EXCERPTS

Updated: 27 August 2019

Sir: You are to proceed to West point and take the command of that post and its dependencies, in which are included all from Fishkill to Kings Ferry. The Corps of Infantry and Cavalry advanced towards the Enemy's lines on the East side of the River will also be under your orders and will take directions from you, and you will endeavour to obtain every intelligence of the Enemy's Motions. Dispatch from Commander of the Continental Army, George Washington to General Benedict Arnold, 3 August 1780, Headquarters at Peekskill. **ed. John Rhodenhamel. "George Washington, Writings." New York, NY: The Library of America, 1997. p.381**

I can now inform you that the Congress have made Choice of the modest and virtuous, the amiable, generous and brave George Washington Esqr, to be the General of the American Army, and that he is to repair as soon as possible to the Camp before Boston. This appointment will have a great Effect, in cementing and securing the Union of these Colonies. The Continent is really in earnest in defending the Country. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, June 11 June 1775, Philadelphia. **Hogan, Margaret A. and Taylor, James C. "My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams." Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007. p.59.**

As his servant Isaac observed, Old Master had an abundance of books and was always looking things up in them. When Jefferson was an eager young student in Williamsburg, books had begun to unlock for him the vast treasure house of human knowledge, and the process of acquisition into which he then entered was to cease only with his life. **Malone, Dumas. "Jefferson And His Time: The Sage of Monticello." Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1981. p.169.**

The satisfaction that this proclamation gave Madison must have been immense. It was ratification of his long-held belief that commercial sanctions worked, that the American republic did not have to go to war with Great Britain in order to assert its rights as an independent nation. ***Cheney, Lynne. "James Madison: A Life Reconsidered." New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2014. p.356.***

Monroe, like so many of his contemporaries, considered the only substantial happiness to be that of the domestic circle; only then did a man acquire a sense of security and stability not to be obtained elsewhere. All this Monroe now found in his marriage. The bond which united the Monroes was a remarkably close one, rendering every separation painful. **Ammon, Harry. "James Monroe, The Quest for National Identity." Newtown, CT: American Political Biography Press, 1971. p.62.**

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Most Presidents have never looked forward from boyhood to the office. There is only one case in which the boy's parents planned it that way. That was John Quincy Adams. His father and mother raised their boy to be a statesman. Their cup would not be full, nor his own unwearying toil and ambition be satisfied, until he became President like his father. He gladly accepted their guidance and tutelage. The Presidency early became his psychological gyroscope, built into his character by these beloved patriots. To him it was the destiny of a family. **Bemis, Samuel Flagg. "John Quincy Adams and The Union." New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956. pp. 3-4.**

He was never a student, our Andrew Jackson, and "his education," in the worlds of his twentieth-century biographer, "simply did not take." But education, or lack of it, is not necessarily a measure of intellectual power, and as Andrew Jackson matured and undertook responsibilities that probably amazed those who knew him as a boy, he would reveal an intellect as powerful as his iron will. **Buchanan, John. "Jackson's Way: Andrew Jackson and the People of the Western Waters." Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2005. p.2.**

Van Buren had come to Sorrento two months earlier to enjoy picturesque surroundings, the daily salt water baths and the balmy climate he had read about in Fenimore Cooper's travel series, Gleanings. As an important foreign traveler, a former head of state, King Ferdinand of Naples accorded Van Buren every courtesy. He accepted these attentions as a matter of course, apparently choosing to ignore the unsavory reputation of his official host, a preposterous petty tyrant who represented everything he had opposed, indeed, despised, in his long political career. **Niven, John. "Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics." New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983. p.3.**

