

EPO4: STEVE PAIKIN

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Kerry Wright [00:00:00] I'm Kerry Wright. Welcome to QCC's Podcast series The Path of Public Service. Each episode, QCC will bring you intimate conversations and valuable insights with inspiring individuals who are of service to the public and striving to make a real difference that benefits every Canadian. All personal views expressed by guests and our host are their own and would rarely be agreed upon. While we can't offer an opinion that speaks to everyone's likings or sensibilities. QCC will continue to recognize those in public service, offer a kaleidoscope of perspectives and operate in good faith to build trust with you, our QCC members and all public citizens. Things get exciting when we hear from listeners. We're all part of a team making our podcasts together. Your insight of our episode will help us greatly. Please share your opinion by going to Ontario25.ca/podcastfeedback. Steve Paikin is a mainstay of Canadian journalism, so interviewing the interviewer makes him a unique conversational counterpart. As you listen to this episode, trust me when I say that the twists and turns of our exchange keep us on our toes and turned out to be some of my favourite moments. Lots to cover. So here we go. It is with great pleasure that I introduce Steve Paikin as our distinguished guest today. He has consistently covered both provincial affairs and international stories for over 40 years and was named the Officer of the Order of Canada. He's also moderated eight election debates and an

author of eight books with rare subject intimacy and great political insight. And after 30 years with TVO has anchored The Agenda for 17 of those. Mr. Paikin I am delighted as we explore your path of public service. Hello.

Steve Paikin [00:01:59] Kerry, I think all of the people that I normally interact with on Twitter are going to want equal time. Thank you. But between what you said and what they said, I think is probably closer to a more balanced truth.

Kerry Wright [00:02:11] Well, you know, anyone can be a journalist, but few people can make the field look so good and you do. So it's well-deserved.

Steve Paikin [00:02:19] Kind of you to say and I apologize for the background here as you can, you know, I don't know if people can see this or if they're just hearing it, but if they're seeing it, I'm in my car right now because I was trying to drive back to my office from an appointment I had and, well, you can't drive anywhere in Toronto. And unfortunately, the place I needed to get to was not accessible by transit. So I pulled into a parking lot and we're going to have a great conversation, you and your beautiful studio and me in my car.

Kerry Wright [00:02:44] Well, that's calling go with the flow.

Steve Paikin [00:02:47] That's exactly right.

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Kerry Wright [00:02:48] Oh, my story is so different. I've got blue skies and every green light I hit to downtown Ottawa.

Steve Paikin [00:02:54] Okay, that's making me very upset.

Kerry Wright [00:02:56] Just to rub it in. Well, thank you. Of course. Welcome. Now, you know, you're in Toronto and obviously you've lived there a very long time, but it would be nice to go back to your hometown of Hamilton. I'm starting to think there's something in the water because the city itself, there's a huge list of people, celebrities who are similar to you and that they're very curious and they have a very durable sense of humour. So, yeah-

Steve Paikin [00:03:30] Name names. Who are you thinking?

Kerry Wright [00:03:32] Oh, well, there's there is Martin Short, there's Eugene Levy. Right on Brian Linehan, the late Brian Linehan. I used to love the way he would ask questions. He was very curious and he he would dig deep in his interviews and find those little gems of information. Of course, there's politicians as well. If you're not laughing and you're going to be crying an awful lot.

Steve Paikin [00:03:55] Well, I would love to get on the record right here. The fact that one of my all time heroes in politics was a Hamiltonian by the name of Lincoln Alexander, who was also a

lieutenant governor of Ontario and and just a great, great man, first Black MP in Canadian history, first Black cabinet minister in Canadian history. And and I you know, I had the real joy of getting to know him really well because we were both from Hamilton. So I saw him quite a bit. And my life has been just enormously enriched by the fact that I knew him. And in fact, in the studio where I do the agenda, they asked me, I guess, how many years ago now, 17 years ago, when we first started the agenda, they asked me, we want to put some pictures up on the wall. Who do you want? And the two that I was absolutely adamant about were Lincoln Alexander and Bill Davis, because Bill Davis was the premier from 1971 to 85, about whom I wrote a book about five years ago, and he was the education minister when TVO was created. So I think those two gentlemen have had a significant influence in my life, that's for sure.

Kerry Wright [00:05:00] There are a lot of people that have been in your life that have been prominent. What qualities do these two exude that really hit home to you that obviously you're putting them right up there as mentors?

Steve Paikin [00:05:13] First and foremost, Kerry, a love of people and a love of public service. Lincoln Alexander and Bill Davis - I don't think I ever heard either one of them use the word power. They were both in government. They were both in Cabinet. Mr. Davis obviously a little further along, given that he was a

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First Minister as well. I never heard them use the word power. They weren't there to exercise power. They were there to provide public service to the country. And I think that example, not just to me, but to so many other people, explains why they were both so successful in their chosen fields.

Kerry Wright [00:05:45] To see. Is that rare? I mean, do you hear that terminology thrown around a lot?

Steve Paikin [00:05:49] I don't think it's all that rare necessarily for Canada, certainly in the United States. I'll remember. I'll listen. I'll tell you a story Mr. Davis told me once about when he met Margaret Thatcher, the former British prime minister, and she said to him, "You know why I love this job so much, don't you, Mr. Davis?" And he said, "No, Why?" And she said, "Because how else would a woman like me be able to exercise so much power?" And Mr. Davis told me the story. Not necessarily to be critical of her, but to distinguish between why she was in public life and why he was. And I don't know that there was an official prohibition on the use of that word when Mr. Davis was premier. But they certainly governed in a way that made you think this wasn't a big power ego trip for anybody who was a part of that government? Yes, and that rubbed off on me. I think I respected that.

Kerry Wright [00:06:36] Right. You are partial to people that are somewhat modest in how they behave in public.

Steve Paikin [00:06:43] Well, my father always told me, son, be modest in all things. And fortunately for you, you have a lot to be modest about. And I've tried to remember that.

Kerry Wright [00:06:50] And yet, you know, what's interesting about that is you are able to become good friends with people that could be at opposite ends of the spectrum. You take a look at Bill Davis, who's totally different from John Turner. And yet you were friends with both of them. How do you how do you do that?

