen? The recruitment to the second George W. Bush Administration? Had you been a part of the campaign? But you were a busy Eli Lilly executive.

DANIELS: I was and roaming the world. I had spent a lot of that year in Japan on some transactions for instance. No, I think the perpetrators as I reconstructed the crime later were Dick Cheney and Andy Card. Each of whom I'd known from the past.

Andy had actually worked in our office in the Reagan White House so that office that dealt with the rest of the federal system, the most important job was dealing with governors. And Andy who became the Chief of Staff for President Bush for five or six years was in charge of that wonderful person and I can't remember which of them called me first but –

KRISTOL: Had you had some indication that this might happen even –

DANIELS: I came pretty much out of the blue. If I remember right, I was in Washington on a business trip, and when the first phone call came, and I can tell you this, that the first inquiry was about a different job than the one I wound up with. And I said at the time, I said, "Oh no, Andy you can get somebody much better qualified for that, I don't think that's a good idea." Then I got a call that said, "Okay, what about OMB?" and I went home and told my wife, "Well, now we have a problem because they're asking about the one job they've got where I could really imagine that a person could make himself useful all the time."

It touches every corner of the government, it deals not only with how the government spends its money but regulations and the having some sense of costs and benefits and reasonableness in direct taxation that they represent. And with the challenge of management, trying to make the thing work a little better all thrown in. So that's how that happened.

KRISTOL: I came to Washington in '85, and I had taught political science so I suppose I knew something, but I remember one of the great discoveries really, when I was at the Education Department, was how important and powerful OMB was, it's not the most famous agency and the Director of OMB is a member of the Cabinet but he doesn't quite sound like a Cabinet Secretary, he has that title Director for some reason. Secretary, but I mean everything goes through OMB in terms of the departments' requests, the budget requests from each department.

The whole regulatory budget of the federal government –

DANIELS: By the way in my experience, then and subsequently, I think quite possibly the finest public servants in the federal government are in that agency. I think there's a little bit of self-selection, positive self-selection there.

I used to say to our folks all the time, or I used to say about them I guess, if you want to come to Washington to make government bigger and more expensive, there's a whole city full of buildings you can work in. If you want to make government smarter and try to see that it spends the people's money more carefully, there's one place you really want to work, and OMB was really deep and very, very talented people but people who were idealistic about – about once the proper authorities had decided on national priorities about making them work well and being faithful to them.

KRISTOL: Talk a little bit about how it actually works. The President unveils his budget every very end of January, beginning of February each year, it's kind of this giant document but, of course, it's an unbelievable amount of work and bargaining that goes into that and OMB is right at the center. How does a Cabinet Secretary – Do they do the first draft? Do you do the first draft? How do you guys bargain? How does it –?

DANIELS: I can't tell you anything about the first one because it's all a blur, because remember, we had a truncated transition. So, none of us, no one could recruit anyone until December something.

And somehow we still had to get the thing organized and out the door – I think we got a little extension from Congress under the unusual circumstances. But for the subsequent that I had responsibility for, the system we devised and probably different in each regime. I would work with the staff and I would go to the President and show him alternate trajectories of it, spending goes up like this and taxation is assumed to be that, and show him the big implications. On this line, you can have this size defense budget and it will be this much increase available for the discretionary programs and so forth and just get a strategic decision from the President of how much he thought was roughly right and then go back and elaborate that in a complete budget.

The other thing I remember was that working with Andy Card we fashioned a little committee. I would call it the appellate court. I had been told that in the previous administration and maybe some before that the President would spend hours going over these memos, yes, no maybe, you know. And everybody was appealing, every departments appealing more for this, more for this, more for this. And I always thought our major job at OMB was to protect the President's time for the things that only a President could do and decide and work on. And so, the system was that we would work with every department and agency and frequently they would be dissatisfied with our – with our decision.

So this committee, which was Chief of Staff, the Secretary of the Treasury, head of the Council of Economic Advisors, and me, the Vice President – that was the key, the Vice President chaired this

committee. And the system was if you didn't like what OMB said, it could go to the committee, didn't like what that committee said, go to the President. Every Cabinet Secretary had the – we made it clear they had the right to appeal directly. In the three years, I was there would you like to guess how many appeals went to the President? Zero.

