

A fireside chat conducted by Ruth Mandel with

Governor Mario Cuomo (NY; 1983-1995) and Governor Thomas Kean (NJ; 1982-1990)

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Ruth Mandel, Director, Eagleton Institute of Politics:

Good afternoon, everyone. It's such a pleasure to see you and to welcome you here today. I'm Ruth Mandel, Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics. We are presenting today's conversation, fireside chat, but no fire, under the auspices of the Rutgers Center on the Governor, which is a program being developed here at the Eagleton Institute with a great deal of excitement and commitment on the part of the faculty and the staff. The particular section of that center that is sponsoring this afternoon's program is the Governor Thomas H. Kean section. And it is not the first program in his section; we've had a number of very fascinating ones. But it's the first one in which he insisted that he didn't want to do another program without bringing one of his best friends along and spending the time in a conversation with him.

So we are very, very honored this afternoon to have with us two of the most respected governors in the United States, and we're so pleased that you could join us. The center is building a virtual archive, and we plan to sponsor a whole range of forums and activities in person, like this, but also in cyberspace so that not only New Jerseyans but people around the country, scholars and students and journalists can take advantage of the information about our governors in New Jersey and about the role of the governor in the American states, which, believe it or not, is a role and an office that, for some reason, is not receiving any attention or much attention in higher education and the academy. And we're trying to do something about that here at the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers. And that could not have happened without the support of Governor Brendan Byrne and Governor Thomas Kean, and we're grateful to both of them and to other people who have been involved in helping us...

Governor Thomas Kean, one of our two very honored and distinguished guests this afternoon, as you know, is the two-term governor of New Jersey. He served from 1982 to 1990. Governor Kean squeaked into office with an 1,800-vote margin, I think is what we talk about all the time, but then was reelected with 68 percent of the vote and an enormous show of support from the citizens of New Jersey for his leadership.

Governor Mario Cuomo, the 54th governor of New York, was elected in 1982, and he was reelected twice, in 1986 and 1990, the longest-serving Democratic governor in the state of New York, and also set records for the largest electoral victories in that state in his two reelection races. So we have here two people whom we all respect and the citizens of their states continue to respect actually many years after they left office.

They're also two people who governed neighboring states. They come from different parties, and yet they managed to become friends during their time in office and also have remained friends since then. We hear it rumored that during your time in office you got together to have dinner, I think once every six weeks is what we heard. If it was more often than that, we haven't been told. But what we really want to know is kind of a nosy opening question. Where did you eat? What did you eat? (laughter) And if we were flies on the wall-- I guess you didn't eat in the kind of restaurant that had flies on the wall, but if we were flies on the wall, what would we hear you talking about?

Governor Mario Cuomo: Do you remember meeting every six weeks? I remember eating every six weeks. [laughter]

Governor Thomas Kean: Yes, eating. Yes. We'd get together when there was something to get together about, which was often the Port Authority, to make sure the Port Authority was investing in the two states in a way that was compatible with the wishes of the two states and their governors.

Governor Cuomo: I think we got together a lot more than, and I don't know that I could do the research to support this, but I suspect we talked more together than most governors of New York and New Jersey. And I hope in the future that Christie, for example, and my son will get together frequently. And I wish them the kind of relationship I had with Governor Kean.

But you only have to meet with Governor Kean once to know you want to meet with him regularly. Of course, what is it? What magic does he have? Well, he's intelligent. He's very experienced. He was a legislator before he was a governor. That helps a lot. I was not, and I wish I had been. But the principal thing is, whether he was a Republican or not didn't mean a lot to me. He was a person who was concerned about the essentials, who was intelligent. I was regarded as a liberal Democrat, and that made me laugh, because I had been rejected in my first campaign because I was Italian American, Catholic, the president of the Catholic Lawyers Guild, had five children and had big hands. (laughter) And I was told by the "New York Post," "Well, you're a conservative. You were at St. John's University, so you must be a conservative." All those presumptions that come out of parties are a burden. They're not an advantage. And so I think what my philosophy was, there's a place for ideology in political policy making, but it's not first place.

First place should go to common sense and a pragmatism. I would call it a benign pragmatism, because with a name like Mario Cuomo, if I just said pragmatism people would think of Machiavelli, and they would say, "He's bad." (laughter) And Machiavelli wasn't bad. He wrote for the princes who were bad, but he--

Machiavelli-- and so that's what Tom Kean was. He was intelligent. He knew what the issues were. We both spoke things that were basically common sense, and it's a lot easier and a lot more effective, I think, than playing the party game, because the party game, if you do it too rigidly, becomes a real problem.

Governor Kean: And there's a little bit of a difference too in the jobs that we had. Governors, in my mind, get graded on policy and accomplishments, what you actually get done, in a real sense, for your state. You don't get graded on how you vote, like legislators do and, therefore, they get graded if they're enough to the right or enough to the left or whatever. Governors get graded on what they do, so you talk more about policy and you get interested in policy.

You get interested in what you can do for the state. And very little of that is really Republican or Democrat. It is, as you said, common sense. And when we got together, we'd talk about what was common sense. What were the needs of New York? What were the needs of New Jersey? How could we get together on those needs? How could we take, for instance, the Port Authority dollars that were available to the states and make sure they were used in ways that were going to benefit both states to the best of our ability? And those, basically, were the conversations. I found out not only the nice thing-- I hope it's still true among governors-- but my best friends among the governors had nothing to do with who was a Republican and who was a Democrat. I was a good friend of Mike Dukakis. I was a good friend of Lamar Alexander, but he was a Republican. But the two education governors in the South, one who came...

Governor Cuomo: North...

Governor Kean: Lamar was a Republican, but...

Governor Cuomo: North Carolina. What was his name?

Governor Kean: Yes. He later became Clinton's education secretary.

Ruth Mandel: Clinton, too.

Governor Kean: A very good friend of mine. And Jim Hunt of North Carolina.

Governor Cuomo: Jim Hunt, right.

Governor Kean: They're both great friends of mine, and we worked together on education policy, and a guy called Bill Clinton, because we're all interested in education. And it didn't matter whether you're a Republican or a Democrat; you're interested in policy, and I guess the advantages governors have is we get to know

each other better. What I found-- I didn't remember this, but it was something we decided. I don't know what it was, and we were doing things here for the states. And something you did, agreed to, I think, and I don't know, maybe it was the ferries or something, but the mayor of New York was not happy with it, and he said so publicly. And I think I said to you next time we met, "You know, we don't really have to do that. We can do something else." You said, "No, no. It's part of the agreement. It's fine with me." And that was the kind of relationship. I mean, this was-- I mean, your dead honesty and integrity just sort of shined through all the time. That made working with you very, very easy.

Governor Cuomo: Jeez, I'm glad to hear that, especially from a Republican. (laughter) I mentioned to the governor before we came in that the one description of me as a governor that I'll never forget was delivered by a Republican, Upstate Republican, who was unhappy with the budget and thought he didn't get enough money. And I had just made the budget, and he had to introduce me at this big thing, and he had introduced me many times before, several times before. So what he said is, "The next speaker is somebody I've introduced time and time again." It wasn't time and time again; he was just bored about having to introduce me. And he said, "So I went to the dictionary for a little help to beef it up. And I went to the word 'governor,' and here's what the dictionary says about governor. 'Governor, a device attached to a machine to see that it does not operate at maximum efficiency.'" (laughter) So you know, I figured, Republican governors are Republican governors.

Governor Kean: I told him how he'd loved to be introduced in New Jersey. The introduction of the governor of New Jersey is the first governor of New Jersey was Ben Franklin's son, and he was a bastard. And that set the precedent. (laughter)

Ruth Mandel: You two both make it sound like-- I mean, talk about a love fest. And it's not that we didn't kind of expect that, because we know you invited a friend and we know you've been friends. But it is not a love fest out there today, and so much of that has been described in partisan terms, as I've been hearing, especially in the last 24 hours, troubles with hyper-partisanship. Are you saying that the nature of the office of governor makes partisanship irrelevant? Or is this very much about you two, as unique individuals? Can we learn something from your experience together across states and across parties that are lessons for other people in other places?