Steve Paikin [00:07:09] I think just for the record, I should say I became friends with them after their political careers were over. I tried to be quite a pest to both of them when they were both in public life. But after they got out, yeah, I did become friends with both of them and wrote books about both of them. And I don't think that's a coincidence. Interestingly enough, they were both born in 1929. Mr. Turner in June. Mr. Davis in July. They both were in public life for the right reasons. I know John Turner, for example, was making a fortune on Bay Street in the 1970s and early 1980s and could have had a very nice life and stayed there and, you know, enjoyed his riches. But his party and his country came calling and he felt the call. He felt the obligation to serve. He always used to say that he loved that line from Saint Augustine, which is something along the lines of, you know, if God has graced you with good talent, then you have a

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responsibility to give back. And he lived that way. And Bill Davis was the same way Bill Davis got in the public life when he was 29 years old as an MPP for the first time in Peel Region. It wasn't Peel region yet, it was just the County of Peel then. And like from 29 till 54 or 55, he stayed in public life and gave up a lot of great earning years. And one of the reasons he got out when he did was that he felt a need to make a living for his five kids and turned out to be 12 grandkids. He really started to feel an obligation to make a salary. And and that's what he did. But both of these guys gave up big earning years in order to be in politics and serve the public. And I respect that.

Kerry Wright [00:08:43] That's the common denominator that they are being of service to the public in a meaningful way.

Steve Paikin [00:08:48] Yeah, absolutely.

Kerry Wright [00:08:49] Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to rewind the clock a little bit further back to Hamilton.

Steve Paikin [00:08:55] Sure.

Kerry Wright [00:08:56] What are the things that you remember that conjure up what compels you to gravitate so much to public service and why? It's been a big part of your life.

Steve Paikin [00:09:05] Well, first, I should say I go back every weekend. My parents, thank God, are still alive. They

still live there. And I go back to see them. And my brother lives in Burlington, which is right next door. So we very much try to stay in touch. And so I don't have to go far back in my mind to conjure up memories of happy times. And I'll tell you, it was a great place to grow up. I grew up on the West Mountain in Hamilton, which, you know, I don't even recognise anymore. It's so developed now. But there was, you know, very little there when I lived there. And it was, you know, just an ideal childhood. It really was. Lots of kids in the neighbourhood, road hockey games after school every day or street football after school every day. There were precious few days, you know, it would have to be an intense blizzard for all of the kids in the neighbourhood not to be playing some game in the streets afterwards. And of course back then there's practically no traffic. So you weren't having to say car, car C.A.R. move the nets and let the cars through too often back then. In that-from that standpoint, just a really great place to grow up. My family was always very big into sports, so we went to a lot of Ti-Cat games and drove into Toronto to go see the Maple Leafs play. I imagine myself playing for the Leafs and and I think I remember my father saying that we wanted to go to Leaf games on Saturday nights because then we didn't have to worry about who you were hanging out with and whether you were getting into trouble. I got one brother as well, so. So that was a good for-

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Kerry Wright [00:10:27] Were you getting into trouble?

Steve Paikin [00:10:28] Well, no, because I was going to I was watching the Leafs games and I was with my folks watching the Leafs, so I was not getting into trouble at all. No, we were ideal children, Kerry, ideal. Never gave our parents a second's worth of worry or concern about anything.

Kerry Wright [00:10:44] Of course.

Steve Paikin [00:10:44] And if you believe that.

Kerry Wright [00:10:46] But it really sounds like perhaps there were generations of your family that enjoyed sports because wasn't it your mother who would read the The Globe and Mail sports pages to you as a child and you gladly listened?

Steve Paikin [00:11:01] That's absolutely right. Over breakfast every morning, she used to read the Globe's sports section to my brother and me as we were having our breakfast. And, you know, it was either a Dick Beddoes column or it was an account of the Leafs game from the night before or, you know, something like that. And but just to circle back then to why I do what I do, it's curiosity on the one hand, but it's also my mum's example, my mum, how do I put this? My mum was a superstar back in the day. My mum really. She was associated with politics but was not a partisan person.

She was asked by all three parties, all three major parties to to run, but never did she like to just do good works for the public. And she, you know, she's Chair Governing Council University, Toronto. She was Chair of Atomic Energy of Canada. She was Chair of the Ontario Council of Health. She was Chair of the Ontario Council on University Affairs. Now she was a director on some of them. So, you know, there was that media connection there. I could go on, but I don't want to bore everybody here. Suffice to say, she set a great example of of somebody who had the public interest at heart and did what she could to advance public issues, public concerns. My dad was in business and my brother took after him. He's in business now today.

Kerry Wright [00:12:18] So she had great influence over a lot of the decisions that you made later on. Was that the greatest lesson that your mother taught you?

Steve Paikin [00:12:24] And I think she'd probably tell you she didn't even like pedagogically try to teach me in that respect. I think she just set the example.

Kerry Wright [00:12:33] Example?

Steve Paikin [00:12:34] Yeah. And I think just by watching, you know, I saw what she did. I saw the issues she was involved with. I saw the people that she was engaged with. All looked pretty interesting to me. And for whatever

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reason, you know, my dad worked in the steel business in Hamilton, and that just seemed a lot less interesting to me and more interesting for my brother. So he went into business and I sort of went into what I went into.

Kerry Wright [00:12:55] But there's something you and your dad share. There was a story that I had read where you had just finished grade 13 and your dad had asked you, "Hey, let's do something special." And you said, "Yeah, hey, let's, let's go to Fenway Park and, and you did. And you said it was very meaningful because obviously, you know, the nice thing about baseball is you get a chance to talk with your dad and you can bond a bit. I remember another story where you were saying, you know, 2013 was a really great year for you in a lot of ways. But, you know, despite the accolades and all the success that year, the thing that you seem to remember the most was the bonding with your son when you went to a game in Boston with him. And he really he really enjoyed it. And you got a great big hug from your son. So it sounds like father, like son.

Steve Paikin [00:13:56] And how do you know all this?

Steve Paikin [00:13:58] This is all true? But how do you know that?

Kerry Wright [00:14:02] Yeah, I know. I've I've listened and read a lot, but it's all very interesting. I hope it's true.

Steve Paikin [00:14:08] That's true.

Steve Paikin [00:14:09] And I can tell you that while I love going to sports of all kinds, baseball is the best sport to attend because you can actually talk to the person you're with. Yeah, you know, the Raptors are a lot of fun, but it's 2 hours of a constant assault on your senses. You can't talk to anybody that you're with. Baseball's great. I love the pace of it. I like the fact you can talk to the people that you're with. And my dad. Yes. In 1978, when I graduated grade 13, asked me where I wanted to go, and I said, Fenway Park, let's go to Boston. Let's see the Red Sox. When I became a Red Sox fan, there were no Blue Jays yet. So the Sox became my team. And and I've been back to Boston, I won't say every year, but almost every year since 1978 to go see the Red Sox. It's just a very important part of my life and and I've taken all my kids there as well and and yeah and you know, I remember reading the book by Bob Costas. Who's a great broadcaster in the United States. Great sports broadcaster.

Kerry Wright [00:15:03] Yes.

