

Victor Atiyeh Interview with Jim Moore, June 3, 2014

An interview of former Oregon Governor Victor Atiyeh, recorded on June 3, 2014. The interviewer, James Moore, was a professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer. This was one of several interviews Moore conducted with Governor Atiyeh.

Note on the recording and transcript: Atiyeh was 91 years old at the time of this recording; he died less than two months afterwards. His voice is relatively faint and thin compared to earlier recordings. This impacted the quality of the transcript, which was made through AI in 2025. The transcript 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

So here we are, the third of June, my goodness, and you've been quoted in the paper,

Victor Atiyeh 0:10

Yes, and I don't think I was angry enough. If he wants to watch his son grow up so bad, then don't run for governor. Yeah, I bet I can't imagine if imagine you being president of Pacific and you have your office in Portland, yeah.

James Moore 0:56

Doesn't make much sense.

Victor Atiyeh 0:58

Doesn't make any sense. Yeah. And well, yes, I was and it's good meet for Richardson, and we'll see how he handles it. But just because you're a Democrat doesn't mean you should be elected. [Note: They are speaking about the gubernatorial and other Oregon election campaigns happening at the time; the Republican gubernatorial primary winner, Dennis Richardson, would lose to Kitzhaber in the fall.]

James Moore 1:33

yeah, but we've got with Wehby and Richardson, their poll numbers are where a generic Republican would be, and then Merkley and Kitts are where generic Democrat is. So there are no great shakes either, but there's a lot of hills you have to go through from the Republican side to get up there. So we got to see if they can do it. I'm really going to be watching this summer.

Victor Atiyeh 2:04

Does money come in as if he's done real well? How come? I don't quite know, but she's getting money then,

James Moore 2:12

well, she's done okay. She's done okay. She raised a little over a million herself and then had a million spent on her. But I just keep going back to Chris Dudley four years ago. Mean, he'd raised like \$3 million at this point, and he ended up raising 10, and came really close, and it takes a lot of money to introduce yourself and all that stuff.

Victor Atiyeh 2:41

I think, well, there's stuff that can be used. I've told the campaign people, I don't know if they can get it, but I remember it so well right late in the campaign with Kitsap, or in the rush wood, and I'm going to get jobs for Oregon not 10 years from now, not five years from now, but now, Well, get a piece of that. Wouldn't happen. Yeah, no, no. Was

James Moore 3:23

now 20 years later

Victor Atiyeh 3:34

for me to understand why Richardson is fully knowledgeable about government. He's been there. Kitzhaber has, of course, but gets Rudy hasn't paid that much attention. So the depth of government is not anywhere near where he is. He said he kind of because it was important he missed out on that 130 some odd million dollars down the tube. Terrible. I mean, that that's just the waste, yeah, and that's not worth it for us to have him for the Obama era, I think Rudy -

James Moore 4:33

And it's not necessarily the Obama era, but at this point in any two term presidency, it's done.

Victor Atiyeh 4:44

It's done. Yeah, well, we'll just have to wait and see what happens. Yeah, I don't know why he wants to continually get. Job?

James Moore 5:07

Yeah, he's begun to articulate that, but it's like he's when he focuses on the programs that he started in this third term that he wants to make sure go through. There's no great shakes there. There's nothing earth shattering. Was a little less than a year ago that he said, Well, it's going to be tax reform, but we know there's not going to be a word about any details on that until after the election, so he's not going to run on that. So yeah, it's a mystery.

Victor Atiyeh 5:42

There's no no I have well, actually, about five, I guess it was the number when they moved all that property taxes. Can you come back? I and the legislators didn't accommodate that they were doing well, that's fine, and they didn't look ahead. We've got a billion, a billion then Kitsap was there, and he has a health thing, and that's another billion. And I don't think there is no way out of either of those, but we're not getting the jobs is what we need, and I'm not sure we get that many jobs. But now, can we raise the income tax, not just on the wealthy?

You could take all of theirs, and it really wouldn't balance the budget. Yeah, so the answer is, no, can we pass a sale tax? No way. Can we can we raise property rate taxes, not to that convention? So if you just look at what I just said, what's the only answer you really have to, in some ways, reduce what you're spending. That's not an answer, but the major part was Republican sort of relevant is too they just didn't look

James Moore 7:44

up. Oh yeah, yeah, we saw that. In fact, through the whole 90s, when the Republicans took over the legislature, they did the same thing, and it's always down the road, down the road. I wonder. I wasn't going to ask you about this because I hadn't thought about it, but in the in the 1990s as that was happening, that's also when we put in term limits. They didn't last for very long, but it's it started a culture that's lasted from then until now. People serve in the house two or three terms, and they're out. Some people like Peter Courtney, you know, last forever, but that's that's the exception. No one has a 20 year career anymore like you did. And so I'm wondering if that when you face things in the legislature and governor and you were able to think as governor, wow, this is what we did in 1965 or things like that. I wonder if that what we call political science institutional memory, if that is something that you've seen change as you've watched the entire government system deal with things, or has it, for instance, shifted from the legislature and elected officials so that it's more in the departments where people do have jobs and are there for a while.

Victor Atiyeh 9:10

Well, Jim, they're just institutional memory. In this case, I've got two or three years and that's gone, and that's not that's not enough to do the job. But I would also say, in relation to what you do that me, although you're not a writer, but the newspapers, their writers don't have institutional memory. So what happens today is something brand new, and it is old with rust on it, yeah, and I. I said to myself, Oh, I don't know how many years, but more years than I thought I was going to be there. I don't think they need people like me anymore, you know,

Speaker 1 10:17

older guy.

