

Russ Dondero Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

An interview of Professor Russ Dondero on the topic of Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh, recorded on August 13, 2014. Dondero was a professor of political science at Pacific University who first came to know Atiyeh through the university's intern placement program in the 1970s. The interviewer, James Moore, was a 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.

Russ Dondero 0:00

[Recording begins mid-conversation.] ...A straightforward guy, you know, not, not a deep thinker, but when you start asking him questions about the political scene, every damn thing -- he knew it. And he is very good at finessing his way around a reporter, you know. And so I saw a side of Vic I'd never seen before, yeah, but I was impressed.

James Moore 0:25

He prides himself on having weekly media availability and half an hour every week no matter what. And he got a little calligraphy thing from the reporter [Archivist's note: This is referring to a certificate given to Atiyeh by the State Capitol Press Corps in 1978, which he donated to the Pacific University Archives]. He mentions that all the time. But yeah, he's great. You know, "There's three things I'm going to do. I'm going to answer it, I'm going to tell you I don't know, or I'm going to tell you I can't answer it."

Russ Dondero 0:53

Yeah, there was no bullshit. He told like it was and like he saw it. And if that wasn't good enough, then fine, "that's your problem, not mine," basically. But anyway. So, what do you want from me?

James Moore 1:13

Well, so I start out all these with the [non-Vic's?]. So tell me how you met him, and you eventually ended up with a great relationship with him. But how did you run into this guy?

Russ Dondero 1:27

Yeah, okay, let me ... Well, first of all, like you, I spent a lot of time with students observing the legislature from -- let's see, I came here '74 so my first session would have been '75.

So went down with the students in the spring of '75 and the big thing then was Trojan [Nuclear Power Plant]. And I got an interview with then-Senator Betty Roberts and -also with Ted Kulongowski. But so: I was aware that Vic was the Minority Leader. Almost -- at the time, I think he was one of three [Republicans]. [Jim: One of six.] Okay, one of six.

James Moore 2:18

You know, the next time, they were -- he was one of seven. They have little Roman numeral gold badges.

Russ Dondero 2:26

So that was -- that era was the glory days of the legislature, in my opinion, because you had, you not only had Betty Roberts there, Kulongowski, who was just a young whippersnapper. And I remember walking to his office, and he had the National Lawyers Guild symbol on his, on his in his office, emblazoned. I mean, which I told the students, that really means he's quite a radical dude. This is not -- those are the people that in the 20s and 30s, defended communists and often got blown up, and really dangerous people. How far he's gone. And so Betty was very blunt and terse. Who said, "Trojan? We're not doing a thing about Trojan. It's there, and the environmental issues with it aren't going to be dealt with." She's very blunt, to the point. End of discussion about that one, which was surprising to me. So I began to be aware of the legislature in '75 and Vic about the same time. But realizing he was pretty lonely there, because as a

minority of six and...

James Moore 3:53

It turns out one of the members of the caucus never went to any meetings. He wanted to be the leader, and he was outvoted.

Russ Dondero 4:01

So I didn't know that! So

that was the era of Blumenauer, Vera Katz. All the legislators who one associates with the Progressive Era of Oregon politics were there, or eventually went into Congress or the US Senate or whatever, you know, Governor or whatever. And of course, it was the time when Neil [Goldschmidt] was mayor of Portland. And so it was the glory years. And so, I was setting up here at Commencement [at Pacific University] in '76... '76.

And I had Paul Phillips in my classes.

And Paul had helped set up Commencement in the gym that weekend. And so I caught him out of coming out of the gym, just by chance. But I'd been thinking about interns, and I'd already had two interns. One for Les AuCoin and one for a state legislator back in Pennsylvania. So I was beginning to build my internship cadre and looking for potential students. And so I had my eye on Paul, because he was -- even though I beat him up on his writing, which actually Nancy did most of it, I learned later on --

Which is probably a good choice, because Paul can't write worth shit [laughs]...

But I knew that, given his personality, he'd be perfect as an intern with the right legislator. And I suddenly thought, Well, why not Vic? You know, go for the minority leader. But a guy who's from Tigard. Paul was from Tigard. And so I started talking. I talked to Paul then, and he said, "Well, let me go talk to Joe Story," because he was a double major in poli sci and econ. And so he went and talked to Joe. And Joe said, "It's fine with me. I got no problem with it. And so Paul said, "yeah, how do we do it?" And I said, "Well, let's go down to Salem and meet with [?]." A range of meetings with the senator through his secretary, and we'll interview. We'll interview, and we'll talk with you. Turned out that for some reason I couldn't go. Something up here prevented me from going -- something, some stupid faculty thing, I don't know what it was. So Paul went down on his own. Which actually was great, because he walks in there, like he told the story at the celebration -- Walks in the office, and his secretary warns Paul that he doesn't like interns. Never had a good experience. And she had told me that when I talked with her. And I said, "Well, I've got a young man who I think Vic just might like, and I'd give him a chance." And whatever, the interview will be worth it, and if nothing comes of it, that's okay, but give it a chance. And so Vic did. And Paul told the story. You heard it. So I got to know Vic through Paul. I don't think I knew Vic one-on-one until that point. I was aware of Vic, but I don't recall actually meeting with students with Vic. I might have, but I just don't recall. So it was really, it was through the internship with Paul. And of course, Paul, all my students, like all internship students, they write a weekly diary. And of course, then it wasn't email. It was weekly sent through the mail. And so I was reading the stuff that he was doing for Vic and I, and I sort of got to know Vic, sort of at a distance. But of course, I was reading the papers and aware of what was going on in the Republican Party and with Vic, etc. And so as things transpired after the legislature -- The other thing is that I had another student was down there, an African American woman student, Sharon Steen, who is the same class as Paul, but 30 years old. She'd gone to UO, dropped out, came back, found Pacific by some mysterious circumstance. And so Sharon was working for Stephen Kafoury. Oh, so while Paul was working for Vic, Sharon was working for Stephen. But they were good friends. They'd been in class together. They liked one another. Sharon is easy to like. She's not an over-the-top partisan. And of course, Steven was the marijuana guy. So she had a hoot, because the Canadians were coming down and interviewing Steven. "What is it about marijuana you like so much?" And so Stephen had a lot of press, and he was just a young stud. And of course, I had known Stephen at Whitman. He and I were in the same class together in 1964 as our graduating class. But I wasn't good friends. He was a fraternity guy. But we knew one another, and he was politically active, just like I was on Whitman's campus. So I knew him. And so through Paul, and Sharon, Steve and Vic, I got to know things going on in those two offices. And again, taking students down there, and then having other internships down the road, I got to know Vic. And then when Paul left the internship, Vic hired him on as his driver, and drove him literally around the entire state of Oregon during the campaign. And so one -- and then of

course by that time, I was watching the Republican Primary contest between Vic, Tom, and Roger Martin.