Steve Paikin [00:15:03] And I think he talked about the fact that that he and his dad did not really have a great rapport. They didn't have a great relationship except when they went to Yankee games and when they went to the ballpark somehow, like the father and son bonded in a way that they couldn't in the rest of life. Now, I never had that problem with

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my dad. I've bonded perfectly, wonderfully and well with him all the time and still do. He at age of 89, he's still a great role model and a hero to me. But there is something about father and son, fathers and sons, and now even father and daughter, because I've taken my daughter to Fenway as well. That just I don't know. It just works for us. Yes. The memories that we create. That first road trip in 1978 led to numerous other road trips over the years. My dad, myself and a number of my kids like a four of them. So it's hard to get them all out to a road trip. Now, sometimes you get what you get, but it's just it's the way that we make memories together and. And seems to work.

Kerry Wright [00:16:00] Yes. Do your sons plan on doing the same?

Steve Paikin [00:16:04] Well, here's the funny thing. I got a son whose name is Teddy Robinson Paikin. He's my third out of four. And Teddy's named after Ted Williams, who is the legendary left fielder for the Boston Red Sox greatest hitter who ever lived. Yes. And Jackie Robinson, who was the first Black ballplayer in the majors.

Kerry Wright [00:16:25] Wow.

Kerry Wright [00:16:26] And and he got named that because he's born in 1997, which was the 50th anniversary of Jackie's breaking the colour barrier. So Teddy Robinson Paikin? He's got. Oh, my gosh. Like what a great name, I think that

is. And he's the one of my four kids that couldn't care less about sports. Now he comes with he comes with on the road trips. He just doesn't care about the sports part. You know, he'll enjoy it. He'll enjoy the fellowship and the companionship, but he doesn't care. The other guys, my oldest guy, just absolutely adore sports and follows it and cares a great deal.

Kerry Wright [00:16:58] And there you go.

Kerry Wright [00:16:59] And I was actually just over in London, England, to visit him a few weeks ago. And what are we do when we were over there, we watched the CFL East Final, Argos and Alouettes. But while we were there, because he still loves the Argos and the second guy like sports, we went to a soccer game when I was over there, Tottenham Hotspur. So that was fun. And you know, my daughter's off at school too. So again, hard to get time with them, but when we do, we go to games and yeah, it just seems to be a place where we all bond really nicely.

Kerry Wright [00:17:30] Wow. It's different. I'm going to keep you on your toes here. On October 21st, 1975.

Kerry Wright & Steve Paikin [00:17:40] Carlton.

Kerry Wright [00:17:41] Oh, you already know my question. Carlton homerun.

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Steve Paikin [00:17:45] Well, how could anybody forget that one of the greatest post-season home runs ever?

Kerry Wright [00:17:50] Oh, I'm impressed. I'm impressed. And did they when they went into game seven, did they win?

Steve Paikin [00:17:57] Sadly, they did not.

Kerry Wright [00:17:58] Boy, you're good. You're good.

Steve Paikin [00:18:00] You know the great. Well, listen, I everybody knows that because the Red Sox went 86 years before winning a World Series. It was-

Kerry Wright [00:18:06] Yeah, it was a dry spell.

Steve Paikin [00:18:08] But no worse than the Leafs are in right now.

Steve Paikin [00:18:12] Yeah. The Sox won a World Series with a guy named Babe Ruth pitching for them in 1918. And then they didn't win another one until 2004. And and I remember 1975 very well. That's the year I became a Red Sox fan. I just became enamoured with that whole World Series against the Big Red machine, the Cincinnati Reds. And there was a moment Carlton Fisk was a catcher, and Pete Rose, who was a great hitter for the Reds, came up to bat in extra innings, and he looked at Carlton Fisk and he said, Isn't this fantastic? And

it was you could tell when they were playing that game that it was something special and something historic and amazing was happening. And yes, first hit the home run off the foul ball in the 12th, sending off, I think, a pitcher named Pat D'Arcy. And it must have been 1:00 in the morning or something. And yes, 15-year-old Steve Paikin stayed up and watched the whole thing. Wow. And and it was great.

Kerry Wright [00:19:03] So did the Boston Red Sox have any influence on Boston University?

Steve Paikin [00:19:08] Well, that's why I went there. I finished three years at U of T, I got a general arts B.A. and then figured out a U of T that I wanted to do journalism for a career and therefore went to journalism school at Boston U. And I picked Boston U because it's a five-minute walk from Fenway Park. Now, coincidentally, they had a good journalism program there, which was good, but that's not the main reason I went there. A main reason I went there was it was close to Fenway and I could go to a lot of baseball games there, which I did.

Kerry Wright [00:19:35] That makes sense.

Steve Paikin [00:19:37] It's kind of another way to choose where you want to go to school. But, you know.

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Kerry Wright [00:19:40] No, no, it makes sense. Kill two birds with one stone and you'll love both. So there you go.

Steve Paikin [00:19:46] Exactly.

Kerry Wright [00:19:47] I notice that there's a lot of faith that plays in your life, and you've said several times that you were destined to write a book or you were. Things happened for a reason. It almost sounds like you feel that your life has some fate to it. Do you believe in destiny?

Steve Paikin [00:20:06] Oh, boy. Hard questions. Hard questions. You know, this is one of the reasons that I'm in journalism and I ask other people questions is that I'm far more interested in the answers that other people give to curiosities that I have than I am pontificating about any particular issue of the day, which I can't imagine anybody else would be interested in. So when you ask me, do I believe in destiny, she's I don't know. I don't even know if I've ever even thought about it. And I'm going to push back a little bit on your notion that I somehow thought it was destiny, that I would write a book someday. I don't really ever remember thinking that other than thinking I'd love to write a book someday. It's something that was on my bucket list of things to do before I croak, but I didn't actually know if it would ever happen. And I was delighted when I finally did. I think I wrote my first one about 22 years ago and done a bunch since.

Kerry Wright [00:21:01] Maybe it was that it was destiny that you write a book for Bill Davis.

Steve Paikin [00:21:07] Well, that's possible. I sort of bugged him for about 30 years before he finally agreed to cooperate with me.

Kerry Wright [00:21:11] That's persistence.

Steve Paikin [00:21:14] Well, and again, that goes back to what we talked about earlier, about modesty. Mr. Davis, At first, I didn't really want to cooperate with me. His mother always used to say to him, you know, be modest, little Billy, be modest. And I think he thought that if somebody wrote a book about his life, that that was somehow be boasting about his achievements. Because let's face it, I mean, the guy never lost, right between every election he ever stood for personal election in 59, 63, 67, 71, 75, 77, 81. He won personal election in every one of those elections. He ran for Ontario PC Party leader in 1971. He won that as well, like he never lost. So his mother made sure he never got a big head over that by reminding him to be modest. So I think that's one reason why he wouldn't cooperate with me on a book. And then as the years went on, I think he thought as he got into his seventies and eighties, Well, you know, I served so long ago who'd care anymore. But I just kept after him and kept after him because I think I think people do care. I think they do want to know who the people were who served

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in politics and made the decisions that, you know, made the province and the country what it is today. And Bill Davis is absolutely a legend when it comes to one of those people. I think we have a lot to thank him for. For the Ontario, many of us are lucky enough to live in today.