Governor Cuomo: Well, I think partisanship is a very big issue and a very big problem. And what's happening at the moment is a good demonstration of that. You have the Tea Party people, who are apparently the ultimate in commitment to a solid code that they think of as their ideology. And so they insist on no big government; big government is bad. And little government, presumably, is good.

Now, of all the stupid things to say, that has to be number one or two on the list. Big government is bad. You mean the military? You mean the space program? What big government is bad? You mean Medicare? You mean Medicaid? What big government is bad? What little government is better than big government? That's an absurdity.

You'd never catch Abraham Lincoln talking about big government, little government. He'd talk about government is the coming together of people to do for one another collectively what they could not do as well or at all privately. If they could do it privately, they don't need the government. If you need it-- education, health care-- and the market system doesn't do it, then the government should. That's it. That's all you need. That's Lincoln. Lincoln never talked in terms of ideology. And Lincoln, I guess, was a Washington fan, because Washington, George Washington said, "The last thing you should do is have parties." You know, unless you want to go out and celebrate. (laughter) But he meant political parties, because as soon as you'd have a political party, you are identifying opposition. And so you can have-- again, ideology has a place, a general emphasis perhaps. Women are a big thing in my life in terms of giving them a place, and I did it and spent a lot of time doing that with my appointments. I set a record for women. Immigrants are important to me, because I'm the son of immigrants. And, yes, that kind of emphasis, perhaps.

But to get specific about it and take only ideological points of view and to hear a Republican leader now saying, "I will not use the word 'compromise.' Compromise is out;" what the heck kind of thing is that? You've got to be able to deal. You have to make deals. You have to be supple. You have to bend. You have to give. You have to take. I mean, there's no magic to it. I really do think it's all a matter of common sense.

Ruth Mandel: Governor Kean? I actually heard the other evening on an interview on television the incoming Speaker Boehner very much backing off from using the word "compromise," as if somehow it had become an unaccepted-- get it out of the lexicon of American politics.

Governor Kean: Well, compromise cannot be a dirty word, because that's how things get done. I mean, if you come up with a program, you never get a hundred percent of it, even when you have your own party. There's going to be something around the edge. If you say, "I won't compromise," then you get nothing. Most of the things, I think, both of us are proud of, our governorships, were done through compromise.

Governor Cuomo: You didn't compromise on principle.

Governor Kean: No. But you compromised on some of the details to get the greater end through. And without that, nothing happens, and that's what we have in Washington now. If you don't want to talk to each other in any way whatsoever or you just decide the other guy's point of view is just not worth considering, then be prepared for gridlock. And we can't afford it in this country now. We really cannot afford it. Of all times, this is the time where good men and women have got to work together to get good things accomplished. Otherwise, we're all going to-- somebody said the other day, "You have a left wing and a right wing, and in between, the bird is dying." And we can't have that.

Governor Cuomo: Well, what's happened-- and now with the taxes, et cetera, is a pretty good example-- if Obama had been absolutely rigid in his position, we might have gone without any kind of legislation. And that would have left you with tax increases for the whole middle class and all the rich people, and that would have been a disaster. And so he became supple. Now, he got his party-- he lost part of his party. His so-called liberal wing said, "Well, you shouldn't have made any deal at all." But he said, "No, I will have to make a deal to get what we need." Seventy-seven percent of the people in today's poll said they liked it. <laughs> You know, 77 percent of the people. Why? Because they're hungry for some kind of progress. And to hear the president getting haughty and sitting back and saying, "No, I will not budge," and the Legislature saying, "You can go to heck," as a result, and, "We're not going to compromise," how does that make the people of the country feel? What the heck is this? In whose hands are you leaving it?

Governor Kean: There's a lesson here. You said it, but there's a lesson here, because if you think about it, they made this deal. The left wing immediately attacked it. They've been attacking it ever since. The far right attacked it, including some of the columnists, said they would never support it. And a lot of the press attacked it editorially and said, "It's unconscionable to make a deal like this." And as you say, 60 to 80 percent of the American people stood up and said, "Thank God they made the deal and we support it. Not that we're for all parts, but we support the deal. We support the compromise." And I think you're right. People have been standing up and really wanting the two parties to get together on something. And now they did it. The American party is saying, "Hurrah!" And I think the Congress, if they turn this deal down in some way or the other, are going to go from whatever they are now, 15 percent popularity, down to 10.

Ruth Mandel: Is there something during your time as governors and, particularly, your relationship together that you could point to as an example and maybe a constructive one, an educational one, an instructive one for people today of compromising? That is, when did the two of you, in meeting together on-- you mentioned the Port Authority before-- there are other issues, obviously, in New York, New Jersey. Can you think of an example of when both of you, with the best

intentions for your state, made compromises? And what, specifically, were they that benefited the relationship and the states?

Governor Kean: Well, we compromised all the time, every single time we met, because New Jersey bought a whole bunch of stuff. New York bought a whole bunch of stuff. There was only so much money to go around. When you think of the fair thing, you got 50 percent. I got 50 percent, because we do the tolls that way. And he would have liked to have a whole bunch of more stuff for New York. I'd like to have a whole bunch more stuff for New Jersey. Every time, you had an agenda; I had an agenda. We'd lay it out and see if it was possible, divide up the money and basically suggest to the Port Authority that we could veto their minutes and suggest they go along, and they did. (laughter)

Governor Cuomo: But what you ought to do is give something up.

Governor Kean: Yes, that's right.

Ruth Mandel: Did you get punished for it?

Governor Cuomo: "You have more people that are riding the trains. I have more people that are doing this. I have 65 percent of the people, so I should get 65 of this." We didn't do that. New York was New York; New Jersey was New Jersey. You're a state; I'm a state, and that's the way I see it. It's not, "How much money did I give New York? How much money did you get for Jersey? And since I'm a bigger state, because I have more people, I could get"-- you could have done that and it would have some kind of logic, but it wouldn't work. And so what we did is, "You have a problem. Tell me what it is. If I can get it done, I'll get it done." And we did.

Ruth Mandel: Did you get criticized for it? Was it such a different media world that you didn't suffer the consequences of today's scrutiny and...

Governor Cuomo: Yes. Oh, sure. No. I was criticized all the time.

Governor Kean: Yes, he was. I remember that. (laughter)

Governor Cuomo: Yes, because criticism is part of it. But the best politician in my house was my mother, actually. She couldn't read or write. She was an immigrant. She came here and told me on one of our campaigns against Ed Koch that-- we had a little grocery store. And she came in and she said to me in Italian, "You know, you're going to lose the race." I said, "Why?" She says, "Well, because you don't like the death penalty." And she says, "Why don't you like the death penalty? It's a bad man, you gotta kill him." I said, "No, Mom. No." (laughter) I

tried to explain to her. Says, "Well, you know, Koch, he likes it, and the customers are saying they're going to vote for Koch because he likes the death penalty. You don't like the death penalty." In Italian, I said, "Mom, would you have your baby"-- because I was her baby-- "Would you have your baby change just for this? I can't be like that." She says, "Okay. You not have to lose. You do this. You tell them you want the death penalty, whatever. After you win, forget about it." [laughter] I've been tempted. <laughs>

Governor Kean: We didn't always succeed in what we were doing. Do you remember the time we tried to finish once and for all that controversy, about Ellis Island?

Governor Cuomo: Oh! [laughter] Oh!

Governor Kean: And we thought we'd settle it at dinner or breakfast, whatever we had together, because...

Ruth Mandel: Oh, so it was breakfast too. [laughter] Not just dinner.