Victor Atiyeh 10:20

And then I said, no, they do need some people like me who have been back, not all, not a whole legislature, but they need some people like me. And you talk about the fact it's so onerous. And so mean at times. That's why people say, Oh, screw it. What the hell am I doing here? My dream of changing Oregon is just a lot of learning, right? And that's what's happening. But I always, I always bring it back to the Electorate, because the Electorate is the one that's putting these people there right, and the Electorate is not making the kinds of decisions that they should made, some pretty bad ones, as a matter of fact. And how do we fix that? Well, there's nothing you know better than I, because I don't, but there's not much in the school. So that they choose just the basics.

James Moore 11:43

No, there's a civics class, which people generally blow off. I remember when I took civics because my dad was the county commissioner and had been a reporter on the television and all this stuff. And I was a smart kid, the teacher just had me teach the class, which was a lot more than he would have done, or could or could, but it's you. So it's always been kind of pushed off to the side. Sometimes you get really good civics teachers, but it's, it's because it's a requirement, it's where they put the people who are near retirement or who are also coaching, or, you know, the debate coach, what are they? All these things, and it's catch as catch can.

Victor Atiyeh 12:33

and that's a depressing thing that added, adds to 17 trillion debt. Where the hell would you go from here? My kids, their kids, when they tell you, talk about balance in the budget, all we did was this paper. What we spent that year? Nothing about paying off the debt. Yeah, so we're adding a whole bunch of stuff. How do I get that out there? I don't know people would listen long enough

Speaker 1 13:25

are paying attention.

James Moore 13:26

Yeah, these kind of conversations always tend to preach to the choir. And that's a very small segment, yeah, and people agree or disagree with you in the choir, yeah, but they know what they're talking about. It reminds me of 20 years ago, when the Clinton Health Plan was going through. And at 1.0 which is based on his name, the senator from Phil Gramm from Texas, who PhD in economics, a tenured professor at like 28 years old, he brilliant, but at one point he Hillary Clinton, because she was spearheading that was in testifying before his committee. And he said, Mrs. Clinton, I have to say that you and I are probably the only two people in this room who knows what's going on in this bill, but and they went at it and at a very high level, and that's the problem with those conversations. They always the complexity becomes sound bites, which then turn into something that hasn't doesn't deal with the issue.

Victor Atiyeh 14:34

There are two prophetic one is Stalin and one is Lincoln. They both say the same thing. Well, Stalin says we don't have to invade. You're going to take care of it on your own. And Lincoln says that if we're if we do not survive, it's our fault. Paraphrasing, yeah. And these are the kinds of things I said, think about, worry about, I got into this thing because I really am a very ardent person in regard to our democratic type of government. The people want it, and people running away from it, even the fact of damn proud of voting by mail. I walked to my precinct at the school on election day. You know, I physically did something --

James Moore 15:43

now you don't even have to lick them.

Victor Atiyeh 15:52

And he always said that he that's neat, yeah, not me, yeah, I've got it written in my multi thing in there, how many hours in two years and I'm writing, couldn't we spend at least one or two of those once every Two years, right?

Speaker 1 16:20

Well, anyway, there

James Moore 16:21

you are. Yeah, exactly yesterday. I was talking to the Washington County Public Affairs forum I did two weeks ago, before the election, and then I did yesterday after the election, and somebody asked me, because our voter turnout was between 35 and 36 it'll probably settle around 36% and that's awful, but compared to other parts of the country, it's great. Average in the these primaries across the country spend 13%, Texas 7%, and so somebody was asking about it, and I was pointing out that in political science, we've actually studied this pretty well since World War Two, the participation has been wafting down variety of reasons, but then you add in for the Civil Rights Act, adds a group in, and it goes up, but then it continues going down. You vote by mail, it pops up and then goes down. And we have all these short term solutions, like the open primary idea, and they all have a short term effect, but the cultural connection, we don't know how to solve that. We just don't know how to do that.

Victor Atiyeh 17:34

Well, there is a way, and of course, it's education. It's talking about how important it is when the kids are younger, and that was my message when I went to school, and it's an important event, So they have to learn what this system is, right, and this system is the people on the government that's our system, and people aren't paying much attention to them. And when the occupiers [i.e. the "Occupy" movement?] were by the city, incident, I wouldn't let that happen if I'd been a mayor and cut that one off the first day. But anyway, big government, I got to get big government, and it was very much like people with theory, governments, no, God damn good. Tell me where it's not a damn good. I can take care of that. But when you say government, I can't do anything about that one.

James Moore 19:02

Yeah. I saw there's wonderful going through the oral history. You have a wonderful image of how you ran committee meetings when you were doing education, and people would come in and say, darn the education system, and you stop. We know this. Tell me what to do to change it. Testimony gets really short, and we move on.

Victor Atiyeh 19:28

I remember that so I know he's coming up, and I knew how I could handle them. And, yeah, you're right. I remember that the other one that Betty Roberts, she had a bill in to eliminate the last year high school and put in kindergarten. I said, Betty. Yes, because the last year is not relevant. Well, we could make the last year relevant.

James Moore 20:10

Yeah, there's that option.

Victor Atiyeh 20:15

I actually, I was the kind of a chairman that would let that go and went to the floor, and we beat her on the floor, but that was the big thing, so she was supposed to work, yeah, but all got on her own. I don't know. I can. First of all, I'm disappointed.

