

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center  
for  
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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**Arkansas Memories Project**

Dale Bumpers  
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford,  
Archie Schaffer III, and Ernie Dumas  
March 9, 2010  
Little Rock, Arkansas

## Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

## Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 15th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing
  - annotations for clarification and identification
  - standard English spelling of informal words for the first twenty minutes of the interview; thereafter, these notations are used only when necessary
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

### **Citation Information**

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**Scott Lunsford, Archie Schaffer III, and Ernie Dumas  
interviewed Dale Bumpers on March 9, 2010, in Little Rock,  
Arkansas. The first part of the interview was recorded the  
previous day.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford:            [*Laughter*] What is your middle name?

Dale Bumpers:            I don't have a middle name. [*Laughter*]

SL:                         Oh, you do. [*Laughter*]

Archie Schaffer III:     It—it is Leon.

SL:   Yeah, okay. That's what I thought.

AS:   But—but he doesn't like it so . . .

DB:   Blabbermouth. [*SL and TM laugh*]

SL:   Okay.

AS:   Dale—Dale, one of the—one of the favorite things we did when I  
was a kid—uh [*coughs*—Betty had this—at Christmastime—  
Betty had these little candles that spelled noel—*N-O-E-L*.

SL:   Uh-huh. Oh, yes.

AS:   Individual letters. And every time we'd go to their house, we'd  
rearrange 'em to spell Leon 'cause we [*SL laughs*] knew it pissed  
him off. [*Laughter*]

DB:   And they—and they still do that. [*Laughter*] Leon is always  
noted on the hearth of our fireplace.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well . . .

[00:00:41] Ernie Dumas: Where did Leon come from? Was that—  
did you have a—somebody in your . . .

DB: Uh . . .

ED: . . . family named Leon?

DB: There was this—I think it was a school te—a school  
superintendent, I think, that my mother had a little bit of a crush  
on. And I don't know what it was, but he was a—he was a  
rather sophisticated guy, I think. And I don't know really  
precisely how that ever—I—we never—I never pursued it with  
her because I hated the name so much.

AS: [*Laughs*] That was one of the Brewer connections—uh—too.  
You know, Gary Brewer's middle name was Leon.

ED: Yeah, that's right. Gary Leon Brewer.

AS: And—uh—I think that's one of the things that attracted—uh—  
Gary Brewer to . . .

ED: Okay.

AS: . . . to—uh—Dale . . .

ED: He didn't like his . . .

AS: . . . was the fact that—uh . . .

ED: . . . he didn't like that Leon either, did he?

AS: He—he didn't like—uh—his middle name being Leon either.

DB: Oh, really?

AS: Oh, yeah. I don't know whether you remember that.

DB: I didn't.

AS: But, yeah, that was . . .

ED: Yeah.

AS: . . . Gary's middle name as well.

ED: Yeah.

DB: Yeah.

ED: It was always Gary L. Brewer. He didn't want that Leon.

SL: Okay, guy . . .

DB: Right.

[00:01:33] SL: . . . uh—guys, today's date is March the ninth. The year is 2010. We're at the—uh—Dale and Betty Bumpers residence in Little Rock, Arkansas. Today we've got—um—Ernie Dumas—uh—sitting in the interviewer chair and Archie Schaffer sitting on the sidelines here to—to keep us on track and to bring up stories that we might otherwise miss. Um—I think he likes being the executive producer here today.

AS: That's right, I'm—I'm more of a behind-the-camera kinda guy.

[Laughs]

SL: You're behind-the-camera kinda guy. Um [DB coughs]—this was—this is the second day of interviews that we've had here,

and I really appreciate—uh—both—all three of you guys giving us your time to do this. Um—and I have to ask if it's all right with you guys that we're, first of all, videotaping this and that we're gonna archive it at the University of Arkansas in the Special Collections Department and the Pryor Center. And—uh—we'll use this—uh—for documentarians and researchers and—and schoolteachers and students to—to learn about Arkansas history. And if all this is okay with you guys, all you have to do is say yes, and if it's not, we'll just stop, and we'll go get some breakfast. Is it all okay with you?

ED: Fine with me.

SL: Okay with you?

AS: Good. You bet.

DB: Fine with me.

SL: All right. Great. Thanks.

AS: Right.

SL: You guys have a good time.

[00:02:55] ED: Are we rolling?

Trey Marley: We are rolling.

ED: All right. Let's—let's go back and talk a little bit more about—uh—the early years. I—we talked quite a bit yesterday about—uh—about your—about your father and his influence on you.

Uh—talk a little bit more about that. Did—did y'all talk about politics around the—the table? Uh—uh—was that a common topic of conversation?



[00:03:18] DB: Oh, absolutely. We were a political household. I—I was not—not cognizant of that until I was an adult and looked back—uh—at how we grew up and the conversations that we went through and—uh—talked about education and so on. And—uh—the—the principles that my father tried to ingrain in us. He—first of all, the—the simple things that we learned in Sunday school, he emphasized at home, such as integrity, honesty—don't lie. And—uh—Mother was not quite as—uh—what shall I say? Uh—uh—she just—she was not a—as tuned into that as my father was because he thought—he thought if he could teach his children—uh—to be totally honest, that everything else would fall into place. He was just—uh—made that way. I don't know. I guess he—he was tuned in by things his father taught him. But anyway, that—that was—uh—beyond integrity and the principles that we learned in Sunday school. And incidentally Dad taught a Sunday school class. Mother taught a Sunday school class. Later on as an adult, I taught a Sunday school class. We were devout Methodists and—uh—but when we were young—uh—our father was on the lookout always



for things that—that he could—uh—that he could teach us that would be—uh—a lifetime experience. And—uh—I—we all adored our father so much. I don't know why not Mother. But our father was our tutor. He was the disciplinarian. And—uh—he was—he—he was the one who—who wanted us to be schooled and not just education, but he wanted us to be schooled in politics. He wanted—he wanted us to know who the first president of the United States was, who the present president of the United States was, and a lotta those in between. He was as particularly—uh—he was particularly in love with Abraham Lincoln. He—he talked a lot about Lincoln, and so far as he was concerned, obviously George Washington wasn't in the same league with Lincoln—intellectually or—uh—in—in character. And he would talk about that. [00:06:10] And so we grew up thinking about different politicians that had made this country great. And it was not until we left home and went to—to college that we became—uh—attuned to a lotta the others. I mean, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison and all those people. It was always Lincoln and Washington. But later on, as I say, before we graduated from—really before we graduated from college, we became—uh—what shall I say? We were attuned to—uh—all the—the famous things that happened in the history

of this country.

[00:06:55] ED: Did y'all have a—a—a daily newspaper that came to the house?

DB: Oh, yes.

ED: Which—which—what paper did you get?

DB: We took the—uh—Fort Smith paper—the *Fort Smith Times Record*, which was the afternoon paper. The *Southwest American* was the morning paper. But the other thing was that—uh—uh—my father ran for the—for the state house—for representative.

[00:07:18] ED: What year did—was that that he ran?

DB: I think that was in 19—well, he ran in [19]32, and he served in 1933.

ED: So he served one term?

DB: One term. Uh . . .

ED: Now that was for Franklin County. The . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . Franklin County had a single representative. And you were south of the river, and did you remember whether he had competition—uh—that he had to beat somebody or—or . . .

DB: He—he—he—there were about six people in the race and—uh—the two who won were both from south of the river—from

Charleston.

ED: Oh, so you had two representatives.

DB: We had two representatives.

ED: Okay.

[00:07:50] DB: And my father didn't run for reelection because—uh—because of that very point. He did—he knew—uh—well, what—the legislature in 1933 changed our representation from one—I mean, from two to one, and my dad knew—uh—as long as we had two, we'd—we'd have a good shot at one of those being from Charleston. But the legislature in 1933 changed that and said that . . .

ED: That would be after the reapportionment—uh . . .

DB: . . . uh—that's exact . . .

ED: . . . after the census. Yes.

DB: . . . after the reapportionment. And so he knew he couldn't be re-elected because the other district—Oz—the Ozark district outvoted us by a large margin.

ED: Two to one probably, or more.

DB: Pardon?

ED: Probably two to one, or more.

DB: I would say at . . .

ED: Yeah.

DB: . . . least two to one.

ED: Hmm.

DB: And so he just—he didn't run again. But—uh—he then—then he—he decided he wanted to run for Congress, and that's when he and Mother almost divorced. She just went berserk.

[00:08:59] ED: That was—when would—when did he think about running for Congress?

DB: I think it was 1936, but I'm not absolutely positive.

ED: Do you remember who the congressman was?

DB: David Terry.

ED: David Terry from the district.

DB: He was from Little Rock.

ED: Yes.

[00:09:11] DB: You know, we—uh—we thought it's a—we thought it was passin' strange that a rural county like Franklin would be tossed in with—with—uh—uh—Little Rock as—as—at a congressional district. However . . .

ED: It was kind of a river valley district, I think.

DB: That's right.

ED: You had six districts at that time, I think . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . instead of four.

DB: That's exactly right. And anyway, he just—that's when Mother just threw a fit. She didn't want him to run. She thought it would bankrupt us, and she went around the house all time he was contemplating running for Congress, talking about how we'd be broke. "Your children will never get an education." She was very hep on that. He was, too. He wanted his children to be educated. But mo—but Mother really dwelled on it about—uh—if Dad ran for the legislature—I mean, if he ran for Congress, we'd all be broke. We'd never get an education and so on.

[00:10:18] ED: Uh—so he didn't run after all that—that year.

DB: He did not run.

ED: And then—and—uh—was David Terry—did—did he—did not like David Terry or—or was—was Terry—uh—retiring or do you remember what happened?

DB: I don't remember. He was not retiring.

ED: Okay.

[00:10:36] DB: No, it—Mother kept saying, "You're gonna have to run against one of the richest men in Arkansas. Those Terrys own that Blass Building in—down in Little Rock. That's how rich they are. And for you to be contemplating running against people with money like that is terribly foolish." And she'd—she would lecture him, and he would not respond. He'd just—uh—he

just had it in his head that he wanted to run, and he was not really paying much attention to what Mother said. But, finally, of course, she prevailed, and—uh—I think she prevailed simply because she knew—because she had convinced him—uh—that she was right that he could not be reelected. One of the things about that was my father was a very fine speaker, and—uh—he was much in demand in the communities around Charleston to—to make speeches. And—uh—he—he often delivered—uh—uh—eulogies at funerals—uh—of people that he knew well. Everybody wanted him to speak at their funeral. And, incidentally, the hardware store all—was also a hardware and funeral home and—uh—he and his partner also—uh—had a funeral home. And—uh—that was one of the things that was the most profitable. I think it was probably more profitable than the hardware store was. But he—but he—but he—he was—as I say, he was much in demand for all kinds of speeches. He was also a—a layman in the Methodist church and—uh—the lay meetings normally took place in Fort Smith. Now I'm not sure where Fort Smith played in the lay district that we were in. But—uh—anyway, those—uh—those meetings in Fort—were mostly in Fort Smith. Dad made all of them, and I thought he was really somethin' because he was a member of that organization. And,



of course, we were big Methodists and—uh—uh—going back a bit to how we were taught—uh—my—as I've—as I say, we were given Sunday school lessons, but we were also giving lay lessons. They were not religious lessons. They were just simple—simple things that my dad would say—"Son, that's not right. And I—you—you have to bear in mind, that is—that's a principle that you—you need to remember. Don't do this, or don't do that." And—uh—they were not frequent. He didn't do that often. He wanted us to be normal. He didn't want us to be quirky or goin' around holding our—uh—holding our virtue on our—on our shirtsleeve. He just wanted us to be normal people, but he wanted us to be honest. He wanted us—he wanted us to be respected for both our education and our integrity.

[00:13:47] ED: He was a big admirer of Franklin Roosevelt.

DB: Oh, Lord.

ED: Could that have triggered his—his interest in the congressional race, just to go to Washington be a . . .

DB: I'm sure it did.

ED: . . . part of the—the New Deal and all of that?

DB: You know, I was so young then, I can't remember exactly what—what all took place in his mind. But I can tell you one thing, and that—I've said this a thousand times—we were—uh—in jest, of

course. I don't want—I don't [*laughs*—I don't want anybody to get the wrong idea. But I've said many times that—that we were taught that—uh—when we died we were goin' to Franklin Roosevelt. Yeah.

[00:14:20] ED: Well, you got to see Franklin Roosevelt.

DB: Yes.

ED: Uh—1938?

DB: Yes.

ED: Tell me about that.

DB: I thought it was [19]37, and I had written on occasion that it was [19]37, and one day a man who—who was—who was at the—uh—meeting—the big political rally in Booneville chastised me—uh—about continuing to say that it was in 1938 and—uh—1937 when it was really 1938. And I've never taken the time to . . .

ED: Okay.

DB: . . . parse that—uh—and . . .

ED: Well . . .

DB: . . . find out who was right about it.

ED: . . . he—he came down here in—in 1937 . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . to the funeral of Joe T. Robinson . . .



DB: That's right.

[00:15:02] ED: . . . when th—Joe T. Robinson was the majority leader and the senator from Arkansas. And he died in [19]37. Roosevelt came down for that funeral—uh—and I don't know that he spoke at the funeral or anything but—so—but . . .

DB: I do know that . . .

ED: . . . the next year—go . . .

DB: Excuse me, Ernie.

ED: Yeah.

DB: I—I think—I—I'm almost certain at the time I saw him in Booneville, Arkansas—uh—that was a political trip on his part on behalf of—uh—uh—Hattie Caraway. He was campaigning for her.