Governor Kean: To me, this made perfect sense; I'd follow your suggestion. New York and New Jersey have been fighting for years over who owns the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island where the ferries go, come back from and everything else. Said, "Look, let's say nobody owns Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island belongs to the American people. And so what do you do about all the revenue coming from the tourists as they go to these tourist things?" And his suggestion was, "Take all the sales tax, whatever. We'll divide it up 50/50 and give it to programs for the homeless in both states." Seemed totally sensible to me. I don't think either legislature bought it. [laughter] Couldn't get it through either. They wanted a fight.

Governor Cuomo: Well, the legislatures are nice. I wish we didn't have them [laughter]-- and sometimes you have to make deals that are not-- for example, I wanted a seatbelt law, and I did the first seatbelt law in the history of the United States, I think. Except for Massachusetts-- no, I guess it's New Hampshire-- every state in the union now has a seatbelt law. New Hampshire's motto is "Live free or die." [laughter] So they don't have a seatbelt law. But in order to get the seatbelt law-- it was very, very hard. It was very unpopular, extremely unpopular with everybody, Democrats, Republicans, et cetera-- I don't know how many things I gave away as governor, you know, one at a time. Same with the death penalty. I stopped the death penalty every year for 12 years. And one year we got within two votes, and I'm not even going to tell you what I did, those two guys. [laughter]

Ruth Mandel: Please do. [laughter]

Governor Cuomo: No, you had to give things up. But I did get the seatbelt and seatbelt law. And this is a story I have to tell you, and it's about one of the people I loved most, Tim Russert, who in my first years was-- he and Andrew were my principal aides, and Tim was a great, great guy, and he was thrilled when we got the seatbelt law done. And the day after I signed the seatbelt law, we were in Buffalo where Tim lives and in a cavalcade, a caravan of small cars, the K-cars. Chrysler, I think, was trying them. And I told Tim, "All right, you get in the back. I'm getting in the front." And he says, "Why shouldn't I sit"-- <laughs> I says, "Because they shoot at the guy in the back, not at the guy in the front." [laughter] So Tim mumbled a little bit. He got in the back and we were going. Now, this is the day after I signed the seatback law, and a car hits the car behind us. They hit us. I go forward and hit the dashboard. I had not buckled the seatbelt. [laughter]

Ruth Mandel: The seatbelt.

Governor Cuomo: The car behind us was filled with media. They jumped out and ran up and Timmy ran out, because he was my media guy. And one of the media people said, "Is the governor all right?" And Timmy said, "Thank God for the seatbelt law." [laughter] And I told that story at the request of his wife at the funeral thing that they had in a big building in Washington. And she said, "Tell that story, Mario, because it makes him human. Everybody's making him a saint." And I added, when I told the story-- I said, "You know, Tim could get away with that because he thought like a Jesuit." [laughter] And the Jesuits teach you that the definition of a lie is the withholding or the misstating to someone who has the right not to be deceived. [laughter] And Timmy's logical. These bums do not have to know. [laughter]

Ruth Mandel: In talking about the collaboration, and Governor Kean, you immediately mentioned the Port Authority. Of course, when everybody thinks about two governors, New York, New Jersey, I know on our team, that's what people started to talk about immediately. Are there lessons from that experience beyond-- you both talked about the importance of collaborating, collaborative leadership-- is what I'm hearing. Are there lessons for today in the situation? We have a current situation with the arc tunnel and the proposed additional connection between Jersey and New York? Are there lessons from that that you could share that would be helpful for today's situation?

Governor Kean: Well, I think there are all sorts of-- by the way, you don't always agree, because I was elected, I guess, one year before you were?

Governor Cuomo: Yes.

Governor Kean: I don't know if it's one year before Mario was elected. And I'd been in office about two months, and Hugh Carey calls and says, "We've got to have dinner." So I was trying to-- budget stuff and I-- "No, no." "Very important. We've got to have dinner." So we meet in a restaurant in New York. I didn't know Hugh Carey really at all. And he's a pretty forceful fellow. We were having dinner and he said, "I'll tell you what I want to do here." He said, "I've only got three-quarters of a year left in office. Big thing to do. You and I have got to sell the World Trade Center, and the money can go to both states, so we can do all these wonderful things in the two states. And I want to do it for some time. Now, I got a governor. You and I can do it together." So I said, "Well, interesting thought." Said, "Do you think you ought to do it?" I said, "Well, I'll have to govern. I want to go back and think about it." And I called the guy who was-- Peter Goldmark...

Governor Cuomo: Yes, right.

Governor Kean: ...who then ran the Port Authority. He said, "That is the stupidest idea I've ever heard. That thing is going, rocketing up in value. It's going to increase tremendously over the next couple years. It's going to be an engine of growth for the two states." And he was right. But Hugh Carey was not happy that we didn't <laughs> in his last year sell the World Trade Center.

Governor Cuomo: He had some funny ideas. [laughter] I was his lieutenant governor, and it was an experience. And that's all I'll say. [laughter]

Governor Kean: You can get in trouble with some of these decisions, not only with the public but-- my two sons are here. I remember when I signed the bill to raise the drinking age to 21. I think you all were, what, 17 at the time? Sixteen, seventeen. You were a year, year and a half away from being able to drink, and all your classmates were too. [laughter] All your friends were, and all of a sudden your father says, "Oh, no, no, no. Three or four more years." [laughter] Got in some trouble at home, I remember.

Ruth Mandel: You were both national leaders. I mean, you were leaders of your states and you were national leaders. Each of you gave the keynote address at the National Party Convention. Is it helpful for a governor in his state to be a national leader? Is this something that is helpful or is it an ongoing problem? We get responses when Governor Christie now, and we could point to many governors in other states who travel around the country speaking for other people and spend a lot of time out of the states and they get criticized. On the whole, was this something that enhanced your ability to govern the state or got in the way?

Governor Kean: I think it helps up to a point. I think at people like in the state to have you recognized nationally as long as it doesn't go too far. They don't like

you running around giving speeches all the time when you should be watching the state. Vernon Jordan said to me, you know, once you-- he said his grandmother said, "You know, you keep your nose in your own garden, because when you put your nose in somebody else's garden, the boll weevils come." And there's some wisdom in that. I do remember, by the way, when I got offered the job of giving the keynote at the Republican Convention, he had just probably had just given probably the best keynote of all time. And so, I called him and said, "What the hell should I do?" You know, <inaudible>. He said, "Call Andrew." And it was good advice, because Andrew, had negotiated for you and I ran into the same-- there were awful people at the convention, who try to work for the various-- they think they're doing their job of protecting the nominee or whatever, but they try to censor your speech. They try to worry about how you do it, this and that and so on. Andrew told me how to deal with those people, and he was right. And at one point, I said to them the day before when they wanted to change a paragraph, I said, "Get somebody to give the speech then." They said, "No, no, we didn't mean that." But Andrew gave me wonderful advice and you were-- I'm very thankful you referred me to him.

Governor Cuomo: Let me talk to that, being a national figure. If it's an issue that affects your state, and also affects the rest of the country, then of course, you're going to be taking a position. Just the other day I was shocked to see in the New York Post there was a picture of Ronald Reagan and me head to head in a kind of combative-ese stand. And what that was about, was maybe, one of the most important issues we ever had while I was governor, and that is the deductibility of state taxes, state and local taxes. What Reagan did-- I got to know him very, very well for a number of reasons. But what President Reagan was trying to do was get more money for the federal government. Well yes, but if you took states like New York, New Jersey and New York and Connecticut and all of your people couldn't have deductibility, that would be a terrible hit. And so, somebody had to speak out against the Reagan position. And he-- this was relatively early in his presidency. And so, I got a couple of phone calls. I did it and I called other governors and we put together an argument and we went to war, and we won.

Governor Kean: And it wasn't partisan. He was leading on behalf of all the governors, yes.