I had some problems with government, and I really hadn't converted from the National to state, but, but I thought, well, I'm going to go in there and I'm going to do it straight forward, honestly. And maybe somebody said, Well, gosh, he did it. Maybe I can do it and then we can improve things. Bullshit didn't work. And

as a matter of fact, of course,

in those days, they gave you stamps, and then I had their stamps and my steps right?

Nobody, but now you and me know

that's the way it's supposed to heal.

So there's a disappointment. I have to say that I feel real good about how we handled government, how we changed, we really changed government for the eight year period, how we got through the recession, how it was interested in our staff meetings,

managers of the state government. They were excited about being a part of solving a tough problem. Good, yeah, and

that that's good folks, and they were all bright people. That's how I picked them. I tell them,

I want you to do this job.

I expect you to do it.

Saying to them, I want to use your brain, yeah, don't report to me every day what you did, right? And

that makes guys feeling pretty good. Well,

James Moore 23:15

that gets into what I wanted to focus on today. Two things, how you picked people, and some of the people that really stand out as successes and failures in picking them, and then this, after we're done with that, then I wanted to get into beginning to pick apart what your perception was of the recession, and then how you saw a role for state government in dealing with that? So let's start with, with picking people. You've got your own staff. We talked about Denny miles when I was here last time. So, but there's, there's Chief of Staff, you know, all those kinds of people. So let's start with those. How did, how did you think of them, pick them, and then then use them. When you were in office,

Speaker 1 24:08

both

Victor Atiyeh 24:12

outgoing Chief of Staff, Denny mouse.

Denny came.

He had a Oregon State. He was communication, yeah,

James Moore 24:26

did video stuff and things, yeah,

Victor Atiyeh 24:28

and he wanted to get involved, so that school said yes for the session. So he came on as very basic intern in my house

and lasted

and then the next session, it came again.

The third session, they figured the school could stand so much that he really had to make a decision. But so now I'm. Working with him, right? And I really felt sorry for him. Several times, people say that Denny mouth is not doing his job, meaning he's not getting that he doesn't even every day. But what does he want to say that he did every day?

James Moore 25:24

You know, he separated his stamps

Victor Atiyeh 25:28

so, you know he didn't have much meat.

So wasn't his fault. That's me, not a fault.

But so I knew him,

but not just knew him and in terms of his capability of communication,

of what kind of a guy he was. And

the same thing happened with Jerry Thompson, she and Al were my chairman for Marin County for each of elections, and I knew her now,

she didn't know even over herself. By that, I mean she was number one on my list when I was elected. And she said, Well, she was ops, and she had a program going, and she couldn't leave it. And actually, Lee Johnson wasn't even second. Len number was next, but he had a deal going. It was really benefiting in the Islamic man

so anyway,

but I knew Jerry, and I knew well,

I called Jerry and she turned me down on the basis of what I just said. The turns out later,

when Lee had left that

after she came aboard,

she I didn't think I could do it. I thought she could do it right. She

didn't, but it just innately

I knew she could do it.

I don't know how it is. I know people to some maybe

I don't think anybody rush to it being I like them or I don't like them. It's, it's just I'm very sensitive as to the people and who they are.

Let's leave those two

I'd been there 20 years. I knew the good guy people were. I knew the qualified folks, so I knew who I wanted to have it and these in these top jobs.

James Moore 28:04

So it was important for them to have not just expertise, but you appreciated the experience they had in government. The

Victor Atiyeh 28:13

fact is that I knew they knew, and

Leo Hanks from he had a big budget.

Brighton, I knew that was a tough one to deal with,

but when we

the thing we did that was so good, I'm going beyond your question

is that we had weekly meetings.

The point was that I well, it helped to the degree of what's going on. You know, during the week, each week would report, but and so I would really keep tabs. I told them initially, I don't want to ever be surprised, yeah, and I never was

surprised. So I got but they got to know each other, and my best example is that we started in uh, housing, but I'm now in the in the legislature that at that point, and I think the budget was \$125 million or something like and they started to say how they were use that money, and they finally got to, like, 25 million for outreach.

Outreach. What can you talk about?

Just open the door. You don't have to go get. Up come to you. Why spend whatever I will not vote with them.

And they finally gave it all to them.

But during the recession,

we I use the word surgically because it's true. Small agencies, 10%

that's big.

Big agencies,

they'd like it, but they could do it and live with it.

So such a play. Number one. Number two was that we wanted to make, need to make the cuts, but Oregon is going to recover, so let's not destroy it. We have so when, we start getting better, we're there, right? Those are all my head, but I was so happy to watch him function knowing that they were they were an important part. I used the word

they didn't work for me.

We worked together, and

that made him feel made me feel good, too.

I guess

knowing people and

knowing

what I expected,

20 years of reaching out, 20 years legislature. Got together,

really a story, and

it worked. It worked well, and it worked very well.

I got to agencies, and I kept repeating, why you have your job, but that's why you have your job. Don't think about me. Think about why you're doing what you're doing, and well, many little things visiting and talk about not just the agency heads, but

we had the

public employees.

I'll get the following, but that isn't important. We started a program up with suggestions, and we gave 10% of what was

for one year, up to 5000 and

agency heads were not part of it. By that, I mean they would run through their agency, but they were not part of the program because he showed my idea, you know, that to happen, and, you know, a Little bit helped

one fella.

I went to and resource on

for I went, I went to their agency, and there were several there that were going to get sick. And what? Of course, I didn't know what to hear what. And the man said,

I suggested you abolish my job.

Whoever was making those decisions, that was very good. I

Well, there's so many things we could talk about. I think we just try to grab it.

