
1966  Deaver encounters Reagan in Los Angeles during the California Republican gubernatorial primary. At the time, Deaver is a supporter of Reagan’s opponent George Christopher. (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, 1987, p. 36)

   Though not part of Reagan’s gubernatorial campaign, Deaver is selected for the number two position in the Reagan transition team headed by William P. Clark. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 23)

1967  Clark is named Reagan’s Cabinet Secretary and Deaver is selected to serve as Assistant Cabinet Secretary. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 24)

   Six months into the Administration, Reagan replaces Chief of Staff Phil Battaglia with Clark. As Clark’s assistant, Deaver has official responsibility for oversight of Reagan’s schedule and special projects. As the political liaison on the governor’s staff, Deaver assumes the role of principal political coordinator within the governor’s office. During this period, Deaver is asked by Clark to take up the unofficial but important role as the chief staff liaison to Nancy Reagan. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 24-27, 36; Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 38)

1975  Reagan’s gubernatorial term expires.


1976  On an airplane flight early in the year, Reagan discusses with Deaver the possibility of a presidential bid. Reagan concludes the conversation by telling Deaver “I have to run. I’m going to run.” (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 83)

   During the campaign Deaver does not get “deeply involved in the strategy of the campaign.” Rather, he serves as Reagan’s “confidant and troubleshooter.” (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 68)
Commenting on the selection of Senator Richard S. Schweiker as a running mate, Deaver says that Reagan and Schweiker spent six hours conferring and Reagan concluded that their “basic philosophical thrusts were not that far apart.” (*The New York Times*, 7/28/1976)

Reagan declines to speak on behalf of Ford in five of the eleven states requested because Reagan’s campaign schedule was already filled by the time he heard from the White House. It is reported that Deaver is upset about the delay in getting the schedule from Ford campaign chief Dick Cheney. Deaver tells Cheney that Reagan will prepare ads to run in lieu of appearances. (*The New York Times*, 9/20/1976)

Deaver joins the Reagan presidential campaign as a senior advisor.

Lynn Nofziger resigns from the campaign following disputes with campaign chief John Sears. Deaver agrees to take over Nofziger’s fundraising responsibilities for the campaign. (*The New York Times*, 8/29/1979)

On Thanksgiving Day, Nancy asks Deaver to come to the Reagan’s Pacific Palisades home. Reagan, who is joined by John Sears and the other members of the “east coast” team, questions Deaver’s fundraising and charges by his firm. Deaver responds, “You need to put somebody in charge, and if these gentlemen have convinced you that I’m ripping you off, after all these years, then I’m out. I’m leaving.” Deaver leaves the campaign. Ironically, it had been Deaver who had brought Sears into the campaign. (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 86-87)

Nancy Reagan calls Deaver and tells him that the campaign needs help. Deaver suggests she contact Stuart Spencer. (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 88)

The press reports that the Taiwanese government was a client of Deaver’s firm during the same period Reagan was a client. Reagan, whose campaign statements have indicated support for increased ties with Taiwan, says he knew of the contract with Taiwan and had “no objection.” Deaver says “There was nothing improper or we would never have taken the [Taiwan] account.” (*The Washington Post*, 6/6/1980)

William Casey, Reagan’s new campaign chief, asks Deaver to return to the campaign as deputy director and chief of staff. Deaver runs the campaign’s airplane operations and supervises the advance work. (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 89)

Reagan accepts the nomination at the Republican National Convention in Detroit. During discussions among the staff, Deaver opposes the idea of a Ford vice-presidency or co-presidency, considering it “disastrous in every respect for
Ronald Reagan.” Instead, Deaver supports George Bush as vice-president. (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 93-94)

**November**


Deaver joins the Reagans at their California home to watch the election returns. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 81)

Ronald Reagan is elected President of the United States.

Deaver serves as a senior advisor on the Reagan transition team. During this period, Reagan holds informal meetings with Deaver, Baker and Meese at his Pacific Palisades home to discuss appointments. (*The Washington Post*, 12/17/1980)

**December**

Deaver and Reagan speechwriter Kenneth Khachigian meet with Reagan at his home to discuss the inaugural address. (Cannon, p. 73-74)

1981

**January**

On the 20th, Reagan is inaugurated the 40th president of the United States. Just before the inauguration, Reagan asks Deaver to slip him a note during the inaugural address if he receives word the hostages are released. Reagan had planned to bring President Carter up to the platform should the hostage release take place during the event. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 86)

Deaver is appointed as Deputy Chief of Staff. Though the position calls for him to report to Chief of Staff James A. Baker, III, Deaver and Baker, along with Counselor to the President Edwin Meese, III, form a “troika” that observes clearly defined responsibilities within the White House. Baker runs White House operations. Meese is responsible for developing policy and coordinating cabinet activity. Deaver “helps mesh the work flow with the president’s schedule and appointments.” (*The Washington Post*, 2/5/1981)

**March**

On the 31st, John Hinkley Jr. shoots Reagan during an attempted assassination. Deaver, who was with the President’s party during the shooting, accompanies the President’s caravan to George Washington University Hospital.

