

Mike Donahue Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

An interview of Mike Donahue, former news anchor at Portland's KOIN-TV, on the topic of Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh, recorded on June 9, 2016. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025, with some manual corrections. It has been provided in order to facilitate research, but the text does contain errors and inaccuracies. Users should check the transcript against the recording before quoting the speakers.

James Moore 0:01

There we're recording. I can see the numbers moving so Jim Moore talking with Mike Donahue and Portland, Oregon, and it's the second of February. The groundhog did not see its shadow this morning.

Which means, which means, actually,

Mike Donahue 0:16

early, yeah, early, early spring. I never figured that quite out. No, you'd think if he saw his shadow, the sun was coming up earlier, right? It was shining earlier. But doesn't work that way. Is this the reverse? Yeah,

James Moore 0:28

and six weeks from now is the beginning of spring anyway, so it's just weird. So I wanted to ask you about you as a journalist and vickate and so first general things on Vic that you remember? I don't know if you knew him when he was in the legislature. He was, he was a Republican leader, but there were only six or seven Republicans in the Senate at that time,

Mike Donahue 0:55

right? I remember my first exposure to him was as a I was working as an intern, essentially 1968 right out of college. I only had four months at Coin. Would have to go into the service and OCS program, and I had, they sent me out to cover a it wasn't a debate, I believe it was a news conference with him in Washington County or someplace like that. That was my first look at Vic Atiyeh and it he was. He was tough. He wasn't a real he would have that smile, but you never felt like it was that genuine. He was he was tough with an audience, with someone that was challenging him, with a question, for example, and but very much trying to communicate with that person. He always seemed to me, over the years, to be very focused, very focused person when he'd made up his mind what he was going to do. Probably hard to change, but I just remember that particular experience. I don't know why, but maybe it was the first time I'd got a chance to do some reporting before I left. But that was my first exposure to him. And he, he has a physical message, I think you get from him, or I did anyway, he's he's stocking, he's strong. His body is strong. Was a card, I guess, for the University of Oregon. Almost went to the Green Bay Packers. Gave that up too when he took the family business. But he, he just, he kind of that tough, strong vision. I was a little bit put off by him because of that, you know, didn't, I didn't feel like he was like some politicians go out of their way to, you know, right? Maybe it's phony, but try to make you feel like you're their best friend. And Vic was a little more standoffish then, but that was my first exposure to him, and I came back in 72 and began to see him a lot more of him then, and he mellowed a great deal over time. In my opinion of him, there was a friend, there was a man who generally wanted to be liked by the news media and would pick out certain people. I always kind of felt like I had a close relationship with Him. So that would be my, my first impressions, really. And I looked it up here before my impression of Vick Atiyeh is a Boy Scout. He was a boy scam. He's an Eagle Scout, and then he spent many years as a regional leader of the Boy Scouts. And if you look at the Boy Scout, not it's the law. I think the Boy Scout Law, we get it here for you, maybe to look it up too, of course. But

it just, it just is vickett, to me,

James Moore 3:45

is this the Thrifty brave true? The what the Thrifty brave true? And Reverend one or no, no, no, okay. I think my boy scouts is a long time a long time ago,

we recited the Thrifty brave true at his memorial service.

Mike Donahue 3:59

Oh, he did, I get to go to that? Let me see. Here it is. Let's see,

Speaker 1 4:06

but I show this. I'm sorry. Yeah, no problem. Gonna

Mike Donahue 4:19

give me some more on it. Well. Anyway, I'll just take the outline. No.

Anyways, first thing it was, was trustworthy, and that's him trustworthy. He told you the truth. I really believe most of the time anyway, didn't always, wasn't always afraid of the consequences, although any politician has to weigh with public opinion, right?

People? Be honest. He would be.

He would communicate. Let's see. What am I trying to say? What fits under Trump? Store. They was hoping to look up the whole thing, because it, for some reason, they don't have that there. Let me click on another one. Okay, because it just when you when you read the what it means. There it is. Okay. Tells the truth. Keeps his promises honest, and people can depend on him. I think he fits, and that's very one sided, but I think that's true, loyal, true to his family. I mean, gave up a college education, gave up a chance to play pro football, to come home and get over the business when his father died. I mean, certainly loved and supported it was a strong family. Being an immigrant, you know, chance to see how strong family was, and we went with him to to Syria that time. Obviously, he's helpful. Cares about people friendly. I didn't think so at first, but I got to know him better. I saw that he was but those, those are just a few. There's many others too that. But I just felt that that kind of described him in my mind. Yes. Is this all lifelong? Scout? Yeah, Vic Atiyeh.

see. What else would I say to

James Moore 6:13

him? Well, impressions will come as your talk. Yes, first big statewide thing he did was run for governor in 74 you were you covering that?