James Moore 10:37

"Vic Atiyeh can never win this race."

Russ Dondero 10:39

Yeah.

That was just fascinating as heck. Because, you know, no one took -- No one thought Vic could win it.

But of course, he did.

And not only that, he won the governorship, incredibly. So, once that happened, then Paul ended up as the ombudsman for Vic. That old, the old McCall-- Our colleague in the profession was Tom's first ombudsman. Oh God, the PSU professor, who became the commentator at K[ATU]-2 for years? [Jim: Oh, Marko?] Marko Haggard. And so Marko Haggard been the first ombudsman, and then Paul became the deputy ombudsman, and then he hired Sharon to be his assistant. And Sharon told me, "Well, the reason he did it, he didn't want to go to the -- When he went to the prison, he was really uncomfortable. And so he figured if he had -- if he had a black female going there in the prison, they'd all behave themselves." And of course, Paul will deny that story, but that's what [?] and Sharon told me. And so the two of them worked together in that office. I got to know Vic at that point, through Paul and Sharon. And then again, taking students down to Salem he was again... It was really through, at that point when he was governor, that I really got to know him because of Denny Miles. Denny, like you said earlier, Denny, was that... Vic was very accessible to everyone, whether it was the media, legislators, the general public or students. And so all I had to do was call Denny Miles and say, "Denny, I'll bring a group of students down, they're taking poli sci, staying local. We'd love to talk with the governor, and love to talk with you guys." And you know, they set it all up. We got a nice tour of the innards of the governor's office. We got to sit in the ceremonial -- not just the ceremonial office -- but the working office on the side, and talk with Denny and the governor and other staff people. So I got to know the governor and his staff, particularly Denny Miles. Personal relationship, professional / personal relationship. And you know, he was always accommodating, as was the staff, particularly Denny. And so that's really where it all sort of began.

I guess my main sense of Vic as a governor, watching him persev--, watching him in the legislature, as well as seeing the issues as they broke down... As you know, the big deal at that time was whether Oregon was going to pass its version of Measure 5. [Jim: Right, it came up again and again.] Again and again. And that was just from my perspective, just death. And I was hoping we would never replicate California's Prop 13. And largely because of Vic, we didn't. But unfortunately, by '91 we did -- five times. Fifth time was the charm [for passing Measure 5], unfortunately. But so, Vic was able to fend off Measure 5 by showing some real leadership. And ultimately, as you know, raising taxes for one year to 10%, across the board. And so he was willing to go against all conventional wisdom in the Republican Party and bite the bullet. In the process, he got rid of the Unitary Tax. Which I wish he hadn't, but he did. But aside from that, he was out going all over the world, showing that Oregon really was "open for business," as he would say. But it wasn't just pandering. It was building relationships in Europe, in the Middle East, in Japan. In the way -- in the soft-sell approach that only Vic Atiyeh knows how to do. And is sort of showing the flag quietly, but working very hard at it. And so it was a combination of his ability to work with a very partisan Democratic legislature...

He was in the minority during his entire legislative career, and he had Democrats during his entire gubernatorial career.

Speaker 1 15:53

Yeah. And you know that part, when I thought about it... I'm sure I made public commentary about that on the radio at that time, but my take on that was: Vic was really a good governor. Willing to make some very courageous decisions, but also willing to extend the hand, because he knew what it was to be the minority. In some sense he did. Again, the man did not have a huge ego. His goal was to get things done and not necessarily get credit for it. And because-- but I think because he'd been in the minority, that he sort of knew what it was like to be on the outside and knew how important it was to reach out to whoever he needed to reach out to. That he was able to do that in a way that most governors really don't do. Or can't do by dent of their personality, their ideology, whatever. And I remember the first thing that Vic said, one of the first things he said among the public [announcements?] he first made after he won the

election -- There was a lot of talk about "cleaning the Aegean Stables in Salem," "getting rid of the pointy heads." And Vic made it very clear: "No, these are public servants. They have served their state. I'm not going to summarily

Russ Dondero 17:24

cut heads. Chop heads, whatever the term is."

Speaker 1 17:26

"If we need to make changes, we'll make them in a very deliberative, conscientious way. But I basically trust the people behind the scenes who do the day to day work of this of the state, and I think generally, from my experience as a legislator, they do a good job. So we're not going to take a scythe and cut heads," you know, "we're going to add." And that's -- to me, that really was an important statement. Because -- number one, he knew as a state legislator, having been in countless hearings, he knew who the bodies were. He knew who he could trust. He knew probably who he couldn't trust. But he was willing to say publicly -- which I don't think any governor, at least since that time, has ever said -- that "No, you can trust the people in the bureaucracy. And and they're they're trying to do the best job they can, and we're going to work with them, and we're going to try to work with the legislature and do the best job we can for Oregon, get on with the business of Oregon." Whether it's bringing business to Oregon or improving public policy. Whether it's schools, the tax structure, whatever. But it was sort of that reassurance that he knew what government was about. He knew that inflaming polemical rhetoric was not the answer, and we're going to go about the job quietly, of doing the business of Oregon. And it was that sense of his commitment to public service, his belief in the [?] and of the value of government. And then, ultimately, he's facing down a bad economy and then going for a tax cut to try to smooth it over, to prevent Measure 5 or something worse, from coming down the road. And then, in the process, building up Oregon's economy. It's those quiet things that he did that I think, make him probably the best Governor we've had since Tom McCall. Well, there's no doubt about that. We haven't had a governor like him since Vic was in office. And so I think he faced some significant challenges, but he passed that test because he was the genuine article. There was no facade, there was no bluster, there was no phoniness about Vic. The Vic you saw in his office as a state senator, you saw as a governor, you saw on the campaign trail, was the same Vic. There wasn't "two faces of Vic" or "three faces of Vic," which I cannot say for any other governor. You know, since then, they all have multiple faces they present, depending on the audience in which they're found.

James Moore 20:41

Yeah, it's interesting: I was talking to Vern Duncan yesterday, because he served... Because the superintendent of construction was sworn in a week before the governor, he was at Tom McCall's last meeting. So [he served under] McCall, Straub, Atiyeh, Goldschmidt. And his impression was with Straub: Great guy, but they come to whatever agreements, and then the staff would do something completely different. Atiyeh: "What you saw was what you get." And staff would help you: boom, boom, boom. And with Goldschmidt you never saw the guy. He was just -- he just was a governor in absentia.