Kerry Wright [00:22:36] Yes. Yes, I. I wonder if you got your persistence from your mother or your father.

Steve Paikin [00:22:44] Or maybe my wife, because I remember she called him at one point. I think he was about 83 or 84 years old. And she called him and she said, Look, Mr. Davis, my husband's not getting any younger. You really got to say yes at some point. And Hugh Segal, one of his former advisers, and John Tory, now the mayor of Toronto, and again, one of his former advisers, they both called and put in a pitch for me as well. And we finally got him to yes. One day his assistant called me and said, Mr. Davis, we'll talk to you about this book project tomorrow night, if you'll drive to Brampton, to his home and meet him. And you can have a discussion about that, which I did. Got to his house. We sat down in the den. Whenever you had a meeting with Bill Davis, you had to make small talk about politics for half an hour before you got to the point, which we did. He loved to gossip and talk about other people. And then finally he said, Tell me what you got in mind. And I did. And he said, okay, well, I have two conditions. And I thought, Oh, here we go. He's going to want editorial control. He said, I

would like there to be a chapter in the book on my father and one on the Constitution. And I thought, Wow, well, that's easy. I can do that. I mean, how can I write a book about this man without talking about his father, who was his political hero? His dad was a crown attorney in Peel Region, Peel County first and the Constitution. I mean, my goodness, he's a latter day father of confederation. You know, he's part of that group in 1982 which repatriated the Constitution. So I could easily say to him on the spot. Of course, of course, I'm going to write about those two things. And he said, Great. You write the book however you want. Never had any editorial oversight. He never saw it before it was published. So that started a series of get togethers. I think he was 85 at the time, which was delightful, which was absolutely delightful. We talked about just absolutely everything under the sun.

Kerry Wright [00:24:38] And he trusted you?

Steve Paikin [00:24:39] Well, I guess he did. I guess he did finally. I mean, it took a long time for me to get him there. But I guess in the end, he finally did. Yeah.

Kerry Wright [00:24:45] You earned his trust. That persistence. I mean, it resulted in a great book. But that persistence also is part of your life. There was also another time where you were interning and you were not getting the jobs after the internship. And yet a lot of people would say, "Hey, I'm going to give up or

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I'm going to go elsewhere, or Let's change directions." But no, you, you persisted. What is it about you that persists so well?

Steve Paikin [00:25:15] I think in that case it was simply the matter that the only job I can imagine doing is the job I am. Doing. I didn't ever want to do anything else. I don't now want to do anything else. I think I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. And yes, the first year I graduated from Boston University, I got the probably 35 rejection letters, which I'm sure I've kept in or somewhere at home from places that I applied to hoping to get work and and didn't, you know, the. And those rejection letters they're you know, you think it's it's pretty depressing at the time. But the fact is. They they put a little steel in your spine. You know, they make it pretty resilient. And if you really want if you really want it, you just say, okay, that didn't work. Let's keep going. And you don't give up and you keep going. And yeah, you know, it wasn't fun at the time, but it worked out okay.

Kerry Wright [00:26:10] I think resiliency and resourcefulness always play a good role in people's lives when they're successful, so you're less introspective and more let's move forward. Let's go ahead this, check out the mistakes and move forward.

Steve Paikin [00:26:24] I'm not less introspective. I'm not introspective at all. People over the years asked me questions about a variety of things, and I

never have satisfying answers for any of this stuff because I, I don't think about it. I spend pretty much all my waking hours thinking about researching, speaking to other people, you know, thinking about other stuff. You know, I want to understand the world we live in better. That's that's why I do the job I do.

Kerry Wright [00:26:50] How much of your time is spent researching?

Steve Paikin [00:26:52] Well, pretty much all of it. The reality is that I don't really go anywhere without a book that I'm reading for an upcoming interview with an author or a research package that I've got to read for an upcoming interview the next day. Or, you know, and depending on how on how thick the schedule is, if I'm at a Jays game, you know, I'll probably just read between innings. If it's a manageable schedule and if it's a really terrible schedule, I can read between batters and if it's a really bad schedule, I'll read between pitches. I've always got something with me that's if I go to a game alone, for example, not if I'm with somebody else, but if I'm on the subway, I'm reading research in the evenings, you know, probably till 11 and 11:30 at night. I'm reading research. You know, one of the nice things about the job I have is that there's quite a prodigious amount of content that needs to be produced, be it a television show or a weekly column or a, you know, writing a script for a podcast, a weekly newsletter, which I do, the latter two of which I do with John Michael McGrath There's a lot

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to pump out, so there's not a lot of time to waste, so I don't sit around wasting time.

Kerry Wright [00:27:55] So in terms of the challenges that naturally occur on a daily basis and as a moderator under intense scrutiny, when you do an election leadership debate, you had a viewing audience of around 6 million people. How do you prepare yourself mentally for that as well as prepare the research that is necessary?

Steve Paikin [00:28:17] Well, the first thing you do is you don't think about how many people are watching because that will just make it crazy. And the fact is, you're right, the agenda might have 100,000 people watching it every night between television and smartphones and laptops and so on. But a leaders debate can have anywhere from three to 6 to 9 million people watching. And you don't you don't want to think about that because, you know, if you screw up, it's a you know, it's probably the end of your career. But what do you do? You read as much as you possibly can. You do as much research as you can. I tend to during election campaigns, go door to door with candidates, talk to voters, hear how they interact with the candidates. So, you know, you never know what kind of a nugget of something you can pick up when doing that. And and you just you arrive hoping to be as fair as possible in your responsibilities. And, you know, I guess the fact that I've done a few of those over the years suggests that they

think I've done okay because they seem to have invited me back a few times.

Kerry Wright [00:29:17] Is that why you chose to work for a public service broadcaster?

Steve Paikin [00:29:21] I know the reason I work for a public service broadcaster is that I want to talk to my audience not as sort of eyeballs to be delivered to advertisers, but rather as citizens of a province and country. And that's that's where it's at for me. I have no I have no problem with private broadcasting. I think many of them do a great job. But it's it's just different. I think it's different when you don't have to interrupt an interview you're doing with somebody to say, hold that thought. We're going to sell some toothpaste. And we'll be right back. Now, I understand you got to sell toothpaste if you want to be in private broadcasting, and that's fine. That's what they do. But I think what we do is different in public television. I really do, you know, 30 years of TVO and seven at CBC before that, it's what I it's what I've dedicated my professional life to. I just think there's a different culture, a different approach, a different focus, a different way of dealing with viewers and listeners in public broadcasting than there is in private broadcasting. You know, you can tell me I'm wrong, maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think so. I really I really feel and see a difference.