Mike Donahue 6:24

Yeah, so I was back in 72 so we covered that. I mean, he in his resume of he knocked off some big fish. I mean, he beat Kulongowski. He beat in the primary, beat Tom McCall. He did lose in his first attempt to Bob Straub, and that was kind of, it was a must have been close. It's actually, it

James Moore 6:47

was 55-45 it wasn't that close. That was the, that was the Watergate election.

Speaker 2 6:51

Oh, okay. All Republicans were bad, yeah. And so it's

James Moore 6:55

interesting, because some of the people I'm going to meet and interview were actually Republicans in the Oregon legislature who were voted in in that 74 election. And so I haven't looked at that dynamic. I see, but, you know, may have cut off at kind of state level offices or something, because

Mike Donahue 7:12

of what I've called his shyness. I wouldn't call him a great campaigner. You'd have to find those qualities that we just went down by getting to know him. And a lot of candidates don't have that opportunity with people right to really reveal themselves. Um, certainly not the charm of Mark Hatfield or the real Mark had so much well, he's my hero, in a sense, in politics, if a reporter is allowed to have him, but and not as outgoing as Tom McCall, certainly, and not as folksy as Bob Straub, and so maybe, you know, I just, I think campaigning was difficult for him. I can't quote anything he said about that, but I think it probably was. It was this shy, this shy guy, but he had a campaign, you know, in his I can't tell you what he was running on, what is, what his issues were at that time, but he obviously was after the next time he ran, he was obviously convincing, yeah, like I said, he gets the Republican. I'm not sure you know the political background in the parties at that time, how he was able to beat McCall. But that's what I remember about him as a campaigner, just shy and not not bursting out with, you know, right openness and frankness and not a bubbly, effervescent personality at all, just just this Vic, dependable Vic, I guess. Do you remember

James Moore 8:43

any difference between the 74 campaign and 78 campaign in terms of personality? Or was it I don't like the same guy?

Mike Donahue 8:49

I know I'm obviously learned something from that. I don't know who was his handler and that, because that can change a lot too. And I don't think we were really seeing the influence yet of national king makers, the people who come in and kind of give you the tell you how you should look, what you should say, and all that. I think we were still, thank God, the grassroots Oregon, our politics and so trust would have a chance to come through as something you wanted to vote for but I don't remember.

James Moore 9:23

Okay, yeah, so he becomes governor. Does anything jump out at you from his time as governor, just in remembering? Well,

Mike Donahue 9:33

of course, his work, often cited is his negotiating with the with the Democrats, to come up with a way to solve our economic crisis we were facing like, like we said, he had a relationship, and he seemed to work compromise with the Democrats in the legislature when they were running it. That's, you know, the great I always admired Henry Clay as a great compromiser, it was. And I think. He played that role. He knew it. He knew how it worked. That was a great benefit for him, of course. What else do I remember about Vic? He seemed to, I recall he is mentioned for having elevated women to particular spots. His chief of staff was a woman, Betty, but Betty Roberts and he appointed the Supreme Court. So he was, you know, kind of ahead of his time in that sense. Yeah, now, now it's done a great deal more. But recall that civil rights seemed to be an issue for him that he tackled. He seemed to, and I guess that's would fit in the Boy Scout Law or code there too, caring about people, regardless of their race or any difference, I don't think he, I never got a feeling that he was ever prejudiced against a certain person. He seemed to and again, he was Arab American of himself, yeah, first one from there to be elected governor of state. So, I mean, or would, why would he have a prejudice in that sense? So I always, I would remember that it's more impressions with me that's encyclopedic mind that you do Oregon politics, which I did, but I

that's kind of, that's what I recall, so

the experience for me, and I you're going to ask this eventually, I'm sure, is the time when we went to on the trade mission right Middle East, exactly, and really got to know him, because we were close. Channel two came along, I think on the first leg of that, when we went to Saudi Arabia. No, they went to Egypt too. They went to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and I think we were the only ones that went on to Syria, right with him. And he was just delighted to be in Syria. I mean, he was home. And he's often come up to me since he got out of politics, when I would see him, or he'd see me and talk about that he wanted. He made him remember how much the stories and covers that we did on him helped him remember that experience, which he called one of his, I forget the exact words, but it was obviously one of his most memorable, happy memories of his life. If I could describe it for you. We landed in Damascus, and he met, I believe he met with Assad, or one of Assad's maybe a son, or something. Denny miles would know for sure, but he got a chance to meet with him. Also met with the president of Egypt, who was Mubarak. Yeah, Mubarak at the time, and we weren't let in on any of those. Yeah, we were kept out, but we were told later. And so anyway, he they said he could go visit his

