

Well, Sean, after reading through your bio, and taking a look at all of the stops that you've made during your career in politics, how have you risen from simply a staffer on a Congressional campaign to, eventually, Press Secretary for the President of the United States? I mean, to sustain such a meteoric rise like you have; it's extremely impressive, to say the least. How'd you end up making it happen?

Thank you. Look I think there's a lot of that a lot of timing and luck and then just a little bit of tenacity in there. I found a calling and a passion in politics and it's not a very lucrative industry. And so, when a lot of my colleagues and contemporaries kind of went on to either consulting or K Street or an association job or a corporate world, I stayed in it. And I think that, you know, the longer you stay in it the greater opportunities there are in politics to move up.

And I sort of found myself in the right place at the right time with President Trump because there weren't a ton of, you know, if you will be, establishment that was willing to be part of the team. And so when he won, and a lot of people really had written off the campaign, there weren't a lot of us that had been with him during the campaign that had prior experience that wanted to go to the administration and I was lucky to be among that handful of people.

Now, granted, being press secretary, and speaking on behalf of the President is quite an important and respected job, without a doubt, but when you're working for a President like Donald Trump, someone who's repeatedly had problems in detailing the truth, your job becomes much harder and open to more criticism. That being said, would you say that our current President made it more difficult for you to try and go about your work in the right way?

Wow, that's actually a really interesting question! Because I think that when you hold a staff position, your job is to serve the principal as opposed to ... it's not like you are a partner. And I wrote this in my book, Jon, that he [President Trump] is not a traditional candidate in a traditional president and I think as somebody who had been steeped in sort of traditional politics and in government, there was a big transition to say the least. And he clearly has a different style than the average politician. And so there's no question that the learning curve was steep, and it was just vastly different because I tell people, in my career I sort of have been a guy who, on the staff, on the team, was saying this is our media strategy this is our communications strategy to drive the message. In the Trump world, it's the opposite. He's the one who's driving that train and you're along to amplify it. But it's a vastly different construct than normally exists on a campaign or in a government institution.

And, you know, with your job involving aspects like speaking on behalf of the President and keeping American citizens informed, it was troubling, from an outsider's perspective, to see the current administration erase the line that once existed between fact and fiction. You know, we've heard KellyAnne Conway coin the term "Alternative Facts" early in the Trump tenure, and since then, it's been a consistent talking point for many on both sides of the aisle. As a former Trump administration member, are you at all concerned about the direction in which the truth has gone since he's taken office?

You know, look, I think President Trump is ... There's two aspects of this. One is, he is somebody if you go back through his career, as a salesman he's always been somebody who's used hyperbole talks about the greatest, the best; that that's part of his style and his salesmanship. Then there's the, you know, the piece that you're getting into, which is knowing and willingly I think misleading the American public and I think that was an entirely different construct something that I never... There times and I've been very clear on this, that I made mistakes; I fell short in an effort sometimes to get out information sometimes on an evolving situation. I didn't have the most up to date information or it changed. And it was rapidly changing and there's a big difference between that and coming out and blatantly trying to mislead people. And you go back through history, you know, if you look at the Obama administration they talked about Obamacare and health care and keeping your doctor and keeping your plan. They talked about Benghazi being a video. And so the question is: 'Was it a blatant attempt to mislead people or did people not have the appropriate facts at the time?' And there is a big difference between those two.

(Sean Spicer here on Sports Talk Chicago) And Sean, obviously today, you're no longer the White

House Press Secretary. In fact, you ended up resigning back in July of 2017. You know, we've been talking about a lack of accuracy and truthfulness on the current administration's part; we've also discussed the difficulties of your former position based on that lack of truth. Is that why you decided to resign, or was there another reason why you stepped down after just 6 months on the job?

