Bob Dole the Last Survivor

his hands clasped carefully in front of his body so that his good left hand shields his withered, wardamaged right one from prying eyes. The creases of age are etched on his tanned face, his curiously jet-black hair beginning to turn white at the fringes. But his deep baritone voice, with its echoes of the wind sweeping across the Kan-sas prairie, and his bob-and-weave bantering style underline his role as the ranking adult in American political life.

The nominal topic is President Clinton's ill-fated \$40 billion

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Consider the case for Bob Dole as a classic lonely guy. His high-octane wife, Elizabeth, is up in Cambridge for a meeting of the Harvard Board of Overseers on this Friday in early February. The Senate majority leader sits alone in their two-bedroom Washington apartment in the Watergate with only his dog, Leader, for company. Sure, he's just flown back from taping the Letterman show in New York, But, nah, he's not going to watch it. Not the Bobster. He figures, I was there, I've seen it. But Elizabeth might call when it's over—tell me what she thinks. Aw, hell, might as well stay up.

So for the first time in his life, the 71-year-old three-time presidential candidate sits through a full hour of Dave. Leno's more his style: Letterman's... well ... a beat or two different. Watching, Dole sees that he was a bit nervous at the start, clutching his staff-written Top Seven List in his good left hand. Said on the show that he

Dole sees that he was a bit nervous at the start, clutching his staff-written Top Seven List in his good left hand. Said on the show that he was running for president. No secret there, can't be coy. Letterman made it into a big deal, hot news. Good publicity, no harm. Better call Elizabeth, just to be sure. She says I was great. Guess it was pretty good, then.

Now Dole's too revved up to sleep. Watches Conan O'Brien. Then he starts flicking channels. What's on C.Span? Bill Safire, bright guy. What's he saying about '96? It'll all be over in 70 days, from Iowa to the California primary. Pete Wilson will jump in. What's this? Dole and Phil Gramm are going to knock each other off? Arragh.

It's like a scene out of an old.

promptu press conference for about 15 Senate regulars. No big news. Just easy give-and-take with in the late 1960s with Dole the The majority leader stands with was the Republican hatchet man; as majority leader under Ronald Reagan, he emerged as a closet moderate, his 1988 incarnation was as the self-made striver who presented George Bush's patrician ease; and now he is the old-shoe Senate leader upstaged by Newt's revolution.

Does a grown man really change personality that often? Of course, a successful politician's public persona is of his own making. But something is out of kilter when Dole's 35-year congressional career is remembered mostly for two out-Clinton's ill-fated \$40 billion
Mexican-peso bailout, which is going down the tubes like there is no
manana. But the subtext — and with Dole the message is always between the lines — is political

s remembered mostly for two outbursts: His railing against "Democrat wars" in his 1976 vice presidential debate with Walter

Mondale; and the night he lost the 1988 New Hampshire primary, snarling at Bush, "Stop lying about

who represents Dole's old district and serves as the informal gobetween, contends, "There may still be staff problems, but Bob has gained a genuine respect for Newt, and vice versa." Yeah, sure.

But Dole can never quite hide his feelings. During one of our interviews, Dole recalled, "Six, eight years ago, Newt was calling me are running the identical picture of Bob and Dave pointing to their mock campaign button, Dole and Dumber. The Newsweek headline seems destined for a campaign

work, I guess." Rudr Typical, funny, and self-depre- left."

cating. But not exactly the reflec-tive answer I had in mind. So I generation of political leaders lost, for the most part, by not serving in

the military?

"Hopefully, nothing," was Dole's immediate response, before adding a little more pensively, "but it is something you never forget." He ruminated for a moment on last year's D-Day anniversary—
"Some of those kids learned more about their fathers or grandfathers about their fathers or grandfathers in a two-day trip than they ever had in their lives" — but then backed off, as if afraid of too much introspection.

"Senator, why should you be

"I think I fit the job description," he said. "People want someone who's been tested. I'm still close to people in my home state, my home town. They hope I haven't lost my compass around here. Conservative. Right-wing conservative. But hopefully, sensitive to the needs of some people who are never going to make it."

There, in a few words — and almost no verbs — is the political essence of Dole. No sweeping vision, no clarion call to a shining city on no clarion call to a shining city on the hill, no sounding the ideological trumpets. (Campaign slogan: "Bob Dole, a pretty good president"?) It's not exactly Bush redux, but listening to Dole, I was struck by the generational pairing of these two Republicans. The dynamic of the '88 campaign stressed their social-class differences. Now I realize they could have been buddies in the same platoon — the preppy and the same platoon — the preppy and the farm kid — serving under John Wayne in a World War II movie.

On a snowy Saturday morning, Capitol Hill was as empty as Dole's home town of Russell, Kan. Walking past the Senate office buildings named in honor of Richard Russell, Everett Dirksen, and Phil Hart, I realized that Dole had been in the Senate with all three of them. Dole is at a stage in life when he should be resting on his achievements, burnishing his legacy with a final stint as majorlegacy with a final stint as majority leader in hopes that someday his name, too, will be inscribed on buildings. Why does he want to spend his midseventies in the White House, wrestling with a job that has become a political Book of Ich?