not only go visit it, giving him permission, they sent us, but there was our secret service. We were told, along with him, to guard us. Oh, and he had three black limousines, large Mercedes. And these guys were really roughnecks. I mean, they stuck a pistol or their belt that was their weapon, and off we went. I mean, speeding, high speeding. It was a mountain town where he's from Amar up in it's, I guess it's probably 75 miles or so, maybe a little further from Damascus. And some of that was hard to a lot of it was just un, you know, undeveloped roads, and as they drive down those roads, they encounter crowds of people in the little towns, and they take down the window, put their pistol out, and fire shots. People get out of the way. We're coming through. And they just drove like maniacs. One point the front car blew a tire, and these guys were so well trained that the second third car just went like that. So anyway, no one got hurt, and they changed the tire. And on we went. And we went up to this, this little town, which is it, at that time, it still felt like it was centuries old. In fact, there is a Knights Templar had a castle the croc de Chevalier, very near there. And, yeah, we made, they kind of made that a town on the Crusades. But one thing I'm researching is, I think that's why Vic's family is Christian. I think that town is hooked to the croc. Oh, it's probably been Christian for hundreds of years. Yeah. They call it the valley of the Christians, yeah, even though it's a hillside area that they call it, and as far as I know, they have done some protests since Assyria became a big issue, but I don't think there's been a crackdown as such. I didn't read anything online about it. So anyway, so we went up there, and we did get to visit the castle one point, but we first went there, and he arrived. He got out of the car, and he had to walk up this winding cobblestone street, white Street, to where the I guess the mayor, or whatever, was up there. His greeting, his reception committee was up there. And as he walked, the people of the town came and they played instruments. They They presented him flowers, they sang songs, they danced. It was just, it was kind of a small scale emperor of Rome coming home after a great victory or something. They just, they were so proud of him. And of course, half the people in the town, I think, were named at Tia, yeah, but they led him up the hill with carrying, she was carrying her bouquet of flowers, and he was just smiling, ear to ear, bigger than I've ever seen him smile before. And they got up there and met the mayor and got, I suppose, what they would consider the key to the city. I didn't know all they were presenting him, but then they, then they went to begin the party, all the relatives to greet and hug. And they went on into the night. They were dancing, drinking, just having a fabulous time. They declared him the governor, not the governor, the greatest governor of the United States, from Oregon, the greatest governor of the United States. Presented him gifts me was just who wouldn't be overwhelmed by that kind of experience, that kind of greeting. And then the next morning, he got up. We got up before him. We wanted to get the sunrise and the rooster crowing, and this man plowing his field with oxen and a blade the way they did years and years and years ago. The whole town had that feel he was we first saw him. He was visiting a Presbyterian Church which his parents and others who immigrated from there had sent money to build. Oh, okay. And so he was looking at that. And then he went down to the they had a large, well, large, big as this room, maybe building, brick building, where they prepared the bread for the whole, whole town for the day. It's like a pizza oven, yeah, kind of thing. And we watched that. And then he went to a school, met some of the school children there, but just a two there was just that overnight. And we're back. I think we left the next day for See he left. Let's see Egypt had been the first stop. And I think we left that day for our next Yeah, we left. We left him. Was a crazy day of flying. We left Damascus. He didn't he went on to Israel, but we didn't do that later the visit. We flew from Damascus at breakfast in Damascus. We had lunch in in Athens, and we had dinner in London, all in the same same day, with the clock rolling in our favor. But anyway, that that was just, it was not only a great moment for him, it's a memory for me, yeah, something I will never forget. I'm sure Dale felt the same way Bucha was a shooter on that we were falling over stone walls, trying to stay ahead and get the shots of them coming up the hill. And, well, you see the video, you'll see your own description of what happened. But he was just generally delighted. And as I say, afterwards, he would ask me, we got him a copy of the tape. Yeah. And just, was just a great experience. Each country was, but that was certainly the highlight of his trade mission. Absolutely, I think he, I'm gonna say, I think that's what I remember most about that. Yeah, that's where I got to know him. I think that's where I started this answer. I got to know him because he would be able to talk to us as reporters. You know, one on one. He even took us, Dale and I, there was a Saudi Sheik that had offered him his jet, his Lear jet, to take the governor, to show him this new town they were building at a refinery built around an oil oil field, new kinds of architecture and yeah, things, it was right on the what's the body of water? Not the Red Sea, but the other side where you guys Persian Gulf, and so we, we went on that trip with him. I got to sit with him and talk with him, and you just get to know a person better. Yeah, your whole all those images are changed that you have, of the impressions that you have. Yeah, he was truly a friendly man, and we weren't, you know, we're going to do stories, but it wasn't, yeah, I don't, didn't feel like he was trying to politically charm us. Yeah, just, just dick that's

James Moore 19:18

talking to Vic's Brother, I've interviewed Ed, his older brother, who's still alive. And last I talked to Edward was in

December, taking back a book. And apparently, when Vic died, they opened up the family home in Amar and had Oh, they had a big open house and basically awake there for

Mike Donahue 19:46

that one. Yeah, it wouldn't surprise me, really, but that's wonderful that they did that. You know? Yeah, he was, well, he was just a huge hero because of what he done in the United States as a governor. That was a. Was like a president, almost to them, I guess, yeah, yeah.