A Harrison from Virginia seemed right and proper. They were Virginians of the oldest line. But a Harrison who came from beyond the Ohio was something new. The men in power found in the young Congressional Delegate an immense store of information in regard to the West. He had gone through a cruel Indian campaign; he had traveled much through the Northwest Territory; he had seen with his own eyes its promise of greatness. He was young and impressionable. The wonders of the West, its vastness, its fertile soil, its rivers, which made the rivers of the East seem like brooks, its forest of stately trees, its plentiful game which made life easy, and its savage Indians, who indeed had been subdued, but who had not been conquered and whose spirits were unbroken. Of all these things this young man bore testimony. **Green, James A.. "William Henry Harrison, His Life and Times." Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Incorporated, 1941. pp. 76-78.**

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Sweet lady awake, from your slumbers awake,
Weird beings we come o'er hil

l and through brake
To sing you a song in the stillness of night,

Oh, read you our riddle fair lady aright?
We are sent by the one whose fond heart is your own,
Who mourns in thy absence and sighs all alone.
Alas, he is distant—but tho' far, far away,

He think of you, lady, by night and by day.
Sweet lady awake, sweet lady awake!
(John Tyler to his new wife, Julia Gardiner, 1844)

Seager II, Robert. "And Tyler Too, A biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler." Norwalk, CT: the Easton Press, 1963. p.13.

When Sam and Jane presented Ezekiel's grandson to be baptized, a young "fire and brimstone" minister named James Wallis chose to interrogate Sam at length about the depths of his own commitment to Presbyterian doctrine. A heated argument ensued and the result was that little James Knox Polk was taken home without receiving the sacrament of baptism. Jane was mortified. **Borneman, Walter R. "Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America." New York, NY: Random House, 2008. p.6.**

That night, July 9, at half past ten President Taylor died. His final words to the members of his family, his Cabinet, and the few friends gathered in his chamber were: "I am about to die. I expect the summons very soon. I have endeavored to discharge all my official duties faithfully. I regret nothing, but am sorry that I am about to leave my friends." **Dyer, Brainerd. "Zachary Taylor." Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1946. p.406.**

Both had always placed great faith in books and yearned for knowledge. This might have resulted either form their teaching experience or a source deeper in their personalities. Whatever the cause, both were avid readers. Fillmore haunted bookstores wherever he found them. Never was he to return from New York City without a few books under his arm, and he "was often followed or preceded by a package sent by express." After many years their library reached 4,000 volumes, and each time it grew beyond its bounds, Abigail would happily call in a carpenter to extend the bookcases. To collectors of rare books the Fillmore library was undistinguished. Its books were more valuable for reference than resale, and it reflected the interests of its owners. **Rayback, Robert J. "Millard Fillmore, Biography of a President." Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1959. p.43.**

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The cholera layed havoc in the United States in the summer of 1833 and Pierce not only gave up plans for an extended trip on that account but succumbed to a serious illness while on a visit at the McNeils' in Boston… But there was no shirking the duty and he set out from Boston about the 21st of November for the capital. The journey in those days was tedious and marked by many changes. From Boston his route lay by stage to one of the Sound ports whence he went by boat to New York. Here he trans-shipped to another boat which took him to Amboy, New Jersey, where a train then whizzed through space to Bordentown at the rate of 18 miles an hour. From here a small steamer brought the adventurer to Philadelphia for the third night's rest. Early next morning another vessel took him to New Castle, Delaware, a second long railroad journey of sixteen miles to Frenchtown followed, then a boat trip to Baltimore, and finally after a stage ride of forty miles in seven hours, lo! The capitol appeared on the horizon and the interminable journey was over. ***Nichols, Roy Franklin. "Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills." Norwalk, CT, The Easton Press (1988)1931. p.64.***

With the first news of Lee's advance into Pennsylvania, he had packed Harriet off to Philadelphia and shipped away his most important papers. He had tried to make Miss Hetty leave, but she said firmly that she would stay if he did. He had told friends who urged him to get out of the invasion area that he would remain at Wheatland if it should be surrounded by a hundred thousand rebels. He and Miss Hetty would see it through together. **Klein, Philip S. "President James Buchanan: A Biography." Newtown, CT: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962. p.xvii.**