Governor Cuomo: And we won. The keynote, I probably didn't tell you this about the keynote, the keynote I gave in 1984, I gave very reluctantly. I had 10-- I had Andrew. Mondale was running. I was very close to Jimmy Carter. I still know him and like him, but I was very close to him and I promised him I would back Mondale. So I'm backing Mondale and he's afraid that the Kennedys are going to do to him what they did to Carter and that is run against Carter at the convention. And so he was very worried about that. It was getting very close to

convention time. I was trying to help him. He needed a keynote speaker. So I went down and saw Ted Kennedy. I've never spoken to him before, we had a couple of drinks, more than a couple drinks and I came back with a deal and called Mondale with Jimmy and Andrew in the room and said, "I've spoken with Ted Kennedy. He will do the keynote, but he will endorse you first. And he'll endorse you. He'll do the keynote." We got him. And he said at the other end of the phone, "I don't want Kennedy." And I said, "What do you mean, you don't want Kennedy? I almost drank myself to death to get him." And it's Ted Kennedy. I think Mondale was thinking that Kennedy gets up there, even with a promise, and he gives one of those great speeches and that's the end of him.

Governor Kean: Yes.

Governor Cuomo: But whatever he's thinking, he said, "I won't have him, and that's that." And so he hung up. I hung up, and I asked Timmy what he thought and Timmy says, "I don't know." Andrew said, "I don't know." And then Timmy thought again. He says, "You know, maybe he's just afraid of Kennedy even with him." I says, "Well, whatever." And so we had no keynote speaker. He called the next day and he said, "You told Jimmy Carter you would do anything but commit a sin or a crime to help me." He says, "You do the keynote." I said, "That might be both a sin and a crime." And he said, "No, you do it." And I point to Timmy and Andrew and said, "What do you think?" And they said, "You know, you promised. You have to do the damn thing. And just do it."

So I took my speech I had given previously and worked on it overnight and I got up and gave the keynote. And it was just, whether by accident or whatever it was, and I think a lot of it's serendipity. I think the most important thing in life, especially political life is the things you don't control, being in the right place at the right time, just being lucky, you know. You hit the right issue at the right time. And the things I had to say were not new. They weren't terribly clever. They were very plain things. But the things I felt deeply, they felt deeply. And you could see it talking to them. You talk about your father who you saw bleed from the bottom of his feet, you know, as a grocer, that regularly his feet were all blistered because he had been up and been through all of that market. And you could see people in the audience, you know, kind of turn. And so, it was an accident. It really was an accident. It was not a great speech. It was, you know, heavily applauded, et cetera. But it was coincidence that what I-- you know, what I was feeling, they were feeling too, at the same time. I didn't give them the feeling, I just reminded them of it.

Ruth Mandel: What did you mumble? It was a great speech?

Governor Kean: First of all, it was a nationally recognized great speech.

Ruth Mandel: You can't run away from that, exactly.

Governor Kean: Circumstances, you know, they're important, but I was hearing my speech the night before and I got a call. The President has just nominated Dan Quayle for Vice President. So as I gave the speech, the story was who was Dan Quayle, which I still wonder, but.

Governor Cuomo: The-- Quayle was not-- Quayle was a pretty smart guy.

Governor Kean: Smarter than people thought.

Governor Cuomo: I had to debate him in his original state, which I think was Indiana, and then he moved up to the North West. And so it was all his people and he was controlling the event in the beginning. And he said, "You know, Mario Cuomo is-- he's a tough guy. He's a tough guy from New York." And I was getting ticked at him. And-- but the deal was you'll debate and then at the end, you'll each have a question for the other. And I was thinking as hard as I could, I'm going to nail this guy with something. And so, we go through the debate and it's kind of back and forth and then comes the time for me to ask my question. And I said, "How do you spell." and everybody started to go-- you know, they were booing. I said, "Wait a minute, wait." I said, "How do you spell the word heroes, and I mean, the Italian sandwich?" And everybody in the audience said, "<inaudible> what is it? Is it with an e-s or?" No. And what he did, he looked at the-- he looked at me, looking at the audience, "Didn't I tell you he was a tough guy?" And that was the end of it and he walked off the stage and I walked off the stage and he never had to answer the question. We got together later, he says, "How do you spell heroes?" And I said, "I'm not going to tell you." And I didn't. And I bet he still doesn't know.

Ruth Mandel: How do you spell luck and clever? You know, Governor Edgar, former Governor Edgar of Illinois was here at a different meeting recently, and was asked something about good and bad times to be governor and he had an interesting answer. He said that the thought the best time to be the governor of a state was when things were really bad, because then you had to make changes and you could get the support. On the other hand, I think about the current President of the United States and wonder if he would agree that the best time to be in executive leadership is when things are bad. I'm wondering about your views of that and how you think that applies to your time as governor?

Governor Kean: Well, I think it's fine as long as they get better. I mean, when I first came into office, we had what was until this time, considered the worst depression-- since the great-- worst recession since the Great Depression. We had no money. I had the other party in control of both house of legislature. I mean, it was pretty-- that first-- and I had been elected by the smallest margin in the state's

history. It was a tough time. But we were able to do things, we had to, as an administration, we had to get our act together. We had to work hard to get-- to do things right. We had to make contacts with the legislature that went out of-- it served us very well in later years. As the economy started to come back, we really had the act together. We knew what we wanted. We had a program and we had policies, but you need-- you can't have the bad times last for a long time. And that's what problem the President's got now. This recession is lasting a lot longer than anybody predicted it would.

Governor Cuomo: I think at the--

Ruth Mandel: Time and chance and circumstance.

Governor Cuomo: I think there is no really intelligent way to value the work of a President or a governor. What we've settled for is the condition of the state when they're finished as though the governor, the President, created the condition, and they never create the condition. You have a legislature. You have the federal government. You have the self. You have the courts. All these things combined. Okay, you show leadership, et cetera, et cetera. But to equate the success of the state with the-- giving him all the credit. I have not done my portrait for the governors up in New York. I don't know if they do it in New Jersey as well. And I said, "I'm not going to put the portrait up. What for?" "Well, we're supposed to be honoring you." I said, "For what? You've got some bums up there." And I said, "No, if you wanted to honor 12 years of what I did, write a piece about things I did that you think were good, that we did, you know, with the legislature and my staff and everything else, and say something about the whole team that operated. Even then, you're going to be exaggerating, because you have the element of good luck. You have the federal governments in the position."

So it's very difficult. If you can finish with a good record, if it comes together, your good fortune and the end of your term, then they think of you as a good governor. If you're down, then you're a lousy President. Right now, Obama's at 41. Last time I looked at the polls it was 41. Why? Because things are still bad. But 77% of the people like his deal. If Obama-- if Obama gets rid of Afghanistan and maybe gets out of the Middle East even beyond that, he really empties out of Iraq and ends Afghanistan, and the economy is up a little bit, he'll be a second term President. If he doesn't get that, if Afghanistan's still there and if he's still-- we're still grinding ahead with 1.5% of growth, he's dead.

Governor Kean: And there's gridlock.

Governor Cuomo: Yes.

Governor Kean: They continue with that.

Governor Cuomo: And he's dead. His only hope is to do what Clinton did in his second term. Clinton's first term was all Democratic. His second term was all Republican, the whole legislature was Republican. And so, he did his triangulation, which was just hyper-bipartisanship. Made deals with Gingrich. Made deals with all the Republicans. Took down the welfare program and irritated a lot of liberals and he got out with 22 million new jobs, balanced budgets and a \$1.5 trillion potential surplus. Wow. Now, it's a wonder to me that we don't make more of that, but with this mess, all you have to do is look back to that decade and say, "Look, if those guys could do it, why can't we?" You know, and a lot of that-- some of that may come back, because whether he did or not deliberately, when Obama put Clinton on the stage the other night, he really made his deal.