ED: Okay. Hattie Caraway ran for reelection in [19]38, and—and—and John McClellan ran against him that—ran against her that year.

DB: That's right.

ED: He was a young congressman from—uh—from south Arkansas.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Camden, I think . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . and that was—and very—came very close to beating her

that year. So . . .

DB: He did. My father was a champion for—uh—uh—ha—for—uh—  
John McClellan.

ED: John McClellan.

[00:15:59] DB: As a matter of fact, he thought something amiss had  
taken place in that election. He didn't—he didn't ever spell it  
out—uh—on a—on—uh—frequent occasions, but if we get—if we  
got into a detailed discussion of it, he always made the point  
that he thought that that election had been stolen from John  
McClellan. And Lord knows, I think John McClellan thought that,  
too.

ED: But he took you down to Booneville, which is, what, thirty miles  
away, I guess, down the road from Charleston?

DB: More like twenty-three miles away.

ED: And—uh . . .

DB: My—my brother and me both.

ED: How—let's see, how old would you have been in 1938? Uh . . .

DB: In 1938 I would've been thirteen years old.

ED: Do you remember anything about that—uh—that event?



DB: I remember all about it. I remember just about everything you  
can think of. I can remember the train slowly pulling into the  
station in Booneville. I can remember—uh—uh—a band. I don't

know whether the Booneville band or what played. And there was so much talk and so much joy. Uh—uh—everybody was just thrilled to death that—that Roosevelt was coming, and it was a—it was a joyous occasion for everybody, partic—those of us who had never seen—uh—Franklin Roosevelt and those of us who had adored him ever since his first election. And it was—you know, it was the highlight of my life at that point.

[00:17:28] ED: Do you remember any—did he speak from the back of the train or . . .

DB: Yes. He spoke from the back of the train.

ED: It was kind—whistle-stop kind of—uh—uh—event.

DB: He—uh—he came out on the back of the train being held up by his son, James. I'm almost sure it was James. It coulda been another son, but I'm almost sure it was James. And—uh—he had a cane and with—uh—James holding him up and his cane, he was able to get to the microphone, which was right in the middle of the—of the back car. And—uh—he was—Mrs. Caraway introduced him, and then he talked about different things. He—course, he made—uh—beautiful statements about Hattie Caraway and what a wonderful senator she was and how Arkansas was lucky to have her—all that sorta thing. And then I can remember Mount Magazine was plainly visible from where

we were. And I can remember him waving his arm and said— and something about "that majes—majestic, beautiful Mount Magazi—zine, which I have been told is the highest point between the Rockies and the Alleghenies," which, of course, it was not e—even close to it. But I guess some of the people on the train had told him to say that. And, of course, everybody applauded wildly when he said it was the highest point between the Rockies and the Alleghenies. And—uh—then he went from that back to politics. Uh—he talked about other parochial things. Uh—the Booneville Tuberculosis Sanatorium was in—in existence then, and he referred to that. And—uh—he named some other people that I didn't know who were—who were state politicians.

[00:19:21] ED: Governor Bailey wouldn't have been there, would he, or . . .

DB: I don't—no, Carl Bailey was not there.

ED: Whether—whether he would've taken—taken a role in that campaign or not.

DB: Yeah. Carl Bailey's the first governor I remember, ever.

ED: Yeah, he had just—he had just taken office in [19]37, I guess.

DB: Yeah.

ED: That was his . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . in his first term.

DB: But at that point, that was the highlight of my life, to see Franklin Roosevelt. We just couldn't believe that we were in the same state with him, let alone standing there listening to him.

[00:19:48] ED: But it didn't change your daddy's vote about—he was still a John McClellan supporter.

DB: No, no. [*ED laughs*] I promise you—uh—he did not vote for Hattie Caraway that year.

ED: And—uh . . .

DB: He was a kind of a fan of John McClellan's.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:01] ED: And then she got beat six years later by Bill Fulbright.

DB: That's right.

ED: And both—those figures figured in your subsequent career.

DB: That's interesting.

ED: John McClellan and . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . Bill Fulbright.

DB: Yeah. That's interesting. You know, all of those people of that generation—you know, they were around for a long time. And I know—course, you know Senator Pryor ran against Senator

McClellan, too. And all those figures were well known and had run for office more than one time, and that's what—that's—those people—I can't think of some of the congressmen at that time. I don't know who our congressman was, but I'm almost sure it was David Terry.

ED: Could've been.

DB: Dave Terry, who was from Little Rock—that was—Little Rock was a part of our district for a long time.

[00:21:04] ED: And then Brooks Hays, I guess . . .

DB: Brooks Hays was also our congressman at one time.

ED: Yeah. He and David Terry, I think, were—they ran against each other a couple of times, I think, although they were both, I thought, pretty progressive.

DB: Yeah.

[00:21:18] ED: I don't know what that was. All right. Anything else that—talk about your father that comes to mind that we haven't covered?

DB: Well, the only thing I can remember is back in those days, the local funeral home only had one ca—one—not ambulance—hearse. One hearse. And we only had one hearse, and it served as an ambulance, too. And my father, on occasion, when somebody would call and say, "So-and-so is sick, and he wants

to go to Dr. Bollinger's hospital"—we had a thirteen-bed hospital. It was owned and operated by Dr. Wallace Bollinger. And so my father would use the hearse to go out in the country—maybe five, ten miles in the country—and pick somebody up who was ill and tryin' to get into town to Dr. Bollinger's hospital. And if Herman, my father's partner, was out of pocket, then he would come to the schoolhouse and ask the teacher to excuse me. And I can remember when I was sixteen years old, driving the hearse. I didn't do it often, but I can remember doing it one time. And my father—after he took me with him on one of those ambulance trips one time. That became one of my jobs. My dad would come down to the schoolhouse and tell the teacher that he couldn't do it. Herman was gone, and "could she excuse me for just an hour or so?" And I'd go with Dad on these hearse trips. And then, of course, on funerals I would drive our family car. Dad would usually drive the hearse, and Herman would drive the car that belonged to the funeral home, and my dad would drive our family car. And we—very few families had automobiles in those days, and he would—so he would drive the family. We always had to take care of the family first to make sure that they got to the cemetery and the church and so on. But those were extremely memorable times to me. And I've told

this story before—I may have told you—that on one occasion we took the family home, but we couldn't get 'em out of the car. They were wailing and carrying on and crying, and we couldn't get 'em out of the car.

[00:24:07] ED: Yeah, we—I think we covered that . . .

DB: Did we cover that?

ED: . . . yesterday.

TM: The creek story?

ED: Yeah.

DB: Okay.

TM: I think we did.

ED: Yeah, we did the creek story yesterday. Yes.

DB: Okay.

[00:24:12] ED: Let's move forward a little bit to [*DB coughs*]*—*after you get married, you and Betty. And talk about the early housekeeping. What kinda—where did you live?

DB: We lived in—on North Winthrop, which was 5200 North in Chicago. And it was two blocks west of Lake Michigan. And the—I believe it was the—I can't remember the name of the famous hotel that was on the lake there. I know Xavier Cugat used to play there every Saturday night, and occasionally, Betty and I'd go over there because they'd let us in . . .



ED: Conrad Hilton?

DB: No, it wasn't . . .

ED: Wasn't.

DB: . . . the Hilton.

ED: Okay.

DB: Hilton was downtown.

ED: Okay.

DB: This was 5200 blocks . . .

ED: Oh, all right.

DB: Fifty-two blocks north. And I was not a particular fan of Xavier Gu—Cugat's kind of music, but, you know, we were sorta desperate to do anything. And they'd let us in over there as guests for one quarter—one twenty-five-cent piece. And so we'd go over there, and we'd have to sit in the back and maybe sit out on the porch or somethin'. And as I recall, I don't think they let us dance. I think that we were welcome to come, but we were not welcome to participate in the dancing and that sorta thing. And we didn't dance Xavier Cugat's kinda music anyway so—but in any event, you asked me just to—you asked me where I—where we lived.

[00:25:58] ED: What did—was Betty working then?

DB: She was. Betty started off working for—I can't remember the

name of the company. But she modeled. They were a dress manufacturer, and when the buyers would come to town, and they had, you know, a whole host of new dresses that were tryin' to show to the retailers, Betty would wear the new dresses and model 'em—walk around with 'em. That's when she told me—one day, for example—the retailer liked a particular dress, but he thought it was a little expensive, and if they could take an inch off the hemline, he'd buy it. And we learned something by that. We learned that the textile industry was really—it was really somethin' and very, very tight. And they didn't—people didn't buy text—they didn't buy dresses just because they were pretty. They bought dresses from this manufacturer because it was a nice dress, and they could buy it from this retailer at a really good bargain. And so that's what Betty did for a long time—not a long time. But later she went to work for a hospital as the librarian. She rolled the library around the hallways and dealt the books out to the patients who wanted something to read. And she did that for quite a while. She worked at Passavant. Passavant was a prestigious—very prestigious hospital. And we used to say people were just dying to go there. And—but in any event, she worked at Passavant Hospital, I believe, for well over a year until I graduated from law school.

[00:28:08] ED: So she brought the income in for . . .

DB: She brought the income in.

ED: . . . for you to . . .

DB: I was on the GI Bill, and so help me—Bill Bowen and I have talked about this a lot—neither of us can—oh, he thinks he knows, and he's probably right, but I could not live—obviously, I couldn't have gone to school on what I made. And I think my income from the GI Bill was \$75 a month, and that was for a man and wife. And I forget what those who didn't have wives got—less than that. But the—I'm almost certain that we got—I got \$75 a month, and she made roughly \$75 a month working, and we were able to make out on that.

[00:29:03] ED: Now eventually, she became a teacher, did she not?

DB: She did.

ED: When you . . .

DB: She . . .

ED: Did she go back to school when . . .

DB: She came . . .

ED: . . . when you went back to Arkansas?

DB: Yes. She came back to Arkansas. She went to Chicago Academy of Fine Arts for a while. And that was a sort of a dress designing, too, and that's a long story I won't bore you with.

But in any event, she—I think she made \$75 a month, and that's about what my GI Bill was. But my father was still living then. My first year in law school, my father and mother were both still living. And my dad told me that as long as I was discreet and spent money very wisely, that I could have his checkbook. And so I tried to be as cautious as possible. And we had more than a \$150 a month. I had my father's checkbook. He was not wealthy by any means. I think his salary at that time was a \$150 a month in the Charleston Hardware. So we were able to live on that, and we'd go out on a Friday night someplace and go dancing or something. But it was really a wonderful, wonderful life. We loved it. And then, of course, a tragedy befell us and the—our whole life fell apart when—in March of that first year in law school, my mother and father were killed in a car wreck.

[00:30:41] ED: When you go back to Charleston with your law degree and your license and you opened the law practice and, as you said yesterday, you—in the back room of your—of the hardware store at the outset—do you remember your first case—your first CLAT—law CLAT?



DB: Oh, yes. I was drawing a deed. An old farmer came in there, and he was selling his farm—small farm. I think it was maybe twenty, thirty acres at most. And he asked me if I could draw a

deed, and I said, "Well, of course." I'd never drawn one in my life, so I didn't know what I was talkin' about. And so he gave me a description of the land, and I told him to come back by the next afternoon, and I'd have it ready for him. And my secretary was a notary. She could notarize his signature. So anyway, I worked it out, and that was my very first case. And he came back by the next afternoon, and I handed him his deed, and he said, "How much do I owe you?" And I said, "Three dollars." He said, "Three dollars?" He just couldn't believe it. He said, "Well, it ain't nothin' but a bunch of writin'." [*Laughter*] Which, of course, was true. It was nothin' but a bunch of writin'. [*ED laughs*] But he finally coughed up the three dollars, and that was my first fee.

[00:32:14] ED: Do you remember any other early cases? Were they all kinda domestic cases—divorces . . .

DB: They weren't all, but there were quite a few—I did quite a bit of work like drawing deeds, drawing wills—that kinda thing. I didn't have any cases, but when I did start taking cases, they were almost all divorce cases. I hate to say this, but that's what my practice was because that was about the only thing Charleston had to offer. I mean, we didn't have any industry. We had—we did have some industry, and I did a little bit of work

for them. But it was a really difficult deal for us to make money practicin' law in Charleston. I was the only lawyer in town, and there just was nothing goin' on that would cause anybody to hire a lawyer.

[00:33:20] ED: You remember your first trial where you actually tried a case in court? [*DB sighs*] Did you do any criminal defenses at work?

DB: No. I did some but not early on. I—that's an amazing thing. I can—there was a time when I could remember every single case I ever tried and particularly criminal cases. I had a case one time—now let me tell you something—people in Charleston, which was just a rural community—they believed they had a stake in it. They wanted to be a part of the trial, and obviously they would be, but all I'm sayin' is they would come to me and say, "Can't we do this?" and "Can't we do that?" And so the case oftentimes would kinda fall apart because the client was so interested in being a part of it. He didn't want to leave it to the attorney to make the decision. When you were choosing a jury, he might wanna pick somebody for the jury that you knew that you shouldn't have. But as I say, those things work their way—it was a very difficult thing to pick a jury in Charleston. I had to ask people—my adversary, for example, would—in the what they

call the *voir dire*, where you ask people, "Did you—do you owe Mr. Bumpers any money in his hardware store?" when you're pickin' the jury. And if they did, my attorney opponent would obviously just kick 'em off the jury. [00:35:23] If they owed me money, they didn't want him on my jury. There were all those kinds of parochial questions. "Are you a Methodist?" Sometimes people would object to that. The judge would uphold it—didn't think it was right. But, course, I was a Methodist layman. Betty and I were both very active in the Methodist church, and they didn't want anybody on there that was a Methodist if they could keep 'em off. Course, in Charleston, Arkansas, everybody knew who was a Methodist and who was a Baptist and who was a Assembly of God or whatever—Catholic. We had a rather heavy Catholic population in Charleston.