James Moore 20:05

Well, that's a great touch, yeah. What do you remember about going to Saudi Arabia? You took this great trip in the year we

Mike Donahue 20:15

we landed. Riyadh, is where we ended up. But there was another town, city, big city near Mecca, Jetta. Jetta, jet is where we landed first, and we spent, spent time there. We weren't as we weren't, didn't have that same kind of access we had later on when we got to fly with him to that town. But they whisked him around. He met, met with Saudi leaders. They they were interested in, it was a trade mission. So they were interested in introducing Oregon wheat farmers, for example, to their wheat wheat farmers. This guy, he showed us his wheat field, and of course, it was totally subsidized by the government. And and I asked him, What if your, you know, what if your crop goes bad? Oh, he said, No problem. We have oil underneath this. So, yeah, no. Worry about crop failure, whatever. But so he went from one thing another, he met with their different councils that they have in charge of these agriculture products and things. It was interesting. You had to have someone, you had to have a partnership. In order to do business with Saudi Arabia. They weren't going to just do business directly. You had to have a Saudi involved in and I just remember him going a lot of places, and some places. Well, from our point of view, it was not always the most media friendly, because they actually cover your camera if they did something or push it away. They didn't want you to shoot something that they felt was a government installation. Of course, there, here you have a Newsweek Magazine, and they're black. They black out things. Yeah, you bite off the stands, but it's blacked out. Pictures are completely covered, and what they don't want you to see. We saw a man switching people switching women near the mosque who weren't covered appropriately, and we saw people sitting back in the shade who had had hands cut off for stealing, of course, for more serious crimes, and take our head off. And, you know, so we did was a whole different experience, yeah, than we used to in the United States. But I didn't, I don't know how he reacted to that, but I'm imagining that was very different than what he saw in Egypt, for example. But I guess that's those are my memories, just going everywhere with him, doing a lot of stories about the

like the wheat crop, right?

They built a little tent, set up a little tent for us, and laid out these mats and brought all this food for the for the Oregonians, admission people and the governor, to sit there and eat. And was so they really wanted business, but on their terms, yeah, I learned that I have to that I cannot shake hands, or I cannot take No, I cannot shake hands with the right hand, because that's the one you wipe with it's the left hand. When you take food, you have to take it with the left hand too, in Saudi Arabia, yeah. But it was, it was quite a cultural shock, yeah, I'm sure to him too.

Those would be the memories from Saudi Arabia, yeah,

James Moore 23:17

and Egypt, same kinds of things. Or,

I mean, you have to know, we have the records of all these trade missions, sure. And there are some things where, with, like, when he goes to East Asia, he will have 75 things a day to do, to see, yes, shake hand here, talk to you here. That was

Mike Donahue 23:39

impression. I had the he had to catch all these bases today was over, yeah. And it was true in Egypt too. Denny would keep track of where he was going to be going to be going. And of course, they drive like crazy in Egypt. We, we did watch a he did watch, well, there were a couple of cool events. We went to the pyramids and saw their show, their night

show that they had, and we went on the Nile. They had Tim and the trade mission people on Nile. They brought a belly dancer on this boat as you going down the Nile one evening, one night, for that matter, I remember those things. Remember the CBS Bureau there was just like it was out of a movie, you know, with the fans turning open windows. It was really something. And they had, of course, they had guards, machine gun guards on the radio station, all around the radio station, didn't want it to be captured, but more of my impressions and his, because we were kept separate. And that's yeah, unless they wanted us to be there to shoot pictures of, yeah, of that. And he was again, he didn't seek us out. But I guess, you know, every time we wanted to ask him a question, he would stop and answer it. But he he was on a mission. I guess, like you say, there were a lot of things to do. So, you know, Egypt, we didn't go beyond Cairo. I think we stayed in Cairo the entire. Our time. I was back another time when we got to go down river, but, but it was pretty much or upriver. But it was pretty much in that one we were in, we were in Cairo, yeah, it was, yeah, okay, the sandstorm was on the other, the other, anyway, yeah, yes. So it was pretty typical, yeah, yeah, yeah. But Syria was different, yes, was they took him out to the and we, we were surrounded by Iranians who got off a tour bus all these, you know. And, yeah, what do they call them? Ayatollahs, or whatever they are, yeah, yeah. They all got off at this ruins, which was just below the heights. There were a Golan Heights, where the Israelis had fired down and had to essentially destroy this town. They wanted us to see what the Israelis would do. You just, and that was something I sensed, and I think he sensed too, just the hatred there was back and forth hatred for the Israelis. I mean, there you see a farmer standing in his field. His rifle was not very far away, yeah, ready to defend his land if Israel invaded again. That was in the back of their minds. But anyway, that was my price was not his, but we did go there and he's and he got a tour, as he did each place, somebody, a guy who would answer his questions.