Kerry Wright [00:30:29] It must be difficult in some ways to coexist because

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you've got the challenge of dealing with the public who are totally that you have buy in and definitely they want to see publicly funded broadcasting. And then you have those that want commercial funding and then you have those that want both. But as long as their partisan views are espoused on the channel. So my question is how does public service journalism coexist in such a mixed media market?

Steve Paikin [00:31:04] Some days are much more difficult than I wish. And by that, I mean, you know, if you look at the television landscape nowadays, I mean, we have just innumerable channels, right? I mean, people can flick around all night long. Most people get 500 channels nowadays and then streaming services on top of that. And, you know, and we have to compete with all of it. And the reality is, I think the you know, the culture, the focus, the approach, the accent in all of those private broadcasting channels is pretty much the same. And I think there's just a very small number of public broadcasting channels that sprinkle the broadcasting landscape. You know, there's us a TVO, there's a CBC, although I think we're a better example of it. We're commercial free. They are not commercial free. They're more of a hybrid, private public. But we're you know, we really are. I think the best example of public broadcasting anywhere in the country, genuinely mission focused, commercial free, very responsive to our audiences.

Kerry Wright [00:32:10] Now, how do you feel a new generation of public servants can be part of building that trust and optimism to continue the legacy of public service journalism?

Steve Paikin [00:32:20] I think we have to do our jobs very well. I think there's no shortcut to this. You have marvellously put your finger on one of the most challenging aspects of being in public broadcasting, the public service in politics, whatever nowadays, which is a lack of trust by a lot of people that we serve because well, for a variety of reasons.

Kerry Wright [00:32:44] I just think that's hard to understand sometimes how we've gotten to this point. Although I do know that often a lot of your colleagues will say the people are always right.

Steve Paikin [00:32:56] When you said the people are always right. I remember two things. I remember that's what John Turner said in 1984 when he suffered the worst defeat any Liberal leader had ever suffered in the history of the country. Brian Mulroney just absolutely took him to the woodshed. 211 seats for the PCs in the election and I think was it 40 for the Liberals. Anyway it was there were showing ever and John Turner got up behind the microphones and said, the people are always right. I mean, what class to not only to say it but to believe it. And he meant it. They are. Now Hugh Siegel also said Hugh Siegel, who was a chief staff to Bill Davis and Brian

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Mulroney also said the people are always right. Excessive sometimes, but always right. And and that's something worth remembering on those rare elections when there's a massive landslide and you're on the wrong end of it. Yeah.

Kerry Wright [00:33:42] Yeah. And that could have been part of the civility. And I'm sure that if Brian Mulroney had lost, he would have extended that civility as well. As a matter of fact, you wrote an article just this week where you were talking about how he did so. And that's what we're missing today, you know, in defeat, providing civil discourse.

Steve Paikin [00:34:02] And yeah, you're quite right. The the story I was harkening back to was in 1984 when John Turner in June of that year won the federal Liberal leadership. Yeah. And that night, Brian Mulroney, who was the leader of the PC Party at the time, sent him a handwritten note congratulating him on behalf of him and his wife, Mila, wishing John Turner well and offering good wishes and good health. And, you know, welcome to the battle. And now it's true that those two men had known each other since the 1950s. They were both young lawyers in Montreal in the fifties and sixties, and they had a lot of mutual respect and they were friends. But having said that, you know, I do remember a time in this country when on the first day that somebody wins the leadership, the right thing to do is welcome them to the race and acknowledge that we're all in the business of trying to provide good service

to the public, admittedly all in our different ways. And you wait til at least day two or three before you start, you know, throwing the mud. And and it's interesting, you know, sometimes I write columns, I get no feedback whatsoever, which is fine. Other times you just get inundated by email saying, well said. And this was one of those I think people want our political leaders to show a little more civility and class, particularly, you know, at a moment when there's a new person in the leadership of one of the other parties. It doesn't hurt to show a little class.

Kerry Wright [00:35:23] Yeah, never miss a chance to serve. There was an opportunity with hope, agency and dignity.

Steve Paikin [00:35:31] There you go.

Kerry Wright [00:35:33] Yeah, Those are your words.

Steve Paikin [00:35:36] Really?

Kerry Wright [00:35:37] Yeah.

Steve Paikin [00:35:40] I didn't know those are my words. That's pretty good.

Kerry Wright [00:35:44] You know, it's interesting. Sometimes when I listen to content that's out there that's about you or I'm listening to a debate. There is a lot of humour underlying some of it. There's almost a sense that there is this comedic impulse inside of you that I feel really

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comes out, especially if you're with Bob Rae. I mean, if you and Bob Rae have a banter going on, you're really funny. I mean, I'm trying to imagine that you might be a good stand up in another life. Or maybe that's something that's on your bucket list. If a book was on your bucket list, maybe stand up and he can be your straight man. Do you do you have a bucket list?

Steve Paikin [00:36:26] I do, actually. I do have a bucket list. I haven't looked at it in a very long time, but yeah, yeah, I do. I gosh, I can't remember the last time I looked at it. It's probably before COVID, but I know it exists and it's in my smartphone. There's places I want to go. I haven't been to every province in Canada yet. I want to do that before I die. I haven't been to the far north. I haven't been to Yukon or Northwest Territories or Nunavut. I want to do that.

Steve Paikin [00:36:56] Ah, ah. I've never been to Newfoundland and Labrador. Never been to Prince Edward Island. So those places I would like to get to before I die, I'd love to see the Leafs win a Stanley Cup before I die. You know, I'd love to see some grandchildren. I got one. I'd love to see some more come along before I die.

Kerry Wright [00:37:14] Are there things you start to appreciate more as you get older?

Steve Paikin [00:37:17] Absolutely, yeah. Basically everything. Basically everything.

Kerry Wright [00:37:22] So your curiosity is insatiable.

Steve Paikin [00:37:24] That's right. That is exactly right.

Kerry Wright [00:37:28] Have any of your values changed throughout your life?

Steve Paikin [00:37:31] Oh, again. Now you're asking me one of these.

Kerry Wright & Steve Paikin [00:37:33] Deep, introspective questions.

Steve Paikin [00:37:35] Introspective questions I have no idea. Ask other people. I don't know.

Kerry Wright [00:37:39] Okay. What about a proudest moment? Do you have a moment in your life that's been one of those proudest moments?