Russ Dondero 21:08

Right, yeah. That's certainly -- as an outsider, that was my view of Goldschmidt. But I'd worked for him in his office as Mayor of Portland on a [grant?] in 80, 81, doing a community analysis study of Northwest districts, Corbett, Terwilliger and Inner Southeast, for practically a year. And I did a report for Alan Weber, who was one of his top three people. And so I was in that office all the time, of course, during the time when he was fucking around with a girl. Because nobody, nobody knew, nobody knew. A lot of people knew later and spent 20 years pushing it under the rug. But... So Neil. Neil is, outside of Bill Clinton, Neil is the most brilliant politician I've ever seen in my life. He could -- but he also thought conceptually, he was, as Alan Weber used to say, "He's four steps ahead of us all." You know, when talking. And I used to-- I never went to lunch with them, but I'd go out to lunch while they were going out to lunch. And three or four of the staff people were talking, chatting, and Neil was always five concepts ahead of all of them. These were -- This was Angus Duncan, Alan Weber, and I forgot who the third person was. So, yeah, he had a top staff. Top staff. All certifiably bright people, but he was the brightest of them. It was clear. And they respected him. So I never understood why he ran for governor. I never-- I couldn't envision him being Governor because he would be bored. He couldn't sit still. When I presented my report to him, he stood up for the entire 45 minutes in his office. He had ants in his pants. He couldn't stand still. I think he heard what I was saying. But he just had so much energy that I couldn't envision him being governor. He, of course, now we know -- he wasn't much of a governor. And, in fact, I've heard from a very reputable source that his appetite for women didn't end with that young woman. Tragic element. And it extended to

people in his staff as governor.

So Neil, you know:

Brilliant politician. But like Bill Clinton: flawed, humanly flawed. And it's hard for me to understand it, because he had a great wife that came out to campus to debate Norma Paulus. And I went over afterwards to the gathering with him in his car, and I just couldn't believe what came out later on. I just couldn't, I couldn't fathom. But, but this was by the time we'd gotten -- we're going through the Clinton stuff. So I said, Yeah, okay, now I get it.

But, you're right.

Vic:

there was a consistency, and there was no... So when you worked with his staff, I'm sure, as you say, and as the senator said: there was no finessing. If they made a commitment, they stuck to it. And the question is, how do we get from point A to point B? That was the sense I had of how you dealt with Vic. With Neil: there was no attention span whatsoever, no real interest. And he was a disappearing act, much as the current governor is on many issues. You know, I think Kitzhaber is, you know, "we'll pick and choose issues." It's PERS this year. It's higher, or early education. Next. Back in the day when he was Senate President, it was salmon recovery and... But at any one point, he's sort of a one trick pony. One issue, and that's it. But I remember when I was doing it on my first my sabbatical in Salem. Learning how to become a citizen lobbyist, I sat in front of Bill Bradbury's office for lunch. And I got to know one of his assistants, who turned out to do -- had done press releases for Carter during that era. During the campaign. But not during this presidency. And then she had done and then she ultimately started doing press stuff for Clinton. So I got to know Clinton when he came to Salem and helped her set up the golf the room at the Salem Golf Club, where he gave a speech to lobbyists and selected legislators, leaders and and so. I had a real respect for Bill Bradbury, because he really, as a majority leader, worked really hard to deliver the goods. Whereas Kitzhaber, just on the other side of the hall from Bradbury, was often not even there. He would just disappear. So again, the difference between Vic is, you know, he was there. He [Vic] was there 24/7, as governor. He wasn't a part time governor, and he was there dealing with the issues, whatever they turned out to be. And he wasn't going to pick and choose. He would just deal with what he had to confront, and so I think Vic, like you said, and like other people have told you: "what you saw is what you got." And I think that that genuineness is what ultimately enabled him to work with the opposition party and with the people of Oregon. And throughout his life, I think that that was sort of "the article." And he's -- I think, unlike his successors, there was an attention to detail. There was an attention to commitments. And you knew that if he said something, he would follow through on it.

James Moore 28:38

I found out yesterday, in budget meetings, he'd sit there and he'd have a calculator in front of him. "Here are the numbers." "Great!"

Russ Dondero 28:43

Well, yeah. He was a businessman. He knew the importance of the bottom line. But he also knew, as a businessman, the importance with his brothers and family that a business... Maybe -- I haven't thought about this, so this is the new idea -- Maybe he is what he is, because he understands the concept of family and a family business. And realizes, in some sense, government is a family, an extended family of voters, of partisans, of lobbyists, of the public, and you all have to work together if you're going to make this work. And that means... that requires you to subdue your ego, to put your ego in check. And that's something most politicians can't do by their very nature. So maybe, I think -- Yeah, he was a fiscal conservative, and he wanted to keep track of the money we're spending. But I think, in part, that's because he knew from his experience with the family business that you're accountable to everyone. What you do affects everyone in the family business. And also, I've never bought a rug from the Atiyeh Brothers. I've walked in there a couple times to see Vic after he was left the governorship to chat with him, but my image of the Atiyeh family... I have a former colleague of mine who's granddaughter and married into the family, and every time she told me about visiting the attiyas for Thanksgiving Dinner: the sense I got was integrity. Now that marriage ended up sadly in divorce, but that's not Vic's fault or anybody else's. I know that from Jason and Sophie's experience. But so, again, I think he understood the concept of how to run a business and a family business. But it also -- my image of it, has always been a quality enterprise. There's never

been any hint of scandal. The advertising they've [the Atiyeh Brothers have] done is very tasteful.

It's...

I think,

there's a sense of quality

that he embraces. So when you got someone who's a straight shooter,

someone for whom there's little if any finesse,

someone who is committed to public service in the broadest, most positive sense. But who understands that, ultimately, Oregonians are a family or extended family. I think that really sort of sort of sums him up, from my perspective, as I think about it,

James Moore 32:15

Let's switch to a couple of specifics. Tell me about the Unitary Tax.

Russ Dondero 32:20

Okay, the Unitary Tax.

At the time, it was in effect: tax the worldwide, global wealth of all the all Oregon's corporations. And, of course, they hated it. At the time, Vic was doing everything he could... Unlike the current era where we're through SIPs and other devices, giving all kind of tax breaks to Intel and Nike, etc... At that point--

James Moore 32:54

I just ran into Ted [Collori?] this morning. And he was in the legislature when they did that. He's just -- shaking his head.

Russ Dondero 33:01

So at that time, the corporate Oregon, which in some sense, was more prominent than it is today, in a strange way... Because we had Weyerhaeuser, or you had actual headquarters... So we had some real heavyweights, and they were locals, they weren't these international people who didn't give a damn. But this was really on their agenda. And being a Republican, it was a natural for Vic to say, "okay, yeah, you know, we probably do need to get rid of it." But I don't know the negotiations behind the scenes, but my vague memory of the press coverage, and we had very good press coverage of the legislature then, unlike we do today... By the way our chapter in the book is still as relevant as it ever was... And so my memory is that again, he was trying to fend off Measure 5. He was trying to recruit business to Oregon and keep business in Oregon. And so I think to him, the logic of getting rid of the Unitary Tax made every bit of sense, because it was a thorn in the side of appealing to not only keeping business here, but attracting more business here. And for him, that made sense. And if, in the process, you increase the business economy's robustness here in Oregon by growing, new corporation, new entities, new economic growth to Oregon: then we can fend off Measure 5, and we'll have the resources to do what we need to do with us. Health, education, K through 12, higher ed, environment, whatever, building roads, whatever. So I think in his logic, I think it made every bit of sense, and obviously it did to the Democratic legislature who passed it. He got through the democratic legislation.