James Moore 26:29

I know that when you guys left, when he was in Israel, they actually took him to the other side

Unknown Speaker 26:33

of that line. Oh, did they, yeah,

James Moore 26:37

we were just there, yeah. But here's the, you know, look the way they think about it, and what it looks like from

Mike Donahue 26:43

here. Yeah, the artillery was up there. That's, yeah, they were, yeah. Well, that's interesting. I got never known that. Yeah,

James Moore 26:50

yeah. So when you, you had this great experience seeing him in, you know, a family place, and that's the first time that he'd been there since, I think 1929 he went when he was six. Oh, just a boy, yeah, in a fascinating trip. It was basically because the rug business. So dad and uncle had business, and the family went along. They bought a car here in Portland and had it shipped to Syria. Oh my gosh. So when they got there, the family was able to drive around this car. Just amazing American car. So, yeah, familiar with, yeah, it's just, but the first time you know that he'd been there since 1929 so you know as you're describing it, and when he talks about it, it's just a an amazing well, he had

Mike Donahue 27:44

access. They allowed him access to leaders. Yeah, that probably somebody else might another Governor wouldn't have had access to because of that link, that he had that important connection with his country, with the Middle East. Yeah, he went to a city council meeting again. We weren't there, but Denny told us later that they were, they were discussing a new water system for the city of Damascus. It seems that the old, older one, who's kind of springing leaks. It had been built by the Romans. They built things well and those things like that, I guess. Anyway, so he, you know, you go to those kind of things to actually see a Damascus city council meeting discussing water pipes. But, yeah, he just had all kinds of access. Yeah, time the visits Dale, I think Dale actually got in for a period of time when he was in Egypt with the President and Mubarak, and actually got in to shoot them, because we had pictures of them together, and I it's the kind of the sound bites I heard from that particular we were just cordial things, yeah. What are you going to do? What did you see when you were there? Then they shoot everybody out. Yeah, it was, if there was anything really, what would an American governor, although he is of Syrian descent. What do you have to say? I guess they probably talked there were wars going on all around. We were standing here in the Persian go on the Persian Gulf. We were on Iraq.

Were fighting. Lebanon had had where the barracks was blown up, yeah,

James Moore 29:13

yeah, taking all going on, yeah. Russia was

Mike Donahue 29:16

in Afghanistan. All that stuff was around, right around that area. Yes, it was that really hit you when you when you thought about it, so he could discuss those kinds of issues. And you would probably know from the notes that were kept, yeah, what? What was discussed, but we weren't in those so yeah, really say, yeah.

James Moore 29:36

Do you have impressions about what this did to his identity as an Arab American. My memory of that time is it was a non issue. Voters didn't think about it. It wasn't, you know if you thought about bickie, it was the rug guys, sure. Portland image more than yes, yeah. But it would didn't have Arab. American, not any part at all, or anything about that. So when you came back, did you see any more Arab Americanness, or was it just

Mike Donahue 30:09

someone going to visit their home in another country? I guess, yeah, it wouldn't, you know? I never, I mean he, he looked very Caucasian, yeah, respect, um, walking down the street. Never guess he was, yeah, it was not, not of dark complexion or anything like that, which is one of the stereotypes people used for, right? But no, I don't think it played a role. I mean, certainly nothing like Catholicism would play in Kennedy's campaigns, or it's, you know, yeah, it was, I would say it was a non issue. But I could be wrong. This is his dad. Oh yeah.