Steve Paikin [00:37:46] I'm sure I have. Can't think of anything off the top of my head here. I mean, I have lots of. You know what? It's a weird thing, but. Most days of the week. I. How do I put this? Most days of the week, I pause and say, My goodness, wasn't that fabulous? And I had it earlier today when my daughter, who's a student at Queen's University, texted me and asked me for some advice on an essay she was writing. And we went back and forth numerous times on text because I don't know if you know this, but but teenagers don't ever call.

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They only text. And my daughter, she also sends voice memos, which is really nice so I can hear her voice. And she was asking me first, you know, we went back and forth on some advice that she wanted on on how to write the essay she's working on. And when we got to the end of all the back and forth, I just thought. Isn't that fabulous? Like, she feels close enough to me and comfortable enough with me to to, you know, to have that exchange. And it just thought that sort of like, this is the greatest day of my life. And I think that frequently for other reasons as well.

Kerry Wright [00:39:01] Yeah. Yeah. I for some reason I sense that you have this ability to recognize those moments where sometimes they go over other people's heads. You're able to recognize how special the simple delights are, the ones that probably are not going to be doing a song in a dance. But you know, they're small, meaningful moments with, particularly with your family.

Steve Paikin [00:39:25] 110%.

Kerry Wright [00:39:26] So, I mean, bottom line, family means a lot to you.

Steve Paikin [00:39:29] Oh, for sure. For sure. And, you know, nowadays even more because it's harder, you know, it's harder to get to see your kids now. I got two living in Europe. I got one in Quebec and I got one in Kingston. So no one's in Toronto anymore.

Kerry Wright [00:39:42] Yeah, no, I got that. Yeah. You know, my daughter went to Queens and. But now she lives in Toronto and my son lives in Ottawa. But yeah, no, it's.

Kerry Wright [00:39:55] It's, it's.

Steve Paikin [00:39:56] At least you got one of them there with you.

Kerry Wright [00:39:57] Yeah. No, it's different. It's different. But at each age, you always have to say goodbye. And there's a grieving process, I think, because you remember them as such. And you know, you can't have that back. But then you look forward to the next stage. Yeah, for sure.

Steve Paikin [00:40:12] Yeah, that's true. True. You know, I'm as as occasionally sad as I am to be missing them as much as I am. I always remind myself, you know, they're doing what they want. They're following their dreams. They're. They're turning into nice people. And. And so I feel better for them than I feel worse for myself. Yeah.

Kerry Wright [00:40:32] Well, that's a true dad. Yeah, And that's all you can ask for. Obviously, there's so many elements of your success that go beyond your career as well, but at what point did you consider yourself successful?

Steve Paikin [00:40:48] At the risk of repeating yet another answer you're not going to want to hear? I never think about

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that, and I don't know that I am. I'm still doing this job in part because I go to work every day trying to do the perfect interview or trying to write the perfect column. Yeah, or trying to record the perfect podcast. And I haven't yet, and I'm not frustrated by that, but I find it very I find it very encouraging that I still want to do better work. And, you know, the other thing is, given the job that I've got, I have. Innumerable people every day of my life, reminding me of what an idiot I am, which is actually very useful. I don't block anybody on Twitter or on Facebook like that. The most vicious comments come in to me almost every day of the week. Wow. And I read them all. And I think it's important to read them all because. Because, you know, you get a lot of compliments, too. And I always figure the compliments I get are not as deserved. And the insults, I think are not as deserved either. But as long as I have access to both, I think I can be somewhat balanced in the way I do my job.

Kerry Wright [00:42:01] So you're saying it gives you perspective and it makes you thick skinned or. Or is that.

Steve Paikin [00:42:06] Sure. It's thick skin for sure. You got to have thick skin to do this job. For some of the people I've worked with in the past, they really take to heart a lot of the negative feedback they got. And it's very debilitating. And it's just not for me because I think if I have one skill, I can distinguish between good, constructive criticism that I really should take up and somebody just being a vile

pig. And I think I know the difference between the two and the vile pig I can read and dismiss and the constructive criticism I can learn from.

Kerry Wright [00:42:43] Well, that is definitely a self-belief and a self-awareness that has served you well, although at some point, even if you're you're not thinking about, oh, I'm successful. The little habits each day add up to becoming what makes you a success. And without those habits, you might not get the podcast or the production or or the commentary that you were seeking.

Steve Paikin [00:43:07] So I never think about that. I honestly never think about that. The only thing I want to be successful in this life really is I want to be a good dad. That's that's always been the most important thing to me. The reality is. This is just kind of a terrible thing to say because I know people who do what I do or are supposed to think that what they do will have, you know, tremendous influence in the years to come. And I am under no illusions about any of that. I think what I do right now is useful. I hope it has some use in this day and age. But as soon as I'm not doing it anymore, no one is going to remember me. And I'm totally fine with that. And it's true. And and, you know, like the only people who are going to remember me are my kids and my family, and that's it. So, you know, I love to be I love being on good terms with them. And the rest of it is you know, it is what it is.

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Kerry Wright [00:43:59] So if I put you in a time machine and you went back in time and I asked you to change something, would you?

Steve Paikin [00:44:05] No. Change nothing? No. And that's all the faults and mistakes and, you know, dumb decisions and all of it. It just does. There's no point. There's no point. We are where we are. You can't put me in a time machine. I don't spend any time thinking about if only I had or if only I didn't, or if only I should have. Or so it's a waste of time because it doesn't. It doesn't get you anywhere.

Kerry Wright [00:44:26] So what is more interesting to you? Reading, writing, researching all of the above?

Steve Paikin [00:44:31] Yes, all of the above. It's like it's why I have the perfect job for me. Because I get the broadcast, I get the podcast, I get to write, I get the research, I get to talk to people. I get to report, you know, which I you know, if I go to events, I can report on them on Twitter. This job has I can write books. I can, you know, used to do leaders debates. This job has provided me with an opportunity to just do all sorts of great, fascinating, interesting stuff. And that's why, you know, not necessarily the best job for somebody else, but for me, it's the best job for me.

Kerry Wright [00:45:11] Yes. Is there a book that you've read that stands out as being the best book you've ever read?