James Moore 35:16

His feeling on that is that they didn't really know what they were voting on. [Russ: Gee, that doesn't surprise me a bit!] So he and Denny-- I don't know how central Denny was to the whole thing, but Denny remembers specifically, and Vic hammers it -- You just sell it as economic development. And people didn't really understand. And it's kind of obscure, but Unitary Tax, it fits on a bumper sticker; and he specifically did it in a special session so wouldn't be hooked to budget negotiations.

So why do you think was a bad idea?

Speaker 1 35:53

Why do I think it's a bad idea? Because since that time, we have not been able to figure out a way of funding basic resources, whether it's human services, higher education or K through 12, sufficiently to keep up with the challenges. And so if we had, if that was back, or some version of us back, or something had replaced it, then I think we would be in a much better position than we are as a state. I mean, we are in terms of higher education, we're

James Moore 36:31

At the forty-fifth or below.

Speaker 1 36:34

Yeah, four out of five kids in poverty. We've got-- I don't need to do the litmus test. So I think we'd be in a much better position than we are, although, again, the downside would be maybe we wouldn't have the Intels, the Nikes here. On the other hand, look at all the people that left us despite that.

Russ Dondero 37:02

And so

Speaker 1 37:05

I think it deserved... At the time I understood the politics of it, at the time, even the economics at the time. And as I recall in the campaign that Vic ran against Ted Kulongowski, Ted's major goal was to save jobs in Oregon. And Vic just hammered him because ... And Ted couldn't come up with a defense. He had been--

Russ Dondero 37:40

Ted had been in support of

supporting Oregon jobs, and there was a particular bill that was associated with that. And I can't remember the name of the bill right now. But Vic just hammered him and hammered him, and eventually Ted just gave up on it. He wouldn't defend himself, wouldn't defend his record, wouldn't defend the concept. Wouldn't go to bat for organized labor. And and that was a Ted Kulongowski I didn't recognize. But what did Ted learn from that? Well, Ted learned from that that you can't beat up on corporate Oregon. So when he did run the next time, he became one of these blow dried corporate Oregon guys who believes in SIPs, believes in giving corporate Oregon everything they want and more, because you got to "grow the economy by growing the business climate" It's sort of -- it's not unlike what Bill Clinton did as a new Democrat. It's "grow the economy" and "trickle down" will do. It's like Reagan. It's like they all got Reagan-ized.

So my opposition to the Unitary Tax is that it denied us of the resources. Not then, but subsequent generations, over the last 30, 40, years that we desperately need to be the kind of state we claim and we want to be in. And the kind of state that Tom McCall had said we should be. But then again, Tom failed miserably at tax reform, too. So I don't blame him. But I think your comment that the legislature didn't know what it was, what they were doing -- I think you're probably right. Which says more about them than it does about Vic. But it also shows that behind the the facade of Mr. Nice Guy, Vic Atiyeh is a very sharp politician. He's sort of an iron fist in the velvet glove when he has to be. Now, I don't think he's mean spirited like Nixon. But he knew exactly what he was doing. And if those fools in the Legislature were not gonna not do their homework. Well, that's their problem. It's not his. And that's what I saw in the campaign against Kulongowski and the campaign against Tom McCall. Vic knew exactly what he was about, and he stuck to his guns and he won. That's again -- and I saw that in the interview we did of him. I realized at the end of that, I'm a PhD, and I was taken to school by a very savvy governor. Brings us into his office, lets us tape record him. No rules of engagement, no bullshit. "Turn on the mic. I'll answer your questions." And then I kept trying to get him into a corner, and I couldn't! He was so good about -- not evading the questions, but giving his answer to my rhetorical question. That I realized afterwards, as I told my student, John Jewett, "This is one smart governor. He's a lot smarter than people think he is, and if a PhD can't corner him; Now, I understand why the legislature has trouble with him." He knows exactly what he's about, and that's to his credit. I respected that in him. I came out of that interview with two thoughts: respecting him more than I ever had, politically and intellectually; but also realizing how hard it is to be a journalist and how hard it is to ask the tough questions of a smart politician. And so I came out of that being humbled. Which is pretty hard to do if you're if you're a professor type [laughs]. At least you don't like to admit it. But also, respecting him even more, because

you know, the answers he gave were logical or perfectly understandable, but you knew behind the answers, there was -- he was thinking this through. Little wheels going on in there, and I wasn't able to get through to those wheels. And I was impressed. That was an hour unscripted, no notes. That's pretty damn impressive.

James Moore 42:24

Yeah. So talk to me about the 1982

re-election campaign.

He goes into it as an underdog,

and he wipes the electoral table with Ted Kulongowski. Thing that really comes out from the Atiyeh side and from the Kulongowski side, is the Atiyeh people intimidated that Kulongowski was dangerous for Oregon.

Yeah, oh, yeah.

I'm going to chase that down. But I've heard from both sides. And you know, the Atiyeh people put out a series of radio ads that lasted for seven days. And got the most -- you know what we teach, it's the most amazing [free?] publicity in the world. It's like the Willie Nelson ad. That campaign just took on his life on its own and off it goes. And then you had like Bob Packwood, who wrote a letter saying, "yes, Kulongowski is dangerous. It's not his policies, it's him,." So take me through that campaign as you remember it. I'm gonna talk to Ted, but...

Russ Dondero 42:55

I'm not sure I can do a very good job of that, but let me-- I'll attempt it. [Jim, jokingly: It's only 32 years ago.] Yeah, only 32. Okay. Again, I think what you described is exactly what I remember happened. And basically what Vic and the campaign did is they framed Ted as a basically a labor goon.

James Moore 43:57

They chose the word "union lawyer" rather than "labor attorney" or something like that.