Because I think people felt they knew, first of all, that he was going to back OMB on most occasions and that if you couldn't get it past Dick Cheney and this other group it probably wasn't going to be worth your time to go bother the President about it.

KRISTOL: My memory is it is the role of the agency, of course, they all had their programs they loved, and the interest groups worked with the agencies, a lot of different programs. And it was OMB's job in a way to say, well, we've looked at some studies and that program doesn't work very well.

DANIELS: Yeah, we put a lot of time into something that sooner or later you'd like to think the federal government, and it will take the support of Congress to do this, but like everything else, it had an acronym. Oh gee, I'll think of it in a minute but it was program assessment – was the whole idea was we would take five years but we would move through all the programs of the federal government and assess them for their effectiveness.

Do they work or don't they? Federal government at that time, as I recall, 43 job training programs. So the question is, can you find some that lead to some meaningful result? People who go through it get a job and still have it X months later. Some such measures like that. The idea which would make eminent sense anywhere else in the world is you identify the things that are working, you might want to invest some more resources in them and the ones that aren't working you might want to stop doing.

We worked through it. Everybody applauded. We put these this report card in the back of the budget but in the end Congress was only academically interested in such assessments. As you say, the pet projects, the pride of authorship, or just the pure philosophical commitments overrode any such foolishness as cost-benefit or effectiveness analysis.

KRISTOL: Had Congress changed much in your opinion coming back into 2001, compared to when you left either Senator Lugar or the Reagan White House?

DANIELS: I think the answer is yes. And I think now another 13 or 14 years on probably the answer is yes again. Always guard against the good ol' days temptation. Everybody I know thinks their high school went straight to hell the year after they graduated, right? You have to watch yourself on things like that.

No, I do believe that there – it's certainly different. The Senate of the 70's and 80's that I saw firsthand, that was everyone now recognizes there was overlap between the parties, which is not there anymore, they're pluses and minus, I think, to what we have now but clearly that was different and it probably did make compromise more common and more likely.

But you know, only history will decide whether these changes are for the better of the republic or not.

KRISTOL: You were there at 9/11 obviously. Where were you?

DANIELS: I was in my office.

KRISTOL: And that's in the Old Executive Office Building?

DANIELS: In the Eisenhower Building right across the parking lot from inside the White House complex. My deputy at the time was – and I had chosen very specifically for this reason – was someone who had been a major player at the Defense Department, knew the ins and outs of that place very well, which I thought would be very useful and it was. I remember we were having a meeting and that the door was

open and there was a TV out there and so you could see smoke from the first hit and somebody explained what we all heard at first. Some sort of a plane crash.

But the instant we saw the second one, he was under no doubts, and really I guess none of us was that this was intentional and something very major and all hell broke lose.

KRISTOL: Did they take you out of the complex? How did that work?

DANIELS: There was no alarm system. There was no communication system. No one had foreseen anything like this. Word sort of got passed, run don't walk. It was understood that the White House itself might be on the target list. So people streamed out.

I got outside, and the cell phones of the day that – we had them but they were first generation. And the system was overwhelmed, they weren't working. All of these people out on the street. I remember that OMB had an annex office about a block away and so went down there and got on a landline and I called the military driver who was assigned to move me around and I said, "Where are you, John?" And he said, "I'm in my office". He had a little corner way up in the top floor somewhere of the OMB. I said, "You're not supposed to be in there. Everybody's supposed to be out. But since you're there, on the way down, run in the office and grab my inbox and my briefcase." I think I said my gym bag.

And get the car and, you know, we agreed we'd try to meet somewhere. He forced his way out, and I got out to the little apartment I had here, got on the phone, and tried to figure out what was next. I was probably the first person back inside the perimeter – the military set up a perimeter a few blocks outside of the White House and I'm pretty sure I was the first person back in late that afternoon. And by that early evening I was sitting in the Roosevelt Room talking to Cabinet officers as we could find them about what we might need to respond to this. We were already thinking – it was already clear we were going to need new resources, various kinds, while the President was speaking to the nation from across the hall. That was a day that sticks with you.