[00:36:04] ED: Do you remember the first case where you really made some money—where there was a judgment, and you got a sizeable fee of any kind? I remember you tellin' me once about a case with Mark Woolsey—that—where y'all—two of you tried a . . .

DB: Mark Woolsey was an attorney in Ozark.

ED: Yes.

DB: And he and I teamed up . . .

ED: And we talked a little bit about that—him yesterday but . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: A specific case or . . .

DB: We teamed up on a few cases, but I can't remember Mark and me ever making any money to speak of. I just—I don't know why, but I—we just never—we never had a case together where it was a real jury trial—real case that we were both immersed in.

[00:36:53] ED: Well, you eventually over the years developed a kind of a reputation in west Arkansas for trial work because you were good with a jury and—so eventually you got some clients—cases outside Franklin County, did you not?

DB: I did. I would have to say that probably most of my practice was in Sebastian County. Now bear in mind that Sebastian County has quite a rural area. It's not just Fort Smith. And that rural area came up to within two miles of the Franklin County line. And as a matter of fact, my farm, which I later bought, was in Sebastian County. And so I had a pretty good practice in Sebastian County. And most cases when you say make money, we made—I made some money—more than usual—by taking personal injury cases—car wrecks and that sorta thing. And those were—usually you settle those cases with an insurance company. And so that really made things better for me than it



normally would've been. I was able to make a pretty good living off of that.

[00:38:20] AS: One of the cases that I remember—you might wanna tell about that was a personal injury case that I—if I remember correctly was, you know, one of the biggest judgments at that time in the state—involved a car wreck there just between Charleston and . . .

DB: Yeah.

AS: . . . Bloomer.

[00:38:36] DB: Yeah. We—I had a case one time where the—one of the—we had two Baptist churches in Charleston, and one of the Baptist ministers was killed in a car wreck just outside of Charleston. And I'm not sure whether the wife was killed—or whether the husband was killed, or the wife was killed, or maybe both of them. I just can't remember. But in any event, we couldn't settle it. And so we went to court, and I got a judgment. The ?trick? case was tried in Charleston. This was the first, really significant jury trial I ever had. And I believe the jury awarded me \$83,000. Now that doesn't sound like much in today's jurisprudence system, but that was one of the biggest jury trials I ever had, then or ever. But I think the \$83,000—I had that alone. Most of the other cases that I had were where I

had to split with another lawyer. This case was eighty-three thousand dollars. They wouldn't settle, and they were going to appeal it, and so that was fine with me. And before we could get it appealed, they settled and paid the full amount. That was the biggest jury verdict in the history of Charleston, Arkansas.

[00:40:14] ED: [*Laughs*] Did you ever—you had a lot of oil and—or gas. Gas was big in that area. Did you do a lotta lawsuits representing royalty owners?

DB: I did some. I wouldn't say . . .

ED: I know Witt Stephens used to complain that you were always . . .

DB: Oh, yeah.

ED: . . . you were always suin' him over [*DB laughs*] his royalty owners up there.

DB: Yeah. He—this is a kind of a dull story, but—for example, if an oil and gas company came into Charleston, and they decided they wanted to drill a certain area, they would go into that area—it might be five to ten square miles—and they'd start leasing it from the people who owned the land for gas—natural gas. We didn't have oil. And so we—they'd come in, and they'd lease this land. And so sometimes these farmers would come to me, and they'd say, "They're wantin' to lease my land and they

wanna pay me thus and so." And I'd say, "That's just about one-third of what you oughta get." And so I became their representative and their bargainer and made quite a bit of money that way. And the—there were other oil and gas cases, and the—that whole Franklin County area became big oil—not oil—gas—natural gas development. And . . .

[00:41:56] ED: Kinda the heart of the Arkoma Basin, which was . . .

DB: It was part of the Arkoma Basin.

ED: . . . a rich gas . . .

[00:42:01] DB: And there were different pools of gas there. For example, everybody knew that Fort Chaffee was rich in gas—natural gas. But in those days, you could not lease military lands, and the gas companies just gave up because the law was that you could not lease a military piece of property for drilling of oil or gas. And later on that was changed. The law was changed, and they—what happened was Fort Chaffee was leased, and it was leased to—I can't remember—they put it up for lease. The army put it up for lease, and some of it brought—I forget—a wholesome amount of money—a really big amount of money. And when that was all settled—I forget exactly how much money was involved, but I will tell you this. Charleston, Arkansas—the school district—incidentally when they started

leasing, the legislature in Arkansas had put a provision in it that the money would have to go to governmental entities in the district. For example, school districts. School districts got a lotta money when Fort Chaffee was leased. And then I can remember they gave that money out. When they finally leased it, some of it brought, I don't know, a tremendous amount of money. And that money was parceled out then to the school districts. And I can remember Charleston, Arkansas—I don't know how much they got, but they got enough to build a new music building, which is now the Dale Bumpers Music Center. [Laughter] And every school district in the Fort Chaffee area got quite a bit of money outta that when they leased that.

[00:44:43] ED: But your representation of the royalty owners in the Arkoma Basin didn't endear you to the gas producers like [DB laughs] Stephens and . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . Stephens Production Company, Arkansas-Louisiana Gas, and I guess there was a number of others . . .

DB: Well . . .

ED: . . . there in the basin, which would [DB coughs] come back, I guess, to haunt you in some ways years later. They were never . . .

DB: Yeah, I don't . . .

ED: . . . supporters of yours . . .

DB: You're . . .

ED: . . . in subsequent years.

DB: You're absolutely right. I was anathema to the oil and gas dealers—drillers—the people who were exploring all this land for natural gas. And so I had to—they had to deal with me most of the time because I represented so many of these people, and they would lease 'em—they wouldn't lease their land until I told 'em I thought that was as good as they were gonna be able to do. And so we got tremendous sums of money for farmers and school districts outta Fort Chaffee. And, of course, there were other private lands which were being leased at this time, too, and I represented a lotta those. For example, if they undertook to lease, we'll say a three-hundred-acres tract—you started negotiating then. Are you gonna lease it for eight dollars an acre, or are you gonna lease it for twenty-five dollars an acre? What's the royalty gonna be if you strike gas? All those issues had to be negotiated. And so by the time I left the law practice, I was doing a tremendous amount of that kinda practice.

[00:46:33] ED: Let's move forward to the governor's race of 1970 and your decision to run. How did your family—when you said

you were gonna run for governor, how did your family react to that? Were they eager to do that? I mean, this was gonna be a—if you won—a big change in their lives, from small town to . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . to Little Rock.

DB: Well, first of all, my mother and father were gone then.

ED: Yes.

[00:46:58] DB: And—but my brother and sister had become relatively wealthy—both of 'em. My sister was very wealthy. And my brother had gone to Harvard and had joined a California law firm after he graduated from law school. And while he was not nearly as wealthy as my sister, he was really hep on my running for governor. He thought it was a great idea. My sister didn't.

ED: Right.

DB: And I knew I couldn't run without the resources of both of 'em. I had \$10,000 in the bank that I had saved from sellin' some cows off my farm. And as I say, my brother and sister were both wealthy, so I took my brother first 'cause I knew he would like the idea. I knew my sister wouldn't like the idea at all. So I told him—I said, "You know, this is probably as good an

opportunity as I'll ever have to make a statewide race," and I set out what I thought would be the political setup for the next election. Now bear in mind that this was in probably mostly January and February of 1970. And so I told Carroll about it. Carroll thought it was a good idea. And he told Margaret. She went ballistic. She thought it was the craziest thing she'd ever heard of. And so Carroll stayed on it. He thought it was a good idea. He thought I oughta try it. And I told him—I said, "You know, I really need \$50,000 to start off with. And I wanna save the money I've got until last to make sure I've got somethin' to finish with." So Margaret was still adamant, and so finally Carroll, who was president of Greyhound Leasing Corporation at that time in Chicago, and my sister, who owned her own business—what was it called, Spike?

AS: Servomation.

DB: Yeah, but not—what was the name of the business—the kind of business they did?

AS: Vending machine business, you're talking about?

[00:49:30] DB: Vending machine business. And so she had developed a tremendous vending machine business and was makin' money hand over fist. As I said a while ago, she was relatively wealthy. And so Carroll said, "Why don't you get on a

plane and come to Chicago?" Winnetka, actually. He lived in Winnetka, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. "Why don't you come to Chicago, and I'll get Margaret to come. I'll make her come, and we can sit down the three of us and talk this out and see whether you should run for governor or not." And so we did. We met in Chicago, and I laid it out for 'em. I said, "You—I don't wanna deceive you about it. It'll be an uphill battle. There're gonna be, counting me, eight people in the race—all of them well known or a lot better known than I was." And I told 'em that Orval Faubus was gonna run. He had been out of office for several years, and he was wantin' to make a comeback. Joe Purcell, who had been attorney general. Hayes McClerkin, who was the house speaker, and it was a prestigious group gettin' ready to run for governor.

[00:50:45] ED: "Bob" Compton, who was president of the Arkansas Bar Association.

DB: Bob Compton, who was a very well-known lawyer from El Dorado.

ED: And Bill Wells of Hermitage, who had been a—the Democratic nom . . .

DB: And in a race for lieutenant governor before.

ED: Yeah, he'd been a—came very close to being elected lieutenant



governor . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . the previous two years earlier as . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . he was the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor.

DB: Yeah.

ED: And I guess the others, to fill it out, were—or a guy named  
Malone.

AS: Jim Malone.

ED: Jim Malone, who was a fish farmer from . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . from Lonoke County.

DB: Right.

AS: Bill Cheek.

ED: And William S. "Bill" Cheek of [*laughs*] West Memphis, who  
was—I don't remember what he did, but he was a very colorful  
fellow.

DB: He was.

ED: But we'll talk a little bit about him later. But—so go ahead with  
the story about your meeting . . .



[00:51:30] DB: Well, we meet in Chicago, and I laid it out for 'em in  
about an hour what the chances were, what the geographics

were—everything—the politics of it. And my sister said, "Now I wanna make sure I understand this. You're telling me that there are eight people in the race counting you?" And I said, "Yes. One is the attorney general, and one is the house speaker, and the others have held public office, or they wouldn't be in the legislature." I said, "Yes." She named one or two others. And she says, "And if you win the Democratic primary, you also have to—in order to win it, you also have to beat Orval Faubus." I said, "Yes, that's true, too." "And then if you defeat Orval Faubus, you've got to run against the governor, Winthrop Rockefeller, in the Republican runoff—in the Republican election—general election." And I said, "Yes, that's right." And she was not above foul language. [*Laughter*] And I'll skip the foul language. She said, "I ain't gettin' involved in this mess. This is the craziest thing I've ever heard of."

ED: Ego trip or something, she [*unclear words*].

DB: Ego trip, yeah. And she said—she used a profanity—you know, "This so-and-so ego trip." And so we stayed two more hours, and my brother was making my case for me all during that two hours, and I left there with \$50,000 in my pocket. And so that's what we started with.

ED: And what . . .

DB: And that was probably as much or more than some of the other candidates had.

[00:53:23] ED: Well, a couple of 'em, anyway. And what about your—you come down to Little Rock and you make your announcement. Do you recall—the Lafayette Hotel, I think?

DB: I remember it well.

[00:53:36] ED: Tell me about that press conference. Did that [*DB coughs*] cheer you up?



DB: It was the biggest downer of my life. I had—some of the Little Rock press corps was there. The more prestigious people like you were not there. [*ED laughs*] And so they started asking sorta silly questions because they thought the whole thing was a joke. They thought that my whole campaign—my whole everything was a joke. And they were tryin' to make a funny thing out of it. There were a few people—there were about fifty people that we had rounded up to get there just so we had a crowd. And the—and I was asked kinda foolish questions, and I tried to keep it on a serious track without much success. But in any event, there were two or three people there who thought it might be doable—not easily doable, but they didn't think it was a funny thing. They didn't think it was a joke. They thought it was a thing that was worth them paying attention to and writin'

a story about it in which they did. But when I left there, I'd never been so depressed in my life 'cause I knew that nobody there was really takin' this candidacy very serious—very seriously. And so I knew I really had an uphill battle. I didn't know whether I could even stay the course or not. Fifty thousand dollars was a lot more then than it would be now. But the questions were—as I say, bordered on being silly and foolish.

[00:55:35] ED: Herbie Byrd of KLRA probably dominated it as he did . . .

DB: He did.

ED: . . . in press conferences in those days.

DB: Yes. And his questions were—just bordered on silly. And there were—the AP reporter . . .

ED: Robert Shaw.

DB: . . . Robert Shaw. Robert Shaw had written not an—not a favorable story, but he had written a story that was not in jest about me a couple of weeks earlier when the Democrats had had a small meeting in Little Rock—I've forgot what the purpose of it was—but, anyway, I made about a five-minute speech at that meeting. And I think that he was sorta surpris—I think he was rather surprised by it at that first meeting, and so he came prepared to be serious at my announcement. And he asked two

or three relevant questions—you know, schoolteachers' salaries, free textbooks—things like that that were on the agenda on most peoples' platform. And—but I guess this whole thing didn't last more than thirty minutes—maybe an hour. But I left there—I was really bedraggled. I just knew I had made a serious mistake. And then I began to prep my—I began to pep myself up by saying, "You know, what if you do lose? You would've kept faithful to your father. Your father wanted you to be a politician. He wanted you to be governor. And if you make this race and especially if you make a decent race of it, even though you lose, you would've kept faithful to your father, and that's one of the main things that you're trying to do here."