Speaker 1 44:02

Yeah. And so they did exactly what Atwood did to Dukakis. They framed him in such a way that by the time the election was over with, no one would have voted for Ted Kulongowski including his mother. And it was because,

Russ Dondero 44:30

I think, at a certain level,

Oregonians don't trust labor unions. And when you are a labor lawyer by profession... when you're a lawyer... Well, two things. When you're a lawyer by profession, when your career has been always associated with being a liberal, progressive lawyer... Remember, the first impression I have was the national Guild. And so Ted. Ted was framed by Vic in a very in a very smart way, and Ted could not figure out a way out of that label. And I think part of it is that Ted being a liberal legislator in a liberal legislature, was not... Unlike Vic, [he] was not able to understand how to defend himself against an attack, because he had never had to defend himself. He's always been part of the majority. He's always been part of the good guys. He sees himself like that. And I think Ted is a good guy, you know, in terms of being a human being. I think he's a terrible governor. Because -- and it really began with that campaign -- because he failed to stand up for his values. He should have been willing. It's easy for me to say he should have been willing to go down with the ship and say, "Yeah, I believe in organized labor. I believe that workers have rights. I believe that that Oregon will be better with stronger public employee unions, blah, blah, blah, and with workers who have rights to protect their jobs regardless." But he he would not defend his record. He would not defend his previous positions. He simply reacted. He tried to, he he tried to dance around it. He would not. He would not respond directly to the Atiyeh campaign charges. And that failure, I think, is why he lost the election. Now maybe he would have lost it anyway. But had he been willing to fight the fight on his own terms and say, "Yeah, that's who I am. So what? This is the choice you have. You have a choice between a conservative candidate and you have a choice between a progressive candidate. And in Oregon, we have a long history of progressive candidates." He could have -- Ted could have pulled out Tom McCall,

and done a Tom McCall deal on Vic. I don't know that it would have succeeded, because Tom was history by then. No one ... you know, voters come and go. But, but my sense is that Ted was like the deer caught in the headlights, and he just wasn't used to defending basic bedrock Democratic Party progressive values, which he had taken for granted and embraced during his political life as a legislator. And that he really couldn't figure out how to respond. He was not used to being on the defensive. He was not used to being the minority, and I think a part of it is probably just sheer arrogance. "How dare you assail my integrity, how dare you!" He never said that. That's not his style. But I think Vic caught him off guard. It's like a basketball team that runs its system, and the other guy is constantly having to adjust to it and can't figure out how to adjust to it.

And I think Ted

again just wasn't able to figure out how to defend himself on his record. When I think he he should have, and he could have. But, but that subsequently leads to when he did run the second time, he was a very different Democrat. He was a corporate Democrat, and that really sets the tone for Neil -- really sort of laid that foundation as governor, and then Ted, you know, walks into it. Barbara -- I think Barbara Roberts was not that kind of governor, and was not that kind of candidate. My problem with Barbara is she allowed Patricia McCaig to run the governor's office, and that was really offensive. And I've known Barbara personally for years, and both before and after, I was actually working with Barbara at Marylhurst on her degree. I was her advisor -- her professor. I would meet with her once a month to go over stuff with her, and and so I really like Barbara. I think she's a gem. She and Vic are sort of personality-wise, very similar. They come from modest circumstances. They're, you know, "what you get is what you see." They're very affable people. They're likable people. I think they both like people generally. And she was dealing -- She like Vic faced the ultimate challenge of Measure 5, as she became governor. And then she and then fed to face Frank's impending cancer and death, which I think really took it out of her, which is why she didn't run. And then Neil [?] runs then. So I would say, I don't see Barbara as a corporate liberal, but I think all the other Democrats that follow the suit are corporate liberals. And I think in some sense, Vic taught them a lesson. "I can't run against business in Oregon, I gotta somehow be pro-business." If you're not smart enough to figure out how to be pro-business without being anti-labor or pro-business without necessarily saying we're gonna raise taxes, then you've got a problem. Your goose is sort of cooked. You're cornered. But again, you know, Vic gets rid of the Unitary Tax, imposes a 10% surcharge for a year, very smart, and fends off Measure 5, and then moves on. See, my argument has been ever since that all happened is: "Look, Vic did the Unitary Tax. He did the 10% surcharge to fend off Measure 5. Well, Measure 5 has happened, folks, we need a new revenue source. I don't care whether it's some form of the Unitary Tax or a progressive income tax, or getting rid of corporate PERS as well as individual PERS, but we need more resources." But nope. Kitzhaber has now kicked the can three times, and he's going to kick the can again. There's nothing I'm reading in him that tells me he's gonna...

James Moore 52:29

Oh, he told us he's gonna have a tax thing. We won't hear boo of it until, uh, sometime after the election. Quite frankly, that's too late.

Russ Dondero 52:35

Sometime after the election. Yeah, it is too late. I think Vic faced the demons that of our economy, and did the best one could do under those very difficult circumstances. And he built an economically-- economic basis now in Oregon, for which he can take credit. But I think now we have a whole different set of problems. And we need to be adults about dealing with them. The past is the past. Vic got us through some very tough times. Fine, let's move on, folks. But I don't see anybody moving on. I mean, I went down to a Connect Oregon hearing, where you had 300 people, half of them dressed in red t-shirts showing their opposition to coal trains and oil trains going up the Columbia River. And it was very clear the Commission was not hearing any of it, and they ran through all the legislators, all the local officials, for two hours before they let the little people speak. Well, the only that's not even how legislative hearings operate. Legislative hearings will say, "Well, if you travel 50 miles or further, you get [to go] first." We'll do the initial presentations. But no: for two hours, we had to sit there listen to Betsy Johnson. Barf! We all -- these are people who've had, you know, insider cracks at this whole thing for months, for long years. So we heard...

that this is an insider's game,

and

the people of Oregon really aren't counted in this process. But unfortunately, the people of Oregon don't understand what's going on and why their classes are too big. The University of Oregon. You know, when your kids go there, they may or may not have dorm space, but "Well, we got the best football team in the nation. We got the most spectacular Knight Arena." You know, all these wonderful things. For which the average student can't get access. And then the latest is the business community in Oregon. And Sunday's Oregonian op ed piece, I forgot who wrote it, said, "Well, you know, we really need to do what the University of Washington has done and what the state of Washington did: Invest in our future, invest in research and development, invest in education." Well, duh.

James Moore 55:32

It's been a fight here since the 1920s.

Speaker 1 55:34

Yeah. But I think, I think in some sense, it goes back to that subtitle of our book: "Progressive versus conservative populists." At some point,

Russ Dondero 55:50

the conservative populace

Speaker 1 55:55

have become such a powerful element in Oregon politics, within the legislature, as well as just in public opinion, that the progressives have not been able to make the case for a return to a progressive income tax or some other form of progressive taxation. Could be the sales tax, it could be an occupational business tax, you know, there's all kinds of ways of getting more revenue. But despite the fact that Portlandia rules, with Washington County's help, in any statewide election,

Russ Dondero 56:35

the

Speaker 1 56:39

ability of Oregon to meet the challenge of revenue is I think, stalemated. Because we have these two basic forces in Oregon that are irreconcilable. The funny thing, though, is that when Measure 5 passed, as you probably remember, Measure 5 lost in the "other" Oregon?