When Tom McCall finished,

and I never thought about governorship

and he quit, and I said,

Hell, I can do that job internally.

I mean, I wasn't nervous. I wasn't his job that needed to be done there. Were things I didn't like, I couldn't do.

I could do that job.

And when I lost

I said to myself, well, I know that I am more or grown as are. I just didn't get the message. And this is the first time out of Washington County, and Bob Straub is out there, boss Watergate and all the rest of it. I figured that wasn't too bad. No one lose but 45

not her shaking. So

it was easy. It was

trembling about Yeah, yeah. I just said, I can do that job.

James Moore 35:57

So getting back to the agencies and you and other appointees in political science, there's, there's people study this a lot. They tend to go, go look at the presidential cabinet. But there's something called going native that happens, and that's when you appoint somebody to be the cabinet officer for Veterans Affairs or health or defense, and at a certain point, they stop doing what the President wants, and they start defending the status quo, or thinking more as the agency itself. Did you encounter that, or did the weekly meetings, do you think help to kind of break that down.

Victor Atiyeh 36:42

They it wasn't a matter of

reporting for changes that they were reporting for

some of whatever they did.

We were very open

and in the face of all the pitters and everyone come up and I say that, that's dumb, that's dumb. So we're talking among our ourselves, although we never use Uber, but it was, we were all part of this team. It wasn't just because

couldn't be veka Tia and

Speaker 2 37:37

if, well, I

Victor Atiyeh 37:43

of course, I didn't have to. I know you, and I don't know who you are, and but when they selected you for the book, I was delighted for many reasons, and mainly your objective that you wrote you were not there to sing a love song. You were there and talk about that period of time when Vicky was in the mix,

and that pleased me. That's what I want to go and so

that's how I would select people

in turn, they would come to me sometime with someone in their upper reaches of their agency,

and they were having a bit of a problem.

My question always was, are they worth saving?

If the answer was yes, if

the answer was well, then get rid of her right now, because that's not going to change. It's the kind of thing I think if you are governor. You do this.

Common sense is the word I use,

and I mean

you'll enjoy this. I started early

in our cabinet.

Governor. We got this problem. No problem. Away. No problems for all opportunities.

So we go to all these years,

82 like maybe, maybe the third special session, Governor. This is no longer an opportunity. This is really just a problem. Right, right. I remember that, yeah.

James Moore 39:48

So let's, let's take that opportunity then to shift to the recession, yes, and the things that you saw, and then the ideas and actions of the state government to deal with it. So the there, when we look back, remember, economists have different views about a recession than real people. So we've been out of this recession since 2008 but no one people are kind of thinking, Yeah, we might be, and it's six years later, and in in your time in office, there were actually two official recessions. There was a short one in 1980 and then it came up, and then it went into the deeper one in 1981 82 so when did the economic downturn become a real issue that began to kind of dominate what you did as governor.

Victor Atiyeh 40:51

Oh, I know I'm trying to think,

well, first thing I knew, and another God spoke to me, you can't have an unbalanced budget. So,

James Moore 41:10

so that's a strong sign right there, yeah.

Victor Atiyeh 41:15

But the other thing was, and the legislature hasn't done it, let's jump in and do something right now, because we can't save money we spent, yeah, and so they would say, we'll wait till the next session, or we'll put it off, or have another longer wait. You spent money. You can't save it, so my attitude was being a retailer, we got a problem with solving so that we actually had one in one and three and 8081. Was easy. There was ways to do it without any real problems. And as you know, the first 182, was raucous, and that established a new home director. But

it also was established sort of,

I think I'm understanding we just can't keep learning these things and but each time it was a matter, we're cutting, and there really are meat, and then there's bone and legislature, they realized we were the exponent, so we keep that

and control, And then the third, and

then the fourth one.

I put together in my mind, there'll be session 82

re election. Yeah, same time,

and at no point did I ever think

what I'm doing is going to affect my election.

And I think I couldn't understand either of us. I'll talk about

that in a moment. I out campaigned him, right?

Incidentally,

I just get along real well. I like him, and he's a good man. And I noticed that we go about some events where we're sitting next to each other, and I'll get up and you'll kind of reach over this old man. We don't talk about it, but

now I want to get back to Richard, my Haitian, because it's important we made cuts, and I'll pick out one that stands out to me. It says Sheldon workshops. This was in human resource and how many could we afford?

So we could, we can afford

35 but we couldn't afford. 40

that kind of thing, which meant,

now that's pretty small government,

but when you do that, everybody understands they're getting treated evenly, fairly. And didn't like it. Can't blame them,

but they just knew that, and everybody was in that position. No, I took three pay cuts, which really was cosmetic, I know it, I mean in terms of dollars, but it was just a matter of telling people, I'm with you. And so it got so what that we all were working, not just government. We were all working at that time. We were able to funnel our food through senior centers,

and they're all around the state.

And a lot a lot of good ideas came out of it. A lot of things that we did remained in the waste basket, because when you have that kind of thing, that's probably the best time to get rid of stuff you don't need some uh, some crummy thing, but you got plenty of money.

You keep doing crummy things.

James Moore 46:54

Were there. It's kind of off that line, so you're getting rid of things. And then you talked about the way there were ideas about, for instance, how to better get food out and things like that. How much were you thinking of ways that we can only cut the budget because we've got to balance it, but shifting things to where they, for instance, might be a better economic pump into the economy, or they might deal with the hunger, unemployment issues better. Were you thinking about those kinds of shifts as you were going through all of this, or was it more? You know, everything's got to be cut 10% and we're going to look at small agencies versus large agencies and be surgical about this. Yes,

Victor Atiyeh 47:44

very, definitely, very

I knew that

the money we get is from people working, paying taxes and those kinds of conditions. No such thing. Well, we did do the surplus, and they believed it. We said three years, I think we went for but they believed us.