Governor Kean: Yes.

Governor Cuomo: He made the deal. And maybe what he ought to do is marry Clinton, you know.

Governor Kean: They-- you know, I've been reading a lot about Teddy Roosevelt recently. Teddy Roosevelt was very discouraged when he left office, because he really wanted to be a great President. And he said, "There's no great President in American history unless he has a war." And he got the Nobel Peace Prize, Teddy Roosevelt, for negotiating the Panama Treaty, but there was no war and he thought he was going to go down as a less than great President because he didn't win a war.

I found out one thing I learned real early when I was governor, because I had a Democratic legislature in both houses. First of all, you know, the legislature came up with some good ideas and Democrats or Republicans, some good stuff comes out of the legislature. When you agree to it and the Democrats sponsor it in both house and they send it to you and you sign it, it's Kean program. Nobody's got any idea who sponsored it in the legislature. And you can-- at the bill signing you can say to Senator so and so, you are the greatest thing ever. You've done this wonderful thing for your state and our country. Nobody remembers that. You can run for it, it's allowed. It's a Kean program, and the President's the same way. I mean, the President, if he does compromise and gets some stuff through, like this first compromise, and it keeps on going, he will get credit for every good thing that's done whether it comes out of the Republicans or not. And he'd be smart to remember that.

Ruth Mandel: I have a whole bunch of questions, but I'm going to ask two more and turn it over to our distinguished audience members who are waiting for an

opportunity. But I want to play, for the first of the last two, number one of the last two, I want to play T.V. host and throw some names out.

Governor Cuomo: Hostess.

Ruth Mandel: Hostess. Okay. And throw out some names and have you both respond to them. So the first name I'd like you to respond to is Donald Trump. Did he make your life easier or harder as governor? And how did he affect your relationship, if at all, with one another?

Governor Kean: I don't think he affected our relationship at all. He was very nice to me because he wanted to build casinos in New Jersey. And when Donald Trump needs something from somebody, he's very nice to them. And so, I got along fine with him. But he had a very definite agenda, and that was it.

Governor Cuomo: Presumably, he got the casinos?

Governor Kean: Yes.

Governor Cuomo: He came to me for something too, which he didn't get and he wasn't nice to me.

Ruth Mandel: Enough said?

Governor Cuomo: Yes.

Governor Kean: I remember the time that I-- when he called up one day and I was governor, he called up and Donald Trump's on the phone. Something was up for the casinos, something they wanted that I didn't want to give them. I don't know what it was. And I thought I don't want to talk about this. So he started off the conversation, he said, "It's a nice day today." I said, "Oh, crap. Come on, get to the point. What do you want?" And he kept talking like that. Finally, I said, "You know, I've got an appointment waiting, Donald." I said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "Well, I just thought it was time to call you up and tell you, you were the best governor in the country." And I thought, that's a smart man. Do you remember, by the way, I was just thinking as we're sitting here, do you remember the time we took on the State Department over the Korean airliner?

Governor Cuomo: Vaguely.

Governor Kean: It was interesting. This was Port Authority again, basically, but it was-- the Russians shot down an unarmed passenger airline with a congressman on board, because it strayed a little out of the regular airlines and over some

Russian territory. And they shot it down. And basically, for some reason, whether it was diplomacy or whatever else, our reaction was sort of, you shouldn't have done that and that's about it. And you and I were talking, probably about something else and I don't know if you suggested it or I suggested it, well you suggested it. You said, "You know, we shouldn't just let them get away with it." So we said basically, "We control the New York airports, the airports. And so together we said, "You can't land here."

Governor Cuomo: Exactly.

Governor Kean: For a period of time. We're not going to accept any Russian planes. And George Schultz, who was Secretary of State, said, "You can't do that." And we did it. And they didn't land for that period of time. In fact, I think at one point Gromyko, was coming to speak to the United Nations. And the State Department said we can land him up at Stewart Air Force Base. And he said, "That's an insult and I'm coming." So we had that kind of period. And it was about a year and a half before I gave the keynote speech at the Republican convention. And so, Nick Brady was then Secretary of the Treasury, said to me, "Will you have lunch with my wife and I and George Schultz and his wife, for dinner, dinner, I guess?" So I said, "Fine." We were at New Orleans and we had a nice dinner, it couldn't have been pleasanter. And at the end, Schultz pulled me aside, like this and he said, "You remember when you did that?" He said, "You wouldn't do that again, would you?" And I said, "Not unless they shoot down another airline." Remember that? It was a--

Governor Cuomo: Yes. No, I remember it, yes. No some positions, you don't have a lieutenant governor.

Governor Kean: Now we do, first one, first one. I didn't have one.

Ruth Mandel: First one.

Governor Cuomo: I was a lieutenant governor and they asked me what it's like to be a lieutenant governor. I said, "A lieutenant governor is a neglected positive like the word inept. Nobody ever says ept. If you're a lieutenant governor, the assumption is you don't do anything." He said, "Well then, why do you have a lieutenant governor?" "Well, why do you have the word inept?", because there's no ept. So that was the worst thing I ever had. Because to be Hugh Carey's lieutenant governor, you know. Sometimes the best part about it was I had nothing to do. But the-- he made fun of lieutenant governors.

Governor Kean: Yes. Our lieutenant governor's also Secretary of State, so you have something to do.

Governor Cuomo: Oh, she's the Secretary of State, too.

Governor Kean: Yes.

Governor Cuomo: I was also Secretary of State.

Governor Kean: Really?

Governor Cuomo: No. I was Secretary of State.

Ruth Mandel: Simultaneously?

Governor Cuomo: As a matter of fact, it was the first job I ever had in politics and when I came home-- first of all, when I went to my mother and father with Matilda and said, "We've had some success as a lawyer, et cetera, but they're after me to run for office and I think maybe for a year or so I'll do it." And so I went in and came out eventually and said to my father, "Okay, my first job is going to be Secretary of State." He says, "You know, all your life you've been a lawyer, now you're going to be a secretary?" So as lieutenant governor, I said, "I paid my dues before I got to be governor."

Governor Kean: Yes.

Ruth Mandel: So another name, how about Ed Koch?

Governor Kean: I get along well with Ed Koch.

Governor Cuomo: He's New Jersey.

Governor Kean: Yes, yes.

Governor Cuomo: Ed Koch, I beat Ed Koch in a race for governor and he hates people who beat him. So he hated me for awhile. But over the years, we worked things out. And I-- recently he was being honored. And they called me up, I hadn't been invited to the honoring, but they called me up and they said, "Will you come? Ed's being honored." And you know, he's 83 or 84 or 107, whatever he is. And they said, "Will you come and speak for him, say a few words, surprise him?" I said, "Yes, I will." So I came and I vowed to tell the whole truth. So I got up to the podium. He was standing off on the side, and I said, "I have always liked and admired Ed Koch more than he liked and admired me." And Koch said, "That's right." And everybody laughed the way you did. And I said, "Nope. Truth is it is said about Koch that he beat me in a mayor's race in 1977. And I beat him in a governor's race in 1982. That's incorrect. It's true that he beat me in 1977. I did

not beat him in 1982. He beat him in 1982." And Koch said, "And that's right, too."

Ruth Mandel: So there was nothing that Ed Koch did that the two of you had to deal with together in and around, with him that affected your relationship or that--

Governor Cuomo: One thing that people probably don't know, Hess, Leon Hess, may he rest in peace, okay. I was dealing with Hess trying to get Jersey to give up-- to bring him back to Queens or anywhere and I was doing very, very well. And then Koch wrote him a letter in which he called him all kinds of names and Leon picked up the phone and said, "You know, I meant to do it, but I will not do it as long as this man lives." So he stayed in Jersey.

Governor Kean: Yes.

Governor Cuomo: So that's--

Governor Kean: We had, you know, I was the one, of course, who negotiated the Jets into New Jersey. And I never--

Governor Cuomo: Thanks for that.