Steve Paikin [00:45:19] Yeah, there is actually. It's called *What It Takes*, and it's written by Richard Ben Cramer, and it was a book about the people who ran for the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations in 1988. And it's the best book on politics I've ever read. And as a result, it's probably the best book I've ever read because politics has an abnormally large place in my in my head. It was just a great book, a very thick, big book, but utterly memorable in describing the path that all of those candidates. And now that I think of a Joe Biden was one of them and Michael Dukakis was one of them, and George Bush, the father was one of them, and Bob Dole was one of them and Richard Gephardt was one of them. The list goes on and on. I think when I read that book and it was many, many years ago, I thought to myself, subconsciously, I would love to write a book like that about Canadian politics. And I think every book I've written about Canadian politics since then has been influenced by that book. I just really loved it. I thought it was just great the way it didn't. It didn't approach politics cynically. It just it approached politics with a view that the people who get in, in the main, are actually trying to do good work and make a contribution to their world. And many of them make big sacrifices in doing so. And we shouldn't be such smart asses and be so cynical about why they're all there, you know, do

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some of them misbehave while they're there? Yeah, sure they do. Do they make bad decisions? Of course they do. But, you know, I've had the joy of writing a bunch of books about a bunch of people who I've had a hell of a lot of respect for. And I think that side of the equation needs some equal time to the other side of the equation, which is that they're all a bunch of corrupt scumbags and they're only in it for themselves and they don't really care about the public. And, you know, they're just trying to enrich themselves while they're there.

Kerry Wright [00:47:09] The self-interest. Yeah. I grew up thinking that people learned from their mistakes. And I know you're a historical buff, so, I mean, you've seen the world make a lot of great moment mistakes and we keep repeating them. But I'm starting to believe that people have to experience life themselves and make those mistakes themselves. Is it possible to learn from history?

Steve Paikin [00:47:39] Oh, gosh, I hope so. Because if we can't, then we're really in the soup. And I think that's one of the reasons, again, why I do what I do, because I'm trying to sort of contribute to the public's knowledge about what has come before us in the hopes that we will learn from it and make better decisions going forward. The thing about history, though, is you've got to teach it over and over and over and over again. And we can't assume that because, you know, because I wrote one book on Bill Davis

five years ago that therefore all sorts of people are going to know about him. We got to keep telling these stories year after year after year after year. Because. Because we do. Because because-

Kerry Wright [00:48:19] Is it part of participating as a citizen?

Steve Paikin [00:48:22] Yeah. Yeah.

Kerry Wright [00:48:23] I mean, John Turner said "Democracy

Kerry Wright & Steve Paikin [00:48:26] doesn't happen by accident."

Kerry Wright [00:48:31] You have to participate.

Steve Paikin [00:48:32] That's right.

Kerry Wright [00:48:32] You have to show up. So, what do you feel he meant by that?

Steve Paikin [00:48:36] Well, he wanted everybody not just to be, you know, a straggler. He wanted people to participate. He wanted them to engage. And that meant anything from run-well, from anything as simple as just exercising your franchise and voting to running for office. Mr. Turner very much believed that the two greatest contributions you could make to this world were in the clergy or in politics. And he flirted with being a priest for a while because he was a very staunch Catholic and ultimately went into public life and made a heck of a

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contribution to the country. Even into his eighties, he was going into high schools three times a month giving speeches, students saying, "You got to participate, you got to get involved, because democracy only works when the people get involved. If we don't get involved, we leave it to the we leave it to the sociopaths. If we don't get involved. And that's not good."

Kerry Wright [00:49:28] You've bared witness to a lot of feedback and you've been on TV show for 30 years and The Agenda was part of that. How have you seen audiences change over the years?

Steve Paikin [00:49:38] I guess the biggest changes are in how they interact with what we do. I mean, I remember when I started a TV show, you could probably barely send emails, I think when I started there. Emails were just coming in. And I know that when we when we did a show, it was on the air once. And that was it. And if you missed it. Tough luck for you and tough luck for us because, of course, we didn't want people missing our stuff. Thankfully, now we've got such a situation where people can watch what we do on television. They can watch it on their smartphones. They can watch it on their laptops, on their desktops. They can watch it when they want. They can watch it where they want. If they can't catch it the night it's on, it's archived on a website. They can watch it in the future any time they want. I delight in in when I hear teachers or university or college professors or students come up to me

and say, we played a show of yours in our class the other day. I love that. You know, it makes me think that that, you know, what I'm doing is not disposable. You know, it might be disposable on the day that it airs on television, but it's got some legs as well. You know, people years later will watch it and glean something from it. So I'm happy about that.

Kerry Wright [00:50:47] And what's your message for people who might want to get into public service and do good work, especially for the common good?

Steve Paikin [00:50:56] My message is do it. My message is do it in any way you want or can. School Board Trustee. City Councillor. Member of Provincial Parliament. Member of the Federal Parliament. If you think you want to make a contribution, do it and you won't be sorry. It's funny. Bob Rae came back to the Ontario legislature the other day. He was he was given a lifetime achievement award by the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians, and he said something I thought was very, very important. He said, "Most of us in life regret the decisions that we don't make, not the ones that we do." And by that, he meant he was telling the story about when Ernie Eves had left as Mike Harris's finance minister and gone into the private sector, got a great job on Bay Street. And then Mike Harris sort of surprised everybody by retiring Thanksgiving 2001. And a lot of people were asking Ernie to run for the provincial party leadership. So

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he called Bob Rae. What you might think is unusual because Ernie Eves was a Tory, and Bob Rae, of course, was a New Democrat when he was premier. But Ernie and Bob had a great relationship, and Ernie Eves called him and said, "What do you think I should do?" And he said, "I don't think you should forego any opportunity to serve if you can." And then he used that line I just said. That when we look back at our lives, we don't regret the decisions we made. We regret the decisions we didn't make. And he said, You really got to ask yourself, are you going to look back ten years down the road and say, you know, I was making a great living on Bay Street, but I had a chance to be premier and I didn't take it. And did I make a mistake in doing that? And I think that's great advice. I think that's really wonderful advice. So if you're thinking about it, do it.

Kerry Wright [00:52:36] Yeah.

Steve Paikin [00:52:37] Do it and bring something good to it. Do it and make it better. Do it and make it more civil. Do it and engage with the public in a better fashion and and engage with your political opponents in a better fact. And they're not your political enemies, they're your opponents. You're all in it for the same reason. You're all in it to do the public's business. You know, there's any number of different ways you can get to Jerusalem, But but that's where everybody wants to end up eventually. So respect for your opponents bring a good spirit to public service. I haven't met too

many people over the years who've said that they were sorry they did it.

Kerry Wright [00:53:11] Yeah.

Steve Paikin [00:53:12] I've met a lot of people who've said they're sorry they didn't do it, but I've met too many people who said they're sorry they did it.

Steve Paikin [00:53:16] No, no. Well said. Well said. I think you're right. Absolutely. And. You know, it's funny because in the end, as you get closer to retirement, you tend to think about perspective in a new light. I mean, even Bob Rae was being celebrated recently, right? And he mentioned that he wished all the people wishing him well could have done that when he was in office. So the humour really.

Steve Paikin [00:53:48] That's right. Yeah. Where were all you people when I was in office saying all these things about me today.

Kerry Wright [00:53:55] I know that it's time to wrap up. And I thank you for the time. I'm wondering if I have a few moments to give you some rapid fire questions just for fun.