The Lincolns were indulgent parents, seldom disciplining their sons. Mary became hysterical if a boy wandered out of her sight or had a minor accident. Lincoln enjoyed getting down on the floor and playing with his sons. Their love for their children was one of the enduring bonds between Mary and Abraham. It was strengthened by the birth of William Walker on December 21, 1850, and Thomas (Tad) on April 4, 1853. The parents were brought even closer together by their grief when Eddie died in 1850 at the age of four and Willie died in the White House on February 20, 1862, when he was eleven. **Harrison, Lowell H. "Lincoln of Kentucky." Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000. p.75.**

Johnson proceeded to Cincinnati, where shortly he announced that his general objective for the future was to expose the dishonorable and wicked means resorted to by secessionists to carry out their nefarious designs in attempting to break up the government. "While I am a citizen . . . of the State of Tennessee," said Johnson, "I am also a citizen of the United States. . . . This odious doctrine of secession should be crushed out, destroyed and totally annihilated. No government can stand, no religious or moral or sovereign organization can stand, where this doctrine is tolerated." **Brabson, Fay Warrington. "Andrew Johnson: A Life In Pursuit Of The Right Course 1808-1875." Durham, NC: Seeman Printery, Inc., 1972. p.69.**

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Consumption—tuberculosis—ran in his family, killing two of his uncles and later two of his siblings. In his final year at the academy he suffered a cough that lasted six months and intimated an early end for him too. At graduation he weighed less than he had when he entered the academy, though he had gained half a foot in height. **Brands, H.W. "The man who saved the union: Ulysses Grant in war and peace." New York, NY: Doubleday, 2012. p.12.**

Hayes was devastated, "My dear only sister, my beloved Fanny, is dead! The dearest friend of childhood, . . . the confidante of all my life, the one I loved best, is gone." In pouring his heart out to Bryan, Hayes exclaimed: "I can recall no happiness in the past which was not brightened either by her participation in it or the thought of her joy when she knew of it. All plans for the future, all visions of success, have embraced her. . . . For many years my mother's family consisted of but three – Mother, Sister dear, and myself. Oh, what associations now broken cling around those tender early days! And such a sister! . . . My heart bleeds and the tears flow as I write." **Hoogenboom, Ari. "Rutherford B. Hayes, Warrior & President." Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1996. p.99.**

From his earliest appreciable days, young Garfield had been fond of books. Before he could read, he loved to listen to what others would tell him, treasuring every word his unpracticed memory could recall. When he was able to read, his appetite for it grew with every hour of his life. What he could obtain in the way of literature he devoured, not merely read, but re-read and re-read, until every world was more than a "twice told tale." **Balch, William Ralston. "The Life of James Abram Garfield, Late President of the United States." Philadelphia, PA: J.C. McCurdy & Co., 1881. p.42.**

In an era of virtual laissez-faire on campus, the daily schedule of a Union College student in the late 1840s sounds more than a little tedious. It began at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast and prayers, ground through a number of study sessions and recitations, and concluded with a final period of study that began at 7:00 p.m. Few escaped, for almost all juniors and seniors (including Arthur) were compelled to live on campus and forbidden to leave without permission. Nevertheless, ways were found by the young men to lighten the load, a favorite being a trip to the nearby railroad station to jump on and off of slow-moving trains. Chet Arthur paid several fines for skipping chapel and breaking small objects in the course of pranks; he once threw the West College bell into the Erie Canal, and he carved his name at least twice on the somber college buildings. But he was distinguished from his classmates in such pursuits in no special way, and found time to join a social fraternity and serve as president of a debating society. During his two winter vacations he taught school at nearby Schaghticoke to help pay his expenses. **Reeves, Thomas C. "Gentlemen Boss: The Life of Chester Alan Arthur." New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1875. p.9.**