Governor Kean: Yes, I know. I'd never met Leon, although we have a lot of mutual friends. And he was negotiating with the people at the sports authority and having lunch at 21 trying to work this out and they hit a snag. And they called me up in the governor's office and said, "You've got to talk directly to him, because it's not going to happen. We've hit a snag based on what you've told us we can negotiate on." And I got on the phone, the hang up was that Koch had told you that he would come to New Jersey, but you won't build him a stadium, he'd come back or maybe that was Koch, but anyway, this was the agreement. And I said, "No, you can't come to New Jersey and then say you're going back in three years or whatever if they build you a stadium." I said, "I can't do that. If you come to New Jersey, you've got to come to New Jersey." And he said, "Well, I give it my word." Leon's word was sacred. And I said, "Well, I don't know how we're going to work this out, because I can't have that as the main problem." He said, "Look, I know New York City. I know Koch, he'll never build it. He can't get it done. So we're not going to get a stadium." And I said, "That may be, I still can't publicize the agreement that that's what it was." And so finally, some how, right through summer months and said, "Here's the agreement, if they build me a stadium within five years or something I go back and I pay to New Jersey this huge sum of money, because I know it's not going to happen." And I said, "That's a deal." So that was the agreement we made. And we became, you know, Leon enormously close friends.

Governor Cuomo: Yes, good man.

Governor Kean: Yes, I gave the eulogy at his-- executor of his estate and sold the Jets to Woody Johnson, over half of the Hess estate. So from not knowing at all, we became very close friends.

Governor Cuomo: About quality not quantity. He's a really terrific human being, actually. He's very smart. He's totally devoted to his political life. That's what he's wanted and that's what he's done. He was in the service with Hugh Carey. They were very close friends. And he's got a terrific sense of humor, he really does. He's 85 now and he's still working every day. He called me up and says, "I'm going to go with Andrew from Virginia." He says, "He's backed and he's proven he can take a punch and I'm with him." And he's been with my son and helped him in a lot of ways. So he's a-- the two stories I told you are absolutely true. But he's a terrific guy.

Governor Kean: We used to have dinner together ... so we could talk about Ed Koch usually, frankly. It was that simple. But they were fun. And then one time, he said to me, "You know, you've got to come out and come to my favorite Chinese restaurant." So we went out to some Chinese restaurant. The door's open and there's a picture of Koch in the window of the restaurant. And I said, "Mayor, you know, I've seen your picture in the window of more than Chinese restaurant around here. How can we know what you really like and don't like?" He said, "See if I'm smiling."

Governor Cuomo: I tell you one thing about Koch, that Koch-- I won in 1982 after the best candidates, the best Democratic candidates, quit the race. The reason they quit the race is that Rupert Murdoch, who had bought the Post and was ensconced in New York and still very powerful, very rich and the New York Times got together and said, "We're going to make Koch the next governor. And put him on a boat. They went over to London, by the time they came back, they convinced Koch that he should be the governor. And all the good candidates, Stanley Fink, who was a really brilliant, brilliant legislator, and three or four other people, all of whom were better candidates than I, had never won a big race, they said that "You're not really a politician. You're still a lawyer." All that stuff. There was no way I could win. Andrew came and said, "You can't run. You got to get out the way everybody else did."

The Times called me. I had lunch with them and they said, "You've got to quit this thing. Take a job with him, because we're going to make Koch the mayor." And I said, "Why?" And they gave me some reasons. I said, "Well, I'm not ready to let it-- to quit. I just want to see what happens here. I know he's spoken to a magazine and said some very unpleasant things about upstate, and I want to see

what impact that had. I just want to see what's the lay of the land." And then I got an idea, and I wish this idea had worked after the description I'm going to give you of. I called Rupert Murdoch. I could not win. Everybody was begging me not to run. He did a Post poll, 38 points down. Okay, so it's a joke. I asked Rupert, "What would happen if I debated Ed Koch." He said, "Well, he'd have you for lunch." I said, "Good. Why don't we have the first theater debate in history." He said, "Well, what's a theater debate?" I said, "Well, let me say first, the debates that we have now, Presidential and otherwise, are a joke. Everybody knows what the question is. And everybody knows what the answer is and you get a minute and a half to talk about abortion or religion or this." I said, "It's an absurdity.

So in this, you do it as though it were a stage play. You have an audience, a live audience. They're there. They can react anyway they want. They can whistle, they can cheer. And you put the two guys or gals who are debating on the stage with no agenda, no questions, no answers, you flip a coin. Somebody calls, he gets it, decides he will speak first or second. You can have Roger Wood, who was working The Post Forum. He will be the only other person on the stage and his power will be the power in the courtroom, relevance. The only time he can intrude is to say, "That's not relevant move on." And Mur-- he said, "Oh, this sounds absurd." I said, "It's not absurd. Look at what you'd be testing. You'd be testing his patience or what he says when he doesn't have notes, what issues he raises, whether or not he lets the other guy speak." I said, "It would be the best test of two candidates ever." And Rupert said, "It sounds too fluke, talk to Clive Barns." Clive Barns was the theater critic. So I called Clive Barns and he said-- the Australian. And he says, "What a marvelous idea." And I said-- he says, "Ed, what about the people in the audience?" I said, "They can whistle. They can throw a banana. They can do whatever they want, you know." And he says, "I think it's a good idea." He convinced Rupert to do it. I got a call from David Garth, Jew SOB, lousy-- he cursed. He said, "You went behind my back. You went directly to this guy. You broke all the rules." I said, "Listen, let's have the debate. I think it's going to be intelligent and I think it's going to be good." We had the debate. We were allowed 100 people. We had 200 people. His 200 people sat in the front, my 100 people sat in the back. I came in the back door, my people were all union guys. I came in the back door.

When I came in, I was late, you know, to the breakfast. It was a breakfast thing. They-- all my people stood up. When they stood up, the people in front of them stood up and so, everybody stood up. And Koch was furious. We got on the stage, and this is exactly how it happened. We got on the stage, Roger Wood threw the coin and told Ed he could call it. Ed said, "Heads." He looked down and Roger Wood said, "Heads, Koch, you have the choice." I grabbed the mic and I said, "That's why he wants casino gambling." And he went bonkers. And we argued for an hour and ten minutes. And we were interrupted only twice by Roger Wood.

And nobody shouted and nobody screamed, and nobody threw a punch and nobody said anything really stupid. And you know, you don't win debates, you lose debates, but you don't really win debates with knock out punches, you know. How many times can you get away with I knew John Kennedy and he-- but they've never tried it since. He called me-- Garth called me after it. I got a good story in the Daily News. But it made me a candidate. I made me a-- I had no money. And so, David said, "Okay, we're going to get you a second debate and forget about theater debates. It's going to be an old fashioned debate. And I said, "Okay, what second debate?" And he said, "A second debate. You had your debate, now we're going to have a debate." I said, "I didn't make an agreement to have a debate." And he said, "Why?" Another string of curses. I said, "Listen, I'll do four debates, but I will not do one debate." Bang, the phone went down. Phone calls back and forth and Andrew says, "What's going on?" I said, "Just keep telling them we'll do four debates, but not one debate." We got four debates. We won by 6.5 points. No money, we spent I think \$1 million, he spent \$3 million. We won by 6.5 points. And nobody's tried it since. And why it doesn't appeal to people to do something like that instead of just asking questions everybody knows are coming and hearing answers everybody knows are going to be. That's the biggest disappointment I've had in politics that nobody's tried it a second time.

Governor Kean: Probably as scared as the candidates and the campaign staffs.

Ruth Mandel: Probably.

Governor Kean: The other is so predictable.

