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Brett --

Here is the information from Terry Sullivan from the Baker Institute (the guy writing the book). It is my understanding from Terry he is meeting with the Judge while in town too. Please let me know what you think.

Thanks.  
Melissa

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Terry Sullivan <sullivan@metalab.unc.edu>  
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To: Melissa S. Bennett/WHO/EOP@EOP  
cc:  
Subject: questions

As promised but late, here are the questions for Sec. Card from the Nerve Center project. This file is in PDF format but I can resend in others if that would be helpful.

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Terry Sullivan 919/962.0413  
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& the White House 2001 Project www.whitehouse2001.org  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

[www.ibiblio.org/sullivan/bios/TerrySullivan-bio.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/sullivan/bios/TerrySullivan-bio.html)

When the only sure thing is change,  
the only real hope is imagination.

- Sec Card questions.pdf

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## QUESTIONS FOR SECRETARY CARD

### WHERE THIS INTERVIEW FITS IN

The Baker Institute's Washington Forum on the Role of the White House Chief of Staff produced the first-ever assessment of the lessons former Chiefs have learned running the White House. These lessons cover all aspects of the Chief's relationship with the President, Cabinet, and White House Staff, the White House operations, personnel, process, politics, and policy. I have attached a copy of the table of contents.

Your comments on planning and operations would form the basis of a summary essay on organizing the Bush White House transition as an example of how closely it matched up with these lessons.

Given the wide circulation this book will enjoy and its likely use by others in future administrations, your participation would become an important addition. And it would be the first historical record of this extraordinary White House operation.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview will cover three central topics: the transition planning process, the mix of White House personnel, and the nature of Bush White House operations. The questions emphasize process.

#### *Transition Planning*

1. After the convention, you took a leave of absence from GM and disappeared taking an office across the hall from Chris Hicks. Clay Johnson says that the Governor did not ask you officially to consider being Chief until late in October.
  - What were you doing from the time you took your leave until the end of October?
  - When did Governor Bush first mention the Chief's job?
  - When did he ask you to consider taking the position?
2. What kind of commitments did you understand the Governor had made to you about the transition?
3. What kinds of commitments from Governor Bush did you think you needed to properly serve him as Chief of Staff?
4. What advice about being a Chief of Staff did you get from the other Chiefs that surprised you?

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5. What advice did you give the President-elect about the White House decision process that he seemed surprised to know about?
6. What element(s) of Governor Sununu's system as Chief of Staff did you want to include as part of your own system?
7. What element(s) of Governor Sununu's system as Chief of Staff did you want to avoid?
8. Some would say that George H. W. Bush was a "clean desk" person. Knowing that about him, his staff managed the paper flow into the Oval Office making sure that they didn't let something in until its author had "honed" it so as not to waste the President's time.
  - What kinds of things did you learn about George W. Bush and his decision style that helped you structure what goes into the Oval Office?
  - To whom did you go to get that information about his style?
  - Some have said Governor Sununu would go running down the hall in the morning because President Bush would have read something in the morning papers that set him off. Is there something that has sent you running down the hall?
9. A prominent part of every new administration's first few days is the signing of executive orders and issuing of regulations.
  - Did you participate in planning the roll-out of the first day's executive orders?
  - In his interview for this book, Mr. Podesta told me that President Clinton had wanted very much to generate a range of executive actions near the end of his term, executive orders and regulations, designed to shape policy into the new administration, primarily to get around the congressional majority. In planning for the first few months, did you have the sense that these regulatory decisions were out there waiting for you or that there was a range of executive orders you would have to reverse publicly when you first arrived?
10. What do you think are the five or six most important decisions the President has to make during a transition?
11. What do you think are the five or six most important decisions that a Chief of Staff has to make during the transition?
12. Some would say that you have to have a team in place that has started working on the budget message and identifying the top policy positions you want to fill first day. Did you have time to do that and if so who led those teams?

### ***Personnel in Transitions***

13. Many transitions (e.g., Reagan, Bush '41) divide the transition in half separating the White House out from the rest of the government. Governor Sununu taking the White House staffing and operation, for example, and Chase Untermeyer taking the rest of the Executive Branch. Some (e.g., Clinton) mix the two: Mack McLarty taking a central responsibility for the Cabinet before he turned to the White House staff.
  - Which model did you use or did you have something else in mind?
  - Was there a sense of competition for people with the Clay Johnson operation like there had been in the earlier Bush administration over White House vs. Assistant Secretary type appointments?



