

Washington Post  
Interview with Jimmy Gould

Jane: This is Jane.

Will Hobson: Hi Jane. This is Will Hobson. How are you doing?

Jane: I'm great. How are you?

Will Hobson: Good, good. Does now still work?

Jane: Yes. Hold on one moment.

Will Hobson: Sure.

Jimmy Gould: Hi, Will.

Will Hobson: Hi, Jim. How are you doing?

Jimmy Gould: How are you doing?

Will Hobson: Good, good. Actually, sorry for all the confusion. It's been a little hectic. Try to research a part of a book about Donald Trump in like two weeks and see how frantic you feel your life is. You just reschedule right in the middle of 40 other interviews I've been juggling for the last two weeks so I'm happy to get 10, 20 minutes for you whenever I can get it.

Jimmy Gould: Whatever you need, I'm happy to help you. I'm happy to follow up again if we need to do it. And, you know, I know him well, and obviously with him early in his formative years so I know him a lot differently than a lot of people. But I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

Will Hobson: Great, great. Basically, what we're doing at *The Post* and in kind of a rapid form is pulling together a biographical book about Donald. Normally, books take years, but in the way we're speeding this process up, we have a bunch of reporters all researching different chapters of Donald's life, a lot of which has already been written about because he's obviously been a public figure for nearly four decades now. One of my chapters is I'm focusing on his USFL time and his various sporting interests, but the USFL is obviously the most significant really sports-related interest he had.

So I went through a court file in New York last week, and I'm reading the *One Dollar League* right now. But what I would be interested from you, outside of few specific factual questions I have, are just any descriptive anecdotes, any stories of Donald at that time, how he carried himself, how he handled himself, or even just stories that come to mind of Donald Trump, owner of the New Jersey Generals and him and the world of sports that you think are emblematic of him.

Jimmy Gould: Well, it kind of goes back to the first meeting, I think it was 1980, when a bunch of people got around the table at the Grand Hyatt Hotel which he had just built, and our goal was to build a football league that would play in the spring. We sat around the table, and every key probably big

real estate guy in the country was at that table, along with kind of their -- I called them at the time *consigliere*.

I had quit law school. Everybody in my family were lawyers, and I came to the meeting with former Ambassador Marvin Warner who owned part of the Yankees and the Buccaneers, and I had done a banking deal with him. This was way before his savings and loan collapsed, way before, probably, I don't know, five, six, seven years before that. He had taken me to the meeting because he had said that he would give me a dream. I had the choice between going into the shipping business or going into this league, so I chose the league because I was young and stupid and poor.

I walked in this room, and it was in the Grand Hyatt, and sitting in the middle of the table was this guy known as Mr. New York, you know, Donald Trump, Mr. New York. And I obviously did not know who he was even though I had been married, living in New York for a long time prior to that into a fairly well-to-do family, and he knew but I didn't know him because I hadn't really been back investing in New York.

And so he was there. I think Alfred Calvin was there. There were guys from pretty much every major city there, and the goal was to come out of that room and talk about whether we wanted to build this league called the USFL. During the meeting, the guy that I was with got up to go leave the room.

He was cold, and I pulled my chair up to the front. As I'm looking around the room, I'm realizing I'm the youngest and poorest guy in the room because I had no money from anybody. I quit law school so you can imagine my fellow --

Will Hobson: How old were you at that point?

Jimmy Gould: I was 30 years old, and I basically have been disowned by my family because I quit law school and we were three generations of family lawyers. So it was just my father built the Scrap Iron and Steel Institute of America and represented Columbia Pictures, a lot of different things. Anyway, I kind of looked around. I said the only way I'm ever going to get anywhere on this thing is to put my hand up, because as I looked around the table, and Donald was there. He was pretty cool. I mean, I didn't really -- there was so much wealth in the room that you know I just knew I was the poorest and certainly the youngest. So I put my hand up and I became chairman of the executive committee, and co-chairman of the media committee, and chairman of the stadium committee, and chairman to the commissioner committee. It was very little I did not put my hand up for, and I figured with these guys, nobody's going to do any work. I'm going to do it all.

The meeting ended. We all went down to the bar, and we're sitting down there having a drink, and Trump walked up to me. Again, I didn't know him. He handed me his card and he said,

"I'm not going to do the league, but, you know, if you ever think there was an opportunity, give me a call." He handed me his card and he left. That was it. That next Christmas, I sent a basket of fruit to him or something like that.

Will Hobson: Did he explain at that point why he wasn't interested?

Jimmy Gould: He didn't really give me an explanation. He just kind of said, you know, he just didn't seem like he wanted to do it. I mean, he was definitely intrigued by it.

Will Hobson: I'm sorry, this was 1980?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. I can check that for you but I think it was -- I'll check and see, but I think it was 1980 when we had our very first meeting at the Grand Hyatt, the very inaugural meeting which created the founding members of the league, which was myself. Trump was not a founding member. Actually, nobody has ever gotten it right so I'm glad we're talking because Steve Ehrhart wasn't around, and Michael Tollin wasn't around. It was John Bassett, me, the father of cable television Bill Daniels, Mark Herman who worked with -- not Mark Herman. I forget the guy's last name, but one of his guys; Alfred Calvin, Alex Spanos was originally in the original deal. He ended up not doing the deal but he was in the original meeting. A guy named Ron Blanding in Denver, another guy Victor

Sia [phonetic]. I mean it was a pretty powerful group of people.

Will Hobson: Was it Mr. Dixon who called this group together?

Jimmy Gould: Yes. David was the founder, and David became very fond of me because I really was kind of the -- in fact, Trump named me from the meeting. He gave me the nickname Youngblood Hawk, because the only thing I can think of was I was flying down and grabbed at everything I could. I mean, I don't know what prompted it, but he liked me instantly. And I didn't really know who the hell he was, which made me not pay a lot of attention to him while everybody else were certainly paying homage to him. We're in his hotel. I mean, I wasn't paying a lot of attention to the whole thing. I was there trying to figure out how I was going to survive because I really had no money. I literally was kind of trying to figure out, you know, I'm the little train that could kind of like.

So, you know, he leaves. I send him fruit. He sends me a thank you note. A year goes by or two years go by. It may have been like '81 or '80. I'll get you the date. But at the end of the day, we end up having the kickoff party at 21 Restaurant in New York, and I'm in Washington DC. I think at the time the kickoff party was Birmingham, Alabama. I got screwed out of that deal. I ended up going to Washington and becoming

president of the Federals. So the inaugural game was in Washington which I did against George Allen, and I was the president of that team and went from there to Tampa, Florida with John Bassett which was another thing that Michael Tollin in 30/30 missed. Bassett came and rescued me. I'd lost 10 games in a row in Washington. They didn't fire the general manager. They didn't actually fire me. They just said maybe it's time for you to move on.

So I worked out a settlement. I went to Tampa. I was sitting down in Tampa, bored out of my gourd, and my phone rings and it's Walter Duncan who was a founding member, who was worth a billion dollars. He was an oil man in Oklahoma. He said, "I've been watching you for a few years now. I like you. I trust you. I really am tired going to 16 away games," because he was Oklahoma, and he was the guy who got Herschel Walker by the way, off the college campus. He said, "I'd like you to sell my team for me." I said, "How much?" He said, "\$8.5 million" and the going insides was \$6 million.

Will Hobson: So actually that leads to my first factual question that I do need to make sure I nail down, which is the actual price of the Generals has been the sales price that Donald paid. In a range and in the court files, there's a sale agreement that if I'm reading it right is \$5.3 million.