Ruth Mandel: Could I-- I want to give everyone in the audience-- you've been terrific and generous with your time and I was actually going to ask you a question. I'm going to leave and see if we can get in at the end some really future thinking and next generation, because you both have inspired sons, obviously one major legacy of your leadership. For those of us who look at your histories, is that you have two sons who have decided that they want to be like their dads. I think that's what it means that your son is the incoming governor of the State of New York and your son is the leader of his party in the legislature. So I do want you to think about a one sentence answer at the very end to what is the lesson? What is the one piece of advice you would give your son today for the future of his leadership? But I don't want you to answer that now, because I want to turn it to the audience for awhile and see if we can cap things off with that piece of advice for the future at the end. So if people would like an opportunity, yes? If you would-- the microphone over here, if you would please? If you would say who you are? I know who you are, but for the record.

Barbara Buono: Senate Majority Leader, Barbara Buono, Governor Cuomo, I have always read that you have expressed ambivalence about your political ambition. First, is that true? And if so, did it figure into your decision not to run for President of the United States?

Governor Cuomo: Where did you hear I have ambivalence? The-- it's-- I never, whether at a Board of Director's meeting at the New York Times, Abe Rosenthal looks down and say, "I don't think you have the fire in the belly." I said, "Abe, show me a guy with fire in the belly, I'll spritz him in the mouth with seltzer." I said, "No, I don't have a fire in the belly." He says, "Why not?" I said, "Because I think there must be people out there better than I am to be President of the United States." "Oh, come on, that's big talk. That's noble talk." I said, "No, that's, you know, I know I'm good enough to be governor. I've proven that. Yes, great I'm satisfied with that, but I can't believe there's not somebody out there." I was for Kerry, frankly. Not John Kerry but Bob Kerry and I thought that he was better. And it was as simple as that. The press wouldn't accept it and so I thought of a single line that I used over and over to the press. I said, "I have no plans to think of running for President and no plans to make plans." Okay, but they just kept coming. They said, that he's Hamlet on the Hudson. I never changed anything. I just kept saying that. They just wouldn't believe it. They also invited me to consider the Supreme Court, Clinton did twice.

And I said to Clinton, this was at the end when I was about to lose an election and he thought I was going to lose it and I thought that was a good possibility too. And he says, "Well, we can put you on the Supreme Court." And I said, "No." And I told Andrew to tell him not to talk to me because Andrew was working for him. Because I knew it was coming and I didn't want to say no, but Clinton asked me anyway and I said, "No." And he said-- he says, "Well, you think you're going to win this race?" I said, "Probably not." He said, "Well then, Supreme Court, you'd be terrific. You did govern, the Supreme Court." I said, "Look, you get 75 cases, maybe a year, the Supreme Court. Maybe I'd write a decision there. But what happens to the death penalty? What happens to the poor people? What happens to all those issues that I've been doing now for 20 years? I'm invested in these things." He says, "What will you be able to do if you lose, then what will you do?" I said, "I'll give speeches. I'll talk about them." He says, "Well, how much good does that do? And I said, "Mr. President, how much good does any of this do? You know, we're little pishers in this universe and for me, Mr. President, I think about the Arab sitting up there on the camel who looked down at the sparrow." Wonderful story, the sparrow is lying on his back with his claws extended and the Arab says, "What are you doing down there?" He says, "They tell me the sky is going to fall and I thought I would try to help hold it up." Silly little bird and the bird said, "One does what one can." And I said, "You know, I would rather be free to go out and talk and argue et cetera." He apparently didn't understand it.

Nobody understood it, but it was as simple as that and still is. The-- <inaudible> oh, incidentally, because I didn't run for President, we got Bill Clinton. Because I didn't go on the Supreme Court, we got Ginsberg. She's now stepping off. We got a terrific Justice of the Supreme Court and a terrific President. You owe me.

Ruth Mandel: We certainly do. Did I see your hand up? Yes, oh, I'm sorry, I thought your hand was up.

Carol Cronheim: Hi, thank you. I'm Carol Cronheim and I had the pleasure of working for Governor Kean. But now people say, "Oh you worked in the Kean Administration, wow." So we've had to back that up a few years. I always say second term governor. My question is where do we moderates go now? We are the major issues in New Jersey, but around the country, we're called RINO's and it leaves us wondering, where do we go now? How do we make it sort of safe for moderates now?

Ruth Mandel: While you're thinking about that answer, Governor Kean, just for the record, for anyone who might be watching this from another state, RINOs is a term that is used often for Republican moderates these days, meaning Republican In Name Only, the acronym. So just for the record.

Governor Kean: Names aside, and there's a lot of name calling in politics these days, always has been, I guess. It's a great tradition. They asked Eisenhower what he was, he always used to say, "I'm a middle of the roader." And the asked him why, and he said, "Because the gutters run on the sides." To me, it goes back to what we were saying at the beginning. Governing is often done in the middle. And if it doesn't get done in the middle, it often doesn't get done at all. And if there aren't people who can see two sides of an issue, who can understand the person on the other side is not a bad person, but simply one with another point of view to be considered and talked, then the system doesn't work. And I worry a lot about this business about people getting destroyed in the primaries, both parties. People who are toward the center get in trouble because they've been talking to somebody across the aisle. That's crazy. We should be encouraging people to talk to people across the aisle. That's how we make progress. And so, I think, I'm proud, frankly I've been a middle of the roader or a moderate or whatever you want to call me... Because in the end, unless you believe that government is too big, these things I agree don't make much sense, I think the future of the country is going to be-- rest on the shoulders of those men and women who can see both sides of issues and understand that one side doesn't have all the truth all the time.

Governor Cuomo: Yes, well I think that's the answer. The answer is it's the rigidity of the ideology that's at fault. If your theory is you can take 10 solid ideas and tie them up and say, "Here it is. Here are all the answers. And I'm not going

to vary from it. Here's how I feel on this issue. Here's how I feel on that issue, and that's that." Well, that's foolish. That's silly, and it's not necessary. It doesn't work that way. Lincoln, we honor Lincoln, most people as the best President that ever lived, you can argue that. But if you read Lincoln, you read all of Lincoln, there's nothing like that in Lincoln. He gave the best definition of government, which I recited very quickly earlier. The best definition of government is so sensible, government is the coming together of people to do for one another collectively what they could not do as well or at all privately.

So presumably, if you could do it privately, you don't need government. And that's what government is. It's the last choice. You need schools, and you're not getting enough education from the market because people can't afford to get skilled-- education that makes them skilled, well then, the government should do that or should at least help out. That's the way it should work. And nothing else makes sense. The Obama, Obama, you know, the people on the left in the Democratic Party, what are they saying about Obama? They have one belief about one issue of taxes. They say, "This tax is for the rich and it's wrong to let the rich people get away with this tax cut, this continuing tax cut and hypocritical of the Republicans to want that." Well, maybe that's so. But the whole question of taxes, if you-- it's a good example of the rigidity.

Some people say, "You can't raise taxes." Some Republicans, particularly, "You can't raise taxes without damaging us at this time. And if you were to raise taxes it would be worse." They're talking about raising taxes on the rich people. If you go back to Reagan, Reagan is known as the biggest tax cutter in history, and he did give the biggest tax cut in history until George Bush, our Bush, the second Bush. And he did that, and he also raised taxes seven times. And when you say that in a debate, anywhere in this country, they boo, they hiss, get him off the stage. That's a lie. It's not a lie. Seven times, okay? And he started by raising taxes on Social Security, raising the yes, taxes on Social Security. He then raised taxes about \$1 billion. Then, the man who had called Reagan's tax policy, which supply side, called it voodoo economics, the original George Bush, who ran against him in the primary, before Reagan became the candidate for the Republicans, he married the witch doctor and became the Vice President. And he said even when Reagan raised taxes, he would not, he would never raise taxes, but he raised taxes when he became President, okay, another billion dollars. And this was on the rich and the top corporations et cetera.