James Moore 30:43

His dad looks really Arabic. He does and he does. Vic's son, Tom looks like exactly like that,

Mike Donahue 30:52

whereas he's more of a nice blend of the genes. He looks tough. That's yeah, that's the way I looked to me at first, yeah, and there's a family thing, like he could take on him, like a wrestler, almost, yeah, no, he's got those hairy arms, just Yeah. Last time I saw him was in Washington Square. My daughter and I were walking down the in there, and I saw him. He was a little bit humped over, but he was pumping. In fact, we I stopped him. Whenever I stopped him, and again he brings up a Mar but then I said, were you? Are you exercising? Are you, you know, are you walking for exercise? He said, No, no. He says, I'm coming to get a pair of slippers. That was kind of the focus, you know, the guy, of course, a lot of men do when they shop, they have certain things are going to get and that's all, but he just, he was genuinely friendly again. He remembered me, and he talked about them are just was a huge highlight in his life, and one we'd share together,

James Moore 31:54

yeah, yeah. Um, one thing I'm really going to be focusing on is these immigrants, because this, you know, they these. The parents are born just about 10 miles apart. Mom is from about 10 miles over into Lebanon now. So she grew up, as far as I can tell, with Beirut is her focus, and French was the first language in Arabic was the second language, whereas dad grew up with Arabic the first language, French. So just interesting cultural Sure, and those countries didn't exist. Then it was the Ottoman Empire. Oh, the lines hadn't been drawn until the 1920s Oh, sure, yeah. So just fascinating. But immigrants are known as Democrats, hmm, he was just a hardcore Republican. And so I'm going to be doing research. Is it the were Arab Americans, Republicans? Was it businessmen? And you know what? Did you know? You think immigrants, they don't first generation ones don't own successful businesses, like a rug business. So you know what was going on? There something different than we usually see. So they came here when turn of the century, there was an Atea brothers thing at the at the Lewis and Clark s position.

Mike Donahue 33:08

So FDR hadn't been president four terms yet, so there was no added. No, it's

James Moore 33:12

not. So there's, there's, there's a very interesting thing. But, you know, Edward tells stories his dad would have all the

Republicans over to his house for election night. That's very interesting, and because this is 1928 was the only successful election night to that, they'd come over and they'd have a party for about two hours, and it'd get really quiet, and they'd all go home, as the Democrats would win nationwide cool age

Mike Donahue 33:41

28 or Hoover, yeah, you've been cool just yeah, he's cabinet

James Moore 33:47

Edward and his brother, twin brother Richard, or 1921 October. And then Vic was born in February or January of 23 so the first real election I remember is 28 Yeah,

Mike Donahue 34:03

okay, well, that is, that's you've got some great angles on his life story. That's great, Jim, sorry, popping out, yeah, popping out at you. So

James Moore 34:13

you, you know he leaves office in 87 you're a reporter for considerable time after that. Do you remember him as an ex governor,

Mike Donahue 34:24

again, making many appearances with Democrats, Democratic governors again there didn't there. They would invite him where, I'm sure they wouldn't have invited another Republican that had not been so compromising or so close to Democrat. That was kind of a period, you remember that too, nationally, I think it's all the Republicans who were moderates, even progressives in those days. You know, the Hatfields, the Percy's the brook Yeah, the Brooke who just died, you know, Rockefeller. They're all those people who we don't see right now anyway, leading the Republican Party. And so he kind of fit that mold, too. I thought as as our governor, but, yeah, I just remember him for causes, you know, things he thought we should. He agreed with others that we should, as Oregonians, be doing. I remember that. I don't try remember we're just a lot of those. And I covered some of those, and so well someone was anchoring. So I always saw them on the news at night, anything specifically, just that he would choose those public appearances to support some initiative that he thought and he'd speak out. We would ask him questions about issues too, on were up for election. Yeah, he so he didn't hide. He didn't run away. He, he certainly used his many trade connections, which he had made during his trade missions as governor, to become this international right trade guy. Right? So he, he prospered because of being governor. Yeah,

some would say that's wrong. Others would say,

James Moore 36:04

yeah, that's I'm going to be looking at carefully. You know, What value did he bring, or would affect people paying him for what he'd done as governor, right? And so you look at that, it's an influence pedal, yeah? And but one of the fascinating stories about him is he told me himself he'd been governor for a while, and he called up his brothers and said, I'm not coming back to the business. And what he discovered is it's a lot more fun to make decisions by yourself than to have to coordinate sure everything and then there was no there was no animosity. The brothers actually worked well together. But he just said, you know, I'm going to be in my mid 60s, and I need to earn some money. And I don't, I'm done with the rug business.

Mike Donahue 36:53

He didn't feel like there might have been a conflict of interest with trade ties for rug merchants, essentially, or buying rugs from all over the world, and no.

James Moore 37:02

And in fact, talking with Ed and I have the archives from the business. I need to get more stuff from the business. When, when Vic was governor, not legislature, when he was governor, they were just absolutely clear, nothing that has to do with the state of Oregon, anywhere. No. Okay, no business at all. And I don't know if they had business before that or not, but whatever it is, they said there's a line. Well, sure

Mike Donahue 37:25

they would have bought Persian rugs. And yeah, kind of, yeah, imported though, yeah, yeah. Well, that was a good kind of, like putting your blind trust or something,

James Moore 37:34

yeah, exactly, exactly. So here's a picture. They would go over to Seaside all the time. So my favorite is, oh, it's great. Your governor is one of these. But right here, I think it's this one. But, you know, I can't swear to anything.