During Reagan’s stay in the hospital, Deaver, Meese and Baker shoulder the day-to-day demands of running the government. The “big three” hold early morning meetings at the hospital to “review vital matters of state” before daily briefings...


**July**

Deaver assumes responsibility for coordinating Reagan’s preparation for the seven-nation summit in Ottawa from Vice President Bush who had been responsible for the preparations. Though there are differing reports about the reason for the transfer of responsibilities, Deaver has been designated with the responsibility for all presidential trips. (*The Washington Post*, 7/13/1981)

It is announced that National Security Advisor Richard Allen will no longer provide Reagan with oral briefings each morning. Rather, he will submit a daily written briefing to the President and be available to answer any questions. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 7/14/1981)

**August**

During the President’s vacation in California, Deaver, Meese and Baker take turns heading the presidential party. During the period Meese is in control, several important decisions are not made, upsetting Baker. “It was the first time we had been outside the White House with only one of us carrying the load,” Deaver later says. “I don’t think you’ll see it again. It’s a matter of chemistry. Even with two of us it’s better chemistry.” (*U.S. News & World Report*, 11/2/1981)

**September**

Deaver ends staff requests for 15-minute meetings with the President. Apparently, “Reagan likes to hear visitors out and refuses to rush them,” making the meetings run over time. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 9/28/1981)

**December**

In the wake of charges that Richard Allen accepted gifts and cash from a Japanese publisher, Deaver urges the President “to move quickly in accepting Allen’s resignation.” (Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 169-170)

1982

**January**

Allen is replaced by William Clark as National Security Advisor to the President. Clark’s selection is strongly supported by Deaver. On the 1st, Reagan signs a memorandum specifying that Clark will have direct access to the President and administrative control of the National Security Council staff. (Cannon, p. 157-160)

In an effort to persuade Reagan to reverse the Administration’s position in the Bob Jones University case, Deaver asks three African American members of the Administration to tell Reagan personally of the response to the Administration’s stance among African-Americans. Reagan would later reverse his position on this matter. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 98-99)
February  It is reported that friction among the “big three” has escalated to the point of “fairly serious warfare.” (U.S. News & World Report, 2/1/1982)

Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Deaver clash over the selection of a nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. Haig wants department official Alvin P. Drischler, while Deaver is pushing for Reagan aide Gregory Newell. Ultimately, Newell is nominated for the post. (Newsweek, 3/29/1982)

April  Deaver visits the United Kingdom to do advance work for the President’s upcoming visit. (The Washington Post, 4/20/1982)

June  Deaver visits the United Nations to make preparations for the President’s address to the General Assembly later in the month. Finding that the seats directly in front of podium belong to the Libyan delegation, Deaver arranges for extra security precautions. (Newsweek, 6/7/1982)

In a departure from his usually low profile, Deaver begins appearing on television news shows to rave reviews from White House aides. (Newsweek, 6/14/1982)

August  Deaver tells Reagan he will have to leave the Administration unless the President puts a stop to the Israeli shelling of Lebanon. (Deaver, A Different Drummer, p. 101-102)

1983

April  Meese, Baker and Deaver no longer hold daily breakfast meetings, meeting instead on Wednesdays only. (Newsweek, 7/18/1983)

May  It is reported that Deaver and Clark aren’t on speaking terms following complaints from Deaver that Clark is tardy in briefing the President for visits with foreign diplomats. (U.S. News & World Report, 5/2/1983)

July  Daily breakfast meetings of the “big three” resume with the addition of National Security Advisor William Clark. (Newsweek, 7/18/1983)

Moose and Deaver come under criticism for receiving loans from a California accountant during the time he was seeking a presidential appointment to the U.S. Postal Service’s board of governors. (The Washington Post, 7/23/1983)

October  When Interior Secretary James Watt resigns, Deaver and Baker come up with a plan that would see them both assume new positions. Clark would move over to Interior, Baker would assume the national security advisor position, and Deaver would become chief of staff. Reagan initially agrees to the plan but changes his mind after encountering strong opposition from Meese, Casey and other conservatives. (Cannon, p. 375-380)
November  Reagan visits Japan and Korea. Though he does not accompany the President on the trip, Deaver was responsible for the arrangements. (Cannon, p. 416-420)

Deaver spends nine days in China making preparations for President Reagan’s April visit. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 4/30/1984)

1984

April  Reagan visits the People’s Republic of China. (Cannon, p. 420-424)

June  Reagan makes a trip to Ireland, London and Normandy. (Cannon, p. 424)

August  During a television interview, Deaver says that Reagan occasionally dozes off in Cabinet meetings. “I think it has more to do with what’s going on in the meeting than what time of day it is,” says Deaver. (*The Financial Times*, 8/15/1984)

November  Reagan is re-elected President of the United States.