Steve Paikin [00:54:06] Fire away.

Kerry Wright [00:54:06] Okay. Peanut butter or chocolate?

Steve Paikin [00:54:09] Both. Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.

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Kerry Wright [00:54:11] Oh.

Kerry Wright [00:54:13] Window seat or aisle?

Steve Paikin [00:54:15] Oh. Window.

Kerry Wright [00:54:19] The celebrity you're most mistaken for.

Steve Paikin [00:54:21] I'm. This is really strange. Evan Solomon. I get mistaken for him probably once a month.

Kerry Wright [00:54:30] I wonder why. I stand-

Steve Paikin [00:54:34] I always say it's time for him. Like he and I are friends. And I always say, Evan, God. It happened again this month. You must feel terrible about this because Evan's ten years younger than me and way better looking than me. And if people think I look like that, then he's got a problem.

Kerry Wright [00:54:45] Oh, so does he get the same?

Steve Paikin [00:54:47] No, he does not.

Kerry Wright [00:54:49] That's interesting. Okay. A stand up comedian or quarterback?

Steve Paikin [00:54:56] Neither is within the realm of possibility. So I'm going to cut that one.

Kerry Wright [00:55:02] Two thumbs down. What time of day are you at your best?

Steve Paikin [00:55:06] Hmm. I don't know. But I know this time of day I'm usually at my worst because I get up super early and I stay up super late. So usually 4:30 in the afternoon, which is roughly when we're talking right now, that's when I tend to lose energy and I need a little jolt. But I think you're very probing questions and you're very interesting approach has kept me on my game here.

Steve Paikin [00:55:29] So there's no lull right now.

Kerry Wright [00:55:31] It's a common time to have a lull. Would you rather be the funniest or the most intelligent in the room?

Steve Paikin [00:55:37] Funniest.

Kerry Wright [00:55:38] Would you rather write a story that laid down the unbiased facts or one that entertained an audience? Oh, my.

Steve Paikin [00:55:44] Gosh, these are such false choices. It's driving me crazy because of course I want to do both in everything. I want to be the I want to be the most intelligent and the funniest. Yeah. I want the peanut butter and the chocolate.

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Kerry Wright [00:55:55] No, now you're prioritising.

Steve Paikin [00:55:59] It's hard.

Kerry Wright [00:56:01] What is? Okay, I'll take that as a two thumbs down as well. What is your favourite movie of all time?

Steve Paikin [00:56:08] Godfather one.

Kerry Wright [00:56:09] Really interesting. And did two or three match up or live up?

Steve Paikin [00:56:15] You know, there's something about the original that I think is always just more special, and I know a lot of people think Godfather two was a better movie, but it came second. And maybe those are the musings of a firstborn, which is me. I'm the firstborn. There's something about, you know, being the first that I think is worth noting.

Kerry Wright [00:56:36] Do you have a favourite actor?

Steve Paikin [00:56:37] I don't.

Kerry Wright [00:56:38] Okay, your favourite quote or expression. Do you have one?

Steve Paikin [00:56:42] As a matter of fact, it's in the new book that I just have out now, this book on John Turner. You know. "Democracy doesn't happen by

accident. You've got to participate." That's John Turner's line and I love it.

Kerry Wright [00:56:54] I noticed you have a Walter Cronkite picture on your wall somewhere in your office.

Steve Paikin [00:57:00] I do.

Kerry Wright [00:57:00] What do you like about him?

Steve Paikin [00:57:01] I think Walter Cronkite was responsible for the most still to this day, the most dramatic, emotional, meaningful, memorable moment in broadcast journalism history. And that was November 22nd, '63, when he took his glasses off slowly and said, President John F. Kennedy has been assassinated in Dallas, Texas, and choked up, cleared his throat, continued to do his job. You know, I grew up watching Walter Cronkite on the CBS Evening News. And I just. He was my guy.

Kerry Wright [00:57:40] Yeah, that says a lot. What's the best compliment you've ever received?

Steve Paikin [00:57:47] Wow. See, again, I don't think of this stuff. Um, well, the best thing anybody's ever said to me would have been when my one of my kids have said, "I love you, Dad." I mean, that clearly is the most important thing anyone's ever said to me. Ever. And the rest of it I don't really think about.

EPO4: STEVE PAIKIN

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Kerry Wright [00:58:04] Well, that speaks volumes as well.

Kerry Wright [00:58:06] And what is the funniest thing that ever happened to you at work?

Steve Paikin [00:58:10] The funniest thing that ever happened to me at work. Oh, my gosh. You know, there's lots of funny stuff that's happened to me at work, but now I'm blanking that you put me on the spot here. What's the funniest thing that ever happened to me at work? I'm so sorry.

Kerry Wright [00:58:27] That we can do that another time. There we go. What's your best tip for making the world a better place?

Steve Paikin [00:58:33] Be nice to other people. It doesn't take any effort at all. Just be nice to other people. Nice is so underrated, Kerry, Especially in this day and age. Just be nice.

Kerry Wright [00:58:45] Sometimes simple as best.

Steve Paikin [00:58:47] Oh, absolutely.

Kerry Wright [00:58:49] I thank you for taking the time out of your busy day. As a matter of fact. I don't know how you do it. That's a lot. But I hope audiences will get a sense of a little bit of what makes you tick. Although I'm sure that it's a little hard to, you know, pull off the layers of Steve Paikin.

Steve Paikin [00:59:09] Oh, you just asked me a lot of questions that I haven't thought much about. Now I'm meeting my brother at the Leaf" game tonight. I haven't seen him in a couple of weeks, so I'm looking forward to that.

Kerry Wright [00:59:17] Enjoy. Take very good care. And thank you again.

Steve Paikin [00:59:20] Pleasure was mine. Thank you.

Kerry Wright [00:59:22] Bye bye.

Steve Paikin [00:59:23] Bye bye.

Kerry Wright [00:59:25] We all have a limited time on this planet. Being nice to people we meet along the way is a beautiful legacy with never ending stories. As Steve's political hero, Lincoln Alexander wrote, "It is not your duty to be average. It is your duty to set a higher example for others to follow." And like baseball, when your moment comes, you need to be ready. Thank you, Steve, for being our guest and in line with QCC,'s vision. We applaud you foremost for your daily contributions as a public service champion and as a wonderful example of an irreplaceable dad, husband and son, possibly another generation to belt out Sweet Caroline at Fenway Park. And thank you for setting time aside to listen to the many parts of public service. I hope hearing about the lives of our guests teaches you a great deal about your own. As producer and QCC's host, I'm Kerry

EP04: STEVE PAIKIN

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Wright. Take very good care. Bye bye.
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of ears with your inside of our episode by
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