[00:57:24] ED: Remember you told a story once about a haircut.

Did you get a—was that before that or after that . . .

DB: That was right after that.

ED: Did you—for a campaign picture to run.

DB: I—the barber in Charleston was a butcher. [*ED laughs*] And when you went to him, you took your life in your hands. He would almost cut all your hair off, you know. You just had to hold his hands for people—you know, he had—you had to hold his hand to keep him from cuttin' all your hair off your head. And I thought, "You know, these Little Rock barbers are more

sophisticated than that. And I had deliberately let my hair grow a little bit, and so I thought, "I'm gonna go get a haircut at a barbershop in a hotel." And so I did. And, you know, I . . .

[00:58:17] ED: Remember which hotel? Probably the Marion?

DB: No, it wasn't the Marion. It might've been the hotel that we were . . .

ED: The Lafayette?

DB: The lafay—it might've been the Lafayette. But in any event, I knew those barbers. I'd seen 'em before, and I knew I was takin' a chance. But in any event, that turned out to be disaster, and when I got through with the haircut, it was just awful and the paper—the picture of me in the paper the next day was even more awful. And—but the afternoon paper the next day of *The Democrat* was a glamorous picture, and I began to get my hopes up again. But I had been so down, I could hardly talk. But anyway, the haircut—they'd had a picture of me that Deloss Walker, my campaign manager—they had a picture of me that was very flattering. It was taken long before this barber in Little Rock got a hold of me, and so that was the picture on the front page of the *Democrat* the afternoon after I made my announcement. And it—as I say, it played well, too.

ED: So you set up a staff. Tell me about your . . .

TM: Excuse me, Ernie.

ED: . . . your big—yeah?

TM: We need to change tapes.

ED: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[00:59:43] ED: All right. Let's go back then and see what else we need to . . .

DB: Okay.

ED: . . . to cover about—let's talk a little about the early campaign and your staff. You started off—you've made the announcement—and who did you have on your campaign staff?

DB: Archie was there.

ED: Archie Schaffer. Was that—he was about it, wasn't he?

DB: He was it in the beginning. And his father, of course, later became instrumental in a lotta things, doing . . .

ED: Now that's . . .

DB: . . . just the . . .

ED: . . . that's Archie Schaffer the fir—senior?

AS: Senior, I guess.

ED: Senior.

AS: Yeah.

ED: Senior or junior or what?

AS: Yeah.

ED: You were the—Archie Schaffer II, right?

AS: Well, I'm actually the third.

ED: Right.

AS: My father was just—didn't have any letters after his name  
but . . .

ED: Okay. All right.

AS: . . . but he was really the second Archie Schaffer but not  
formally designated but . . .

[01:00:34] ED: Okay. So Archie's father, Archie Schaffer . . .

DB: Senior.

ED: . . . Senior—was part of the campaign or did—or was he just a  
volunteer?

DB: Yes, but he did all of his campaigning outta my law office in  
Charleston. Isn't that a fair statement?

AS: Yeah. Yeah, we had the hometown headquarters in Charleston—  
we called it . . .

DB: Yeah.

AS: . . . that ran out of your law office there.

DB: Right.

AS: And you and I borrowed the car from Hug Chevrolet and . . .

DB: Yeah.



AS: . . . took off drivin' across the state. And then we had—for the first few weeks, you know, we had Deloss Walker's office in the Union Life or the Union Bank building. And, you know, that was about it for the first month probably of the campaign.

[01:01:17] ED: Then you opened a campaign office in Little Rock, right—after that?

DB: Yeah, we—down on Second Street.

ED: Yeah. But basically, it was just you and Archie drivin' around the state and makin' talks . . .

DB: For the first cam . . .

ED: . . . and shakin' hands for the first . . .

DB: . . . for the first primary. We—that was right—but we had some drivers, too. Spike didn't spend as much time—he was a—what would you say, Arch? What was your primary responsibility then?

AS: Well, until we opened the campaign headquarters, you know, I drove with you for the first month, say.

DB: Yeah.

AS: And, you know, we started the middle of June so, you know, from middle of June till after the Fourth of July, I guess, I was still driving around. Then we opened the campaign headquarters on Second Street—Second and State in Virginia Atkinson's law

office. And once we opened that campaign headquarters, then I stayed there and ran the campaign headquarters.

[01:02:20] ED: And there was a young fellow from Danville, Arkansas—a young lawyer that I think drove you part of the time.

AS: Right. David Stewart.

ED: David Stewart.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Yes, he was part of the campaign.

DB: Yeah, Dave was practicin' law in Danville then, wasn't he?

AS: Right.

[01:02:33] ED: Do you remember who else was—Martin Borchert was the mayor of Little Rock and had been—was one who had discouraged you from running two years earlier and kinda get you on the track to running this time.

DB: That's right.

ED: Was he involved in this campaign—your . . .

DB: He was fairly involved. I would have to say it was not in a very significant way. He—I don't know how to describe it, but he was—he collected quite a bit of money for the campaign. He knew some people in Little Rock that were givers normally in campaigns, and I think he gave—he got some money from

people like that. And he'd take me with him. I can remember one trip we made, but I can't remember who it was. But he gave us a hundred dollars or somethin' like that and then—Martin was pretty good at that. And Martin had a lotta connections, and he stayed on the phone a lot talkin' to people. And he was—I think he was sorta the titular campaign chairman, wasn't he?

AS: Yes, he—I think—I can't remember exactly what his title was, but yeah, he was . . .

DB: We wanted him because he was the mayor of Little Rock, and that gave our campaign a considerable amount of prestige.

[01:03:58] ED: And Ben Allen—was he involved? I mean, he was a lawyer . . .

DB: Ben was heavily involved in the . . .

ED: He was . . .

DB: . . . in the Faubus runoff. No, he was heavily involved in the Rockefeller race and . . .

ED: Okay, but not in the first primary.

DB: No. Is that a fair statement?

AS: I think so. Yeah.

ED: And Bill Bowen was not—and both of those guys were—at that time with the . . .

DB: With the Smith firm.

ED: . . . William J. Smith law firm.

DB: Yeah. Right.

[01:04:28] ED: So you—how much money did you raise overall for that first primary? How much did you spend, do you think?

DB: If I were just guessing, I'd say probably fifty grand maybe. Was it—would it have been? I'm—we're talking about not the runoff but the general—you know, in the primary, we had eight in the first primary, and then I guess Faubus and I came out . . .

AS: In the runoff, yeah.

DB: In the runoff.

AS: I don't remember the exact amounts, but I think in the first—in the—as I recall, in the fir—and I can't remember whether this included your family money—the Carroll and Margaret money—but we raised about—a little less than \$150,000 . . .

DB: In the first race?

AS: . . . in the first primary.

DB: That sounds right.

AS: And then I think we spent maybe another \$50,000 in the runoff . . .

DB: Against Faubus.

AS: . . . you know, against Faubus. Yeah.

DB: Yeah, that sounds right.

AS: So a total of about \$150,000 to get the nomination.

[01:05:35] ED: But you spent a little bit of money toward the end.

Archie, you may remember how—at what point—buying some television time and—'cause I—or was that later in the fall? Did you do some—you did some television advertising in the first primary, did you not?

DB: Oh, yeah.

ED: Right toward the end?

DB: Yeah, we spent virtually all of our money from—on television.

ED: And these were fifteen-minute, little talks, or do you remember what those were?

DB: Actually, they were more spots than anything.

ED: Just little . . .

DB: They were thirty . . .

ED: . . . small, short spots.

DB: . . . second spots. Yeah. We had one television show on Channel 7 that they just sorta gave us. And what else?

AS: Well, one of the things that I remember was the—I think it was Channel 4, the NBC affiliate . . .

DB: Oh, yeah.

AS: . . . that did a kind of a candidate profile where they gave each

candidate about five minutes. And that was, like, a week or ten days before the first primary, and that's what really, as I recall, got people's attention.

DB: It was longer than that before the first primary.

AS: Maybe it was two weeks.

DB: Yeah.

AS: But . . .

[01:06:41] DB: Well, we got a—our phone rang off the wall after that night. It was down at Channel 4, and I forget—one of the newscasters was emceeing it. And they took everybody in alphabetical order, and that was the greatest stroke of luck I ever had because I got to go first. And I knew in a show like that, that people were gonna be tearin' the knobs off their set to get back to watch the *Ed Sullivan Show*. They weren't gonna watch a bunch of politicians. And that really—but that show that night was well watched. It was the first time anybody ever had a chance to see all eight candidates. And I'm—if I were just guessing, I would say that that was the single most important thing that happened during that campaign.

ED: Did . . .

[01:07:42] DB: Our phone rang off the wall, people wantin' yard signs and wantin' this, that, and the other. And I got to go first,

and I was—as I say, I'm sure not many people watched after the first or second one.

ED: This was virtually the advent of television in politics in Arkansas, I think, so that—it was, I think, a very significant event itself 'cause I—I've—I began—as a political reporter, I began to hear comments. My own mother said—I asked her who she'd think she was gonna vote for—Joe Purcell—and she said, "No, I think I'll vote for this Bumpers fellow. I saw him on television, and I liked him." So that was when we began to realize that there's something happening out there.

DB: It probably was.

[01:08:21] ED: Yeah. Along about that time—maybe a little—a few weeks before the primary—first primary—you got a call from Roger Mears, who was chairman of the Pulaski County Democratic Committee and the head of a—kinda the reformed Democrats—liberal Democrats in Little Rock. And that point, I think, in your campaign you were still barely registering in the polls. Do you remember that conversation? It was Roger—when he called you . . .

DB: I . . .

ED: . . . offered their support.

DB: . . . I remember it very well. I can—I—when I say very well, I

can't give you, you know, the precise language, but I can tell you that—and I don't believe it was Roger Mears that called me.

ED: I think it was. I think it was Roger.

DB: You do?

ED: Yeah.

DB: Well, you'd have . . .

ED: You—we didn't cover this yesterday, did we?

AS: No.

ED: Okay.

[01:09:15] DB: Anyway, Roger wanted me to endorse Orval—um—he wanted me to endorse somebody. Who was it?

AS: No, he wanted you to attack Orval.

DB: That was it.

ED: Yeah.

DB: That was it.

AS: They wanted . . .

ED: His idea was that with all these people in there, it's gonna become a two-man race, and you need to be—whoever the anti-Faubus candidate was, was going to be . . .

AS: The ?alternative? . . .

ED: Somebody needed to establish themselves as the antithesis of Orval Faubus.



DB: Yeah.

ED: And that was the key to it. I think that was his strategy.

[01:09:48] DB: That's right. And that didn't appeal to me at all, and it certainly didn't appeal to Deloss Walker. He just threw a fit. He said, you know, "We're not about to do that." And Winslow Drummond was a pretty good friend of mine, and I was at a rally up in one of the northeastern counties.

ED: Batesville, I think.

DB: No, it wasn't Batesville.

ED: Newport or somethin'.

DB: No, it was further over.

ED: No? Okay.

DB: But anyway, I was at that thing that night and I called him—and I called Winslow after the thing was over, and I told him word for word what had happened. He said, "Well, I'll tell you, my best judgment would be not to do it." He said, "I ran for the school board, and those people put that same proposition to me," I think, of jumpin' on Faubus or jumpin' on somebody, "and I took their advice, and I did it. And I finished," I think, "a slow fourth"—somethin' like that. He said, "I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole if I were you." And I said, "Winslow, you know, I'm from western Arkansas. I know very little about politics in

central Arkansas, or any other part of Arkansas." And he said, "You just remember, I was running pretty well until I got mixed up with that crowd, and that took me out." And so that was the end of the story.

[01:11:16] ED: So you called Roger Mears, I—the next morning, which was a Saturday morning. And you called him and told him . . .

DB: We were not gonna . . .

ED: . . . count you out . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . that you're gonna do that.

DB: That's exactly right.

ED: You're gonna run your own campaign. And then, I think, they went—Hayes McClerkin was . . .

DB: Went to Hayes McClerkin, and I think Hayes bought it.

ED: He did it, and he went on a campaign against Faubus and . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . illegal gambling and Arkansas Loan and Thrift and the Pensions for Pals and all the . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . all the scandals . . .

DB: Yeah.

[01:11:42] ED: . . . I think, and the rest [*unclear words*]. So you get, I think, in the first primary twenty-one percent roughly.

DB: Twenty-one percent.

ED: You squeezed Joe Purcell out for a second place and get into the runoff with Faubus. And what happened in that runoff campaign? Was it basically television . . .

DB: It was basically a television thing, and I don't know how we did it, but we had a sufficient amount of money in that. We had a sufficient amount of money in that to be—get heard.

[01:12:20] ED: Now you go back to your sister and brother again for money, right?

DB: That's right.

ED: How did that go?

DB: Now that was before . . .

ED: The primary.

DB: . . . the first primary.

ED: Okay.

DB: It wasn't during the runoff. But he—Deloss called Carroll and said, "You know, we're doin' really well, and Dale is coming up." And he had some figures. I forget what the figures were, but the—they were fairly impressive.

ED: Thirteen or fourteen percent in the polls—something.

DB: Yeah. I think it was 14 percent. But he said, "The thing about it is, we're moving up. That's 14 percent right now," or yesterday or whenever they had taken this poll. "But thi—this is an indication of where we are headed. But we can't do it without television, and we need—I've checked with the stations, and it's thirty—it's gonna take \$35,000 to really make an impression this last two weeks." That's when Carroll called Margaret, and she absolutely just dug her heels in. She wasn't gonna do it. And within two or three days, she sent Carroll a check, and the two of 'em came up with \$30-, 35,000. And I'm convinced till this day that that—Deloss was right. That last \$35,000 was the thing that got us in that runoff.