Jimmy Gould: Well, he may have ended up paying that, but I believe the contract was closer to -- \$8.5 million was the original deal. But he did have some concerns after he bought it, and there were some -- I'm not sure where it ended up because -- and I'll get to that in a minute. I do believe we signed the contract for \$8.5 million. I'm 99.9 percent positive that that's what the price was.

Will Hobson: What would your job have been at that point?

Jimmy Gould: Well, I represented Duncan and then I became president of New Jersey Generals.

Will Hobson: So were you like an independent agent working for Duncan?

Jimmy Gould: Of which I was purely an independent agent. At the exact moment I sold him the team, I was the executive vice president of the Tampa Bay Bandits and of John Bassett's media and real estate company, living in Tampa. I have been president of the Federals and a founder. I have been a founder of the league. I was still chairman of the media committee.

Will Hobson: So why did Duncan ask you to broker the sales? Just because he figured you were connected and would know who would be interested in buying?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. I think he just -- well, what he said to me is, "I'd like to get out. You know everybody. You're co-chair of the expansion committee. You know everybody. You help



bring people into the league. You're a young guy." I said, "We put that in writing," and he said, "No." I said, "What will you pay me?" He said, "I'll pay you \$300,000." To me that was like a lot of money, anybody it will be a lot of money. You know I was [indiscernible].

Now, we're in 1983, and I'm a man without a country basically even though I'm down in Tampa with Burt Reynolds and John Bassett, and I'm living the high life, you know, going there at the games and going to an office, but I was freaking bored out of my mind, and I'm down there, and John was one of my dearest friends in the world. That's the story that was really never told right by Michael Tollin who, by the way, he and I did a movie together, so I'm not picking on him. But he missed the most important element of the story, which is I was with John when I got the call as executive vice president, and John and I were both co-chairmen of the expansion committee, and of the media committee. We did the ABC deal and the ESPN deal.

Everybody knew it was kind of my league. I mean David Dixon had moved on. Judge Peter Spivak had taken over as chairman, it was with Alfred Calvin in Detroit, and I was kind of the guy who was really pushing to go sign as many ball players as possible and had even done a deal that Tampa signed the first future contract for Cris Collinsworth was my deal. That's when we paid Cris for [audio glitch] to help market the

league during the winter when the NFL was playing. I mean it was the only time in history. We wanted to go after their players and bombard the NFL.

Will Hobson: What timeframe would that have been? Right after Donald bought?

Jimmy Gould: I know exactly. That was the summer of 19 -- it was right after the season -- that was 198? [audio glitch] and we would have been like in July or August.

Will Hobson: Of [indiscernible]?

Jimmy Gould: The first season had just ended, but the season ran in the spring. I think the championship game was like June or July. I think that year the game was in Denver, if I remember correctly. I can't remember who played, but I think the Philadelphia Stars beat Tampa or beat Chicago. I can't remember.

Will Hobson: What did Tollin -- what did he get wrong about that, about John Bassett?

Jimmy Gould: Well, Tollin never really put together the glue. What happened was that he never put together that I left Bassett to go to Trump. He never really connected that when I got the call, and what's critical about it is John Bassett wanted to keep the league in the spring, and that John Bassett wanted to keep it just plodding along and doing what he was doing because he had been a member of the World Football League.

He had been in a competitive Hockey League. I mean, John was a wonderful guy who came from a very well-to-do family. He was married to the Carling Brewery family, and John was one of my best friends. I mean, he rescued me out of Washington so I was very loyal to John, but when I got the call from Duncan to go to New York where I had lived in 1970 to 1974 and was married into a family that was on the board of the American Broadcasting Company, I mean, it was like, hell, I'm going to New York.

You know, I'm a business guy, and I was just down in Tampa and I appreciate what John did for me. But at the end of the day, I knew if we got an owner in New York that was a real owner in New York that this league had a real shot. And frankly, I'm quoted, I think it was in *Esquire* recently where I said, "Are you kidding me? We should have paid Trump to buy the team, instead of Trump paying for the team." A lot people were critical of Trump, but the truth of the matter is the league was losing \$100 million.

So Trump coming along was going to drive the media. I mean, you know, the media loves Trump. I mean, they either love or hate him but they write about him. You know, the old Calvin Coolidge line. And so basically when I got the call from Duncan, he said, "I assume you know a lot of people that are worth more than \$50 million. I want to sell the team for \$8.5."

I said, "No problem. I know a lot of people." It wasn't exactly true but --

Will Hobson: You know enough. You knew one.

Jimmy Gould: I knew one, and immediately I said, "Okay, Walter, if you'll give me your handshake over the phone to pay me \$300,000, I'll get it done." He said, "Okay you got a deal."

So I sat back and I remember that day. I took a long walk. It was beautiful and hot as shit in Tampa, and I was walking along and I'm going, wow, that is an opportunity. I'm going to call Trump. I knew his number because I had his card with me. At this precise moment, 212-832-2000. I think that's what it was. I could be off but I think that's what it was. So I dialed Trump's number thinking, of course, I think he was one. We played one season. We got up and running. We had a TV contract. We had Herschel Walker. You know, I mean, maybe I can talk him into this, you know, whatever the price was going to be. I do know this, his payment schedule was over a period of time. So maybe he ended up not paying some of those payments because he worked out a resolve with Duncan. I was out of the picture.

Will Hobson: I think he might have worked out a better contract or another contract, but then the court file isn't signed. But the contract in the court file, the sale price is

\$5.3. He puts \$1.2 down, and then he paid the remainder off in annual installments through '89.

Jimmy Gould: That's true. He may have gotten out of some of those payments based upon whatever and settled with Duncan. I mean, I think at that point that's possible but I was gone by then. I was out in Hollywood making movies and stuff like that, but I know where we started. Whatever is in the file is probably what he ended up actually paying.

Will Hobson: I would like to push it chronologically forward a little bit and go to, you know, so Donald, he signs on and --

Jimmy Gould: Well, let me give you one comment. He didn't pick up the telephone. He wouldn't get on the phone.

Will Hobson: I read this in another interview with you that you had to like cajole him.

Jimmy Gould: I sent his secretary 10 pints of ice cream and then waited, and she had it from a really great ice cream place in Cincinnati, Ohio, and has a lot of butterfat. It's really great, and then I called, and she got him out of the meeting, and he said, "What's so darn important that you've been calling me every day for the last two weeks? What could possibly be so important?" I said, "I thought you might want to own a football team." He said, "Which one?" I said, "A New York team." He said, "Which one?" I said, "The New Jersey

Generals." He said, "How much?" I told him. He said, "Get on an airplane. There will be a ticket waiting for you."

I went into business with Trump. I got to New York. He put me up at the hotel. I went to his office. We negotiated. We had a closing, and he bought the team and the next day he met with me and made me president of the New Jersey Generals, and we became very close. But I had to really work my way in like almost I was his first apprentice. I had to find a way in the dark because he was not opening up the door.

Will Hobson: Just for my chronologic purposes, when to when did you work for the Generals?

Jimmy Gould: When I sold the team and I immediately became president of the Generals --

Will Hobson: That would have been when? September of '83, or --?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. September of '83, and I would not go out to the Meadowlands. I refused. I made him give me an office and a wing at Trump Tower because I knew that's where the action was, and he did. I was on the same floor with him, at the very opposite end of the floor with him. We would walk back and forth and see each other, mostly me walking to him, but we were very close. And then I also became the right-hand man to Trump. So I was like his right-hand man and president of the team, and I ended up staying in that role until about March of

'84 when my dad died. He knew I wanted -- I had done about, I don't even know, but probably close to 40 deals of signing NFL players to various teams, and particularly to the Generals to the USFL, and then later selling them back at a profit or keeping them depending upon what was happening. The big deal that we did was the Lawrence Taylor deal.