But while I'm cutting

budgets,

I raised, I read and I raised economic development. Those two

others were cut

because I knew where our jobs were going to be or come from, or I read, or I've been have it's one of those things I read. Got \$100 last session, and we raised the budget 10% okay. Now they gather in 10 on their break loose from that.

That's what the next legislators are going to do.

So when you asked me about what I thought about

the future and how you get there,

it wasn't just a matter of cutting and cutting and saving money, but it also was a really effort to get jobs in the State of Oregon, when they say jobs, I mean

taxpayers. And

then worked. The other one worked was we didn't destroy government as we came out of it. And. The government was still good in shape, so the elements that were surrounding decisions of how many sheltered workshops we're going to get out of it, we have to

be ready to work out

in the meantime. These are the things that have to be done. You have to do it. You can't just say, like guts opera said not 10 years ago, five years of never. That's

damn nonsense. You just don't go out and catch you after now, but there's

Speaker 2 50:50

the electrics again. Yeah,

James Moore 50:54

that's what Thucydides was warning us about. Is all those silver tongued orators out there, and they're successful. They're very successful. They're very

Victor Atiyeh 51:04

successful. Yeah, they say things

that they believe this. And

the other thing I'm sure is probably driven, you know,

this candidate through Congress has said it,

and then they'll go get some

bright guy from Washington, DC to be an advisor, and there's no nothing about Oregon or no, and we're seeing

James Moore 51:41

that with the campaign staffs. They ship campaign staffs out here, and it's like, you know, you got to talk to Oregonians like Oregonians. Can't Give me a commercial and a message that would work in Georgia or Minnesota or Florida. We're not there.

Victor Atiyeh 52:01

I had, I had really a very clever man out of

home of Seattle,

Speaker 1 52:12

after I lost

Victor Atiyeh 52:15

my first race. And I'm trying to remember now, I should remember seeing a wonderful man unfortunately died. Yeah, if you decide you want to run again, you need that. And he calls himself the real Paul Miller. And so that's where it kind of hung. And then as we got closer to the whole thing, finally went up to

say hello to meet him,

And he was an advisor for the National

James Moore 53:02

This is physicians, oh, yeah, some doctors, yeah.

Victor Atiyeh 53:06

And he was speaking to them with a T shirt and a beard, and had them standing up and cheering. And so he's describing this man, and he said he's a little nutty, but he really so when we told him we're coming up, he says, I like to my friend. I got some surprises. So we land, and he comes and greet us, and he's excited. He's got a suit on. He's got a Brooks Brothers credit card. That was a change, but that's as far away as you want to get. And he was very bright. He also said that I'm going to make some suggestions, and if you want to use them, fine. If you don't use them, that's fine too. I'm not going to cry and go well, from other stuff, there it is. You decide what you want, and that's the smart thing. Most of us say, No, this is what you have to do, right? Which is probably something you shouldn't have to do. All of these mechanics, you and I can talk about them, and you know what I'm talking about.

And that's what it did.

That memory thing comes in,

and like I said to myself, well, if you like me, not a whole lot, but they need some like me. Fortunately, they come to you in the media and say, What do you say? So you get a shot at it. Yeah.

Oh. I've been timid about yourself, right?

I don't like his style

of not getting out and talking to people, not being available. This business I knew it was coming up because the guy called me. And

what gets over even conceived

as that shows his character

as a matter of believing there are many things that you you do different when you're a governor, and I would no more think of running the governorship out of this house, would fly.

That's where it is, and that's where you go.

James Moore 56:03

In that article, it was interesting that they didn't bring up there's another governor who did exactly that. But even more, Julius Meyer. He sat out at Manuka Okay, and his driver would drive him in occasionally and drive him back. And he ran the whole state during legislative sessions, and everything sitting out there at Manuka. And it's just so when they were doing this, kids, there's a great example, and you can take pictures, I mean, but they didn't, they didn't, either didn't know it or didn't put it in there. But it's been done before, but, yeah, did a lot of research to make that to put that story together as well. I was also fascinated. Today's the primary in California, and so Jerry Brown is going up for his fourth term with a new they have this open primary system and things like that. He's expected to get through just fine. Get through just fine, but it's fascinating, as I was going to come talk to you, you served at the same time Jerry Brown did, who's now on his fourth Kitzhaber is a fair chunk after you. I mean, he was in the Senate when you were there, but it's just interesting to see these two guys going for their fourth term. And in effect, Jerry Brown adds in another generation ahead of kits in terms of the amount of time that he's been around at this high level. Yeah, and Jerry Brown, you know, his kids Harbor, you can see he's mellowed. He's actually changed. He's in compared to Ray was his first term or two. He's much more outgoing. He'll campaign for people in the legislature. He never did that before. Jerry Brown has gone undergone just a huge conversion in the type of governor he is, in his openness, in ability to really work across the aisle, lots of things. It's like he was the ideologue who became the total pragmatist, whereas Kitzhaber, you can see a continuity there. There's not a I sense

Victor Atiyeh 58:12

that by little things I read about Jerry Brown, and having known him, it ain't the same, yeah, I'll tell you. Tell you a story. First National Governor's meeting, and California was sitting next to me here, and Jerry Brown, at that time, was

constantly running for president, right? And so he was running for president, and the setup, as you know, was this square. And then in this case, the media was all up against that wall. So well start the meeting, and he had not yet shown up. And sometime during the meeting, he comes in with his entourage, and immediately he starts talking,

I guess, figuring out what question he wants to ask,

I finally said, got a governor,

took a tear from Oregon, but

he wasn't really interested in that.