[01:13:57] ED: You kept a—you did something sort of unusual in that race. You kept a very close tally of all your campaign contributions and . . .

DB: Boy, we did.

ED: . . . and also turned some down.

DB: Yeah. We did all of that. We turned down some money. Witt Stephens always insisted that he'd given money, but we couldn't locate it in our campaign.

ED: Well, he told me once that he offered you some money, and you said that you were too good for—to take his five thousand

dollars or something. And so he . . .

DB: Well, of course, that's not . . .

ED: That—that's—that was his account to me . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . one day.

DB: Yeah.

ED: That you were—you . . .

DB: I would . . .

ED: That was dirty money from him.

[01:14:45] DB: Well, I was not gonna take Witt Stephens's money under any circumstances, before or after any event. I got to know him a little bit during the campaign, you know, and he was a very [*unclear word*] fellow—well [*unclear word*]. We had nice, interesting conversations, but he knew I didn't want his money, and I don't suppose we had more than two conversations. Martin Borchert took me over there one time, I remember, and he thought if we just went over there and visited with him a little while, he would voluntarily give us some money. I didn't want to take his money, but Martin—course, Martin'd take money from almost anybody. And so that just came a cropper. But anyway, back to Witt. Witt—as far as I know, he never got a penny into our campaign, but he would swear if he were alive

today that he put a sizeable amount in.

ED: Well, he—in the—well, he didn't—obviously didn't in the—in either of the primaries, but I—he told me he wanted to—he tried to give you some money in the general election because you were a Democrat, and he said he was a Democrat. And he wanted a Democrat to get elected. And—but his comment to me was you didn't [*DB coughs and clears throat*]*—you spurned his money or something, and he kinda resented it.*

DB: I have no recollection of that really.



[01:16:17] ED: And racing—did the racetrack—did Oaklawn try to give you some . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . send you some money?

DB: Yes. I turned that down. I took that money home with me because the person who gave me the money from Charles Cella told me that they had always given money in campaigns, and there was absolutely not a hint of anything wrong with it. He said, "And I can promise you this is as clean a money as you'll get." And I said, "Yes, but I hear that, but I also know that the legislature has control over how many races they can run a day. They have control over how long the season is, what the odds can be. They have everything. The legis—the legislature can

determine everything."

ED: The taxes.

[01:17:10] DB: Taxes. How much . . .

ED: The pari-mutuel taxes.

DB: "How much they're gonna have to pay the legislature and so on."

And I said, "I don't wanna have to mess with that." "Oh, listen, champ," he said, "this—you don't understand. This is just as clean as any money can be." And I said, "Well, it probably is. I wouldn't challenge that at all, but I don't want it." And he said, "Tell you what. Take this money home with you. You're goin' home this weekend, aren't you? You're goin' home tonight." I said, "Yes." He said, "Take this money with you and just hang onto it till Monday when you come back." We had a big Monday morning séance, and I said, "Okay." So I took the money home—took it out of my pocket. It was all cash. And I've forgotten how much money it was. It was a sizeable chunk.

[01:18:00] ED: We should say that this is before the days of rigid campaign finance laws.

DB: Oh, yeah.

ED: And that people . . .

DB: Well . . .

ED: . . . could give an . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . unlimited amount . . .

DB: No, you didn't . . .

ED: . . . of money and . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . there was no accounting for it or anything else in those days.

DB: You're absolutely right. There was no . . .

ED: You could give cash. You could give any amount of money.

DB: That's right. But I left that money on the top of the chest of drawers in my bedroom that night—Sunday night—and I got up Sunday morning, and I came back to Little Rock with that cash in my hand, and I gave it back to the guy who tried to get me to take it.

[01:18:31] ED: One of the—in the runoff campaign, one of the issues—I guess, maybe the principle issue that Orval Faubus raised in that two-week period was he maintained that you sa—were a big Winthrop Rockefeller supporter. And that was the issue for, I think, a number of days. He kept throwing accusations about your not only voting for him [*DB clears throat*—giving him money or supporting him or whatever. Do you remember that—I think you kinda dodged the issue . . .



DB: I did.

ED: . . . at the time.

[01:19:07] DB: I did duck the issue. I didn't—and I don't think it—  
I'm still not prepared to [*laughter*] . . .

ED: To say whether you . . .

DB: . . . to say what I did.

ED: Okay. I think you told me once that you had [*laughs*]*—*you had supported Winthrop Rockefeller [*laughs*] in those days.

DB: Well, and, of course, everybody knows that Winthrop Rockefeller and I were much more attuned politically than Orval Faubus [*laughs*] and I were. I could not—I could never have taken money from anybody in the Faubus camp. Never could've done anything to align myself with him in any way.

ED: Yesterday, did we cover that story about Pine Bluff? We didn't, did we?

AS: No.

ED: The discussion—or we did in there this morning.

AS: No.

DB: I thought we did.

AS: Yeah.

[01:19:57] ED: Tell me about in the runoff when Faubus has a press conference at Little Rock to make this dramatic announcement.

[*DB coughs*] This would've been maybe a week before the runoff election.

DB: That's right.

ED: And Ed Lester, I think, was your campaign treasurer or something involved in your campaign.

DB: Ed was just really a man for all seasons. He was everywhere I wanted him to be. He raised some money, but he was not our chief money-raiser and all that sorta thing. And I was just tryin' to think about . . .

[01:20:39] ED: Faubus made the—announced that he was going to have a press conference at Little Rock to make this blockbuster announcement that was gonna change the campaign. And you heard about it . . .

DB: That was approximately . . .

ED: . . . so you had Ed Lester . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . go to it.



[01:20:52] DB: I think that the—Faubus made that announcement about a week to two weeks before July 4. And nobody could understand he was sort of alluding to some hanky-panky, but he was not really clear about what he was talkin' about. But this was gonna be a blockbuster announcement by Orval Faubus that

was gonna take Dale Bumpers outta the race. And so I got a hold of Ed, and I said, "Ed, we've got this big rally in Pine Bluff. It's a huge political rally. There's gonna be a big crowd there. And I wish you would do me a favor. I wish you'd go to Little Rock and attend Orval Faubus's press conference and call me on your phone the minute you get the results of that—what it's about, what he says, and so on." And he said, "Okay, I'll do it." So I go on down to Pine Bluff with two or three aides. And Faubus spoke before I did, and that was unusual. Usually the sponsors of the rally would put Orval Faubus on last. I always had to go first because the people who were sponsoring and the people who were really—what shall I say? Gonna benefit most from it—those people went last. But anyway, Ed called me, and the rally was going on full blast. But Ed called me, and I took his call. I went—I think I went to a tree—I went over by a tree. Somebody had a telephone similar to a cell phone, and Ed said, "Orval Faubus says that if he is elected governor, that he will be assassinated within two weeks," I believe it was. [01:23:04] And I said, "Well, why? What's the logic?" He said, "Nobody knows." He said, "I talked to other people who were there and asked 'em if they understood it—what it was about. Nobody seemed to know." And I said, "He's gonna be assassinated?"

That's—the reverse of that seems the way it oughta be." And he said, "It is, but I'm just telling you the way he told it." So Faubus spoke before I did, and I got through with the telephone call with Ed. I went back to the truck bed where the platform was for the rally. And Faubus was next up as the speaker. Not me. Him. And he said, "I have some startling news for you. I have just learned"—and he goes through the story—that if he is elected governor, he will not survive more than two to three weeks after the election. He will be assassinated. And so he goes through that thing, and I follow him on the platform. And I said, "I must confess to you that I don't understand what Orval Faubus has just said about his assassination. It makes no sense to me. I'm not saying it didn't happen, that somebody's not planning to assassinate him, but I'm just saying that [*cell phone rings*] the—to be assassinated because he was elected would be a first in this entire country. Never happened before." And I said, "But I will say this—the greatest thing about this is you, the people of Pine Bluff and Jefferson County, have the privilege and opportunity to save Orval Faubus's life by electing him—I mean, by defeating him. If he's not elected, he's not gonna be assassinated. Now, how could you beat that for a platform issue?" And everybody started hootin' and hollerin' and carryin'

on, you know. And that only went on about ten minutes and it was over. But that was the—I believe that was the stupidest thing I have ever witnessed in a political campaign.

[01:25:31] ED: Well, he was threshing around a lot and that—I think he realized a couple of days into the—into that runoff campaign that it was over. I'm sure that he—I think Gene Newsome did regular polling for him, and Newsome was a great pollster. And I'm sure he told him—showed him the numbers that he was . . .

DB: Beat . . .

ED: . . . no way that he could be elected in that runoff. And so I think . . .

[01:25:57] DB: Do you suppose Gene Newsome hatched that . . .

ED: The assassination plot?

DB: Yeah.

ED: Probably not.

DB: I wouldn't think so.

ED: No. Probably not. Gene—I doubt if he . . .

DB: I would think that came straight from Orval Faubus.

ED: Gene didn't really care about anything. He just did the polls.

DB: Yeah.

ED: And he—then he started polling for—he'd been polling for . . .

DB: Purcell?

ED: He'd been polling for Rockefeller during Rockefeller's four years.  
So he did Rockefeller's polling as well.

DB: Yeah.

[01:26:20] ED: And I think did the same polls for Rockefeller in the  
fall that showed that you were gonna win by a landslide in the  
fall.

AS: Yeah, Gene did the postcard poll, right? Didn't he do his polling  
by postcards?

ED: No, the . . .

AS: Or was that by somebody else?

ED: No, no, that was the whiskey—that was the—that was Ike  
Murray's poll, I think.

AS: Oh, was it—that was done by postcard?

ED: Yeah. Well, maybe not. [*DB coughs*] No, beer—the beer poll  
was a different kind—there were a bunch of little—I've forgotten  
who did the postcard poll, but—no, Gene Newsome was a  
professional. He did all the . . .

DB: He . . .

ED: . . . scientific polling. He was very, very good. He . . .

DB: Was he?

[01:26:56] ED: I mean, he was unerring in his—I—in his polls, as I  
recall.

AS: Mh-hmm.

ED: I think he predicted your—his numbers for Rockefeller, according to Rockefeller's people, had your number exactly on the money in the general election. And it was about the same as it was the . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . week after you won the primary.

DB: Yeah.

ED: It never . . .

DB: Nothin' changed much . . .

ED: Nothing changed . . .

DB: . . . in the two weeks to . . .

[01:27:21] ED: . . . in the election. How much money did you spend in the general election? Do you know?

DB: In the general election, we spent 300,000.

ED: Somebody who worked for Rockefeller in those days told me that they—that he spent about 10 million on that campaign during the year—a total of about 10 million on that campaign.

DB: That I spent 10 million?

ED: No, that Rockefeller did.

DB: Oh, that Rockefeller spent . . .

ED: Rockefeller spent about 10 million.

[01:27:44] DB: I—I'm quite sure that that's very close. I have no idea, and I've never investigated it or tried to find out how much money he spent. I had heard 3 million, and I think he probably spent more money than that, but that's neither here nor there. We weren't paying that much attention to it. We were just trying to raise enough money to stay on television. And we raised—I believe we raised \$300,000 and spent \$300,000 in that general election.

[01:28:21] ED: Yeah, that was about the time that we were—I think they'd passed some campaign finance laws, and they were—I don't think they'd kicked in. Maybe two years later, I think, is when the campaign finance laws began to kick in and required elaborate reporting . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . reporting of . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . of collection in the spending period.

DB: It had been talked about so much and I—in my heart of hearts, I knew that even though it was not law at the time, I knew there was gonna be a lotta discussion simply because of Rockefeller's wealth. And it would probably—it—they panned it back on me on how much I spent and all that sorta thing. I knew it—I just



knew how much money everybody was spending was gonna become public, and so I made a very careful accounting of every dime we took in.

[01:29:09] ED: When you won the runoff election, did you—were you confident that you were gonna win the general election then against Rockefeller?

DB: When I won the runoff?

ED: Yeah, when you won the runoff, did you—you seemed to be very confident in that campaign, like you were—that it was all over.

DB: About defeating Rockefeller?

ED: Yeah.

DB: Yes, I felt certain about that. I can't remember doing anything that would mimic a genuine campaign during that time. All I did was just go here and go there. I'd go to rallies, make a pep talk—didn't talk nearly as much about issues as I had during the primaries. And I—one time, somebody came up to me and told me that they thought Rockefeller had a poll showing it was winnable—not that he was ahead, but that it was winnable—which caused me some pause. But within two or three days, I saw another poll that threw that right out the window.

[01:30:19] ED: It was nearly two to one . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . from the first to the finish.

DB: And it would've been two to one except for this fellow in east Arkansas who got . . .

ED: Walter Carruth . . .

DB: . . . five percent.

ED: . . . Walter Carruth of Lexa running as what—American Party—American Independent Party?

DB: American Party. That was it.

ED: Yeah. And he got about 2 or 3 percent or something—5 percent maybe at most.

DB: I never saw him during the campaign. If he had a campaign, I was unaware of it.

ED: No, he didn't do much.

DB: Yeah.

[01:30:49] ED: All right. So let's move on to your election. And did you have any contact with Rockefeller after the election?