Will Hobson: Right. I want to ask you about that. But before I forget, so just to make sure, your exact title was executive vice president?

Jimmy Gould: No. President.

Will Hobson: President.

Jimmy Gould: President of the New Jersey Generals and right-hand man to Donald Trump.

Will Hobson: That was from September of '83 to March of '84?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. My dad died March 21 I think of '84, and I left to go to the funeral. He was unbelievably supportive of me, and then I stayed with him for a little bit longer. I kind of became more of a consultant to the Generals at that time because I wanted to do other things, and what happened was he and I -- in June I was still working with him. I went out to California to put together the special event called the *Challenge of the Sexes*, which was Martina Navratilova and Pam Shriver against Bobby Riggs and Vitas Gerulaitis which we did at

the Convention Center, sponsored by Trump Plaza Hotel. Donald and I, a man by the name of Robert Andreoli out of Rhode Island put the deal together, and Trump and I did it for Cerebral Palsy Foundation, and we put the event on.

It was going to be the beginning of a lot of things that we were going to do together because we were still close. I mean, you know, I just loosed, time for me to move -- look, I've been living in the USFL for four years building the league, and it was clear that we needed somebody who was probably going to be in the Meadowlands. And, you know, Donald and I were close, and frankly after my dad died, what happened was I said to Trump I want to go make movies. We talked about buying the NBN. We signed Bryan Sipe at that time. We did a lot of signings, and we did the *Challenge of the Sexes*. I think we did that in August of '84, and then in November, I remember this, November of '85.

So Trump and I stayed close, kind of talking about different things and things like that. He and I had a nice conversation about sobriety. I'll never forget that. When my dad died, he wrote this beautiful letter to my mom, my stepmom, who was from New York, about reflecting on life and about how proud my dad would have been of me. What was important was Donald knew that my dad and I didn't necessarily see eye to eye after I recently quit law school. And when I went with Trump, I



think it made my family, my dad, very happy and proud of me because Donald was clearly a name and building things, and that's why I've told a lot of people who have interviewed me that hey, you know, you couldn't have found a kinder, more supportive person. Maybe he isn't like that with everybody but he's certainly like that with me. And we ended up doing that event together, and we had a long talk, and he totally gave me his support to quit drinking in November of '85, and I haven't had a drink since.

He was heavily influential in that decision by me which, of course, he had lost his brother to alcoholism, and he said, "You'll always have a job with me. Always." I mean, we were just really close. I just see him very differently than a lot of people do. So very smart, reads thoroughly, studies everything, asks for a lot of advice from people. He does make his own decision but I saw him as a very thoughtful, very caring person, frankly.

So we did that event, I ended up saying to him, when I came back to New York I went and visited him. When I came back, when I got sober and quit drinking, and I ended up going to Hollywood and making movies. And even after I was there and I got married, I came back to see him with my wife, to introduce him to my wife who is now my ex-wife, and he couldn't have been more supportive and more loving, you know, gave her a big hug, and

said how much he was fond of me, and frankly just recently sent a note to the same thing.

I just know him differently than a lot of people, and I think the important thing in the USFL is he didn't want to do the league in the first place. When he did do it, he clearly wanted it to be very successful. He threw a lot of money at it, a lot of money at it. And when he did, his goal was to go head to head and make it an important product. He wanted the best product on the field. That's why he went after Taylor, and we went after Sipe, we went after Joe Theismann, we went after Freddie Gilbert. We went after everybody.

Will Hobson: You knew that it was transition then, tell me the story of the, to the best of your recollection, of Lawrence Taylor negotiations because of all the ones, that was an interesting one.

Jimmy Gould: Well, what I found out was that Lawrence Taylor was in the paper that day. Trump and I were just hanging out in his office, and I read in the paper that Taylor was unhappy with his contract with the Giants. He was only making about \$250,000, \$300,000 a year. He was the most valuable player in the league two years in a row, and he was unhappy. So Trump and I were kind of talking. I said, "Hey, you know, maybe we ought to sign Taylor." He said, "Yeah."

So I called up the union at the time, and I found out how to get to him, and I ended up putting a call into Lawrence Taylor. I said, "LT, you don't know me. I'm Jimmy Gould. I'm president of New Jersey Generals. I'm the right-hand man to Donald Trump. How would you like a million dollars?" He went, "Yeah."

Will Hobson: Where was he when you called him? Just in New Jersey somewhere?

Jimmy Gould: I think he's probably at his home. I think I startled the shit out of him. I said, "Put on a suit and tie, and I'll see you in a couple of hours." He said, "Okay." I think we probably tipped off the press. We weren't supposed to but we probably did.

Will Hobson: Who would have told you not to?

Jimmy Gould: I don't think anybody would have told me not to but it really wasn't something that you did because what about if you didn't sign him?

Will Hobson: Right.

Jimmy Gould: In other words, keep in mind the league was trying to survive, and the more guys we took from the NFL, the more likely that we're going to get -- we were always the lead story. If you go back -- and I have never been able to figure out how to do this but I don't think there was a Sunday where

Brent Musburger didn't talk about us during the NFL. They're just unhappy. We were always the story.

Will Hobson: Was he hosting like the pre-game show or was he --

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. Brent would do it, or you know, I think even Iger was involved. I think it was Bob Iger at the time was in sports, and I was just making phone calls left and right to ABC and CBS, and saying, yeah, you know we're about to sign so and so. "Really?"

Will Hobson: So you called LT, tell him to put on a suit and come on down. Did he come that day?

Jimmy Gould: Oh no. He came within two hours.

Will Hobson: He came within two hours.

Jimmy Gould: Within two hours with a black suit on, with the button popping off of the jacket. Literally, he was holding the button on the jacket. Like he hadn't put on a suit in a long time.

Will Hobson: Is this the button like the front of the jacket, like you need to button together or --?

Jimmy Gould: Well, it was kind of like you wore like a jacket -- he had a black suit on, and the button was like either hanging from a thread or actually it may have just popped off when he walked in at Trump Tower. We had bodyguards and guards there and all that kind of stuff. He came in and I met him.

They called me up and I went down and got him. I brought him into Trump's office, and I said, "LT, meet Donald Trump." We sat and talked, and we couldn't do the deal directly with him because he had an agent, but we really didn't want to call his agent so we ended up putting him on the phone with another agent who happened to have represented Cris Collinsworth.

Will Hobson: Why didn't you want to call his agent?

Jimmy Gould: We didn't know who his agent necessarily was, and I'm not sure he cared about calling his agent because as it turned out his agent was Mike Trope, and Brady Black. But Mike Trope was a tough guy to work with, and I would assume that what we wanted to do was figure out to make sure we got the deal done, right? You know, in other words, so Richard Bennett who, God rest his soul, was also an amazing -- he was an agent for most of the Red Skins. He had done the Collinsworth deal. He was a good guy. He knew the players. He took care of the players. I knew he was going to get a good deal for Taylor. We didn't care about that because we were prepared to give him a million dollar signing bonus. That was more than he was making in three years. I mean, it was the right thing to do. He's the best player in the NFL.

We were after building America's team, and we were after challenging Al Davis to a winner take all game. That's what was behind it all, and nobody ever talks about that but that's a

challenge that was going on because we knew Al was probably the one guy that would take us up on the challenge because he's already sued the league a couple of times. So Taylor comes in, we tell him, "Where do you want your money to be put?" We sent a million dollars. Richard Bennett got on the phone. We negotiated the deal. I negotiated the deal on behalf of the Generals and Richard. I knew Richard quite well because Richard had actually represented me when I left Washington to go to Tampa.