But now I'm going to do that. I even got a photograph.

You know, when he said they have these water things,

toilets, yeah, paper, toilets, yeah.

So he says to me, would you like to drink water? Oh. Yeah, thank you. So he picks this thing with the door he attached, pours the water down and then puts it here. Why? Because he didn't want the one, the water thing in front of him. Wanted it in front of me. I wanted president. Oh, my God, if I were fast enough, I would have said, later, would you like a drink water? But there's a program somewhere. Yeah, it was a newspaper thing.

Jerry Brown, torn water with the day. I

but, and,

of course, the fact that he was married had a lot to do with whatever he was doing. Oh, yeah, and

now I, we're all different.

Tom, I said, to I said, Ed westerdoll, why don't you make a deal with Tom? You?

Have him write his speeches and you write the head lips.

We went back to Washington. May have talked about on Saturday, Bill 100 Yeah, Jackson, yeah. I

James Moore 1:01:47

was actually just reading about that as well. Yeah.

Victor Atiyeh 1:01:51

And the one thing truly

he gets credit,

but he gets credit for doing the whole thing. I give him credit for being tenacious. He In other words, he took it and ran with it. And so it was him taking it and running with it, were able to

move these measures.

The one thing I don't understand is why his portrait has him at the beach, because he had nothing to do with that.

James Moore 1:02:35

He flew into the helicopter and a stick, yeah,

Victor Atiyeh 1:02:41

but, and Audrey didn't answer that. Audrey didn't like it. Yeah, I'm sure Tom did, because he's bigger life, yeah, but she said to me, I got word. I sometime in the middle of the night that Tom had passed away.

So I drove up and

talked, excuse me, talk with Audrey. She's so she was telling me about what the this whole service is going what's going to happen? But then she said, Oh, Tom's gonna

James Moore 1:03:36

love it, yeah, Joe and I was giving my talk yesterday, because these the Senate and the governor's race had the potential to be really interesting, but a lot has to happen to really make them strong, strong races. We may have a wonderful group of ballot measures, including one to have a Tom McCall day. And so I was just as I was talking to them and saying, so I don't know what you do on Tom McCall day, I'm envisioning people running to the beach with sticks and putting them at the mean high tide line and posing for pictures.

Victor Atiyeh 1:04:21

The quickest way to describe Thomas, I think playing golf, I told him. Must have told him nice shot Tom.

And his reply was yes. It was

normally say, thank you. Yeah, exactly.

So that's a sort of snapshot. Yeah, absolutely, that's

who he was. He liked it. Uh huh. He pushed things to happen. You know, the bottle built was not his at all. No. And he posted to start with, but it was, it was really heavily lobbied, because we had a glass manufacturing plant, but it was his push. So that's where I gave him credit, not for inventing

James Moore 1:05:25

out in front, yeah, like the Henry Ford of politics didn't really invent anything, but by gosh, he put it together and pushed it,

Victor Atiyeh 1:05:33

yeah? Or you could have any color you want, huh?

James Moore 1:05:36

Yeah, exactly. I just learned that before the every every color you wanted except black, they had them in all sorts of colors. But what he discovered is, with the new way that he put together the production line, black paint was the only thing that would dry in time to keep the production line going at that speed. And so that's why they did everything before that. When it was a slower line, you could pick all sorts of colors, yeah? But it was just because those other colors wouldn't dry fast enough. And so there you go. They're black, yeah?

Speaker 1 1:06:18

Well, a lot of reasons for things. Oh,

James Moore 1:06:21

yeah, exactly. Well, we've been going for a little over an hour. The next big thing I wanted to talk about was the Rajneeshees. Do you want to do that now for the next 20 minutes or so? Or Sure, okay, so let's talk Rajneeshees. The key things here. I mean, people have written about the Rajneeshees,

you know, all sorts of angles on it,

but I know from talking a little bit to you, and then a lot to Denny, that you know you had behind the doors, you had the state police set up and all those things, and that you made a very particular point of not talking to the Rajneeshees in person, and that you carried your executive order around with you all the time. So tell me, you know, kind of a complete story. How did they come to your attention, and then the reactions as you moved through the rajneeshee,

Victor Atiyeh 1:07:24

attention as the red clothes that they all had and Sheila, crude,

terribly arrogant. I it.

And then, of course, overgoing Is there a better and ill and they had right to be.

Rosny figured that

they're bigger than anybody

Speaker 1 1:08:02

out of had a man

Victor Atiyeh 1:08:08

do something about those people. What do all men do?

I said, Look, if they break the law,

there's the citizen, they're going to get the same treatment anybody else will because of the loud mouth pushing around it. There's nothing in the Constitution about that. And a democracy, you can do that. And I've told people, I said repeatedly, you don't understand democracy. You really don't, because that couldn't happen, as a matter of fact, didn't happen when he went back to India, they wouldn't let him in his own city. Well, we couldn't do

that. They come to me and say,

they've got guns.

We had good

information.

But, you know, my little pickup comes up and down the frame where he's got a gun. Out there, we can have guns, but he can't have a gun. Again, it always came back to me as a democracy, you violated, and you're in trouble. Now, there were the verbs of violating, and you've heard that we put into training

the National Guard.

Now the reason for that was if Aaron training in the federal government pays for it

James Moore 1:09:41

exactly.