KRISTOL: Amazing. You saw the President when he came back to give the speech.

DANIELS: Before and after, yeah.

KRISTOL: That was such a memorable day. The government didn't expect that is most striking. I mean, you're a Cabinet-level official and a crucial one to all the decisions being made. As you just said, you had to talk to all the Cabinet officers. I guess it's good you thought to go to the – is it the New Executive Office Building, the OMB?

DANIELS: This was just some little two-lane room annex they were renting down the street.

KRISTOL: You just thought to go there?

DANIELS: To find a phone that worked. I think I was able to call my wife from there, too. Which you know everyone was eager to do.

KRISTOL: And substantively, do you think, I mean it was so crazy, of course, and there were so many decisions made on the fly, that some weren't gonna be made – I'm sure over-resourced, under-resourced. Do you feel generally the U.S. government did a pretty good job? I mean, all in in those next three, six, 12 months?

DANIELS: In many respects, yes. I think militarily we did a really good job. President and the country acted decisively, and just ask the Taliban how effective that was. Now, I was part of the group tasked, there were only a few of us, tasked without any publicity – in fact, we went down in the bunker under the East Wing where no one would see us in order to have these meetings. President wanted to know, "Did

the nation need a Department of Homeland Security?” and that was a really hard question. The status quo wasn’t very effective because responsibility for these things was scattered all over the place but it wasn’t obvious, and it isn’t obvious today.

You would be demonstrably better off pulling things together as we did but ultimately that was the recommendation and I’m less sure about that. I’ll tell you one thing that bothered me though was I kept trying to get people to think about the problem in a slightly different way. Drew on a lot of napkins, I remember at the time. Saying now, “Look, there are dozens of ways that the bad guys can try to kill Americans, and commandeering another airplane and flying it into a another building is just one of them.” But everyone was fixed on that, that’s how you wound up with metal detectors the size of Volkswagens and long lines at airports and that sort of thing.

Everybody at Congress and everyone was manic to throw resources at that particular threat and I wasn’t against protecting against that but I kept trying to get people to think about all these other threats. We’d have these National Security Council briefings and you know, tunnels and rail and ports and pipelines and just old-fashioned, what we now call lone-wolf assaults and so forth.

I was frustrated that we couldn’t get people to apportion the available resources against a variety of things but were so fixed on the experience we just had that you wound up with TSA and that we know and I still believe that a more sensible, rational policy would have yes, worked on that problem but would have gotten us started on so many other places where to this day we remain vulnerable.

KRISTOL: You can come back in 2017, and another tour at OMB. You only had two years, right? You could do another two and half, I think. I think your wife would be happy to see that again, you can probably rent the same one-bedroom apartment you had here, whatever it was. The glamour – people think it’s so glamorous being a Cabinet-level official but I remember we had dinner at one point in 2001, and I remember it was at someone’s house and you did have a driver – that’s sort of the one perk you get.

But I remember Susan saying to me – she’d been around Washington and I’d been obviously Vice President Quayle’s Chief of Staff – but still the kind of – the gap between the alleged glamorous life of the Cabinet officer.

DANIELS: Well, I wasn’t on the Georgetown circuit, that’s for sure.

KRISTOL: You working seven days a week and then coming to this party for a couple of hours and saying what a nice break it was, but it was a very modest party.

DANIELS: It was probably just what the doctor ordered at that point. That was not the only bachelor officer down there, Tommy Thomson also was commuting, except you couldn’t go very often, especially after 9/11, I wasn’t getting home much at all.

KRISTOL: Well, you had such a big job. I mean, OMB is such a huge job and one reason it’s an elite agency because it’s a small agency. My memory worked very hard because they got to keep an eye on this huge sprawling federal government.

DANIELS: I used to tell him, “You’re the special forces of the Executive Branch, and therefore should hold yourselves and be held to a higher standard of hard work and performance and so forth.”