Will Hobson: The deal was like a futures contract? The deal was like one year Giants --

Jimmy Gould: It was a one-year signing bonus with a \$4.8 million futures contract to play when his Giant's contract ran out. But the million he got no matter what.

Will Hobson: The \$4.8 would have been for how many years?

Jimmy Gould: I'm guessing about five.

Will Hobson: The million was a bonus he got just for signing?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. He kept that no matter what happened. Then I went back to Trump's office, and we high-fived, and I don't think we were high-fiving in those days because that didn't -- high five.

Will Hobson: One thing I want to ask about, LT has given an interview about this where he mentions, he said when he came

to Trump Tower, he had to watch like a video or slideshow or something.

Jimmy Gould: Yes, he did. Yeah. Everybody did.

Will Hobson: What was it?

Jimmy Gould: Well, when you came into Trump Tower, you know, I mean you watch the video on the Trump Organization, on Trump, on everything he was building, on the buildings, and his vision of New York, and his vision of what he did.

He is without a doubt the single greatest self-promoter on the planet. He's also one of the smartest guys I've ever dealt with. I learned more from him --

Will Hobson: I was curious what that video -- what was that? It was a promotional video about his company?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. It was about -- well, we all did that in those days but he just did it better than everybody else. I mean, if you were selling a building, sometimes you're selling things that didn't exist, right? So, you know, you would show your plans, you'd have a video of other things you had done, and it would be a presentation. You actually sat in the theater room. You're brought in and before you got into Trump's office, there was like a little auditorium. It wasn't a big auditorium. It was like a little theater room. I sat him down there and I showed him who he was about to meet. Well, he wanted the million dollars, and at the end of the day, you know, I wanted

LT. I wanted the single greatest football player who ever played defensively, and then I wanted to go get Joe Theismann.

Will Hobson: The auditorium room, is that on the 26th floor too?

Jimmy Gould: Yes, right outside of his office. I don't remember the floor but whatever floor he was on, it was right outside. So you'd go receptionist, then you go through a door, and then you would be taken in off the reception area into a door on the left. You'd sit in a little room. You'd watch the show, the video, the stuff like and then you'd leave there, and then the next secretary with his main secretary would be there, and then there was another secretary, and then you'd be led into his office. He either would sit at his desk or there was a table that he had. We went in there, we met, we talked, we shook hands, we did this deal, we put the contract in a vault, we gave him his million dollars, I think it was a Merrill Lynch account, I think it was where we sent it to. Taylor left. We never told anybody about it. We never said a word, nothing to anybody. It was our secret.

Will Hobson: Well, someone knew. Someone told the press, right?

Jimmy Gould: Well, it leaked out because they saw him enter the building, but we never ever confirmed it, which was a really important thing because it was really important that you



not confirm something or deny it because we weren't sure where we were going with everything, right? If we could have gotten the Al Davis challenge, winner takes all for a hundred million dollars, then you certainly would never let Taylor go. If we had put together the team and beaten the team that I think won the Super Bowl if I remember correctly in '82 or '83.

Will Hobson: '83 I think so.

Jimmy Gould: Yeah, '83. So what better thing to do than take on that team. At that time, clearly the Raiders were America's team. I mean they were the tough guys. They were the bruisers. And so Davis is the kind of guy that probably could've accepted the thing. I mean winner take all. Now what we would have gotten wasn't -- Trump didn't care about the money. I think he was after getting in the NFL or doing something. I don't think that league didn't sit around and say, how do we get into the fall? That isn't what I think happened.

I think what happened was we were surviving. Some of the teams were doing better than the other teams. Clearly, a lot of people were watching football. Football was not bad. It was pretty good. We were signing a lot of tough players. We signed Craig James. We signed Herschel Walker. We signed Steve Young, Doug Flutie. You know we were signing guys. The problem was we couldn't get on the damn airways because it was anti-trust. I mean, you couldn't get on it, and if you can't get on

television, you can't have a betting line, you're not going to be playing football in the fall. It's not going to happen.

Will Hobson: A few specific things, I'm just curious to see, you don't confirm anything, do you get an angry phone call from Wellington Mara, or somebody up there at the time?

Jimmy Gould: Oh, did we ever get a phone call. So what happened was the first phone call was Trump calling me on the intercom into my office going, "There's some guy downstairs. Matthew will go get them for you. Meet them in the conference room." I went, "What?" He says, "Don't worry about it. Just some guys who want to see you." I did not think Donald has got a great sense of humor. Okay?

Well, clearly the guys who were down in the conference room are his agents, and Trump said, "I got you on this one. Don't worry." So I go into the conference room, and there are two very angry agents staring at me. And in those days, if you thought agents had mixed records today, you should had seen them in those days. I mean, they were big and tough.

Will Hobson: How long was this after LT's --?

Jimmy Gould: Within a week. So we did everything we could to leak it out there but we weren't about to confirm it.

Will Hobson: So these are both LT's agents?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. Well, one was a runner and one was an agent.

Will Hobson: What's a runner?

Jimmy Gould: In those days, depending upon the color of your skin, the one who connected you up to the agent. By the way, some of that still goes on today. I mean, I've been an agent for 21 years, thanks to Trump, you know, because it was his idea. I've signed over a hundred ball players.

Will Hobson: How did that conversation go with LT's agents?

Jimmy Gould: Well, I had two bodyguards, one each side. Trump wasn't in the room. He was in his office. I'm sure he was smiling. They said, "Give us the contract. We'll give you back the million dollars." I said, "I don't know what you're talking about. Would you guys like some food?" They said, "No. We don't want any food. We would like the contract." I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." They said, "Well, maybe this will help you. What is it you want?" I said, "Well, I'll be back in a minute." So I went down to Trump's office, and I said, "Donald, what do you want to do here?" He said, "What are they offering?" I said, "They're really not offering much of anything other than the money back. Well, we're not doing that deal."

So we talked and talked and talked, and talked and talked. And, clearly, he was willing to sell the contract back to the Giants through the agents. I didn't really want to sell it back

because I wanted to build America's team which he did too. But he's an incredible businessman, and he said, "Get the number out there and you can do it." So I got the number to \$750,000 profit for a two-week deal basically, a week-and-a-half. We shook hands. We got George Young on the telephone who was the general manager of the Giants. Trope got on the phone, called George Young and said, "We got it. Now what are you going to pay my client?" And they gave Taylor the largest contract I think anybody had ever seen. And we got our million back plus \$750,000 profit. Trope and his guy got paid their fee. Taylor stayed as a Giant, which Trump and I were fine with because we wanted to keep him in New York. I mean, the one thing about that is there was no way we were letting the man get out of New York. And that was the headline of the paper. On the day that he came to see us, Taylor wants out of New York.

Will Hobson: So you dealt with Taylor's agent and with George Young, the GM of the Giants?

Jimmy Gould: Yes.

Will Hobson: You never got an angry phone call from the mayors or anyone else?

Jimmy Gould: Well, I don't know at the time. I don't know. Ted Miller [phonetic] was alive and I know Tim and I didn't get the call. The level that I got the call, which I got a lot of those calls on those days, was not a good one to me.