So there were a few reasons. I mean, look, I lived in the public eye for six plus years where people were watching everything I said and did. And there's no question, as I said a moment ago, that there were some moments at the beginning where I could have done a better job. And I think the water was tainted, if you will, from the beginning. And a good chunk of that's on me. And I think as I went forward with the president, we came to a point where he really wanted some fresh and new blood. We were understaffed. I'd been dual added three times as both White House Press Secretary and Communications Director. We wanted to bring in some new folks. I respected that I encouraged the President to do that. But I think ultimately, when he selected somebody who I didn't think I could be a good partner with, and I didn't think it was going to work out well, I said to the president 'Look, I respect the fact that you want some fresh blood, if you will, a reset. I support that but I think it's better that I step away and let you do this.' There was no way after what the first six months had been, that the curve was going to change and suddenly, it was going to get tremendously better and all things were going to be great. And for both the sake of myself, my family, and for the President and the administration, it was my belief that if I step down, and let somebody new come in, that you would have an opportunity sort of reset, if you will, and not make it as much about me as it had become. Because ultimately, the job of a press secretary is communicate the thoughts, ideas, policies, events, and announcements of a principal or a candidate or an official. And it's not supposed to be about them. And I think too often I've found the story was becoming about me, and that's not something that I ... you know... if I put my objective hat back on as somebody who advised people before, I would have said, this is not a good, tenable scenario for your organization going forward, and I had to be, I think, fairly honest with myself about what was in the best interest of not just me, but for the country and for the President and that was to step down.

How difficult was that for you to have to deal with the story being about you instead of the president? Again you're just trying to do your job, being the press secretary, and communicating the ideas that President Trump has, and then all of a sudden, all of these stories are coming out about yourself and how you're doing your job and all of that. How did that affect you personally?

Oh it was horribly ... I mean it was difficult, horribly difficult. Look, I joke with people I had probably done in my six years with the RNC, you know, roughly 500 plus interviews. I had rarely ever gotten noticed or whatever. And that changed immediately in the Trump administration. And I had always known that there would be a little bit more attention brought because of the, you know, the nature of the job, but the idea that, you know, there would be skits and memes and all that kind of stuff that eventually came, was not something that I anticipated, expected, or in many cases, relish. At times, it was extremely difficult, not just for me but for my family. Jon, look, I always tell people I joke about the fact that my upbringing in politics was like a minor league ballplayer. I went from campaign to campaign city to city, wherever the next game was, that I could grow my career. But to get a job like White House press secretary; frankly I never thought that was possible. The guy at the RNC running communications, which is what I had been for six years, is never the person that gets selected for the press secretary job. It's always somebody from the campaign. And because of the uniqueness of the Trump campaign, I had this opportunity. But I had never in my wildest dreams thought of that. And this was literally going from playing like minor league ball, Cape Cod League, you know kind of ball, to suddenly getting thrust into the playoffs of Major League Baseball. And that was a massive and titanic shift in my life.

You know speaking of Major League Baseball, now that you mentioned it, I know you're a very big Red Sox fan, you're also a big Patriots fan. So I wanted to ask you this question and it's gonna be a choice question, so it's gonna be, I'm sure a difficult one. What was the greater moment to you in Boston sports history: the Red Sox breaking the curse in 2004 and winning the World Series, or the Patriots coming back from a 28 to 3 deficit in the Super Bowl to win it all.

Oh. All right. Look you're right. That's not fair. It's not easy. But I'm going to go with the Sox on this

one. I mean, look that game in Houston was by far one of the best that anybody will ever see in their lifetimes, as far as a comeback goes. But for the Sox, breaking that curse was something that was stood for generations and I've been to a World Series victory at Fenway and there is nothing that I can compare it to. So, you're right, it's a tough question. But I'll go with the Sox on that one.

And finally, Sean, before we let you go here today, let's go back to February of 2017, where, less than 3 weeks after you began your job as Press Secretary, comedian Melissa McCarthy put together a funny impersonation of you on Saturday Night Live. She even won an EMMY for it later in the year. What were your thoughts on McCarthy's impression; did you find it accurate??

It's not. I mean look she was trying to be funny. I think she's a very talented actor. There were some parts of it, obviously at the beginning, I thought it was funny. If you're going to do a job like this you've got to be on the laugh at yourself. But, there were obviously I think there are a couple of times when it's hard to go over the line. It was a little bit more mean than funny. But as far as she goes there's no question she is extremely talented. You know I remember the first time that I saw that and I really had to laugh at myself; I knew that I'd had a tough first week. I had no idea that I would be part of that skit, but, you know, I sat back and I watched it the first time and I just laughed and I said you know what. You deserve this, Sean

Well Sean, thank you so much for joining me here today. Really appreciate the time and hope to have you on again soon. Thank you.

You bet. Thank you.