Victor Atiyeh 1:09:45

There we had all that equipment at Redmond.

They brought these homeless and it wasn't working for them, so they just turned them loose, and I kept yelling at them, you. Got to send these poor people back toward least something they know. And in the meantime, quietly, the Salvation Army, we gave money to go get him and put him on a bus so we never told him we were doing it, and I hated him as

much as anybody.

The other one thing, though, I knew

that they were going to go away. Cults always go away. If you know of any history at all, they'll go away. The only problem is, when are they going to go away? Right? And

I think in their right to be bad,

but have to remember that that's a democracy, things we can do and can't do, they should realize

that's the case.

Sheila really wanted me to come talk to him. I never I didn't want to give any sliver. But Jerry and Bob Smith would meet with him for the first time, and unfortunately, probably the last time. All

law enforcement was working together.

And, you know, fortunately, they out there, and some are here, across the line, that's my criminal, which means your criminal, right? And so on, the sheriffs and the police and the state police and all of that, and the federal government and they all worked together for the first time, and then they helped keep a cap on I uh, but you go through that, and I get training if you want to learn anything, but I've done much really learned anything.

But in a democracy, you take it as it comes, and

you do the things that need to be done. Yeah.

James Moore 1:12:46

Did the Rajneeshees do anything after they successfully won election, so they took over the city? Did they do things like take part in the league of Oregon cities meetings or anything like that that, you know, of mean, because it would seem to me that if I were in a cult doing that kind of thing, but then you gain a major legitimacy, you know, under the rules, you've won. If I wanted to talk to somebody like you, I just figure out what the League of Oregon cities was doing, and I'd go to a meeting

Victor Atiyeh 1:13:22

where you were I they probably felt they were bigger than whatever it is.

They really didn't feel they were

big time, but they were dealing with a small city and a small county, and they weren't going to go very far.

The salmonella thing, awful

there has this is not proven

night before the session at a start, logs were still going, and I was just say a few words, along with whatever else they had. And during the course of the dinner, I got really, very sick, really sick.

I got up and

said a few words and left

Dolores and Ion said, We ought to go to Mercury.

Went home, and

finally I agreed. I was in bad shape. I does. He knows this came on. Now,

Bhagavad had something to do with that,

and that could be. Me.

Fortunately, I was able to,

they gave me shots and did whatever they do, and I was able to get up and go to the next morning, right? And I was anxious, because this morning is my last chance to speak to the joint system, right? So there was that. We didn't make much of it, but,

but that was guesswork. Salmonella was not guesswork. Yeah,

Speaker 2 1:15:42

and so

Victor Atiyeh 1:15:47

they could do those things.

You know, I said

I had a bug one and a recession all at the same

James Moore 1:16:04

time. Space out a little bit, but

Victor Atiyeh 1:16:09

it was interesting.

Just seemed to go through it, and then I go back, and I'm not being too honest, but I come from a small store business, and my brothers and I are retailers, which, as it turns out, is a useful learning tool, and all the things that are involved, we didn't. There were months we wouldn't take our own salaries, kinds of things retailers have to face. And going back, I was going back Washington. No,

anyway, my cousin is a stuff back there,

told him, then decided I was going to run for governor,

and he could tell that's nice.

Speaker 1 1:17:22

And the

Victor Atiyeh 1:17:26

whole thing just happens. Yeah, I never anticipated and held to it that I was not going to ever

commit myself to running again,

and certainly I would never thought about the governor, never until I figured my 20 years training, I think I'm ready to be put on. Yeah, get off the bench.

James Moore 1:17:58

Yeah. Did you ever consider national office, national law, not for

Victor Atiyeh 1:18:08

two things.

I never want to go to Washington,

but probably more important, when you're one on one, right to be one of 100

James Moore 1:18:24

or 435, yeah,

Victor Atiyeh 1:18:30

and I watched Congress, and they just stop around. They'll solve problems two years after it needs to be solved. I so I think the most important post is a governor, because you can make changes in a state,

and if you make a mistake, it's only a 1/50

mistake. Back there, 5050, so I had no inclination or dessert. I believe

I could have beat Bob primary,

but I walked the beach with him. I told him I wasn't going to run. Probably he

James Moore 1:19:29

slipped because he had his first re election or a second but at one point, there was a Tom McCall thing going on there too. There's a famous story of on the filing deadline just before five o'clock, packwoods up at the dias Yeah, and McCall walks in 455 or whatever. Yeah. Glad hands. Everybody gets up in the front and shakes Bob's hand and says, Good luck. I. Just

this goes away. But

so, yeah, I mean, you, you were, you were, you know, you're the, the most recent Republican governor, but you were, you were a governor at a time when, you know those moderate Republicans, there were giants, and they bumped into each other, which is exciting to watch. And you know, it sounds like you had a good attitude about how it all worked and things like that, but if you were a bit thin skinned, it could be a pretty threatening time if you were up there, yeah. Yeah. Okay,

Victor Atiyeh 1:20:43

really, when you think of it,

a state is a place you can make changes, and they can be copied by other states if it works.