It was from George Young. The call that Trump got, who knows what he got? I mean, in other words, like at the end of the day, it's perfect that we're talking about it because with the New York Primary Day. But he is all New York. He loves New York. They love him. He was not letting Taylor leave. And he did not ever -- in my mind, he was committed to keeping Taylor in New York at all cost. And so there was a no-lose proposition. Think about it. Taylor won, his agents won, George Young won, Tim Mara won, Wellington won, we won, everybody won, and it was a brilliant, brilliant move.

I got to tell you, the next day, I went into his office - I'll never forget it - and I walked into his office and I sat down. I had free access to him anytime I wanted. It was just two guys, you know? I mean, he's only three years older than me but I'm -- and he looked at me and he said, "You're the second best deal maker I have ever seen." And I looked at him, "So what's that going to get me?" And he said, "I don't know. But great job." And I said, "Great job to you." And that was kind of it. But that's when I kind of asked him for, "Hey, can we kind of restructure my deal?"

But I also kind of was at the point in my life where it wasn't enough for me just to kind of run a football team. I really wanted to -- I mean I saw who was coming and going out of his office. It was unbelievable. I mean he would take me to

the U.S. Open with Pritzker. He would take me to lunches and dinners with Steinbrenner. I mean, the exposure, not that I didn't have exposure, it's just he was the kind of guy that we would do press conferences and I would talk and he was just an incredibly supportive guy. I don't think we had really any big arguments other than maybe I wanted to keep Taylor for a little longer and try to do this game. But I think that he knew at the end of the day that it was the right move. He did well. Taylor did well. He responded that way.

Will Hobson: Now, you're in New York and you have these conversations with folks. You're connected to the NFL. I'm curious, when you had conversations with the agents or with someone like George Young, how these NFL connected people treated the USFL folks. Were they professionals? Did they treat you like, hey, this is [indiscernible]. What are you guys pulling? I'm wondering how the tone of those conversations went.

Jimmy Gould: Well, George Young was infuriated with me. And George Young -- and I kind of looked at it like George Young was -- you had guys like Fink [phonetic] and Young and the veterans. I mean, the guys that built the league, right? Were the old guard guys for families that control the NFL that nobody in the Rozelle era did this to them. Are you kidding me? Who are you? But you got to understand, I was just secretary of war

and he was General Trump. So I was his secretary of war. That's what they called me. And he was General Trump which made sense and we had an unlimited bank account and we could do whatever we wanted to do and we weren't going to get told not to. It was war. It was war because we knew that we would be the first time in the history of any sport probably where we would be competitive and have the money to basically drive the prices in the NFL up through the roof, and it made them crazy. They didn't know what to do. And not only that, we were on the airwaves every weekend. I mean we signed over 60 guys. This was no joke.

I've never added up the amount of money that I cost NFL but I'm very good friends with them today obviously. And there's a lot of guys that got into the NFL and Walker ended up in the NFL and a lot of guys in the USFL ended up in the NFL. As I said, I've done 100, probably close to 90 or 100 players. But Trump was to be reckoned with. He wasn't going to let people push him around.

And at the same time, for me, I don't know, call it I didn't have fear. I mean, I'm sitting there in that room with two guys staring me down saying, "Give us the contract, we'll give you a \$1 million back." And it was like that just doesn't sound right to me. And I got two bodyguards. I got one on each side of me. It's like I'm eating my lunch and I had a corned

beef sandwich. It's kind of like I think people started to get some respect for the fact that we weren't playing. It was real. It was true.

Will Hobson: Those two agents, they were big guys and they were dressed like agents, I assume? They were in suits and ties?

Jimmy Gould: Brady [phonetic] is a pretty big guy. Brady is very big and he was dressed, I think, in a sport jacket and a shirt. I don't think he had a tie on. Trope I think had a tie on and a suit. My kid and I actually, later in years, just talked about it. I never saw Brady again. But Trope and I kind of -- I don't know if we laughed about it.

Taylor wrote a book about it called *Living on the Edge*. And he called me, "This dude next to Trump." It was classic him getting there within two hours. And the other classic moment was when Trump and I concocted a scheme to sign Joe Theismann. And I loved Joe Theismann personally and I got to know him really well. It was a really great moment when you think about we tried to sign Don Shula as our coach. Joe Theismann is our quarterback. We got Brian Sipe, by the way, who was pretty good, and Lawrence Taylor and Mark Gastineau. Trump decided not to sign Gastineau.

But we were building America's team. We were building the team and I'll never forget taking Joe Theismann because he



stayed at my apartment that night. I had a brown stone on 67<sup>th</sup> and Park and Madison. I'm walking over to Trump Tower. I had the life. I'm single. I'm making money. I'm watching this and I pretty much have carte blanche to do whatever I want. And Trump believes in me and he likes me and he trusts me and here I am and I'll never forget it. So Theismann is in with Trump and I. So they take a walk with me. So I'm walking down the hallway and then he is signing autographs and all that kind of stuff. And I think he just won the Super Bowl in '82 or something like that. Yeah, because Raiders did in '83. So Joe says, "Where's your bathroom?" So I take him in the bathroom. I'm standing next to him at the urinal taking a leak. And I'm going to myself, this is surreal. It's like we just got Joe Theismann and we're an inch away from signing this guy from the Red Skins to play for the New Jersey Generals.

Will Hobson: What had been happening with that negotiation?

Jimmy Gould: I think Theismann probably got paid a lot of money by Jack Kent Cook. And I think Joe was intrigued but I didn't think Joe was leaving. I mean, there were some guys who just didn't go. There were a lot that came. I mean Mark Wilson, we sold him back to the Raiders. He had won the Super Bowl. Who else? We signed so many guys. We were drafting guys. I just think that Theismann --

Will Hobson: How many NFL players do you think you signed and then sold back to the teams?

Jimmy Gould: Well, a lot to the Raiders. A lot to Al Davis. We signed about 11 Bengals away, which took me a long time to make peace with Mike Brown who is my dear friend today. But that took time. We didn't sell them back to the Bengals. We just signed them and so they just got bonuses like Joe McClare [phonetic], Dave Lapham, people like that. Tollins were signed a future contract of the Tampa team. We did the -- God, I don't know. I mean, I've always used the number 20 or 30 guys probably, maybe more. It was a lot. I mean, it was a lot. What happened is we kind of started a trend.

Keep in mind that Trump and maybe three or four of the other owners were not afraid to spend the money. Now with really your issue is that some of the owners were thinking that this was kind of getting sideways a little bit. They wanted to have cost containment.

Will Hobson: So another question I want to ask is that that seems to me from reading through even the court filing with that, that the expanded surge that Trump was making while he could afford them, they were controversial in the league. I mean, there's a transcript of a league meeting in New Orleans early on. It's like January of '84 and it's right after the LT thing. And I think Carl Peterson and Al Taubman had bitched in

the papers in Philadelphia a few weeks before about Trump basically, that we're trying to maintain a player budget and it's going to screw it up.

Jimmy Gould: Let me answer that for you because I love this discussion. Al Taubman was the first one to violate the agreement, not Trump. Al Taubman -- each team was supposed to have two marketing guys, what we called marketing guys which were the high-priced guys. And then the rest of the team were all minimum salary guys, right? So we did have a union. Taubman was the first one. In fact, that's actually who played the Philadelphia Stars in [indiscernible] game in a championship game because, number two, Myles Tanenbaum for Philadelphia and Taubman, they signed the guys. So what Trump was doing was following suit. He's not the one who started this. They were just mad because he was doing it better and more effectively than they were doing it. But he didn't start it. I just ran with it. I mean, they didn't have a secretary of war like me. I was going after everybody. I was on the phone constantly going after these guys. I ended up becoming an agent later on after this.