14. Some would say that what you want in a White House staff are people who work well with other people. Good people skills rather than hermits, “open-door people.” Others would say, you want people in a White House who know their way around Washington or who know their way around the President-elect. What did you think were the characteristics you were after in this White House?
15. Many White Houses seem to look for a balance between Washington operatives and campaigners. Looking at this Bush White House, you see a lot of people who have been around the candidate a very long time and not many with nothing more than Washington experience. Mr Calio and your team of Deputies represent the exceptions.
  - What kinds of advantages did this concentration on the candidate give you in organizing the White House decision process?
  - Do you worry that a lack of Washington context might spell trouble for you during White House deliberations on issues?
  - How did you come to select the Deputies you have? As Sununu’s Deputy you had known President Bush very well. Did you use your own example as a good model?
  - Why does Clay Johnson carry this extraordinary rank of “Deputy to the Chief of Staff” and not Deputy Chief of Staff?
  - What critical elements did you think you had to have authority over in order to transform the Bush campaign team into a governing team?
16. When you bring in a White House team, some would say there are two things that you have to do — not give them the highest titles that they can get and not spend all of your salary money — in order to have some flexibility to “grow” in the job.
  - With all of these Counselors to the President and Senior staff, have you left enough room for title creep and salary creep or have to reached your salary caps early?
  - In the past, the responsibility for drawing the line on these “caps” has fallen on the Deputy Chief of Staff for Process. Who did that job this time around?
17. On November 29, 2000, Vice-President elect Cheney announced a transition team including Ari Fliesher as Press Spokesman, Michael Toner from Fred Fielding’s law firm as counsel, and David Gribbon III as congressional relations. Mr. Fliesher had not worked for Cheney nor had Toner but Mr. Gribbon had.
  - Why did one stay on and the others get replaced?

### ***White House Operations***

18. Some would say the Chief of Staff has an audience of two — the President and the First Lady. What is the difference for the Chief of Staff between working with Barbara Bush and Laura Bush?
19. Some would say that the character of the administration is a reflection of the President but the character of the White House is a reflection of the Chief of Staff. How would you characterize your White House staff?
20. Most Chiefs of Staff agree that the Chief or his representative has to attend every senior staff meeting with the President, in particular with the National Security Advisor. What are your rules about Oval Office meetings?

21. Do you have a system in place for a Cabinet officer to get direct access to the President and by-passing the White House staff? Say on a 24-hour notice basis through a post office box?
22. The former Chiefs of Staff universally complained about the tendency of presidents to become enmeshed in what they call “Oh, by the way...” decisions. What precautions have you instituted to avoid these kinds of backdoor arrangements?
23. Can you recall when during the transition you started holding regular, senior “White House” staff meetings?
24. Meeting Schedules vary from one White House to the next.
  - What is your standard daily schedule?
  - Like a James Baker, do you have a “mini-staff” meeting before the morning Senior Staff meeting?
  - When do your meetings start and who is included?
  - Some observe that the staff meetings shrink in size over time. Have they changed over the year?
  - On the scale between Mr. Sununu’s “vigorous policy debate society” to Mr. Regan’s “information exchange” where would you put *your* Senior Staff meeting?
  - Did you make a decision to not work on Sundays and/or to make people go home at a decent hour so that you would have some slack in the system for handling crises?
25. Mr. Bowles and Congressman Panetta said that a major function of the Chief of Staff was to “orchestrate” presidential decisions — decide when a decision was ripe for presentation and manage the president’s decision so that he got the maximum use of his time.
  - Do you agree that that is a good characterization of some part of your job?
  - What are the elements that you look for in orchestrating President Bush’s decision meetings?
26. You were a legislator in a “major” State like Texas. What kinds of experiences do you think have surprised the Texas people (like Clay Johnson or Karen Hughes)? What do you hear in the early morning senior staff meeting that gets the Bush people saying “You’ve got to be kidding!”?
27. Early on in the administration, one puzzling thing was you saw Mr. Rove up negotiating on Capitol Hill. Some would conclude that this kind of activity was bound to confuse the congressional leadership about the status of the Chief of Staff as the President’s “negotiator general.” How did you build a balance of responsibilities into the White House between these senior staff and yourself?
28. Some Chiefs of Staff, especially those who previously have held elected office, don’t like the part of the Chief’s job where they have to say “No” to people. So, they delegate the saying-no job to their Deputy. Senator Baker’s Deputies seemed to have had that role. Some say that job was left to you during Governor Sununu’s tenure. Others, like Secretary Baker seem to prefer to take that bit in their own teeth.
  - How do you see the Chief’s responsibilities in this area?
  - Which of the three of you (you and your Deputies) have primary responsibility for:
    - Long-term scheduling and planning?

- Decision implementation?
  - Staff budgets? Salary caps, title creep....
  - “Have you really thought that through or are you saying that just because you think that’s what the President wants to hear?”
  - White House process “Cattle prod” in the process at the White House — a cabinet affairs meetings has to be held; what’s happening?
  - “Protecting the President” on paper flow: “Is this something the President has to know?” “That sentence is 32 words long. It will have him searching for the period on the Teleprompter?”
  - Tells the President, “No, you can’t take the dog on this trip.”
  - Tells the President, “Though he just had a meeting with you in the Oval office and never mentioned it, Secretary O’Neill really doesn’t want you to take this action.”
29. Many of those associated with the Chief of Staff responsibilities have lamented the need for a long-term planning function.
- Have you been able to put in place a time, say once a month, when the President and the senior staff stops and “looks back” and says, “Let’s turn around and see what happened for the last month. We did all that or we came through all that...”?
  - In such moments of reflection, do you think that some of your transition plans had avoided situations in which you didn’t have treat the situation as a ‘fire drill’?”



# NERVE CENTER

## MANAGING TO GOVERN FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

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