It's hard to pinpoint the precise moment when Dole realized that it wasn't yet over for him. At a fare-well dinner for Bush, just before Clinton's inauguration, Dole was



BOB DOLE An Army Gunner At Camp Breckenridge in Kentucky

overcome during his speech and began to sob. "I sort of saw Bush there," he says now, "and I not only saw somebody who lost, but state." But that was then, the majority leader stressed, and this is now. Still, Dole couldn't resist a now. Still, Dole couldn't understand some of the stuff he talks about." So I impishly asked the majority leader his views on Gingrich. "I don't understand some of the stuff he talks about." So I impishly asked the majority leader his views on Gingrich. "I Survivor — that ought to be your door fresh each to your door fresh each t

> The Hart Senate office building was deserted. Dole, in an armchair, surrounded by nondescript scenes of Kansas fields that he can identify by county, began to talk about the notion that, in light of his age, he might make a one-term pledge. "Some say 'You'll be a lame duck on day one'; others say it's courageous. I think if you had a strong vice president . . ." Then Dole, unprompted, brought up the most obvious trophy veep, Colin Powell. He makes a point of saying that while they haven't spoken on the subject, Powell does have a "nice house."

> The conversation shifted to Richard Nixon. Dole was Republican chairman during Watergate ("It was my night off" is a joke he's been telling for 20 years), until Nixon fired him or suspected disloyalty, replacing him with George Bush. Later Dole would describe Carter, Ford, and Nixon as "see no evil, hear no evil, and evil." But as a eulogist at Nixon's funeral last spring, Dole wept for his genera-tion a second time.

You don't have to delve too far into psychobiography to know that Dole yearned for Nixon's approval. "He always thought I'd be a good president," Dole says. Nixon, in fact, wrote Dole about the 1996 campaign shortly before he died. ish the job.

"He had it all figured out," Dole says with a kind of awe. "He kept says with a kind of awe. "He kept saying, 'Your voice is strong. As dent Clinton announced his propos-

Dole's resurrected presidential ambitions: The senator feared he was too old to run until Nixon the ultimate authority figure for a Republican of Dole's generation and After a week of trying to keep up with Dole, I do not doubt his staminated by the state of the state o

na. But his health could be an issue. He was operated on for On the other, he sent his adminisprostate cancer at the end of 1991. trator of EPA to Capitol Hill last The senator insists that there have week to denounce our common been no flare-ups and plans to re-lease his medical records. His level 20 years of environmental protecof candor about the operation has tion" and to reel off wild horror stobeen remarkable, and in our inter- ries that are an obvious misreading view, Dole talked about the afteref- of what we are trying to do. feets of the surgery, openly using the taboo "I-words": Impotence and incontinence. He confided, "I never had any incontinence. The impotence thing takes a while. That's regulation and cut those regu-treatable. I think when they say lations which are obsolete."
only 10 percent have that problem, President Clinton's proposal they're not leveling with the American male."

President Clinton's proposal doesn't meet that test — his proposal is no substitute for all in the proposal is not all in the proposal in the proposal in the proposal is not all in the proposal in the propo

around — the last-hurrah campaign he never thought he'd wage — Dole, of all people, does seem ready to relax. And when most of needed. Common sense regulations are needed. Common sense regulations the young guys in your party are electing to spend more time with their families rather than face you, why not relax?

Of course, there have been purveyors of the new Bob Dole theory before his other presidential races, and the old Bob Dole always surfaced to self-destruct. How mellow can Dole be when, like Bush in sense before enacting regulations and applying some common sense before enacting regulations. 1988, he's haunted by that missing line on his resume? His hero, Ike, started the chain of World War II presidents, and 50 years after V-E Day, the last survivor wants to fin-

\$13 Billion Spending Cuts To Bill Clinton

By BOB DOLE

By BOB DOLE

WASHINGTON — President
Clinton won big headlines on
March 28 with his proposal to cut
\$13 billion from four government
agencies during the next five years.
I've learned just recently maybe \$8
billion of that is already in the
president's budget, so I'm not certain what the figure really is. But
we certainly welcome the president's interest in trimming government spending. The Washington
Post even suggested recently that
the president's interest may be related to last November's election
results. Certainly, we hope he's
hearing the message.

hearing the message.

Now, the president has a real opportunity to get on the spending cuts bandwagon. The Senate will consider more than \$13 billion in spending cuts, and the American people won't have to wait five years to see the savings. These are cuts in this fiscal year — this is \$13 billion the government won't be able to spend during the next six months, not the next five years.

The American people want more than tinkering around the edges. They want dramatic results, and they want better use of their tax dollars, starting now.

The American people sent a loud and clear message to Washington last November: Rein in the federal

government, reduce the size of government, and cut spending. Senate Republicans are prepared to pro-vide the leadership once again to turn that message into action.

Clinton Proposal Misses the Point

March 16, 1995

long as your voice is strong, age is al for reinventing environmental, not a problem. You don't look old.
You don't act old.'"

This is the Resetta stone to ing the burdens of compliance is a welcome first step, but misses the point that real reform means getting rid of unnecessary and over-

His daughter, Robin, says that since the cancer, her dad has been more at peace. Even The New York Times has discovered the "mellow" Bob Dole. And this time around in the left human around a substitute for eliminating unnecessary regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative. That's exactly the kind of reform our comprehensive regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative. That's exactly the kind of reform our comprehensive regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative. That's exactly the kind of reform our comprehensive regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative. That's exactly the kind of reform our comprehensive regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative. That's exactly the kind of reform our comprehensive regulations that stifle productivity, innovation and individual initiative.

that won't require fines for not checking the right box, regulations that don't define all farm ponds as wetlands and regulations that won't create significant burdens for small businesses and communi-

Americans are demanding that we get government off their backs regulatory reform.

We Congratulate and Support Bob Dole In His Presidential Campaign



Russell





Shields Oil Producers, Inc. Shields Drilling Company and Employees

483-3141

Shields Building

Kansas