DB: Yes, quite a bit. He invited me to the Mansion for lunch three times before I was inaugurated. And he was very helpful. He told me they were gonna leave those expensive carpets in the living room, the dining room. He gave me some sagacious advice that I can't recall fully now. But he gave me the names of some people that he told me I ought to get in touch with 'em

and seek their advice. He told me that the prison would be a real problem for me. He told me about a couple of other things I can't recall. But he was very open about that. He named two or three people that he said, "I would shun if I were you even though they're Democrats and considered to be"—and I can't even remember who they were, but I just remember he gave me the names of some people that he told me I should avoid. But we sat at the lunch table just the two of us on two or three separate occasions, and he was surprisingly illusive. He was surprising—he was really surprisingly open and sensible, and I was really—I was surprised by it.

ED: He was better one-on-one . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . than on—in . . .

DB: Absolutely.

ED: . . . in speaking. He was a terrible speaker and . . .

DB: Yeah.

[01:32:41] ED: . . . which he demonstrated during the campaign.

What about your family? Having to come—small town coming to Little Rock. How did they take to this idea of coming to Little Rock and how did that work out for them?

DB: We thought we were gonna spend more time in Charleston than

we did. I didn't want to—I wanted to move into the Governor's Mansion for official purposes and to make it an office where I could transact some business. Though, unlike Rockefeller, I did not want—I didn't want people comin' to my house. He—I don't know—I guess Rockefeller transacted most of his business though in his office here. I don't know. But somebody told me that he transacted very little business period. But what little he transacted was in his—I believe it was in his office. I'm not sure. I know one thing—we talked a moment ear—a while ago about who had attended my announcement that I was gonna run for governor. What was his name—Herbie Byrd?

ED: Herbie Byrd.

[01:34:07] DB: Herbie Byrd told me that he had gone—he called the governor's office every day for three weeks, and he was not in any of those days. And I've—I had been under the impression that he stayed in his office most of the time.

ED: He didn't—he rarely came to the office at the capitol in the mornings. It was usually noon or so before he came. And he spent a lotta time at Petit Jean Mountain, and he flew . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . back and forth. He had a—his private jet, and he would—he didn't spend a lotta time at the Governor's Mansion. He lived

mainly on the mountain and would fly down to Little Rock and spend a few hours in his office in the afternoons. So he was rarely there in the mornings. He was not a morning person. He stayed up to two or three or four o'clock in the mornings. That was kind of his lifestyle, and he transacted business at . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . midnight. Called people and telephone conversations with aides, you know, like Tom Isley. They might get a call at one o'clock in the morning to discuss some issue. Isley was his chief of staff. So that's just kinda the way he operated, so I can understand why if Herbie called the morning—office every morning, he wouldn't get him. [*Laughs*]

DB: Well . . .

ED: But you . . .

DB: I—I'll keep this off the record. Go ahead.

[01:35:37] ED: Well, in addition to his kinda personal advice, you also took a lot of his program that . . .

DB: I did indeed.

ED: . . . and passed it. And these were not things that—ideas that he particularly came up with, but they were long on the agenda—reform agenda—progressive agenda—and you kind of took—including reorganization and a lot of other issues that he

was unable to pass, and you passed those in that first session in 1971.

DB: That's right. I didn't see any reason to throw a million-dollar study away without giving it a chance.

ED: That was on the executive reorganization of government—consolidating all these . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . all these agencies . . .

DB: All the . . .

ED: . . . under thirteen department heads.

DB: I think there were sixty-five agencies we consolidated into the thirteen.

ED: Something like that.



[01:36:38] DB: I got that—I think I've said this—I got that from my brother, who was a pretty sharp executive. And I never will forget, after I had been elected and was calling people in to sort of formulate how we were gonna operate, and one of the main things that we talked about—the mainest thing we talked about was reorganization and how we were gonna put this thing together differently from the way it had ever been before. And my brother said, "Little brother, anytime you think you can run an operation with sixty-five people reporting to you, I got bad

news for you. That's not doable." And so I told him about Rockefeller and this reorganization. He said, "That's obviously the right way to go." And he said, "You should—you told me they had thirteen in the plan." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "That's more than enough. You should have—you shouldn't have any hesitancy about going full bore and reorganizin' that state government, so that you have one person from each organization responsible to you who will report to you." And he said, "The—you pick somebody out in each organization that you think you have confidence in." And organization was one thing. I was gonna do that. But how you make reorganization work was a separate matter, and that's what I spent most of my time on.

[01:38:27] ED: Well, that session—the 1971 session—it probably was the most productive single legislative session of the century as far as major legislation passing. Reorganization got a lot of attention, of course, and that passed by a landslide, I think.

DB: Yes, it did.

ED: I forget. Everybody was . . .

DB: Now, we had a . . .

ED: . . . predicting great trouble—resistance from state agencies and . . .

DB: Yeah.

[01:38:56] ED: You got—did you get Bill Foster to sponsor that or was that . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: I forgot.

DB: Bill Foster sponsored—one of the major sponsors.

ED: And he's been a big—he'd been a big Faubus man, and he had supported Faubus, I think.

DB: But he had no trouble—Bill Foster had no trouble transferring his allegiance to me. We became fast friends almost immediately.

[01:39:18] ED: And so throughout that four years he was helpful in all kinds of . . .

DB: Everything.

ED: . . . controversial legislation.

DB: Particularly on school matters and on tax matters. Bill told me he'd never voted against a tax increase—that he had voted for every teacher salary increase he ever got a chance to vote for—that educationwise, he yearned—he yearned to vote for every bill that would enhance education. I thought Bill Foster was the best legislator I ever served—ever had anything to do with. Thought he was a very fine man on top of that.

[01:40:00] ED: During the campaign, you had—taxes had been a big



issue in the campaign, as I recall. And Faubus—Rockefeller, of course, was on record of favoring much higher taxes. In fact, in the 1968, 1969 sessions, he'd—he had proposed increasing general revenues by 50 percent—I think, nearly every tax on the books he had tried to raise and, course, was defeated by huge margins in both the house and senate on all of those things. So they tried to—he tried to make an issue of it during the campaign with you, and you kind of ducked the issue. You would not commit yourself to supporting taxes, and you would not say that you would not raise taxes. And how did you bear early in that session? You proposed a big package of tax increases in a very conservative legislature that did not want to raise taxes.

[01:41:03] DB: I had made up my mind on who the real players were in the legislature. There had been not too much change in the legislature in the election. And some of the so-called "old bulls" were all back, and I'd made up my mind during the campaign that people like Olen Hendrix in Stuttgart—what was his . . .

ED: You had Clarence Bell of Parkin.

DB: Clarence Bell was another one because Clarence Bell was a school man. You know, he'd been a schoolmaster. But I picked

these people out that I . . .

ED: Wayne Hampton was the guy you were thinking about . . .

DB: Wayne Hampton's who I was talkin' 'bout.

ED: . . . from Stuttgart.

DB: Bill Foster, especially. But, anyway, I picked out about ten people that I thought had the clout and the determination to do something really relevant for the school system and virtually the same people for reorganization. I thought reorganization was gonna be much tougher than it was. I thought that by the time I left there two or three months later, I'd be lucky if I had that reorganization plan passed. He had Bessie Moore, you know, who was just runnin' from one end of that capitol to the other, and there were several people like that who just were bonkers.

[01:42:36] ED: And Bessie Moore was head of the state library . . .

DB: Exactly.

ED: . . . commission. Yes.

DB: That's exactly right. So—but in any event, we got that reorganization plan passed *tout de suite*, as they say. It was absolutely amazing how quickly we got the thing passed. And I can't remember now how long it took, but it wasn't long.

[01:42:59] ED: It was very early. Charlie Matthews was, I guess, the state Democratic chairman, and he helped you push that

through, I guess.

DB: He . . .

ED: Was he a legislative assistant . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . I think, in the house . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . at that time?

DB: But anyway, the—when you sat down and talked to somebody about it and gave them the pros and cons, if you told them why this was necessary—how much money it was gonna save—how efficient it would make state government compared to what it was now—they believed that. I mean, you know, it made good sense when you talked about it, and I think that's the main reason we were able to get it through. And some of the—st—the "old bulls" were really—they were optimistic about it. They thought that we needed it and that it would work. I think also they probably thought—I think that they may have thought that there'd be more appointments for 'em to make. And the truth of the matter was it's supposed to operate in the opposite way. But for some reason or other, that didn't dawn 'em. But I say, it was something that I really took great pride in.



[01:44:19] ED: But the tax issue was much tougher.

DB: That was the one where people would stop me on the street and say, "I voted for you the first time, but I'm not gonna vote for you next."

ED: Course, you raised—I don't know whether I can enumerate all the taxes—the increased you—the—course, the larger one was the . . .

DB: The major tax was \$58 million.

ED: Well, that was the . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . raising the personal income tax and . . .

DB: Yeah. And . . .

ED: And you—I think you applied the sales tax to services and the cigarette tax and real estate transfer tax . . .

DB: Mh-hmm.

ED: . . . and I've forgotten all the others. Archie, do you remember any of the other taxes but . . .

AS: Those were the major ones but . . .

ED: Those were the major ones.

DB: When all was said and done, I think we had—I think we'd raised \$58 million, and while that sounds like nothing now, \$58,000 million dollars back then was a lot of money. I . . .

[01:45:05] ED: And raising the income tax had never been done

since the income tax . . .

DB: Since the constitution had been written.

ED: . . . since the income tax had been created in about 1927, as I recall, and then right after that the state amended the constitution to require a three-fourths vote of each house in order to raise most taxes and among those, the personal income tax. So you had to get twenty-seven votes in the senate and seventy-five votes in the house of representatives to raise the income tax. And nobody thought that was doable at the time. Did you get advice about that, that you shouldn't try to do that?

DB: Oh, Lord, yes. Most people thought that the income tax was not doable, but even if it was, it'd be a political disaster for me. And I'm gonna say that was the one thing that people considered to be a real—that was gonna be a real jarring thing in the next election. I never did feel that way, and the reason I didn't was because I had charted what this money was gonna be spent for. And while they hated the tax, they loved what it was gonna go for. And when we would explain to them—teacher salaries especially. We didn't get as much teacher salary as I had hoped we'd get. But when we got everything put together and got the tax allocated, most people were pretty well satisfied with it.

[01:46:54] ED: The original version of your tax was gonna take the

top marginal rate on incomes above—I . . .

DB: Seventy-five percent.

ED: Well, it's about—yeah. Well, above 25,000, I think, at the time.

That was a pretty high salary back in 1971. But you were gonna raise it from 5 percent, which is what it'd been since 1927, to 9 percent—the top rate. And I think you tried I don't know how many roll calls in both the house and senate to try to get that . . .

DB: A lot. A lot. I know we . . .

ED: Three or four roll calls in the house.

DB: Oh, more than that.

ED: Yeah.

DB: We had more than that.

ED: In each house.

DB: I'm—I don't know—yeah. I don't know how many there were, but it was probably—came close to setting a record in the legislature.

[01:47:37] ED: And I think in the senate, you had kept getting twenty-five votes. You needed twenty-seven, and you kept getting twenty-five votes. Senator Bell and—Senator Clarence Bell of Parkin and Senator Bob Douglas of Texarkana, when the roll was called, they happened to be outta the chamber every

time . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . and—so [*laughter*] you were trying to get—call the roll again and get them in the chamber. Never could. You—so you finally had to—just finally had to carve it back to 7 percent, which is what it still is, I think.

DB: That's right. That's what will prob—always remain.

ED: Probably.

[01:48:16] DB: But I tell you, that—did we get that done in seven—there were seven—was it seven votes?

ED: You mean . . .

DB: Or 7 percent?

ED: Seven percent was the top rate . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . that was . . .

DB: Yeah . . .

ED: . . . on [*AS coughs*] incomes above twenty . . .

DB: I think we voted nine times, didn't we?

ED: There were a number of times. I don't recall how many.

DB: Yeah.

ED: But over a period of—it took a week or so in each house of roll calls, I think . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . to get it over the top to get the seventy-five. The house, you'd get seventy-three, and then it'd go down to seventy-one and then up to seventy-four and—but you finally got it over the top . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . both places.

DB: Nobody more surprised than I was.

[01:49:01] ED: So you had all this money then to spend.

DB: Yeah.

TM: Guys?

DB: Has . . .

ED: Yeah.

TM: We're gonna need to do a tape change.

ED: Okay. Nevermind.

[Tape stopped]

[01:49:08] TM: Well, we're rollin', guys.

ED: Are you ready?

TM: Yeah, we're ready. The last thing you did say—we were talkin' about. He had a lotta money to spend. If you want to pick up exactly where we left off—talking about campaign money that had come in. But we could pick it up wherever we're ready to



roll from.

ED: I don't remember—Arch, you remember what we were talkin' about, if anything?

AS: We were talkin'—just talkin' 'bout the general election campaign against . . .

ED: Well, and we'd already got . . .

AS: . . . Rockefeller.

ED: . . . we'd already gotten into the—into his governing.

AS: Right. Yeah.

ED: So we might . . .

AS: We've kinda bounced back and forth.

ED: . . . we might just pick up—we'll just pick up there.


TM: You bet.

[01:49:44] ED: Okay. You—when you were governor in the first year or so, you faced a bunch of—in addition to the problems of governing—some political situations that you had to deal with. Maybe the first one was the crisis in east Arkansas dealing with the Lee County Cooperative Clinic in Marianna, which was a poor people's clinic that had been set up, I think, under some federal—that maybe they'd gotten a federal grant and—to try to provide health care for poor people and mainly African Americans in the Delta. And it was highly controversial all over

the—that whole area—all the doctors and all the white people, I guess, were upset about it and wanted that clinic shut down—thought that it was a kind of a hotbed for radicalism and integration. So my recollection is—and you may correct me—is whether it fell to the governor to decide whether to continue funding to renew that grant, and there was all kinds of pressure on you as a young governor to deal with that situation. Do you remember that?