Much of it happens that way, but you

uh, but federal government is just out of control. Totally. Everybody's thinking about, what can I do to make me look good for my next election? Yeah, and that's not the way you're supposed to vote. Yeah,

James Moore 1:21:21

in political science, we talk about the state's role in this is the laboratories of democracy, where you try things, and it's fascinating to watch how people in the President or in Congress don't let the laboratories work. So first big example is the No Child Left Behind, which was Texas for like, two years, and we didn't know if it worked or not. We later found out it didn't. But by gosh, Bucha becomes president, and he sells people and poof, there it is. It's everywhere, and it's had

its ups and downs, and it's kind of going away. But the healthcare is the same thing Massachusetts. That's the plan that we used, and it had worked moderately well in Massachusetts, but there were specific things about Massachusetts that made it work, and then boom, that's what everybody falls on, is they're coming around, and it's everywhere, and it's a grand experiment, and we're not all Massachusetts, and we'll see what happens, but it's just fascinating to watch the politicians say, Oh, I did one experiment in one place, so it must be applicable everywhere.

So there we go.

Something to watch on that is Obama's carbon emissions idea that just came out. It's based on what Oregon, Washington, California, and several of the states, including a couple of Canadian provinces, have been doing cap and trade and things like that. And for them, for us, it actually has made the carbon levels be lower than they were expected to be, not where we projected, but lower. So I don't know if that's enough of an experiment.

Victor Atiyeh 1:23:13

We'll find out. Well, there's many of those men.

Some don't work for some states. Some

don't work at all for any states, yeah, I'd

say, well,

North Dakota does this

argument. Why is she weak? Well,

let's go see what he did. But just because, but the subject

wouldn't

have been brought up of North Dakota,

James Moore 1:23:56

right, right? It creates its own reality.

Victor Atiyeh 1:24:01

One place that didn't work, I was sitting again with the governors, and North Dakota was on one side, and South Dakota and the other side of me leaned over and said to North Dakota, what kind of an airplane Do you have? And so he's describing an airplane. We don't have

any North and South,

but I really think we should have had but that was a matter of not being a governor's point. But I can have my department heads going on Terry back the same day instead of a three day trip. And

somebody sent a

little wooden airplane. This is the only airplane you're going to get. I. Yeah,

Speaker 1 1:25:03

so, but Well,

James Moore 1:25:07

I think that's a good morning,

Victor Atiyeh 1:25:09

Jim. I enjoy being with

you and really try not to over live

it, but I have some great memories, aside from the technical polymer political side of things that happened.

I was up in the river, and

saying that the lodges that the sheriff that was in deep troubles coming through, he shaved their head and turned them around anyway, in the backyard, He had this,

agriculture,

agricultural engine thing

and Marvel, strawberry. Robin.

Well, he said, Look,

I tried and tried and tried to get it started,

and when I finally got at the starter, I started. I couldn't stop it. Don't flash like that. You see my paddle

of the great Coronavirus? Yes,

James Moore 1:26:50

yes, yes, you have it. Yeah, I think we've got it. Yeah,

Victor Atiyeh 1:26:57

they gave it to me. Said, Governor, you screwed up more than once,

but it almost got to be an honor.

The first Did you hear that story? How it first started? You really enjoyed this?

Well, first I was

going up to rogue,

and this paddle coming down, and I grabbed it,

and instantly I had an idea.

Anyway, we painted it up, up the creek without a paddle,

and the first one was

my public utilities Commissioner, again,

good man did a good job

anyway. He was testified, and it was whatever it was, it was controversial. Room is filled with people, and of course,

TV and radio and so they were on them. Now, Governor TMA do No, no,
they keep hounding anyone.

This is Governor idea, too.

Finally, the senators dropped off, except one housing.

Finally, out loud in this room as a senator, this job is tough enough. I don't have to take that shit,
but that's exactly out there public.

Oh yeah, yeah,

James Moore 1:28:58

I've always wondered what I would do if I was called to testify before Congress or something like that. Like, do you
listen to what you're saying?

Any idea about this?

Victor Atiyeh 1:29:10

Oh, yeah, the different things the

department transportation,

they were working on the bridge between West and East,

and Christmas time was coming up,

and he gets on that

TV, I guess it was that says that caution

people not to use the ridge I got.

Don't you know, these guys have been waiting all year long for this period of time, and you're telling them, don't come
to downtown. And.

That we had fun

and we had jokes,

we had reports, and

it was a good deal.

I yeah, I like to make clear, of course, Joy Thompson wasn't Republican, but I had Pat Eva on natural resources on
basically arrested governments, and I knew Pat was a Democrat. Bob Duncan recommended her, and I knew when I
hired her, she was really good. It wasn't until after I left office, I found out Bob was

registered Democrat.

But you see, that's a good lesson, because

just don't let don't let that bother you. Yeah, it's the same thing between female and male.

As a woman or a man,

they're competent, competent men and incompetent also. So killing us. Start throwing those buckets around, and we're in a hurry.

James Moore 1:31:46

Yeah, yeah. When reading your oral history, you're writing about your relationship with Bob Smith, and then when he, I think when he became speaker, but at some point he made everybody had to be a Republican on the staff. And I know the other end of the story. When he was in Congress, he had Democrats and Republicans,

and when

Walden came in, he fired all the Democrats. So I don't know if Bob Smith had seen, you know, I just have to have people running these offices who know what they're doing. I don't know what changed, but it was interesting to read your from the 1960s 70s, and then I was paying attention, you know, when he left office, yeah. And it was a different, a different thing. And Walden came in and said, Nope, all Democrats are out the door.

Victor Atiyeh 1:32:38

Bob. Did that change?

Yeah. But fascinating

again,

is that picture of a six in a phone book. But that wasn't the thing we were having a hawk, but we had a state treasurer, Tony meager Supreme Court, Justice, Chief, Congressman and government out of that six, Yeah, amazing. Pretty good odds.

James Moore 1:33:13

Pretty amazing. Well, good I'm going to be out.