

## Lon Holbrook Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

Recorded on June 6, 2017 in Oregon

Interviewer: James Moore, Pacific University Professor

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025 with some manual corrections. We recommend checking this text against the audio recording before quoting the speakers, as it may contain errors.

-----

Lon Holbrook 0:00

They have a meeting. The lead agent of the Secret Service, they set up who blocks the freeway, and who does this, and... a big deal. And they had their big pre-visit meeting, and when they were done, they said, "Now, does anybody have any questions now?" And I was there for this purpose, I said, "This time the governor," I'm paraphrasing, speeding it up. "This time the governor needs to be able to drive up to the hotel and get out and go inside, and then you can do what you did before you can secure the car or whatever. But that's the way it has to be. This is the state of Oregon. This is our state." That's the way... he is the governor, and this lead agents from DC could give a shit less. And he says, "No." He said, "We can't let that happen. That's just not part of our deal." And I said, "Well, let me tell you, let me put it in perspective, maybe you can understand. If the governor has to walk again, like you did two weeks ago, and through the rain to the hotel, you can block your own freeways. That's the way this is working." And he looked around and there was a state police corporal or sergeant there that was kind of the head of the freeway blockers, if you will. That'd be like 20 some cars to do all this stuff, maybe more, I don't know. He looked at him like... and he went, that was his signal. So this agent turns to me and he said, "Well, when will the governor be there?" I guess we can let you drive to the hotel after all." That's what a bureaucrat from DC understands, [Moore: Yeah.] because there's nobody else to block the freeways. The Portland Police were already overloaded with everything they had to do. Multnomah County was overloaded, and if the State Police didn't block the freeway, it wasn't going to get blocked. So, he let the governor drive up to the hotel, and that's the way you deal with those bureaucrats. They understand that. But if they're given the opportunity, he tells me, "No. Take off, buddy. I don't want to be bothered with you guys." Does that surprise you?

James Moore 2:18

No, not at all.

Lon Holbrook 2:20

But that's the way that we got through that whole deal. [Moore: Yeah.] So the... now, I ventured away from the Warm Springs, but just that he was really tight with... and when the chief died, that upset him quite a bit. And there was another guy, he was like a manager. I'm not sure of his title. He wasn't chief, and... I'm trying to think of his name... not Smith... but he spent a lot of time around the governor, and we'd see him a lot. He was probably the one tribal member that the governor would see all the time. And he really was hit hard when he died, too. It was hard on him. Really hard, actually. You know, and people don't realize, the governor, financially took a real hit being the governor. I mean, his brothers made a lot more money in the business than -- and he would have been in that business had he not been governor. And there was a time he wanted to go to a board meeting, and it was snowing and just slippery, or in hell and a mess, and the governor was going to go, hell or high water, and cars were all over the freeway and it was blocked. Finally, I convinced him. We didn't go to that board meeting, but he wasn't real happy about it. Again, he kind of gets... it was important that he be there, and he wanted to be there.

James Moore 3:54

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Lon Holbrook 3:58

Well, I probably, ran this course... unless you got something else.

James Moore 4:04

No, no, this is good. Very good.

Lon Holbrook 4:08

Probably good. Some things, maybe I shouldn't have said, but at this stage of our life, who cares?

James Moore 4:13

Exactly.

Lon Holbrook 4:15

Some things, maybe I shouldn't have said.