DB: Yes, I remember it pretty well.

[01:51:04] ED: How did that—was that correct? Was it a federal grant that you had to approve or . . .

DB: It was a federal grant, and it had been given to an organization,  the name of which—they had formed an organization and gave it a name. And the money was to be dispersed from one of the federal agencies, and it was supposed to be to enhance and improve the health of people—of black people in areas like Marianna, Arkansas. And I hadn't been governor two weeks until this big brouhaha occurred, and the reason it occurred was because the people in Forrest City were—not Forrest City but . . .

ED: Marianna.

DB: . . . Marianna.

[01:51:58] ED: Actually the whole area around it as well, I think.

DB: Yeah.

ED: It was kinda spilled out beyond Lee County.

DB: That's right. And all those people down there were terribly upset and wanted—they wanted those grants suspended. They wanted that pla—that thing chased outta town. They didn't wanna have anything to do with it. And the black folks down there were really—they were most concerned about the future of this organization. They loved it, and they were getting better health care—at least seemed to be getting better health care than they'd gotten in the past, and so they did not want that thing torpedoed. And the white people in Marianna were absolutely as livid on the other side of wanting me as governor or anybody else in authority to torpedo that whole project. [01:52:50] They didn't want it, and they said it was just a troublemaker, and some people were makin' a little money out of it, and all that sorta thing, and they wanted it stopped. So they—you know, they—some of my friends in Marianna—some of 'em that were white—came to see me and make their pitch for gettin' rid of this organization. And there was a young guy down there named Olly Neal. Olly was a very bright guy, and he was fairly eloquent, and the people in Marianna disliked him intensely, and they wanted me to take a hand in doing something about him

because they saw him as the problem. And I just—I couldn't do that, first of all, if I had wanted to because it was a federal program. And the—so the people in Marianna started takin' their kids outta school and puttin' 'em in charter schools and other places like that. And this thing just—this problem just wouldn't go away. And I can remember one time I had heard that there were a bunch of those people—much of the blacks who wanted to keep that clinic—it was a clinic by then—they wanted to keep that clinic [*door squeaks*] for their children, and they were adamant about it. And I can remember one day I walked out into my conference room, and then that thing was full of people out there. And so I tried my best to just say a few words and get outta there. But it got to the point where it was obviously turning violent, and some people were gonna get hurt—probably killed. And I had appointed a former FBI agent as head of the state police. And I called him to the office, and we talked about it, and he said, "The—you know, this is not gonna be easy. You're not gonna be able to—easy to get rid of this group." And I said, "Well, we're gonna have to figure out something to do," and to be truthful with you at this moment, I don't remember precisely how it wound up. I think, though, that the clinic survived.

[01:55:25] ED: You approved the grant.

DB: That's right.

ED: The grant was subject to your veto. The governor had the power to veto or approve the grant.

DB: That was one of the most difficult decisions . . .

ED: And you . . .

DB: . . . I ever made because . . .

ED: And . . .

DB: . . . I had a lotta good friends in Marianna, and they were good people. But I also knew that the people down there wanted that clinic. They knew that the black folks down there were not getting—being treated right in the health care, and they wanted to keep that clinic. And they wanted—they were planning on adding additional doctors to it. And so anyway I forget exactly how it was resolved, but I know that the clinic survived, and it survives until this day.

ED: It does. It's still in existence. It still provides the . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . most of the heath care for . . .

DB: That's right.

[01:56:21] ED: . . . African Americans in that two- or three-county area there. Another incident—I guess—I think it occurred also in

your first term was another hot political situation up in the Fifth Judicial District, which was a court district involving—I think it embraced Faulkner County, Conway County, and maybe Yell County and . . .

DB: Maybe a part of Pope County.

ED: . . . Pope County, which is where . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . Russellville was.

DB: Yeah.

[01:56:52] ED: And, course, that included—Sheriff Marlin Hawkins was a political boss of Conway County and then Faulkner County was also part of that same kinda machine. You had Senator Mutt Jones over there, who was a powerful person and a lawyer in that district, and a judge named Russell Roberts, who was kind of a kingpin also in that machine. And on the opposite end of that district, you had a prosecuting attorney named Alex Street, who was a kind of a progressive, reformer, type, and they were butting heads. They were in a—just a mortal conflict—had been for several years—had been indictments and all kinds of things. And so the old political machine wanted to separate that district and take Alex Street and the prosecuting attorney and the progressive side of the district out of it and

create a separate district over there, and so that they would— Sheriff Hawkins and Mutt Jones—they would have their own prosecuting attorney and their own judicial system there. So they had been battling for—I guess, for ten years and as I recall, they put a bill in the legislature in 1971 to separate those two districts and create a fresh judicial district, so they could separate those two warring halves. Big battle over that. Lotta tension—and you remember that fight and . . .

DB: Oh, I remember it all well.

[01:58:21] ED: And what happened?

DB: You know, that's a—I was afraid you were gonna close the question by saying, "What happened?" [ED laughs] Because I don't really recall what did happen, except . . .

ED: They passed the bill—both houses.

DB: They did—they finally passed the bill?

ED: Both houses passed that bill, and it went to your desk. And there was all kinds of pressure from people in that district . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . for you to sign that bill.



[01:58:46] DB: I remember I was so perplexed about that and really so—and undecided about what to do. The people in Conway—I'm talkin' about the city of Conway—were adamant, you know,

about splittin' that district up. Of course, that was a group of people like Mutt Jones who—you know, to be quite frank about it, they would control that court system if they could get that thing split up. And I knew that wasn't right, and I knew the people especially who were trying to do it were not doing it for noble purposes. They were doing it for very selfish purposes. And so Richard Arnold, who was one of the dearest friends I ever had and one of the brightest men I ever knew—Richard had monitored that whole thing for me from the beginning. He was on my staff in the governor's office.

[01:59:43] ED: And he'd been a lawyer. He'd sued Marlin Hawkins, and some—I think, defended [*unidentified sound*] some progressive interests up there in some of those cases.

DB: Again.

ED: Litigation. Yeah.

DB: Richard, course, was as you know, is one of the brightest lawyers in America. And he was a wonderful man, a great citizen, great lawyer, and a very dear friend of mine and most of us. He stood for all the right things. And I was perplexed about what to do with this bill when it passed, whether I was gonna veto it or not. And Richard and I sat in my office for I'd say, you know, one to two hours with hardly uttering a word to each



other. And we were trying to figure out, "Should we go ahead and just veto this bill or—you know, were we gonna allow the termination of that district? Are we gonna split it up, or are we just gonna—what are we gonna do?" And . . .

[02:00:52] ED: Course, if you—you'd make mortal enemies. If you vetoed the bill, you were gonna make enemies of some powerful legislators . . .

DB: Oh, Lord!

ED: . . . who'd be voting on all of your legislation.

DB: Absolutely. There was no question but that politically I'd have probably been better off to not have vetoed the bill. And those people were all of one voice. But they were also people that were really not considered top-notch citizens. So anyway, Richard and I sat there for about two hours without talkin' or anything. And I told Richard—I said, "Richard, you know, I know in my heart of hearts that that bill oughta be vetoed. And there's no earthly reason for us to allow people to take over the legislature and the judicial system for nefarious purposes." And so we finally did that, and it was sustained, and so that was the end of that story. I think I've got that right. I—it's been so many years ago but . . .

[02:01:58] ED: I think that's basically right. Yeah, you did veto the

bill, and there was some talk about overriding your veto.

DB: Yeah.

ED: And it takes only a simple majority to override a veto . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . in the Arkansas legislature. It's unlike Washington. But they did sustain the veto.

[02:02:12] DB: Bob Brown. You mentioned Bob Brown, who's writing a book, and this plays a major role in the book. And he came to my office, and we talked about that. He refreshed my memory on a lot of it, and it was really a very, very trying time for me as governor, and it was a trying time really for the whole state and the bar association—a lotta people. And I thought, "You know, if I don't herd the courage to veto this bill, I oughta just resign and go home." And I concluded that, sittin' in my office with Richard. We sat there for about two hours, and it was an easy decision to make once I had put it in that perspective, where I knew it oughta be done—there's no point in sittin' here all day with this bill. And so we vetoed it, and that was the end of it.

[02:03:02] ED: And you did make an enemy of Mutt Jones . . .

DB: Oh, yes.

ED: . . . who was a . . .

DB: A mortal enemy.

ED: . . . senator from that . . .

DB: Conway.

ED: . . . from that district. And he'd been a thorn in the side of, I think, Winthrop Rockefeller for four years, and he was thrilled when you defeated Winthrop Rockefeller, and he was, I think, for a while considered himself your greatest ally, I guess . . .

DB: Oh, yeah.

ED: . . . when you first took office.

DB: When I first . . .

ED: And that destroyed that . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . pretty quickly.

[02:03:31] DB: He spent a lotta time in my office because he was really tryin' to warm up to me and me to warm up to him. And, you know, anybody that's had any judgment at all knew exactly what was going on, you know, and so I tolerated it and didn't make a to-do about it. But I just made sure that he wasn't gonna take over the Fifth Judicial District.

ED: He used to bring his pages down from the legislature . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . every day from Conway. He'd bring his pages down to have

'em—herd 'em into your office and have his picture taken with you and . . .

DB: Oh, yeah.

ED: . . . for—send back home.

DB: That was a [*ED laughs*] ?biennial? . . .

[02:04:11] ED: Yeah. Well, and then subsequent to that, of course, he gets in—as you say, he became your enemy and then fought you, I think, the rest of the way. And then he got in trouble for income tax evasion and was convicted, I think, in seventy—in 1972 or [19]73, he was convi—I think late [19]72 he was convicted of income tax evasion, which created another big crisis. There was an effort then to expel him from the senate. And he always thought you got involved in that to . . .

DB: Well, you know, I was just gettin' ready to say . . .

ED: . . . to oust him from the senate.

DB: . . . I don't remember that. Course, I didn't get involved in it. I don't know what's—what the circumstances were.

ED: Well, he attacked you in print several times. He said that you were high handed, and you were tryin' to get rid of him. And eventually, of course, he was expelled from the senate.

DB: Was he?

ED: It took a two-thirds vote to expel him. It was a statewide

movement to try to get the senate to expel him. And Bill Wamsley, a ally of yours who was elected to the senate the same time you were, from Batesville, kinda led the effort to expel him, and they failed the first time. They failed to get the twenty—twenty-four votes to expel him. And then they had a special session and came back at that special session and voted—they got the twenty-five votes to expel him.

DB: To expel him.

ED: And he was ousted from the senate. But . . .

[02:05:45] DB: He never—he was not convicted of a crime?

ED: Yes, he was convicted. He was convicted of tax . . .

DB: Did he serve time in the j—prison?

ED: He never served time. He was a—he got a—he was fined and had a suspended sentence for—three or four years' suspended sentence, but he had to give up his practice of law. But he never forgave you. He always thought you were somehow . . .

DB: Isn't that interesting? I was not aware of that.

ED: Yeah. And Rockefeller 'cause he always thought Rockefeller . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . and got the Republicans to sic the IRS on him and [*clunking sound*] get him in trouble with the IRS, so I think he thought you and the Rockefeller [*laughs*] and the Republicans were . . .

DB: Had . . .

ED: . . . were his downfall but . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . nevertheless. Talk about some ethical things. You found out early on that people wanted to give you gifts as governor. And you had a policy, I think, not to accept gifts. Do you remember dealing with that? I—in fact, there's one particular gift you got, I think, maybe in your first week in office from a member of the State Police Commission who wanted to be reappointed.

[02:07:00] DB: Mh-hmm. I tell you, that was a Christmas gift. It was my first year. I'm not sure whether I got it after I was inaugurated around Christmastime or whether it was the one year pursuant to that.

ED: I think it was right after—I think it was right—you took office in about the second week of January of 1971. All of those—most of those terms ended that second week of January.

DB: Yeah.

ED: So you had that appointment to make the—almost your first week in office. So I think this would've been your first week in office.

[02:07:38] DB: Yeah. I don't remember the appointment or

anything about it, but I do remember one day somebody handed me a gift. I think the gift was probably un—it was still wrapped. I don't think it was open. And somebody said, "Here, Governor, this is a Christmas gift," or some such thing as that. And I said, "Well, you know, we've got a rule here against this sorta thing." And so, anyway, we went ahead and opened the gift, and it was a gift from a man in south Arkansas in—he was on the State Police Commission, and he had sent me a wristwatch.

ED: Rolex.

DB: Was it a Rolex? I knew it was a very expensive watch. And . . .

ED: And I think it still had the price tag on it.

DB: I believe it did have.

ED: Yeah.

DB: And I don't know—I don't remember what the price tag was, but it wouldn't have made any difference to me what it was. I was not gonna keep the watch because one of the things we did do—early on—I'm not sure how early, but it was a known deal that I was not going to accept gifts. There was just no point in trying to run a state government and be accepting gifts from people who had different reasons for giving gifts to the governor. So anyway we opened this gift and I—I'm not sure, but it seemed to me like it was \$125. Might've been more. It was a very

expensive watch. And I told my secretary or somebody—I said, you know, "Wrap that up in the same box it came in and take this letter." And so we wrapped the thing up, and I wrote a letter to this man in south Arkansas who was on the State Police Commission. [02:09:32] And, you know, you had to be an idiot not to understand what it was about because it was time for a reappointment of that position, and I'm sure that he thought, "Well, you know, it's time to reappoint, so I'll send a gift and get myself reappointed." But in any event, that—that's pretty much the end of the story. I wrote him a very nice letter that I had written other people and continued to write to other people, saying that I value their friendship highly, that I appreciated all their support, but that I had taken—I had sort of taken an oath to myself when I took the governor's office, and it was that we would not accept gifts for any reason from anybody. And while I didn't attach anything nefarious to the gifts, if I broke it for him, who was a very dear friend, I'd have to break it for others. And I just didn't wanna start down that road. I was perfectly happy with our policy, and I wanted to continue it, and I thanked him very much for his thoughtfulness and sent the watch back to him. And that was just the beginning really of all the trouble. He was one of those people that obviously took strong exception



to something. It was an insult to him. And I don't know whether I ever heard from him orally or by mail or what. I'm not sure I ever heard from him period. But I sent it back to him, thanked him profusely for his friendship, and so on.