And then came Clinton and Clinton told Jessie Jackson and me and the March on Washington, he'd do \$200 billion in infrastructure if he were President. He got to be President. We went to him, Bob Rubin was appointed. Rubin, six or seven months later called me up and said, "I know the President said he would give \$200 billion. We can't do it. We have to raise taxes one more time because we're licking the

deficit." This is when the Republicans thought the deficit was real. And he raised taxes, \$1 billion. That's three, Reagan, Bush and Clinton. And what happened? \$1.5 trillion potential surplus, 22 million new jobs and upwardly middle class, a shrinking poor people. So how can you argue anything as an absolute truth. It's not like that. It depends on the circumstances. There are times to raise taxes and there are times not to raise taxes and every governor knows it. So you need to be supple and that's the answer.

Governor Kean: You're right. Because the-- and the idea of saying this kind of tax code is terrible, this kind of tax code is good. I think the class warfare argument is political. I understand it, but it's not valid. I think everybody should pay some tax. And the upper rates ought to be graduated to the upper rates. But it ought to be we got to do something. And I just-- I tell people when I was in the legislature, when I was governor, I was trying to get a few taxes passed. I used to tell legislators, "Look when I was in the legislature for 10 years, during that period, I voted to increase the sales tax, gasoline tax and income tax." And they're like, "New government." So it's not poison, but it's the right time. I think you should say, and I agree you shouldn't raise taxes on anybody in time of deep recession. That's most economists agree to that and I think publicly right on this issue, not now. It doesn't mean you don't do it down the road. And to say when you're running for office that you'll never, ever do something, not good, not good public policy, I don't think to fence yourself in before you know what circumstances will bring you.

Ruth Mandel: Are we okay on the tape? Would it be okay with you if I let one or two more people ask questions? It's just because we agreed on a certain time and I don't know--

Governor Cuomo: If he wants to answer them, it's fine with me.

Governor Kean: It's fine. He's kind enough to come here.

Ruth Mandel: Okay. I know I didn't look at this side of the room, and is there somebody here who had a hand up and is dying to ask a question? Yes?

Nick Accocella: Nick Accocella. I don't have a question. I want to bold enough to contradict something Governor Cuomo said earlier. I was there that night. It was a great speech.

Ruth Mandel: Yes? Right here in the first row.

Q: Okay, I'm... and I'm a graduate student. I have a question coming from just the kind of the younger generational [person.] It seems like the ideological chasm

between the two parties is so great that a lot of people, especially people my age go into it, you know, go into it with the view of oh, there are good ideas on both sides find themselves having to really put ideological <inaudible> around certain issues. And can't envision a world that's more bipartisan and isn't so split. People have stuff they feel so strongly about and there's some on either side who have the will to compromise on certain issues that people really feel like we can't give this up for that. I'm just wondering have you found how to counteract that?

Governor Kean: I think you're right, and it's difficult because the parties now demand certain litmus tests. You want to run in the Democratic primary, you've got to have certain beliefs on a certain number of things, otherwise you probably won't get the nomination. Same thing in the Republican primary, and I think it's unfortunate because it leads-- it lends to the kind of rigidity that we've been talking about in the Tea Parties. And I never minded, frankly, when a candidate gets up there and somebody's up in the audience and says, "But you said you'd do this and that.", for the candidate to say, "You know, I changed my mind." It's not an awful thing. We all change our minds on things. If we're listening we can get convinced to change our position sometimes, but superior logic, I hope. But I think to be-- the way you're required to be rooted now and make everlasting pledges on certain issues which may affect whether or not you can govern effectively or not, I think there's a real problem with the political system.

Governor Cuomo: I don't know how you'd get a real accurate count, but it seems to me that right now, the country of voters, unfortunately, that's a small population, but the people who vote regularly, say 30, 32, 33% call themselves liberal, 30, 32%, say 30 call themselves conservatives and the ones in the middle are called independent. But in the 30% or so who call themselves this or call themselves that, some of them, when they get into the polling place are going to vote the other way. When you do all the numbers, the truth is that the people who are not obliged to the left or to the right are the largest part of the votes. And they-- I think the people understand that you need, let's use the word again, suppleness, here. Very good demonstration of how silly some of this labeling is our mayor in New York City. Now, he's born in Massachusetts. He's a very good friend. We know him.

Our firm represents his old company, because he had to give up the company, at least theoretically. The-- well, no, you know, the law is the law. But he's born in Massachusetts as a liberal, and he says he's a liberal. He comes here and registers as a Democrat as his first race, and I was part of that. Why? Well, because Democrats had a better chance. He then registers as a Republican to run the second time. He then registers as an Independent because he's thinking of running for President or getting selected. And never changes a single position. So you know, what does that mean? It means that labels don't mean a whole lot. And

there are some things that I believe very strongly and I'm not going to change my mind about.

Well, you know, most of the time, you know, I'm going to listen to arguments. So a little bit of commitment to certain propositions. I mean, I'll never vote for a death penalty, never under any circumstances and there are things like that, two, three, four, but they're not the things that you need at the heart of government. So I don't see it as a real problem. I think what's happening now in the country, I love the idea that Obama made a deal. Just the fact that he made a deal, before you tell me what the deal is, I love the idea and so do the people, 77% so far. That will change. But 77% of the people are saying at last, maybe you guys are going to make sense.

Governor Kean: But I think it's still a problem. I agree with you totally again, but it's still a problem I think if you want to be nominated these days in the wonderful district by one party or the other, you've got to subscribe to certain truths or you won't get the nomination. They will not nominate you.

Governor Cuomo: Well, there you've got to be my mother. Tell them what they want-- tell them--

Governor Kean: Yes, I'm all for it.

Ruth Mandel: Unfortunately, we do have to come to an end here, and I want to return to that question, the future question, the legacy question. You've inspired two sons who have gone on to important leadership, presumably have a long life of leadership ahead of them. Yours the incoming governor of New York. Yours the leader of his party in the legislature. I know you can write a book for each of them, but I want to close with as close as possible to one sentence each, if you would give them as advice for their future as leaders. I'll start with our guest from out of state.

Governor Cuomo: Why?

Ruth Mandel: Why? My mother taught me, always the guest first.

Governor Cuomo: So this is advice to whom, his son or my son?

Ruth Mandel: To your son.

Governor Cuomo: Can I give advice to his son?

Ruth Mandel: I will ask him whether he agrees to that.

Governor Cuomo: No.

Ruth Mandel: We'll see how you answer the question.

Governor Cuomo: This is my turn. No, I would-- I have given the advice to Andrew. So he's done what he had to do, and I think I told you already, the advice basically came down to win this thing, go up, get the swearing in on January 1st. Say a nice speech about your parents, principally. And then, tell the lieutenant governor, after you make governor, tell the lieutenant governor he's in charge, you quit. And now you can forever say that we're two, Italian, you know, governors named Cuomo from the same family and still not have to face the hard work. No, but my advice to Tom's son would be to look closely at your father, not just as a governor, because he was a great governor and we all know that. But nobody's mentioned what else he did after 911 and how he was selected for one of the most important positions ever, that commission where the world was listening to hear what would happen next. And he went up there, with his intelligence and his sobriety and he was magnificent. So that should be your model, and it wouldn't be so bad if on this side of the river, somebody had a family with two governors in it.

Ruth Mandel: We must end with you giving advice to Governor-Elect Cuomo, now.

Governor Kean: I like that so much, I don't know what to say. No. I think you keep at it. I think the time is more time than the time you and I served.

Governor Cuomo: Absolutely.

Governor Kean: You do your best not to settle and you-- I think if my son had an example to follow, I'd say Mario Cuomo wouldn't be a bad example in the way he's conducted his life as well as his governorship.

Governor Cuomo: I was hoping for that.

Governor Kean: Thank you.

Governor Cuomo: Thank you, very much.

Ruth Mandel: Thank you so much. Governor, thank you. Thank you so much.