1985

January  Deaver announces his plan to leave the Administration in early spring for private business. Deputy Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater tells reporters that Reagan views Deaver’s position as irreplaceable and that his responsibilities will be transferred to Chief of Staff Baker’s office. (*The Los Angeles Times*, 1/4/1985)

It is reported that after Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and James Baker decided between themselves to switch jobs, it is left to Deaver to break the news to the President and gain his approval. (*The Washington Post*, 1/11/1985; Deaver, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 134)

On the 20th, Reagan is sworn in at a private ceremony at the White House. In response to media criticism Deaver says, “I think it robs a little bit of the public ceremonies to see the whole thing twice. It doesn’t make a heck of a lot of sense to the people out there. I understand the media’s attitude. But that’s a continuing dialogue that we have. The media is never going to be happy unless they sit in the Oval Office 12 hours a day.” (*The Financial Times*, 1/3/1985)

Also on the 20th, Deaver enters the hospital with what was thought to be the flu. The illness turns out to be more serious, an inflammation of the kidney resulting from an allergic reaction to medicine. He remains in the hospital until the end of the month. (*The Washington Post*, 1/29/1985)
March  Deaver travels to Europe to make plans for the President’s four-country visit in May. (Newsweek, 3/11/1985)

April  Deaver, charged with making arrangements for Reagan’s state visit to West Germany, selects the Bitburg cemetery as the site for Reagan to lay a wreath to remember the war dead. The discovery that the cemetery contains the remains of several dozen Waffen SS soldiers sparks an international outcry in opposition to the event. On the 15th, Reagan receives a letter from West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl reaffirming support for the Bitburg visit, but offering the possibility of new talks about the arrangements. Reagan sends Deaver to Bonn, instructing him to tell Kohl that he “will stand with him as promised” at the ceremony. Deaver’s role in creating the controversy strains his relationship with Nancy Reagan who is “furious” that the flap might overshadow the entire visit to Europe. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 104-108; The Guardian, 4/16/1985; The Washington Post, 4/22/1985)

May  Deaver joins the Reagans for a private lunch with Mother Theresa. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 113)

Following the President’s European trip, Deaver leaves the Administration to start his own public relations firm.

October  Deaver is back in the White House helping with preparations for the President’s appearance at the United Nations and his Geneva summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev. (The Toronto Star, 10/7/1985; U.S. News & World Report, 10/21/1985)

1987  In a meeting with Reagan at the White House, Deaver and Stuart Spencer encourage the removal of Don Regan as Reagan’s chief of staff. (Deaver, *A Different Drummer*, p. 119-20)
Early Years with Reagan
Origin of relationship with Reagan. Service as Assistant Cabinet Secretary. Role as political liaison. Discussion of Reagan's management and leadership style as governor. Relationship with Nancy Reagan.

Joining the campaigns. Role and responsibilities in each of the campaigns. Major challenges faced as senior advisor during each campaign. Departure from and return to the 1980 campaign. Discuss the campaign personnel changes following the 1980 New Hampshire primary. How did the change affect the campaign's tone and strategy? Vice presidential selection. Consideration of a possible "Reagan-Ford" ticket. Role and responsibilities during the transitions. Recruitment and selection of the Cabinet and White House staff. What attributes did Reagan consider most important for his staff and Cabinet officers to possess? What changes did you observe in candidate Reagan from the 1976 campaign to the 1980 and 1984 presidential bids?

Deputy Chief of Staff and White House Politics
Responsibilities and role as Deputy Chief of Staff. Division of responsibilities among yourself, James Baker III and Edwin Meese III. Relationships with other key White House staff. The success of the “troika” during the first term. Discuss the most important considerations in scheduling Reagan. Division between ideologues and pragmatists in the White House. The attempted assassination and its aftermath. Role of and relationship with Nancy Reagan. Deaver-Baker plan to become Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor respectively. Role in staffing decisions. Discuss your coordination of foreign trips and summits (Korea, West Germany, China, Ireland, Normandy, etc.). Discussion of Reagan's management and leadership style as President. Decision to leave the Administration. Involvement with White House activities after your departure (Geneva Summit, etc.).

Major Events of the Reagan Administration
Discuss any special involvement with or recollections about the following events and issues associated with the Reagan period: Supreme Court nominations, assassination attempt, Strategic Defense Initiative, Iran-Contra, tax reform, Grenada, bombing of Libya, INF Treaty, U.S.-Russian relations/summits, MX missile program, bombings of U.S. embassies, air traffic controllers strike, AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia.

The Reagan Presidency in Retrospect
What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Reagan Administration? What features of Ronald Reagan and his presidency were missed or misunderstood by the press? How should the Reagan presidency be viewed by history?
TIMELINES

- Michael K. Deaver Timeline, prepared by Darby A. Morrisroe, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 10/28/2001.

SELECTED WRITINGS BY MICHAEL K. DEAVER


THE EARLY YEARS, CAMPAIGNS AND TRANSITIONS

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF

The “Troika” and White House Politics


Foreign Trips


1984 Inauguration


Departure

Miscellaneous Excerpts


President Ronald Reagan
Oral History Project

Briefing Materials

Michael K. Deaver

September 12, 2002

Prepared by Darby Morrisroe, Research Assistant
October 2001