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He cared little for dining out, and if he ever escorted a young woman anywhere the fact was not recorded; indeed, he noticeably kept his distance from the belles of the city. His sisters once asked him whether he had ever thought of getting married, to which he replied: "A good many times; and the more I think of it the more I think I'll not do it." **Nevins, Allan. "Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage, Volume I." Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1932. p.72.**

During his service, Harrison earned a name for tough discipline tempered by deep concern for his men's well-being, a reputation that followed him to the presidency. One of his biographers noted that as an officer Harrison was "a stern, yet fair, taskmaster who knew that idleness was waste and civilians do not become soldiers simply by putting on uniforms." A captain serving in the Seventieth remembered on long, tiring marches seeing his commanding officer, Harrison, carrying the equipment of "some poor worn out soldier," as well as dismounting and walking" while a sick soldier occupied his place on the horse." His service in the war was an important part of the rest of his life, with Harrison often speaking at meetings of the Grand Army of the Republic, the fraternal organization for the Union army veterans. "I know of no higher honor in the world," Harrison said, "then to be called 'comrade' by the survivors of those who saved the Union." **Boomhower, Ray E. "Mr. President: A Life of Benjamin Harrison." Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2018. p.5.**

The fledgling lawyer's capital comprised good looks, a pleasing personality, and a spotless character. He was rather short, but he carried his slim, well-muscled body with military erectness, and moved with a quick step and an easy swing of the shoulders. His shining gray eyes were intent. His warm smile exhaled a buoyant confidence, and his voice, a low tenor verging on a baritone, was musical and strong. McKinley's moral rectitude was written, like a certificate of character, on his pale, handsome face. ***Pulitzer, Margaret Leech. "In the Days of McKinley." New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1959. p.10.***

He avoided social contact for several weeks because he was afraid he would cry in public, and then confessed: "If I had very much time to think I believe I should almost go crazy." The boy fell into such an episodic depression that lasted for months. He wrote in his diary to relieve his "very gloomy and desolate" moods, then he launched into intense activity ("must keep employed") to ward off feeling the depths of his loss. He saw no reason to get good grades with no father to please, and he wrote that "the aim and purpose of my life had been taken away." **Dalton, Kathleen. "Theodore Roosevelt, A Strenuous Life." New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. p.68.**

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"However different man and woman may be intellectually" he wrote, "coeducation . . . shows clearly that there is no mental inferiority on the part of the girls. . . . Give the woman the ballot, and you will make her more important in the eyes of the world. This will strengthen her character. . . . Every woman would then be given an opportunity to earn a livelihood. She would suffer no decrease in compensation for her labor, on account of her sex. . . .In the natural course of events, universal suffrage must prevail throughout the world." **Pringle, Henry F. "The Life And Times of William Howard Taft." Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press by arrangement with Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1939 (1967). p.30.**

It should not be forgotten that it was Woodrow Wilson who, at the time of the Armistice, nurtured and supported the organization of the greatest battle against famine and pestilence in the history of the world. Included in this work was the rehabilitation of millions of children, who otherwise would have brought inexpressible ills upon the world through their stunted minds and bodies. And it was under Wilson's leadership that America furnished 95 per cent of the materials and money for this battle to save Europe. Not only did idealism save hundreds of millions of human beings, but he himself refused to stoop to use the powers which American resources offered him in carrying out his terms of peace. **Hoover, Herbert. "The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson." New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, INC., 1958. pp.263-264.**

British Parliamentarian Cecil Harmsworth would later observe that he did know of "any historic personage . . .who so strangely attracts and repels" as Woodrow Wilson. This was possibly because—as another Wilson acquaintance observed—"probably in the history of the whole world there has been no great man, of whom so much has been written, but of whom personally so little has been correctly known." Yet another, who, as a college student, had first encountered him, never lost sight of the personal paradox that was the man: "Stern and impassive, yet emotional; calm and patient, yet quick-tempered and impulsive; forgetful of those who had served him , yet devoted to many who had rendered him but minor service . . . precise and business-like, and yet, upon occasion, illogical without more reason than intuition itself." **Berg, A. Scott. "Wilson." New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2013. p.5.**