KRISTOL: Say a word about George W. Bush as President. You really did see him a lot, and you don’t have to be modest about this. If you’re the OMB Director, you’re at the Oval Office two or three times a day, I mean, you’re sending memos, you’re involved in every really policy decision.

DANIELS: Utterly sincere I would say, utterly committed to trying to serve the nation well, as I would say, as unmindful of political considerations as you can ever expect an elected official to be especially after an attack on the nation and he had made decisions I've always felt this – that those people who were the harshest about him and said the most negative things should at least have credited his sincerity. He would never have made the decisions he did unless he believed they were absolutely essential to protect the lives of Americans and the future of the country.

And so, sure people can second guess and people can quarrel with the judgment but they should at least credit the sincerity of his convictions and I certainly saw that.

KRISTOL: Dick Cheney, you mentioned him earlier. You were close to him?

DANIELS: I like to say that. And he's an easy guy to know and be around and – but of course, very, very firm in his beliefs that in particular that national security is the first duty of government and that you don't leave anything to chance, if in that realm.

KRISTOL: How much did your duty really to sort of make sure money was spent well, come into some tension with the desire to make sure we're protecting the country? I mean, I'm, of course, strongly for but can be, I suppose, an endless – there's always more you could do, right?

DANIELS: Some people don't remember but candidate Bush was really careful about what his pledge was in regard to defense. We were in the peaceful period and were enjoying the peace dividend of President Reagan's leadership and the President's father, 41, had delivered to us and to the nation. The guidance for that first budget was very restrained about defense; in fact, the only significant investments were to kind of catch up the salaries that had slipped behind inflation and so forth.

In the first budget, there was really more people but not much more for hardware and all those things. Well, then comes 9/11, and we have a different set of challenges, and of course, you know, took cues and direction from the President. I do remember however that in one respect we were trying to make it all add up again within the general parameters the President had given us, and I insisted on a significant increase – I won't say how much but it was a lot of money – for the so-called "Black Operation," so the intelligence community – clearly were becoming more important in the world of asymmetrical warfare and all that. And what I remember is in the NCS meeting or wherever we were when I broached this, you know, here's the update on how the budget works or maybe it was a request for a supplement budget, I guess, and when I said that there was silence and Condi Rice, when I said we should do more and Condi Rice said, "We have entered a parallel universe."

That was her point. No, I mean, of course, I believed then and much more trillions of dollars debt much more so now that this is – this is security threat by itself. The nature and the excesses of fiscally that have become, we've become desensitized to. But at that time I had no question at all, not just because the President, I knew what he wanted and was his agent but any patriot would come to the same conclusion at the time. We got to deal with this problem, whatever it takes and then make other things adapt.

You know in October of that year I had been invited already to go give a speech at the National Press Club, and I gave in large part the speech that I think I had probably intended before September 11, and I remember I took three federal agencies along of examples of things that worked. The National Weather Service was one, I think maybe the WIC program was another, but in any event I was trying to make the point that some things work and you got to know what they are and you got to praise them and those things that don't we got to get out of.

Well, comes 9/11, the theme, the central theme of the speech was, and I used some examples of history. Truman after WWII, for instance, where when a nation went to war there were major reductions in other spending to make it possible. And that was my appeal. And you know how deaf were the ears that that

fell on because Congress was happy to chuck in more money for both to prosecute the war but also the homeland security stuff that came along in its tens of billions without reducing anything really to make room for it.

That's how you – it's not a matter of having it both ways. I think that's how a sensible country would respond.

V: Change that Believes in *You* 1:06:22 – 1:15:20

KRISTOL: So we're here in the Summer of 2015, and I can't let you go without asking you – you've had so much experience in politics, the Republican Party, the conservative movement, such a major figure in all of those things. How do you think we stand? Are you optimistic, pessimistic about conservatism? We can get to the country in a minute, but I'm just curious what lessons would you have? Advice? Warnings?