This is from a book where you send it off to Apple. Oh, and they'll do stuff. But one of Edward's daughters put this together. So there's Vic. I was going to say that looks Yeah, and brother. And then this is already looked like he could play guard for the Packers. I mean, yeah, yeah.

Mike Donahue 38:15

He was just solid.

James Moore 38:17

He was solid. And one thing I found out because

he and his brothers all went to U of O together in 1941 but he's a year and a half younger. He skipped a grade.

Mike Donahue 38:31

Oh, and was it his birthday was late in the year? He know

James Moore 38:35

His birthday was January, February. Yes, it's back in the middle. Flunked a grade, or they held him back. No, they he skipped a grade, so he moved forward. His brothers were here, okay, wanted to be so they were then, so he was two years behind. Then he was one year behind. But in those days you graduated from high school, there was a January graduating class and a June graduating class. So his brothers graduated in January of 41 and Vic graduated in June of 41 and then they all went to college together in 1941 you're just learning so many interesting things. Yeah, I had no idea in the world. Oh, no, that's Yeah. That's great again. There's that strength of family, yeah, closeness of family, unity of family so important to important to them, yeah. So any other impressions of Vic, you know, place in history, you know, he, he doesn't, didn't like to say it, you know, it's the last Republican governor. He said, No, no, just the latest Republican governor. Yeah, that's right, the most recent Republican governor. Well, things are

Mike Donahue 39:41

going to have to, is it going to have to be a monumental change for, I think, and you will probably would agree to to see another one anytime soon. Not that that can happen. Politics is, you know, strange, oh, yeah, strange history. Way it goes up in it, there's a book you should read if you haven't already. It's, it's called. A Day in America 1927 believe that's a title, and it has all the amazing things that happened in that one year. Yeah, you know, I read that because it's Lindbergh's flight, but it's almost right. Yeah, it wasn't that correct, yeah. I mean, once while I go back to it and read a couple pages and chew on something, yeah, there, you know. But anyway, why did I bring that up?

James Moore 40:22

Some reason, Republican governors.

Mike Donahue 40:28

Well, that was Dick's fourth birthday. It soon became, you know, there was Harding. Was he a Democrat? Oh, no. Hardy's Republicans, yeah, he's Wilson. About the list is the worst Governor ever, yeah, for all the Teapot Dome, which came out, I guess more after he was dead, but yeah, a lot of, a lot of that fraud that went on in his administration, yeah. But yeah, they there, and then the Democrats took over because, you know, they figured voters figured their problems and blown their own, their chance. And yeah. So it was a long period of time for Democrats until Eisenhower came along. And I guess he was sort of a Democrat in some ways. I mean, he had to decide which party he was going to run the president. But that was kind of a transition that we saw the Republicans come back again. So, you know, I suppose

that that could happen, but, you know, I just gave him more notoriety, I guess, in that sense, as he was the last one. If there have been two others Republicans after him that have been governor, maybe he wouldn't have been that noticed. Yeah, but he really stood out because of that. Yeah, I said, just, I wish I had, I'm just like I said, I'm flattered to even ask me, I just don't have a lot of memories, just general impressions,

James Moore 41:44

you know that? And that's perfect, because, I mean, it's been a long time since he was governor, and you're one of the younger people I'm interviewing. Well, like

Mike Donahue 41:54

I said, I feel that he mellowed. Certainly after he was governor, he left the political foray, so to speak, he became more, I don't know. I think he was genuine all the time. I think he was just, he just didn't know how to, you know, expose himself, right, expose himself, but to make himself, to let his attributes be known to people, as a politician, because that kind of creates distance between you and the voter, whether you want to or not. And sometimes when you try to close that distance, you're judged as phony. Yeah, and he didn't want to be phoning anybody. So it's just I really admired, really admired him, as I say, I got to know him so much better on that on that trip, and was impressed, impressed with him. I think that's it. I can't that's great. I think of so that's great. Yeah, glad you're doing the book. It certainly needs to be done. And boy, you're finding some great, very newsworthy,

James Moore 43:00

all singles to the story, yeah, all sorts of little interesting things. It's getting to the stage now where I think at least once a week I have to sit down and just write up projects like this. You can't keep in your head. They're just too big. But it's now, you know, I just need to write these things up. Just put them in a file.

Mike Donahue 43:19

Is it? Is it interrupting your sleep? Is it?

James Moore 43:24

Although I had a weird dream about doing interviews on a TIA stuff the other night, and then couldn't get out of the parking lot because it needed exact change, I didn't have any.