Even after she passed to the Great Beyond, in 1910, Warren G. Harding continued the custom of having flowers in his room each Sunday to recall the memory of his mother—even in the solitudes of Alaska, those last three Sundays of his life, and under the scorching suns of Panama, or far across the seas—no matter where he might be—Mother's Day was an every week observance with this devoted son to the end of his life. **Chapple, Joe Mitchell. "Life and Times of Warren G. Harding: Our After-War President." Boston, MA: Chapple Publishing Company, Limited, 1924. p. 17.**

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At 7:20 a.m., the new president appeared on the porch in a blue serge suite, black tie, and white Panama hat to greet reporters. Before leaving Plymouth they asked the driver, Joe McInerney, to stop in the little graveyard so Calvin could visit for a moment the plain grave of his mother. It was a somber moment but also a quietly optimistic one; even the graves of Plymouth gave him strength. **Shales, Amity. "Coolidge." New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2014. p.252.**

The continent of Europe has another constant experience strange to the United States. Out of the political pressures, miseries, revolutions and ambitions of men, it has had to bear the periodic rise of militant dictators who at once endanger the peace. Its history, from the foundation of our Republic to 1926, has seen the succession of Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Lenin and Stalin, and Mussolini. The processes which give rise to these disasters involve forces from which we have departed for centuries. **Hoover, Herbert. "The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, Years of Adventure 1874-1920." New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1952. p.475.**

No one knew, or will ever know, what dark nights of fear and despair he had to endure in the twenties. For his career and his morale, these were Franklin D. Roosevelt's wilderness years. They were surely deeper and more forbidding because of their medical character, than Winston Churchill's famous ten years as an involuntary backbencher (1929-1939) or Charles de Gaulle's twelve years (1946-1958) waiting for the call at Colombey-les-deux-Eglises while the Fourth Republic floundered to an end. Roosevelt's perseverance through these years, to unheard-of triumphs of political success and statesmanship, is a lesson in human faith, courage, and intelligence. **Black, Conrad. Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom." New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2003. p.177.**

In December of 1909, shortly after her ninety-first birthday, Grandma Young died. Harry, who had been devoted to her, tried to imagine all she had seen in her life. She had been born in 1818. She had once told him of a time when Solomon was away and a band of Indians came to the door saying they wanted honey and hung about sharpening their knives on the grindstone until she turned a big dog loose and sent them flying. In recent years she liked to sit silently in the sunshine in a rocker smoking a corncob pipe. Her death was the first to touch Harry directly. That Christmas without her, he said, was the saddest he had ever known. **McCullough, David. "Truman." New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992. p.*79.***

Twelve years before he became President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower had a well defined ambition. "They will probably think me a conceited individual," he wrote to Mark Clark, "but I see no objection to setting your sights high." For a quarter of a century he had worked prodigiously to prepare himself for the assignment he was seeking. He wanted to command an armored regiment. **Pusey, Merlo J. "Eisenhower The President." New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1956. p.1.**

Finally, he came up the stairway to the plane, kissing his wife and sister then strapping them into the planes two beds, buckling the children into their seats with a flash of conversation for each, leaving lighted little faces in his busy wake. He did the same with the men, focusing on each for a moment. Then, surrounded by smiles and happy chatter, he settled in his seat, a large swivel chair in the center. The stewardess came back with a bowl of his favorite fish chowder, someone handed him the afternoon newspapers, and his barber began to cut his hair as the professors reported to him on their specialties and the issues of the day. **Reeves, Richard. "President Kennedy: Profile in Power." New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993. p.*18.***

He was a reluctant Vice President. He had hoped and planned for the presidency, but fate or the limitations of his time, place, and personality had cast him the second spot. And he despised it. From his earliest days in the Texas Hill Country, he had aspired to be the best, to outdo friend and foe. He needed to win higher standing, hold greater power, earn more money than anyone else. Some inner sense of want drove him to seek status, control, and wealth. Being less than top dog made him feel rejected and unworthy. **Dallek, Robert. "Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson And His Times 1961-1973." New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998. p.3.**