DANIELS: Well, you know I'm a non-combatant these days and out of respect for the strictly nonpartisan institution which I work for, but I'll say that history, I think, teaches us to be optimistic even when the elements of future promise are not yet too clear to us. I'm economically optimistic. People never see the innovations, the breakthroughs, the discontinuities coming. Who saw the tremendous breakthroughs that a lot of Purdue engineers and others participated that have suddenly transformed the oil and natural gas picture.

Affordable, reliable energy is the absolute necessity for lifting up poor people and economic prosperity in developed countries, and suddenly we have a whole new equation there that even the experts probably didn't foresee. And those will keep coming. What I'm less sure about is whether there are structural changes in the economy. That we haven't figured out. I mean, that the prosperity when it comes won't be as widely shared as has always been the case and which is necessary really for public confidence in free institutions. And I'm talking here about the so-called winner-take-all economy in which asset-free entities suddenly generate enormous wealth and it only takes a few people to do it.

And then finally –

KRISTOL: On that one as Governor of Indiana, you obviously thought a lot about this, are we fated towards a little more of this big-winner-and-then-everyone-else-kind-of-stagnates economy, or is there –

DANIELS: Well, I don't think so. I hope not. We have to work against it. That's another reason we should absolutely maximize this energy opportunity that I just mentioned. Which is make manufacturing much more practical and competitive here in the U.S., if we take full advantage of it.

KRISTOL: You got some manufacturing back to Indiana, didn't you?

DANIELS: You've seen growth in manufacturing jobs, which is not the worldwide trend. Indiana happens to be the most manufacturing intensive state in the country. It's 30 percent of the economy out there and a big percent of the workforce. So no, I think these things can be countered and resisted. I certainly don't claim to have figured out how that one plays out. And then maybe back closer to the question you asked, I do think we have cultural issues in the country.

And I'm still hoping, I don't believe there inexorable, I don't believe they're irreversible. We've seen awakenings and other shifts in both directions historically. But as many scholars have documented, there are certain attitudinal and cultural norms that are conducive to not just national economic success but more important individual.

The fulfillment of individual potential and the affirming of human dignity. Author Brooks talks about earned success, and if for either reason – economic trends, cultural erosion, if that's a fair term – if for either reason it becomes less and less common, or more and more difficult for average people to have the

earned success that has not only triggered good things for everybody in America but also in my opinion validated and therefore sustained free institutions.

People believe in them because they work so very, very well for us all. That's worth worrying about. But, I'm an obstinate optimist based on history and still a belief that the fundamental elements of the American character will still assert themselves.

KRISTOL: And the conservative movement broadly speaking, not in a narrow way, that when you were not being President of the university you've been involved in so much. What are your thoughts on that?

DANIELS: My thoughts were as a public official and are as a private citizen that the opportunity there, which I don't think has been seized by enough leaders for that set of principles, is one that starts with an intense belief in the importance of the individual and the individual dignity. I think it's a missed opportunity frankly.

Because the big argument that I believe we see and our country is between those who sincerely believe that people are victims, people are gullible, people are helpless in the face of these big forces and corporations – pick your villain – and therefore need someone, them as our benevolent betters to make all the decisions and you know take care of the poor darlings.

The effective counter to that I don't think is about statistics. I don't think it's really about philosophy as importance as it is to have that foundation, I always thought that the argument should start with pointing out that there is a school thought that believes in you and your ability to lead your own life and to make smart decisions about your own healthcare, about where your children should go to school, about how to spend dollars that you can spend the more wisely than you know these self-appointed folks over here.

And I think there's a winning political appeal in that and in a play off of the President's former line, I always said the theme of somebody's campaign should be change that believes in you. And I think that's, it's not just a tactical, that's the essence of the American experiment. And so I do believe that looking ahead there's a vocabulary and a set of policies to make it real that might appeal to large numbers of Americans. If they're asked to stop and think about would say, "Well, heck yes, I can decide for myself, I should decide for myself, and I don't want to surrender my right to do that to people however much they say they love me and want to take good care of me."