James Moore 57:02

Yeah, Portland is Portland. It's, as Phil Stanford said it, "Portland and its playgrounds." And it's just stunning to me, looking at sense of "Whoa, there's Portland. We can't do what we want to do." You guys voted for it. The rest of the state, all those conservatives said, "You're nuts!"

Speaker 1 57:19

When I go to Salem and talk to legislators about [?] land use planning issues, dealing with SIPs, and how we're giving the money away: it's the Republican conservatives from Grants Pass that hear Me. They get it because they realize they're not getting any this benefit. Washington County is getting it. And they hate Washington County, and they hate Portland because, yeah, "you guys are sucking the blood out of us, and we get the drippings." And when I make that point, they say, "Yeah, you're right." But you know, when I talk to Tobias Reed, good luck. There's no, there's no, there's no conversation.

James Moore 57:19

One of the things that I'm really going to explore with Vic is he has some really interesting observations about single and multiple member districts, because he was half his legislative career in multiple and then half in single. And from his point of view, when they went to single, voters acted differently, and elected officials acted very differently. Parochialism. Because you didn't have to represent, in his case, the dairy farmers and the Intels. You just did Intel. And so I'm going to be looking carefully at the political science literature to see if anybody's really explored that. I don't think they have, but it's a very interesting observation.

Russ Dondero 58:51

Yeah, it is an interesting observation.

Now,

Les AuCoin

was a state rep during that era.

James Moore 59:05

Because 70 is the change. 70, 72, I think is the first.

Russ Dondero 59:08

I don't know whether Les would be willing to be interviewed. My sense of him is that he's not willing. But you know, on that issue, that'd be a fascinating issue to discuss with him, because he was at that transition point.

James Moore 59:26

Yeah, when I talked about Bob Smith, same thing. Jim Redden was around in those days too. So, yeah, there's, there's, there's several of them that are around.

Russ Dondero 59:34

Somebody who was around would be, I think they'd be... That's an interesting observation. And I think -- I never -- I got here after that system had been replaced, so I never experienced it. And I don't remember whether that's the way things were when I grew up in Roseburg and Douglas County. I don't think they were.

James Moore 59:59

Yeah, I don't know how long it was,

but it's all the '67 Supreme Court decision. And they said one person, one vote. So off you go. So tell me how you got this amazing medal.

Russ Dondero 1:00:20

That's a good question. I'm trying to think.

James Moore 1:00:26

We got pictures of you from the from the party, yeah, so

we got the pictures of you...

Russ Dondero 1:00:34

In the middle, yeah?

James Moore 1:00:35

I think you in the middle and Vic shaking hands, right?

Russ Dondero 1:00:38

I had it on. I don't wear it.

I-- [Jim: It's like wearing a breastplate.] Yeah, it is. It's heavy. It's well, when, when Vic was governor, he had that medal commissioned,

and so

at some point --

It was well after his governorship, when he became a member of the Board of Trustees [of Pacific University]. Here I was at some social gathering, and he -- I'm trying to remember how that happened. Seems to me, he was...

I saw it,

or he showed it to me,

and then I said, "God, that is beautiful. I didn't know you had that commissioned." And, "Boy, that'd be really nice to have one of those in my treasure trove of memory." And the next time I saw him, I don't remember where it was, he gave it to me. And then so I... I think I'm not giving you a very good, clear answer, but because I don't remember. But I think it was one of those situations where, you know, I saw him out here, and I knew that it existed because I'd seen a copy of it somewhere, maybe probably something you showed me and and what's nice about now the original one was that was the have this symbol of the state of Oregon, and the saying "she flies by her wings." Okay, the back of it that I got originally was blank. Just had, I think, Vic Atiyeh on the back of it and the date.

But when,

at some point

since Joe Story and I were connected by the Story-Dondero Award given to us by Paul and Nancy Phillips -- the money was financed by Paul and Nancy Phillips in that award.

I said, "Well, Joe,

I'm going to give you my medal. Because, we sort of share this common link to Vic and to Paul." And then I-- and then I said, because "I've got another version of it," which I did by that time, and that version, which Vic sent me in this beautiful little case, which is sitting on the top of my above my computer on the shelf, has also the territorial medal of the state of Oregon on the back. So I got the Real McCoy. But I think it just happened because of certain serendipitous circumstances, where somewhere I saw it, and he said, "Well, I need to get you one of those." I think that's what -- I think that's how it happened. I think I need you to get me one of those. And I said, "Well, that would be very lovely, and I'd be very appreciative." And then later on, I explained to him that I had given the medal to a friend, a colleague at Pacific, because we sort of share this connection to you. And he said, "Well, I'll get you the original one, because it has the territorial sign on it." So, it's just he's a nice person. And so I think this happened just serendipitously. No big deal about it. And more importantly is: he did it. He could have just forgotten about it, and I would have forgotten about it, and I would have been fine, but he didn't. He's just -- that's just who he is. If he makes a promise, he keeps it, And there's a lovely note attached to it. And I think that's the story, as far as I recall it. And it's absolutely -- I mean, I treasure it. It's the most valuable piece of Oregon history I have. I've got, I've got the three, several bills that I helped pass in the legislature, that I've got in my office, and I'm very proud of, but that medal is... and that, of course, with that is now the picture of Vic and me at the ceremony, which I love. And so, yeah, it's in a special place. And that's And the funny thing about it is that I know you know, when Paul sees me and talks with me with students, I don't know what you're getting out of this Marxist professor, but so he's always doing that to me and so. And apparently, you know, when you guys had lunch, Paul said, yeah, that Marxist professor. And so I thought, oh God, now I'm really going to be toast with Vic. Vic never mentions it. Never goes there. And of course, my Steve Dean, when he was still covering the legislature,

after he left the Trailblazer thing,

caught me one time, he said, Paul Phillips says, You're a Marxist. And I was, I said, Steve, Steve luck. I had Paul as a student. He wouldn't know the difference between Groucho Carl or Harpo, and that pretty much closed the discussion. But I did have a bad habit early in my career of saying as a Marxist, yeah, and, and if the truth is told, the more I see the economy going the way it's going, the more I go back to, you know, what Marx says in terms of his economic analysis, his politics were, were, were blindly stupid. But his analysis, I think, of capitalism, is still right on. Yeah, there's

James Moore 1:07:25
a piece than the New Yorker,

maybe 9293 94

about a that says, you know, Marx, the ideas, his solutions, may have been kind of weird, but, man, he pegged it down totally. Let me see if I've got

Russ Dondero 1:07:46
and when you if you read the Congress manifesto toward the end, yeah, here we go,