Whatever 'pathetic Freudian psychiatrists' may make of a parent who did not kiss, hug, or say 'I love you', Richard was always intuitively confident of Hannah's maternal devotion. Perhaps the bond between mother and son was too deep for others to comprehend, but it was the strongest single influence on Richard Nixon's life. **Aitken, Jonathan. "Nixon—a life." Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1993. p.15.**

The ten-month investigation took its toll on Ford. It was not just the hours spent questioning witnesses, which included people who had been in Dallas on that fateful day and scientists who had determined that the rifle used by Oswald was the murder weapon. It was the evidence, which included photographs and X-rays of Kennedy. "It was shocking to see a friend with, literally, his brains blown out," Ford later commented. "It really hit me inside." **Kaufman, Scott. "Ambition, Pragmatism, and Party: A Political Biography of Gerald R. Ford." Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2017. p.88.**

A few weeks before Thanksgiving, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin visited the White House for purely nostalgic purposes. "Begin had already written me off and discounted my input completely," Carter recalled. "He was no longer even indicating friendship or cooperation or mutual dependence on me. It was tough." **Brinkley, Douglas. "The Unfinished Presidency." New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1998. p.26.**

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Dutch's poor eyesight contributed greatly to his love of football over baseball. He claims it never occurred to him that he was seriously nearsighted. In his mind, "the whole world was made up of colored blobs that became distinct when I got closer—and I was sure it appeared the same way to everyone else." He never cared for baseball because when he stood at the plate, "the ball appeared out of nowhere about two feet in front of me." And he was "the last chosen for a side in any game." This changed when he "discovered football; no little invisible ball—just another guy to grab or knock down, and it didn't matter if his face was blurred." He had trouble reading the blackboard even from a front seat in the schoolroom and bluffed his lessons, receiving good marks despite this. **Edwards, Anne. "Early Reagan, The Rise to Power." New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1987. p.52.**

There was no sign of Del or Ted anywhere around. I looked as I floated down and afterwards kept my eye open from the raft, but to no avail. The fact that our planes didn't seem to be searching anymore showed me pretty clearly that they had not gotten out. I'm afraid I was pretty much a sissy about it cause I sat in my raft and sobbed for a while. It bothers me so very much. I did tell them and when I bailed out I felt that they must have gone, and yet now I feel so terribly responsible for their fate, Oh so much right now. Perhaps as the days go by it will all change and I will be able to look upon it in a different light. [Letter to mother and father, September 3, 1944] **Bush, George H.W. "All The Best: My Life in Letters and Other Writings." New York, NY: Scribner. 2013. p.51.**

Where the nonthere place was, only Bill knew: a heart of darkness he could not or would not share with anyone. He thus seemed to be, beyond his enthusiasms and engagement with people, always plotting, at a deeper level, his getaway, his ascension, so to speak: to a place of power where he would not have to—unless he chose to—defer to his alcoholic stepfather, to the bigotry of people of low intelligence and limited compassion, even to his adored mother, who had chosen to take back Roger Sr. in pity rather than listen to her son's warning that she was making a terrible mistake. Bill was, in other words, at once intimately bound up in his community—his home, his friends, his school, his church, his many extracurricular activities—yet also consumed with ambition to move on: to escape. **Hamilton, Nigel. "Bill Clinton, An American Journey, Great Expectations." New York: NY: Random House, 2003. p.116.**

I felt for Don again in the spring of 2006, when a group of retired generals launched a barrage of public criticism against him. While I was still considering a personnel change, there was no way I was going to let a group of retired officers bully me into pushing out the civilian secretary of defense. It would have looked like a military coup and would have set a disastrous precedent. **Bush, George W. "Decision Points." New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2010. p.93.**

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