So at the end of the day, I don't blame Trump at all. I don't think Trump caused the demise of this league at all. And I've said it on many shows when people have asked me, I think Trump kept this league alive because it was losing hundreds of

millions of dollars. And I think that the league should have paid Trump, no ifs, ands or buts to come into this league because we didn't have a New York owner. I mean I love Walter Ducket [phonetic] and I always will and he's passed away, but he was not the New York owner. You don't go to 16 away games as an oil man out of Oklahoma. Donald Trump took this league to a whole new level.

And you can argue about some of the tactics, some of the things, but one thing you cannot -- one thing about Trump when he makes up his mind to do something, he passes through [indiscernible] like I am. And they didn't object to that. I will say this to you, every time we had an announcement, every single person called and congratulated. So they like to look back and say that, but the truth of the matter is New York is -- if you don't have a strong presence in New York, you don't have a league because of the media. I mean, we can argue about it and I'm not picking on the *Washington Post*, but the truth is New York is the media town. And without it, you just don't --

I mean I find it curious that your player unions are in Washington but your league offices are always in New York because it's kind of the media capital. It's where stuff happens. It's when you get the international. So I think having Trump become the face of the league in New York, hell, I

would've paid him to do that. Instead of him paying to buy the team, we should've paid him.

Will Hobson: So a few just quick factual questions to make sure.

Jimmy Gould: Yeah.

Will Hobson: So the team played the Meadowlands but I guess were effectively worked with the team office in Trump Tower then?

Jimmy Gould: No. So I did all of the stadium deals for the whole league. I mean every single one. So I got the Meadowlands early on in negotiation when I was head and chairman of the stadium committee. So the team had its offices at the Meadowlands, but I refused to work at the Meadowlands like I refused to work in RFK Stadium. I had an office on L Street in Washington. I think it was 16th in L. And I always wanted to be where the business corporation was because that was where my strength was. It was in finance and business and what I call business development, strategic thinking and how to build the value. And the football organization was inside the tunnels of the Meadowlands or of RFK Stadium or something like that.

Will Hobson: So the Generals, where did they practice?

Jimmy Gould: Well, we all had practices -- Washington had its Jacksonville. You're talking about for training camp?

Will Hobson: No. I mean in the season, were they --

Jimmy Gould: Oh, they were at the Meadowlands.

Will Hobson: And in terms of the front office, was anyone else in charge of talent selection and drafting and trade? I know this guy Jay Seltzer, his name pops up a lot.

Jimmy Gould: Yeah, we hired him as a consultant. When I was moving out, Jay got hired and I think there was a big push at that time by some of Donald's people closer to Donald to bring them in to that situation. And I was kind of moving in a different direction come March or April. My dad died and it was kind of like it was just time for me to move on.

Will Hobson: Another thing I'm curious about is during the games, where was Donald and I guess how did he --

Jimmy Gould: In the owner's box.

Will Hobson: And were you ever in the owner's box during the games?

Jimmy Gould: In the owner's box.

Will Hobson: I mean, who would he be watching the game with? What was he -- I know obviously he didn't drink. But how did he conduct himself during the game?

Jimmy Gould: Well, I wasn't at a lot of games with him because by the time I left, I was at the championship game in Tampa with him that summer. But remember I started to move into a different arena when we did the challenge of the sexes. So that was that end of that summer, right? So basically, we

started in March or April, right? In March kind of and we ended at the end of June. So I didn't spend a lot of time at the Meadowlands with him during the games because I was kind of -- my dad died and I kind of took off and came back. And when I came back, I was kind of focused on making movies and doing other things. And then he and I got involved in the Challenge in the Sexes together. So I can't really speak. I think I went to one or two games with him and I don't remember anybody remarkable that -- he loves football so he would watch the game. He loved football and he's competitive as hell.

Will Hobson: Yeah. So the question I want to ask is some people have claimed that he didn't know football, he didn't know the sport.

Jimmy Gould: Totally wrong. Totally wrong.

Will Hobson: Did he ever mention his playing days?

Jimmy Gould: I wouldn't remember that but he knew football. We talked about everything. He knew about sports. He knew football. He knew movies. I got to tell you, I've been with a lot of very wealthy people and I am on the board of Build-A-Bear. I built Build-A-Bear behind the woman that founded it. I did a lot of businesses, a lot of stuff. He's, if not the smartest, one of the smartest people I've worked with of all times. And I've been with a lot of people. Because he studied, he read, he took notes, he did his homework, he had

great advisers. If he were to become president of the United States, I'm thoroughly convinced he would have the best advisers in the world around him 100 percent. And I'm not a member of the Republican Party. I'm an independent. But I will tell you that he does not play around when it comes to that. That's why we went after Shula. We knew if we got Don Shula, we would have nothing to worry about, right? And that would have happened had he not asked for his freaking own condo.

Will Hobson: And reading back in the clips that it seemed like it fell apart. Shula claimed it fell apart when Donald confirmed the negotiations on one of the pre-game shows on Sunday.

Jimmy Gould: Well, since I was in the middle of the whole thing, I know that Shula wanted his own condo.

Will Hobson: In Trump Tower?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah. And that wasn't going to happen. But now whether or not there was a leak or not, probably. I mean, we were pretty good at leak and fix.

Will Hobson: So you weren't around then for the trial?

Jimmy Gould: No. I was going to be -- I left -- I'm trying to think. The trial was what date, '84, '86?

Will Hobson: The trial was '86, the spring/summer '86.

Jimmy Gould: No. I went from New York to California to make movies and never really looked back on it too much. I



think when the trial kind of started, I still had my apartment in New York and I still think I saw Trump once or twice, but it really wasn't about -- I never really actually thought we were going to win that trial because I figured it would be contributory negligence or whatever that we would be -- that they would find us as creating our own demise. And I think if there was a mistake at all, we should have been -- if you're going to go that route, you got to keep playing so that jurors see you as still playing and therefore your losses are greater.

Will Hobson: Why couldn't they keep playing?

Jimmy Gould: Well, I don't think he'd want to keep losing money. I think what everybody is missing, it was a great idea. And Trump would say, "If God wanted there to be football in the spring." His favorite line. We were past the point of no return. Once you have a television contract, you start to realize that you got to compete. We had a lot of competition. I was quoted in Forbes back when I was 30 saying USFL was not football as much as it was software because of the coming age of television of all the channels. So I knew we would get the ESPN deal. We hired Chet Simmons in order to get it. I hired him as our commissioner. He was the president of ESPN.

So Trump saw the big picture like I did and he did everything he could to support it. And he threw a lot of money at it. And he was passionate about it. And I have nothing but

the highest respect for him. And I think the way that it was thrown up at his face is just wrong. I was there when I sold the team. I went through it all with him in the beginning. I brought it to him. And he didn't start out trying to take on the National Football League in terms of I got to move to the fall. I think people who are losing hundreds of millions of dollars are saying to themselves, how do I stop losing money?

I mean, frankly, it's a bit of a microcosm to America. The more you give away your trade debt to -- you create trade debt and then deficit to China and Mexico, you start saying, what do we do to turn it around? So I think he came up along with the other owners a way of doing that, but I think we probably should have kept playing. But frankly, I think he put some life into that league. I will say that the first game was pretty remarkable that I had 30,000 people in the stands at RFK Stadium after the Red Skins has just won the Super Bowl.