James Moore 1:07:50
the return of Karl Marx, John Cassidy, 1997

Russ Dondero 1:07:55
it's brilliant. Yeah, yeah. I mean, after all, he did write for the New York Herald Tribune, as I recall. So he knew that even though he never visited United States, I don't think, I don't think he did either. He certainly understood something about the economy and but, but you know when early in your life, in your academic early in my political life, I was more than willing to use that label, but I learned through the hard lessons of losing tenure at back east that maybe you shouldn't do that to yourself. But when I came out here and I would generally, I said that early and occasionally in some classes, but I was sort of testing to see whether they were paying attention. But if you pushed me, yeah, I'm a Marxist dem, right? So I think so was Madison and a lot of other people who looked at the basic fault lines of economics in this country and realized that class is an enduring political dynamic in the society. And until as long as you have the haves and have nots, it's going to be that way. But that's what government is to do, is to even out those, those conflicts and and that's what we've lost. We've lost that. I mean, we now have a 1% who feel they're privileged beyond all measure. So I think it's gone it's gone further, but so, yeah, it's, you know, I think, you know, at times I wish I'd never used the label. But then again, why not? That's one of the privileges of being an academic. Exactly. You can label yourself and then run away from it, and then and then half, but you ultimately have to be accountable for it.

James Moore 1:09:49
One of the things Vic did most of the oral history with the Historical Society, 9293 but then he asked for the same guy to come back in 98 He said, there's some things I want to make sure that I get down here. Didn't say, anything new, yeah, nothing new. We had, we knew exactly what you felt about this. There's one, one thing I have to explore, but that's it. But one thing that comes out in 98 is he feels a lot of decisions that he made and ways that he was taking the state prevented us from going to socialism.

And so that's it's it's not in the earlier stuff. It's not anything that I talked to him about. So what did he mean by that in 98 so to look at, maybe, you know, response to the Clinton Health Care

thing could be, yeah, okay, yeah. Sure. You know, who knows? Who knows what it is, yeah? But yeah, it's out of character. He doesn't get those labels. No,

Russ Dondero 1:10:51
he does. No, I don't remember those labels. Although, during the campaign against Ted, there was that implication. I don't really use that. He's, he's not one of us. He's, yeah, he's,

James Moore 1:11:05
well, in 82 there's people who were alive and thriving at that point who remember that union was a lot of wobblers. Yeah. So, yeah, yeah. You know it's, it's world federalism, it's, it's cases taking over your timber at

Russ Dondero 1:11:23
a certain point. I think, you know,

Vic, you know,

like my dad lived through the Great Depression.

So, you know, he probably

had some sense of how the world is, sort of historically, has been divided between two different visions of how to organize society, one perpetrated by Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin, and the other perpetrated by The founding fathers. And so at some level, you know, he may feel there may be a deep sense of, yeah, well, there's a certain divide, and Clinton is coming too close to it, spending too much. And certainly given Hillary's role

in healthcare,

even though there's nothing socialistic about that at all.

James Moore 1:12:30
It's every other developed country in the world.

Russ Dondero 1:12:33
Yeah, but yeah,

it may come down to the fact that Vic is a

an Oregonian? Well, he's an American politician who's an American politician for whom socialism is a dirty word, yeah,

James Moore 1:12:49
and for all his international stuff,

really good on the economics, but it's never clear to me that he understands the government systems, and he's totally upfront. The 19 293 interviews asked him some great questions about culture, and Vic has got great answers. You just got to be yourself, you know, I don't drink a lot, yeah. So I tried it once when I was in Asia, and I woke up like, 15 hours later saying, What the hell did I do? You know, so it's just yeah, that's stuff, but that that also is you're you're always in your shoes. The Empathy is not necessarily there, yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:13:30
yeah, and, and we don't elect Well, I think that kind of, I think part of I wonder, I get this speculation, and you may get a better sense of as you go on this project, I wonder what part of that anti socialism and sort of deaf ear to the other world isn't because he's an immigrant,

James Moore 1:13:48
yeah? And one thing I've

Russ Dondero 1:13:51
been an Arab, yeah? I mean,

James Moore 1:13:53
I know nothing about the Arab immigrant community in this country, and so I need to look at them. Are they the traditional Democrats when they get here, turning to Republicans. His dad was a Republican, which seems to me, first generation people generally don't make that switch. So was he a businessman? First Arab immigrant, second. So there's a there's a real dynamic

Russ Dondero 1:14:14

there, yeah. But I think part of it too,

maybe that you may discover if you look in the family tree closely enough, which you should be able to do, I hope with family art records and stuff. I've already got

James Moore 1:14:29

an ancestry.com going. I have, I have the shipping manifest with Young Vic at age six coming back into the United States after going to visit the family in Syria? Yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:14:41

so here's, here's a family from Syria.

Now, what time did they come? Over 19 what

James Moore 1:14:50

the parents got here in 1900 1901?

Russ Dondero 1:14:54

Okay, my father's parents got here in 19 six from Italy. So same. Mirror in Genoa and I, but I have a, you know, so look, what was the politics of Syria and Lebanon like? Well, at

James Moore 1:15:13

that point it was, it was thought of the omnipotent there was no Syria. There was no That's right, okay, it was, it was Damascus. Yeah, they were in the the homes Sultanate. So I'll have to figure out what that mom lived here, which is basically the outskirts of Beirut, okay? Dad lived here, basically the outskirts of homes, okay? 20 miles apart. Now there's a line between her rage marriage. Now it's, I don't know if it's rage or not, but there's, there's, yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:15:45

yeah. That would be really interesting, because Christian, yeah, the

James Moore 1:15:49

where Vic's dad's family is from, there's still a crusader Castle, if I'm really, the town exists as the place that took care of the castle. Yeah.

Russ Dondero 1:15:59

So interesting? Yeah, interesting. I don't, I don't know.

James Moore 1:16:03

I mean, Vic went to the castle, but in doing my own research, I found out that's why the town exists. So there's some really intriguing things there.

Russ Dondero 1:16:10

Yeah, yeah,

yeah. I think somehow,

the the son of an immigrant child coming to Oregon, which has no sense of is a all white, Anglo state, yeah, you know, it would be interesting to know, I assume he went to Public Schools in Portland OR, yeah. No, yeah. So I started in all that white center, yeah. So I guess the question I would have is, to what degree was his image of himself shaped by his immigrant heritage or by the desire for so many immigrants to become to become Americanized in that next generation. Yeah, which he would have been, you would have been sort of that cutting edge.

James Moore 1:17:07
And dad is born 1885

the one who got him over here was older brother, older uncle, sees who's born 1878 Well, one who was kind of internal. And so the dad had the business here, Aziz was in New York, doing the actual importing, export, interesting. Eventually moved out. Yeah.

Russ Dondero 1:17:31
Interesting, yeah.