My wife said, Really,

you hardly started this thing? Yeah,

Mike Donahue 43:43

well, I can see if someone could become obsessed with, you know, a mission like this. And,

James Moore 43:48

you know, talking to other people who've done biographies, you you begin to identify with your your subject. And so you're writing, you know, I'm writing as a historian and a political scientist, and he's the topic and getting into these things, but he's just a nice guy.

Mike Donahue 44:07

Yeah, that's a good, nice guy. There's maybe a part of your title, yeah.

James Moore 44:14

And so getting, you know, raising the questions need to be raised. And he was totally up front. His archives have no conditions on them whatsoever. There's that Boy Scout Law again, yeah, you said, if you find dirt, you put it in there. There may be some that is inadvertent. When he went to Syria, I don't know for which trip, but there was a rich guy who came up and said, you go to the market and you buy whatever you want. All pay for it. Okay? And so they did, and what the deal is, you then go back to the United States, where currency can't travel between Syria and the United States. He gives you his daughter's address. Yes, and you send the daughter the amount of money that you spent. So it's a way to smuggle money. Yeah, that's really interesting. And so this is, you know, for Vic, it's nice guy. It might be part of his the

way he understands culture, whatever, did he violate federal currency regulations. So there's just very interesting little things. Because, as you said, you said, when he made up his mind about something, he just stuck with it. And he did that in all sorts of parts of his life. He did an interview with The Oregon Historical Society, wonderful interviews, oral history in the early 90s, and he was going on and on and on about how the legislators now were paid so much money they could, they didn't need to work out of their jobs paid \$18,000 a year. But for him, remembering \$600 Oh, sure, then, well, right? You You have to have a second job on the legislature. Now, it's like, well, right? Yes, you do, yeah. And

Mike Donahue 46:04

he had a very profitable business going, yeah? Well, you say not when he was governor, buddy.

James Moore 46:10

Well, he did. It turns out he was being paid the salary. Well, not when he was governor, but when he was in legislature. Even when he wasn't there, they paid him a straight salary the whole time. Because one thing Vic was saying was about going into business after being governor, he had to do it because he'd spent so much time in politics, he hadn't been able to earn enough money for retirement and stuff. And so I, you know, chasing down exactly what that meant it the he was getting paid his regular salary when he was in the legislature. So, and he's a shareholder the whole time, sure. So, so,

yeah, but, but

so, but he'd make up his mind about something. By gosh, that was, that was it, yeah,

Mike Donahue 46:59

but he still could compromise Yes. Interesting thing too. But when he was sure his role, that's a Davy Crockett thing, he's sure he's right, he went ahead, or he could go ahead, whatever,

James Moore 47:08

well, but he Yeah, he'd do it if it made sense. But he also he prioritized what was important to him. And so if he had made up his mind about something, but it was number 15 on his list, and you it went the other way. That's the way it

Mike Donahue 47:22

is. We did a, I do remember one other time we did a when it was his last day in office. We went down to Salem, and actually we started in his home up here. Oh, and drove down and drove down with him, yeah, and went through the whole day with him.

And it was, it

was one of those. He had a delightful time. I can't recall any false steps or, yeah, there isn't an impression of anything really strange happening. But it was just,

James Moore 47:51

did you come back up here with him?

Mike Donahue 47:54

No, we didn't come back. We came back ourselves because we had to get the story done. Yeah, for a deadline, but it's the end of the story as they got home, and Dolores feature store in that respect, or home finally,

James Moore 48:05

and Vic looked around and the state troopers as a courtesy. Gold had told them, as a courtesy, you drive them home. But then the state troopers left, and he's all by himself. Oh, and it's and Barbara Roberts talks about the same thing. It's like, Oh, so that's was a joke that his son, Tom told that the at the service and Vic told billions of times, one day you're a peacock and the next day you're the feather duster. That's great. And you see, there's another thing we have is, I think it's his fishing licenses. His fishing license when he's in Governor? Is fishing license number one for every year? Oh, and then in 1987 it's fishing license number 3004, 58 well,

Mike Donahue 48:54

he probably bought the other ones too, but yeah, yeah, nice. Remember, yeah, I didn't come home with him. Yeah, in that respect. But that's an interesting angle to that, to that story. To him, yeah, that little, that old world top desk he had, yeah, can the governor's office showing me some things about that. I remember some, but I don't recall. Yeah, my problem is sharp enough to remember exactly what he said about them. But yeah, it's a long time, yeah, yeah. We've got a great memory. Jim, so which serves you so well? We never could stump you on it. Nobody could stump you. Always had a good answer,

James Moore 49:33

yeah. That was when I was doing the elections with coin. Jeff from.