Will Hobson: I guess the conventional wisdom now and the popular perception told in Mike Tollin's documentary and other stories about the USFL is that, basically, it was Trump and his side wanting to go to the fall versus John Basset and his supporters, and Basset got sick and died, and with that ended up or any opportunity to really stay in the spring. That it was just too quick, that the fall move and the lawsuit could have been a path to success but not so quickly, not in 1986. And

that if the league had held on and waited a few more years, it would have the strike in '87 potentially. It would have had another boon for the USFL. And then it might have been in better shape to challenge the NFL just a few years down the road. And that's where folks blame Trump for pushing them to move the fall in '86 and then sue.

Jimmy Gould: Well, but you see, that's the same conventional wisdom they're applying to Trump today. Not you, but they're applying to Trump today that he's politically incorrect and how could he run for office if you're politically incorrect. And my answer is, it's about time somebody be politically incorrect. If what we've got isn't working for a lot of people, that's why you have such a momentum for him. What is right or wrong isn't really right. I mean, I land on this but there's a lot of disenfranchised angry people that are supporting him. And frankly, it wasn't that he went too quickly. If you're going to have an argument, the only argument is should he have gone at all or should he have gone earlier? Because your anti-trust violation is still there.

If the NFL controlled the airwaves and the networks let them do it so you couldn't go and have a competitive situation at all, why don't we go on '84, '85? We'd already proved our point that we have one year. We showed that we drew some crowds. And you're never going to be successful. It would be

like you had the arena league right now. Nobody makes any money in the arena league. It was an outgrowth of the USFL. So Trump and Taubman and Tanenbaum and Spanos and all the guys are in there, they didn't get in this thing to lose \$300 or 400 million. And that's my point.

My point is that we had a product and the product was pretty good. The problem was that people weren't coming and supporting it because it was in the spring. You had baseball, you had all kinds of -- the weather was too good to play football. Football should be played in the snow and in the Lambo field, in the rough and tumble weather where you're freezing your ass off. I mean I don't agree at all with what Michael Tollin. Michael is our friend. Michael and I made a movie about tennis together called *Unstrung*. We sold it to Disney. I don't agree with Michael at all. And I also thought the way Michael handled Trump was completely wrong. And I was in that show probably 12 times. But he never connected that I left Trump.

Trump flew with me on the airplane to go -- this is the oddity of what never even hit the airwaves. We flew at the last row of coach from Tampa to New York when I flew to go meet with Trump. I took John with me in the Trump Tower. I walked in the Trump Tower to introduce John to Trump. They shook hands. We talked. I stayed. John begged me to come back with him. I

said no. And I sold him the team. Now, John Basset was completely supportive of my selling the team to Donald Trump. Chet Simmons was. Every single owner called me on the phone and said, "You're back," because I left Washington then and then I went to Tampa where they thought I was going to get parked. Because I had gotten most of the guys and driven and getting guys into the league. I initiated the college work deal.

So there I am minding my own business but when I was able to sell the team to Trump, there wasn't one person that didn't call me on the phone saying this is the greatest thing in the world and we're really proud of you and we really respect what you did and this will breath new life into the league. So how could they, just a couple years later, turn on him and blame him for it? It makes no sense to me unless they just can't take --

Look, every deal has an up and down, a winner and a loser. We lost. But it wasn't because, hey, of all the people in the league, I would say the two most passionate people were Donald Trump and John Basset and then maybe me. And maybe me in a different way because I didn't have as much money in the deal as they did, but I was the guy between them. And that's what I find interesting is that Tollin never focused on that. Basset could have said to me, I don't want to sell the team to Trump. He never said that to me. Everybody knew if I sold the team to Trump what was going to happen. Everybody knew it. They knew

that it was going to be a big steroid shot and that New York was going to be -- and then everybody started calling and coming. And he had crowds turn out and Walker was there. In other words, you had a rebirth so to speak. And so it was just -- it made a lot of sense. I don't think conventional wisdom, which I do agree with you it's an easy way out, but I just don't share that view. I think that Donald did what he said he would do. He put his heart and soul and money behind it. Look, I'm not going to defend the guy other than simply tell you that I couldn't have asked for a better owner.

Will Hobson: I forgot to ask this real quick. So your experience for the USFL, you've been a law school dropout. What was your professional experience at that point?

Jimmy Gould: What was my professional what?

Will Hobson: Experience at that point. What had you done for a living? Because you were like 30 --

Jimmy Gould: I had built a ton of real estate projects. I had built indoor and outdoor tennis clubs when they were coming on board. I saved the union terminal railroad stations since [indiscernible] project in Orlando, Florida. I redeveloped a 1,200 acre planned unit development. I was really more into real estate in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Will Hobson: Would it be accurate to say you were a real estate developer at that point?

Jimmy Gould: It would be accurate to say that I was a developer. In fact, *Washington Post* did a pretty big story on me in 1983 when I opened up in Washington. You probably got a copy of it.

Will Hobson: Yeah.

Jimmy Gould: Do you want me to tell you what it was called?

Will Hobson: Yeah, go ahead.

Jimmy Gould: Hold on. Let me get it. Hold on. I could probably even send it to you but hold on.

Will Hobson: If it's got your name and it ran in 1983, we've got it archived. I can look it up really quickly.

Jimmy Gould: Yeah, it's called. Let me just see. David Remnick -- what's the name of that article? What's the file on the *Washington* thing on the right? Federal's what? *Federal School, Frontline, Bottom line*. Written by David Remnick.

Will Hobson: Remnick?

Jimmy Gould: Remnick. Yeah, David Remnick. And that was the article that introduced me to Washington when I was president of the Federals. And then I went from there to Tampa. And then when I left Trump, the article was in the *Herald Statesmen* and many other papers where it said, "General Trump loses his right hand man, the secretary of war."

Will Hobson: One quick question. So that video that LT watched, was it an ad for Trump Tower condo or was it just a promotional video for the Trump Organization? I just want to be accurate.

Jimmy Gould: If I told you, I'm sure it had Trump Tower in it. But I think it was a little bit more about the Trump Organization and Trump. But it definitely had Trump Tower in it. But it's been a long time since -- I probably watched it a hundred times.

Will Hobson: Right.

Jimmy Gould: Okay? Because everybody I brought into the thing, I had a lot of people that wanted to meet him and I used to get a kick out of going in there. But it's been a while. It's like he didn't force you to go do it. It wasn't that kind of thing. It's just like we do that here, too. We take people in and show them what your history is. I mean why not? I mean --

Will Hobson: No. I'm just curious. I want to make sure that I frame that accurately because it was -- if it's promoting merely the real estate property or the company at large.

Jimmy Gould: I don't remember that. If I told, I would hate to steer you wrong. I don't remember.

Will Hobson: Okay.



Jimmy Gould: I remember that Trump Tower was in it because you're in Trump Tower and you're there.

Probably the other great story was the Andy Warhol story when we picked the New Jersey General Cheerleaders. And that was a classic with Donald and I.

Will Hobson: If you got a few minutes --

Jimmy Gould: Yeah, I do. Basically, every football team - I'm a young guy. I mean, it's like we've got to have cheerleaders. So it's basically we turned it over at that time to Ivana. And Ivana basically said it was her show. And Donald and I should just go and lay low. And she put the word out there and they were lined up down 5th Avenue. I mean it was the New Jersey General Cheerleaders. And I remember I wanted to call it the Trumpets and I got my head taken off by Ivana. But Andy Warhol was the lead judge and then there was like I think Liz Smith and -- who was the famous opera singer? Beverly Sills.

Will Hobson: Liz Smith was involved?

Jimmy Gould: Who?

Will Hobson: Liz Smith was involved?