KRISTOL: I hope the political leaders come to see you as a private citizen. When you were on the ballot, I always thought – one reason I was enthusiastic about your running is I always thought 2012 – apart from the fact that I thought you would have been a good President of the United States, not just of Purdue University, not that Purdue is just the just – but you know.

But it was that you were on the ballot in '08 in the same year as Barack Obama, he won Indiana by half a point or something like that, you won reelection by 20 points?

DANIELS: Close. We came away because that was a big turnout election. We came away with the most votes ever cast for any candidate of any office so far in our state's history.

KRISTOL: So I figured you ran the same time as he, he did well in your state at the presidential level, maybe the presidential candidate should have talked to you more about the message that works because my definition a lot of people voted for you who've succeeded –

DANIELS: I can only speak to one state. We tried to serve it well.

VI: Intellectual Freedom on Campus (1:15:20 – 1:20:24)

KRISTOL: Let's talk about higher education for just a minute because you've given very eloquent remarks about that especially about freedom of speech, freedom of thought on campus. We see some alarming things so what are your thoughts on that?

DANIELS: I don't have anything original to say but I have pointed out since accepting the position that among many, many areas that might be worthy of review in higher ed, this obviously irony that places otherwise fervently committed to diversity, don't seem as committed to the most important diversity of all, which is of thought. That's a fairly common observation.

But credit where it's due, what we at Purdue did was take note that the University of Chicago under the leadership of an eminent First Amendment scholar, Professor Stone, had written a sort of, updated its policy on academic freedom and freedom of speech, and how essential it is that of all places, institutions of higher learning have to protect it. They said it so well that I called the President there and said, "Would you mind if another school copied – we can't do any better, we can spend a long time and not produce a better articulation of these principles."

And they said they were fine and our trustees enthusiastically embraced it, and I hope other schools might do the same. We really need to reaffirm this. There's a lot of, I think, pretty dangerous sloppy thinking going on out there about what free speech really means and not and people being sometimes bullied out of expressing their opinions freely. This, this would be a very serious misunderstanding. I said to someone who was writing on the subject that if these other schools want to disinvite speakers or allow people to be shouted down and intimidated, embarrass themselves in that way that's their problem, but if they're giving birth to whole lot of little authoritarians who completely with an upside-down version of our freedoms that's everybody's problem.

And so, I hope they'll be healthy movement back the other way. I think I see some signs of it as people note these excesses and are bothered by them.

KRISTOL: And that's good if Chicago has done the work. If people could just Google students or faculty or college presidents watching this, just Google the Chicago Free Speech Code or Purdue Free Speech Code now.

DANIELS: Very clear exposition of what free inquiry means.

KRISTOL: Final point, unlike many college presidents I think you actually taught a course in the last year. Was it a seminar or a lecture course?

DANIELS: One-hour, one-credit-hour course, yes. I thought I should, not having trained – I mean not having lived in the academy – I wanted to see what a little bit about what our faculty go through and have that experience. Great, great learning and stretching experience, and I'm going to continue it.

KRISTOL: What topic?

DANIELS: Yes, I ultimately chose on the centennial of the First World War. I thought it was a very under-appreciated event in history, it just transformed a whole century in so many ways, geopolitically, culturally, and of course, it led to – the war to end all wars led to an even worse war, rise of totalitarianism. So that's what the course is about. The Great War, causes and consequences.

KRISTOL: And the History faculty lets you teach this without a Ph.D. in History and all the scholarly credentials?

DANIELS: A person or two did challenge that, but they had great support from the faculty, certainly for the concept of teaching. A number of them spontaneously suggest, why don't you, I don't know if they would have guessed what I was going to choose.

They do these student evaluations, of course, these days, and I implored the students both semesters that I know it's a little bit of a chore but please fill it out because if anybody needs feedback, it's a rookie. And so I got almost 100%, and I learned a lot, made some improvements, but I will say I got pretty good grades from the students so I took some heart from that.

KRISTOL: That's the most impressive thing I've heard about your already impressive career. Mitch, thanks so much for joining us today. And thank you for joining us today on CONVERSATIONS.

[END]