The

Yeah. The Ottoman Empire would not have been a very good crucible for developing a sense of democratic life, no civic culture, no it would have been more of a process of, well, here's the people you need to deal with if you're in business and and these are the rules, the unwritten rules, whatever they were at the time, I don't know, but

I know, in my dad's case,

they arrive in Little Italy,

in Greenwich Village,

And then within a matter of a few years, they come out to Seattle, and in the process, my grandmother and my grandfather separate, which is very unusual, had to be incredibly traumatic.

But

the so Italian, the Italian who moves his family as my dad and his two younger brothers to Seattle eventually remarries how that happens. I don't know, because I don't know how you get an annulment in that era, yeah, but they must have figured it out. But they all became, you know, the brothers became solid Democrats. But a lot of lot of Catholic Italians who stayed back East were Republicans. Kind

James Moore 1:19:15
of depended on what city you went, Yeah, what the machine was, yeah. But

Russ Dondero 1:19:20
I remember, when I was at Whitman, my professor took us, we had a seminar on state, local government, and the culmination was going to Olympia to see the legislature, and we got a chance to meet with Dan Evans as a newly minted majority minority leader who was as oppressive as hell. You knew this guy was going to be somebody. Obviously it was. And then we got to meet with Governor Rossellini. Well, you know, we're in the governor's office, around this big table, and my professor is Bob, fluent of Italian, American professor.

And. So

gov, we all introduce ourselves. And what I introduced I said, Oh, he said, the governor said, Oh, I know your dad wants to I didn't say anything. I said, How do you know my dad? I was thinking, you know my dad is in Oregon, and I finally figured out he knew my uncle, Perry, who was very politically active. And but I never said anything, yeah. I just went with the flow, yeah. But So yeah, there's got to be, there's got to I think there's got to be some interesting back stories to how Vic was shaped in it by his early childhood, schooling experience, by his family experience, and at some point he must have, he must have felt I have to make a choice. I'm an Oregonian or an Arab American, yeah.

James Moore 1:20:50
And I, I don't know if he ever consciously made that choice to him, he was always an American, yeah, always, always,

always, always, yeah. But you know Edward's the only one who's left now, and I don't know how talkable he is, but there have to be stories of the generation ahead of them making that choice. There's you can see that some of them that are Dick's generation, but because the other uncle was older, so they're born 1015, years ahead, are born like Aziz, and then turn into Andrew very quickly. Yeah, so there's, there's very quick.

Russ Dondero 1:21:28

Yeah, that's interesting. When I didn't find out my dad's real name until he died. My dad, you know, my dad was Charles Albert, Don Darrell, all of my life. No, his given name was Carlos Alberto Dondero, yeah. So, you know, there and, and when I got my dad's billfold, he had an updated

what's the group Italian Americans, you know, yeah, sons of Italy, yeah, sons of sons and my and my dad never went there. Yeah. I was not raised in a I never went to a Catholic church. I was raised in a congregational church. I only went to a Catholic church when I was in graduate school visiting my uncle, Fred Ann Flores, over a summer in 66 and I said, it's about time I go to a Catholic Church. Aunt Flores took me to her Catholic Church. And so that part of my family tree was never part of the equation. The Italian part was, but it was very, you know, amorphous, yeah, but, but then to find out your dad's real name is Carlos Alberto Dondero, and that he had an updated son of Italy that told me something about my dad that I didn't know. So and then, of course, he would walk in thanksgiving. I couldn't go home from from Whitman to Roseburg, that was too long. So I'd go to Seattle, and my dad would be up with my uncle. And they would, they would, uncle would invite Italian friends over for Thanksgiving dinner, who my dad grew up with and suddenly they'd be in the other living room yacking in Italian, including my dad. I didn't know how that my dad could speak Italian, yeah, so, so again, there's got to be, you know? There's got to be another side,

James Moore 1:23:35

yep, because Vic, Vic knows no words of Arabic, yeah, yeah. I mean, he knows two of

Russ Dondero 1:23:41

them. Yeah, he speaks, he speaks Arabic like and speaks Japanese food only.

James Moore 1:23:48

Doesn't speak any Arabic and and

funny Dolores loved to she's, she did, didn't graduate from college, graduate, but, um, she would have been a home Eva person. She loved experimental cooking, international stuff, Vicks, just meat and potatoes. So there's no hummus in there, there's no kefta, there's no nothing, yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:24:15

somehow that doesn't surprise me exactly,

James Moore 1:24:17

totally. It was kind of, I think she was kind of disappointed that she cooked this and I wouldn't eat it.

Russ Dondero 1:24:27

I don't think I've given you very much. No,

James Moore 1:24:28

you're great. And as I get into this, one of the things that Vic mean the very first time I interviewed him in December, he spent the first 10 minutes saying how excited he was about this. And this is your project, not project. I'm going to give you my point of view. You know, all this kind of stuff, but for this book to stand the test of time like the McCall book, it's got to be he's a person of his times, and so if I need it, I'm going to be coming back to you for your sense of what was the late 70s. And 80s, like, in terms of context, one thing that's a positive and a negative is he's governor exactly when I leave the state, and he leaves the governorship three years before I move back. Okay, so my personal, you know, I'm, you know, living in Vermont, yeah, short school in California, and all in India, in Illinois and stuff. So, you know, it's kind of on the radar, but not, yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:25:26

that's sort of like when I would I was out of state when McCall was governor, yeah. And people used to ask me when all the things were going on that was putting Tom on the radar map, yeah, in the next 10 years, what is about your state that you know your governor says, come visit, but don't stay. And I was known as the, I was the Oregonian. I was the weirdo. I was, I mean, yeah, Dickinson, college, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. You know, their concept of West is Ohio. Oh, yeah. I mean, exactly, you know. I mean,

James Moore 1:25:56

I was in Vermont. They talk about going west. They were doing just talking about going to Albany, yeah,

Russ Dondero 1:26:00

yeah, yeah, so, so, yeah, I would, I would have to try to explain from afar, my home state, yeah, but at certain level, you know, I was at a severe disadvantage because I wasn't here. Yeah, follow it that closely. But subsequently, you know, I did, but, but, yeah. Vic, well, if I can be, if any, any help down the road, because I was around, yeah, but my memory is, is haphazard at times, so

James Moore 1:26:35

well in these projects, because, you know, it is, memory is an issue,

Russ Dondero 1:26:40

but what I have to do, what I would do next time, is

Google the TIA years and remind myself all the things I forgot, and then it will come back. Oh yeah, yeah, because I didn't do that. Yeah. I've been sick with bronchitis the last two weeks, and I'm still on meds. So yeah, but I'm not catchable, but I just, my granddaughter just shares her germs.

James Moore 1:27:09

That's good. That's that's what they do. Yeah, that's what they do. Great. Okay, so, oh.