Jimmy Gould: Maybe it wasn't Liz. It was one of the big Post writers. It may have been before Liz's time. It was somebody very well known that was a writer at the paper. Very

well-known. And then Beverly Sills, the opera singer. But Andy was the lead judge.

Now, Andy knew nothing about football, okay? But Andy sat there, the head of the thing when all the girls would dance. And it was all held downstairs around the fountain of Trump Tower, which is where we did all of our press conference. I've been trying to get copies of all this for years because I miss it. We did so many press conferences but I've never been able to --

A&E did a special and flew me to New York to talk about Trump. I know we don't do a lot of this stuff. It's just now people are calling because it's kind of a period in his life where he was -- look, he was a young guy and he loves sports. Look, he didn't want to stop with the Generals. He wanted to buy the Cleveland Indians. And we tried with [indiscernible] but that was definitely on the table and --

Will Hobson: Why Cleveland?

Jimmy Gould: I think because they were for sale. He heard it and he said, "What do you think about this?" I said, "Absolutely." I mean I wanted to build the largest sports and entertainment empire in America. And he became one of my clients. When I decided to go and do something different and follow my passion with, I gave up a lot of money to do that.

And he stayed with me in terms of represent me. Do something with me.

Obviously, I'm very fond of the guy. And I worked for him. I had worked for him for 30 years. I mean, it's like he just was really smart and really -- he was very genuine with me. I never had any problems with him. If we argued, we argued over business terms or deals like that but they weren't really arguments. They were more like he'd asked what I think, I'd tell him, and then he tells me what he thinks.

Will Hobson: The quote you gave I think to *Cincinnati Business Journal* where you said something like you should spend 90 percent of your days scheming. Is that right?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah, he said -- well, my dad died. And he said, "It's time for you to reflect." Those exact words. And I said, "Yeah." Because I was pretty broken up over it. And he called me and then he sent this incredible bouquet of flowers to my mother who was in New York [indiscernible] and she had been married to the fashion designer John Whites and divorced him and married my dad after my mom died when I was a kid. And he wrote this great note to her that brought her to tears and she didn't cry very easily. I mean Donald was great. But he said to me, "This is the time to reflect. Ninety percent of your time should be used." I think he meant planning but he said scheming and 10 percent reflecting. But he was really trying to say to

me, you take your time and think about your family. And you take time and think about what it meant to you and you think about that's what's important in life. And then get back to work. But it was a genuine comment.

I think when I was interviewed, I said scheming or planning. But clearly what he was saying is you're in the world, go figure out how to -- there's the expression you eat what you kill, that one of the guys at the table, I forget if it was Taubman or who said that, basically, there are two types of people. Those people who were born with money and those people who have to go out there and kill for food, like the *Revenant*. I kind of felt like I was a revenant because I started with nothing. I mean I was cut off.

So I also did not think that Trump was given as much as of a head start as everybody said he was. Not to my knowledge, he wasn't. I mean he clearly -- what he pulled off at Trump Tower and at Grand Hyatt -- I think Grand Hyatt was maybe one of his better deals of all time.

Will Hobson: Was that just a coincidence that you guys -- that the first meeting was the Grant Hyatt?

Jimmy Gould: Yeah.

Will Hobson: Trump didn't say like, "Hey, we should have this meeting in my new hotel."

Jimmy Gould: No, because I wasn't in on the planning of the first meeting. I kind of took over after the first meeting. So I think David Dixon [phonetic], probably it was suggested that David that it be at his hotel and that he offered the hotel. I know when I went to New York to sell him the team, he put me up at the Grant Hyatt. I stayed there for probably six weeks and then he let me go to a different hotel.

Will Hobson: You covered basically all the major points I wanted to cover. Is there anything we didn't talk about, any anecdotes from your USFL days or just other stories about Donald that you think are emblematic of who he is?

Jimmy Gould: He really wasn't -- well, two things I would say. I think that he had a pretty good handle on a guy like me who was young and didn't have any fear and was willing to go through the wall to go get what I needed to get done. And he was pretty cool. He was pretty calm and collected and cool and very confident. I did notice that he took incredibly copious notes of everything that happened. Like he had spiral notebooks in front of him and he wrote down everything.

And he always asked the question first of anybody I introduce him to, and that was, "So what's new?" And I thought about that a lot. Even after -- because I missed him. I mean after I left, he was somebody that kind of grew on me. And I probably could have stayed with him for the rest of my life. I

mean, but I wanted to make movies. I'm not saying I was right because I did pretty damn good with him. But I always was the kind of guy that wanted to go and build my own thing. But the terminology when you meet somebody and you say, "So what's new?" does almost compel you to figure out -- like most people say "nothing" or "a lot" or whatever.

I think it was his way of seizing up within an instant nanosecond whether or not he was going to have -- whether he was going in or out of that meeting real quick. If you walked in and said, "I figured out how to cure cancer." He would have been in there for a long time. That's what's new. But a lot of people probably just went, "Oh, nothing, just keeping busy, travel a lot." "Okay. It was nice to meet you." He wasn't impolite. He shook everybody's hand. I know I hear this thing that he doesn't -- he's a germophobe. Only one time I ever saw him not shake my hand and that's because I had a blister on my thumb from playing tennis. And I gave him a lot of static about it.

He was just a real guy with me. We talk on the phone every Saturday and tell each other what was going on. And I will tell you one great story and that was when I first sold him the team, he wanted to go out and meet everybody. He told me to meet him at his apartment. So the next day, I got to his apartment, it was a Sunday because we had done our deal on a Friday night and

a Saturday week. I kind of worked it out that I was going to live in the Trump Tower and be the president of the team. And then I met him Sunday morning. I was living at the hotel at that time before I got my Brownstone. I walked over to 5th Avenue where he was living and Matthew was there. And Matthew pulled the limousine up outside. And so Matthew opened the back door and got me in the limousine and I expected Donald in on the other side with me as he came down. It was a little bit late. He came down. He waved to me. He got on the driver's side. He drove the limousine. And talked to me while he drove. Matthew sat next to him and he drove.

And I just never really forgot that. It was like, "Holy shit. I'm being driven around New York by Donald Trump." Again, at the time, it didn't faze me. In other words, I didn't really worship the ground he walked on like so many people that came to see him. I mean they just worshipped him. I just didn't know any better. It was kind of like, I just took into stride. We went out for the meeting, came back, and he was a real good mentor for me. Sometimes, I was -- some of those days, I would drink a lot, hang out, party a lot. It was just that period of time in my life when my dad was sick. And he would kind say, "Hey, get to work. Come on in. Where are you?" He was always checking on me.

He made a big difference in my life as you probably can tell. And he was a great mentor but it was the kind of time for me to move on and do something different. And I haven't met anybody that has taught me as much about business since then. I've got a lot of great business people. I've probably done 60, 70 deals and hundreds of contracts. And ten Broadway plays and one Tony's and Grammy's and movies and had a great life and two great kids and a couple of failed marriages. But at the end of the day, he left an indelible print on my life. And I think that's what's going on right now is that he knows what he's doing. And maybe some things you could do differently but it's what he's doing. And he definitely, definitely, definitely had a love for football and he definitely had love for sports. There was no two ways about it. And he was very competitive.

Will Hobson: One factual question I forgot to ask. How old are you right now if you don't mind me asking?

Jimmy Gould: I was born January 1, 1949 so I'm 67. And this was I was 30. When I left, I was 35.

Will Hobson: Jim, listen, I appreciate all your time. Because it's like a book and also will be some stories, I have no idea when this stuff is actually going to be out. When I do get a handle on that I'll let you know in addition to the other folks I'm talking to.

[End of file]



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