ED: Although I think he had supported Orval Faibus.

DB: Had he?

ED: Yes, yes.

DB: I'm not sure I knew [*ED laughs*] that at the time but . . .

ED: He was an appointee of Faibus. Yeah.

DB: Yeah. And I guess he thought this would overcome that mistake. And so anyway—sent the letter back. Sent the watch back—everything—and didn't hear any more from it until the state police reported to me that they had been getting information from the state police that this man was up to no good. And I forget exactly what the details of it were, but we put some new rules into effect at that time, and that's sorta the end of the story, except I think he wound up maybe goin' to prison for . . .

[02:12:01] ED: No, I don't think so. I think what happened was that later in the year the state police came to you and told you that there was an inmate at the state penitentiary—somebody who had recently been convicted and sent to the state penitentiary—

and they had—this person told prison officials that this man had—in south Arkansas whose appointment you had not made had hired him to assassinate you. And so—and they had asked you what you wanted to do about it, and you said send somebody down—send a trooper down there to tell him that if anything ever happened to you, that he would be the prime suspect.

DB: I do—I remember that part of it.

ED: Pr—that he would be the prime suspect, and I think W. A. Tudor, who was the head of the Criminal Investigation Division of the state police, told you that he would take care of it personally. He would deliver the message to the man personally so . . .

DB: And he did.

[02:12:57] ED: Yep. That's my memory of it from some years later.

DB: Your memory of it is perfect. I—I'm sorry I couldn't remember all that, but you hit the gist of it—the whole thing. It wouldn't take long to tell the story. But the whole point was that I was not gonna accept it from him or anybody else and that, you know, "Don't try to do this anymore."

[02:13:24] ED: And you had—at some point, you had told me many years later about—that one of the reasons you decided after two terms not to run for governor again and to run for the Senate or

to do some—anything else was because of all the mental pressures on you as governor—worries about ethical lapses by your administration—somebody was gonna do something crooked that would reflect badly on you, and it was just a—it was a struggle for you all the way. Worries about somebody in the administra—in this giant government under you would do something crooked, and it would reflect badly on your morals and what your daddy had taught you. Does that . . .

DB: You've hit the nail right on the head.



ED: You told me once that the day you left the governor's office, a great burden was lifted from you.

DB: It was the happiest day of my life. I could not bear the thought of having to face an investigation about something about which I knew nothing. And yet everything that happens in the prisons—everything that happens in the liquor industry and the—you name it—it goes right to the governor's office. The governor may know nothing about it. Chances are that he does not know anything about it. And yet it's out there. There's not much you can do about it. One time the director of the state police, whom I had appointed—a really wonderful man. He'd been a fine state police—a state officer and was doin' a very good job with the state police. And in any event, he came in one day and told

me—he and W. A. Tudor, who was head of the—I guess the—I forget what Tudor's . . .

ED: CID—the Criminal Investigation Division.

DB: Criminal investigating section.

ED: Yeah.

[02:15:42] DB: They came into my office maybe together and told me that they had word that somebody was selling paroles in the state penitentiary and that this woman had come to see Major Tudor and told her—she was a poor, black woman, totally dependent on probably welfare. And so she came to Tudor with this story, and neither he nor the other gentleman, who was formerly in the FBI, came to see me at that point. But what had happened was one of the members of the parole board told a woman, who had a son in the penitentiary, that her son could be made free. He could be turned free at the next parole board meeting and that he somehow—I forgot what the terms were, but somehow or other, he would be available, and that they were gonna see to it that he was paroled at the next board meeting.

ED: If he got some money.

[02:17:05] DB: Yeah. Yeah. This—we're gettin' down to the . . .

ED: Okay.

DB: . . . main thing here—if he could produce—I believe it was a thousand dollars before the next board meeting. This woman was very poor. She couldn't have raised a thousand dollars to save her life, and yet she wanted her son freed from the penitentiary worse than life itself. And so she went to Tudor and told him the story. I don't know how she knew about Tudor, but she told him this whole story about this parole board member offering freedom to her son if she could produce so much money. And he said, "Now don't misunderstand me. This is not for me." I don't know how he put it to her, but it was essentially, "He can be freed, and the State Parole Board will accept his plea to be removed—to be—to free this young man," and that's where it stood. But the amount of money to be put in was only offered to the parole board member. It was not offered to be shared by all the parole board members. It was just the—the bribe was to go simply to this gentleman who was on the parole board. And so, anyway, the parole board member made an appointment to see—let's see, let me make sure I get this straight. The parole board member agreed to meet her at her home and to produce the money if he would promise him—if he would promise her that she would be freed at the next board meeting. [02:19:11] So they came to see me and told me what

the deal was, that we have a parole board member who's taking bribes, and at the next parole board meeting, this young man's name is gonna come up. He's going to—this man who's taking the bribe is going to make the case that "this man is free, needs to be freed, and so the sooner we can do that, the sooner justice will be served." And [*AS clears throat*] Tudor went down there—anticipation—W. A. Tudor, the criminal investigating officer—officer—he went down there and hid behind the door in her living room or bedroom, I don't know which—I'm talking about the mother of the inmate. And so he hid behind the door, and he listened to this conversation between this man who was gonna get this youngster freed and—the mother of the youngster. Now it was all cut and dried, and not only that, we had a tape recording of the whole thing. And he was telling her—you know, he was telling her how they were gonna free him, that he was virtually freed now. She—he told her that she—the whole conversation was being tape recorded for the full parole board and so on. So the next day, Major Tudor and—let's see, it was Major Tudor and somebody else. Oh, Major Tudor and the head of the state police—came to the Governor's Mansion to see me to tell me this story. And so we immediately set about trying to get him prosecuted—trying to get the charge developed about

how there was a bribe getting ready to take place and so on.

[02:21:24] And, you know, that was a really terrible time for me, and it was a difficult time for me—troublesome time. But I decided there was nothing to do except go whole hog to see that this young man not only was not freed—not only did his mother not pay anything, but that this parole board member was properly prosecuted for having participated in bribery. So the next day, I called the parole board member to my office and told him that I had heard some stories that were really troublesome to me, and I was gonna have to seek his resignation. And he said, "I"—he kinda muttered around. He said, "Well, Governor, I just don't understand this. I don't know what this means. I don't know anything." I said, "Well, I'll tell you precisely what it means. It means that we have sufficient evidence that you have offered a bribe—that you have offered to accept a bribe from a parent of one of the inmates for a certain amount of money. We have to accept that the way it is. We're gonna hand this over to the prosecuting attorney of the county, and if they won't take jurisdiction, we'll get somebody else to try it. But right now, I want your resignation from the parole board." [02:23:00] And he whined around for about two minutes, and he didn't know what I was talking about, he said. And he didn't—he just

couldn't imagine what this was all about and so on. And so I said, "Well, I'm sorry you feel that way about it, but I need to tell you that you are—here forthwith, you are fired." And he was about half teary eyed then, and he walked outta my office. He hadn't been gone sixty seconds till Martin Borchert, who had sat in on this whole conversation, said, "You know, Governor, you didn't get his signature—his resignation really—formal resignation." I said, "Run and get him and bring him back." So they ran down to the foot of the steps to the governor's office—brought him back to my office, and I told him—I said, "You know, I have to have your name on a resignation. It's imperative that we get your resignation right now." He didn't quarrel or anything. And I'd had Pat Williams, my secretary, type up the resignation. He signed it, and then to shorten the story, we couldn't find anybody who would take that case. No prosecutor would take the case. He couldn't take the—he couldn't—nobody could take the case from Little Rock because the jurisdiction wasn't there. And so—and we could not get anybody to take jurisdiction in the county and prosecute him in that county where the bribe had taken place. And so we started looking around for a prosecutor from some other jurisdiction, and to make a long story short, we couldn't get anybody to take



the case. Jim Guy Tucker was willing to take it, but for technical reasons it wouldn't work, and we just could not have tried him and made it stick. And in Pulaski County or the county where the bribe took place.

ED: Which was in south Arkansas, I think.

DB: Now that's a rather lengthy story.

ED: Yeah.

DB: But it'll simply point out the things you have to deal with as governor, but the things you have to deal with in government period.

ED: So you if you could go to the US Senate, you wouldn't be responsible for twenty-five thousand employees under you . . .

DB: No, that's right.

ED: . . . and what they—what they're doing.

DB: That's right.

[02:25:35] ED: Okay. Let's move forward to your second term. You run for a second—at that time, we had two-year terms. And you run in 1972, and you draw three opponents, I guess, in the Democratic primary. I think it was a pretty much open-and-shut case. Everybody sort of acknowledged that you were a shoo-in for a second term in spite of your tax increases, and you were—apparently were terribly popular. But you got—let's see, Q.

Byrum Hurst was a state senator at Hot Springs, and he, I guess, was your chief opponent [*DB coughs and clears throat*], or the other one was . . .

DB: Fellow from Paragould.

ED: . . . Mack Harbour, a hospital administrator. Young fellow. Dapper. Nice head of wavy hair. From Paragould, I think.

DB: He was.

[02:26:35] ED: And he ran. And a third guy I think was a state representative, George Davis, from Horatio, Arkansas . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . was the third one. And I think all three of those—two of 'em, anyway, went to—I think, went to prison [*laughs*]*—but—*outta that group but . . .

DB: I think they all three went.

ED: Did they all three?

DB: I think . . .


ED: I—well, I . . .

DB: I'm not sure.

ED: George Davis might've got in trouble for totin' weapons in the wrong place in the house and firing off weapons down in Howard County. But Q. Byrum Hurst was subsequently convicted of some kind of federal charges and served some time, and then

Mack Harbour did, too. I've forgotten what—some hospital—  
some . . .

DB: It was totally unrelated to this sort of thing.

ED: Yeah, unrelated. It was some kind of business dealings in—up  
 there. Do you remember much about that campaign? It was  
a . . .

[02:27:26] DB: I remember a lot about it. And I don't remember the  
details of it except Mack Harbour caused me some loss of sleep.  
He had a guitar. He went around the state pickin' the guitar and  
singin' ballads. But he started a rumor that I had done  
something at the track in West Memphis.

ED: Horse—the dog racing track at . . .

DB: Dog racing track.

ED: . . . Southland.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

[02:28:03] DB: And I don't really remember what it was. It seemed  
to me at the time it was brought to me that it was just a nothing  
case. But somebody was apparently fixing the races in West  
Memphis, and I sent Tudor over there first. And Tudor looked  
feverishly, and he could not find anything goin' wrong over  
there. Couldn't find any bribes being taken—nothing. The bets

were being made legitimately and so on.

ED: Didn't he—didn't Mack Harbour allege—maybe at a press conference—that you had flown to Buffalo or Rochester, New York, and accepted a brown paper sack full of money at the airport . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . or something up there?

DB: Yes, he did. That was about . . .

ED: And you got . . .

DB: When I ran for that second term, Betty was just goin' crazy because Brooke, our daughter, you know, had this terrible illness, and we had been taking her to Boston to Boston Children's Hospital. And Betty was so upset because we couldn't take her during that campaign. She couldn't leave the state, and so I promised her—I said, you know, "When this campaign's over, we're gonna catch the first plane to Boston—Boston Children's Hospital—and have Brooke examined and see exactly what her condition is and all that. [02:29:31] And we did. And—but as I recall—and I'm not sure what the timing on this was, but I do know this—that before we could do anything about that, Mack Harber started this story that the people who had the concession stand at West Memphis had paid me for that

concession stand and—all of which was just, you know, really in my mind too silly to think about. But anyway, I had to check it out and have the state police check it out and everything. And, of course, there was absolutely nothing to it. And nothing ever came of any of that, and so we just torpedoed the whole idea and didn't do anything further with it. And I sent Martin Borchert over there, and Martin went over there. He couldn't find anything even close to being remiss, or wrong. But I lost a lotta sleep about that simply because he was accusing me of bribery, and there wasn't a soul in the state took that seriously except me, and I really took it seriously because I just hated the thought of havin' to go through an ordeal of disproving these allegations. And, you know, the truth of the matter is 99 percent of the people in the state didn't even know anything about it. It never made enough publicity. It was just one of those things that became well known as an event that could cause trouble but never did. And we had the state police go over there. The state police said they could find nothing wrong anywhere. And that's a funny thing. That thing simmered for a while and then finally just died. But he was—he—as you know, later he was indicted and sent to prison for—I believe, it was a charge of using state funds by—or state property for his home.

He did some work on his home that came outta the state coffers.

[02:32:07] ED: I'm not sure. It had somethin' maybe to do with the hospital that he was administering. I'm—I don't remember what that was. But I remember you telling me once that you were tossing and turning every night, and you were just makin' yourself sick over all this stuff, and Betty told you, "Forget about it."

DB: Yeah.

ED: There's nobody but you is [*DB laughs*] paying any attention to this stuff and goin' . . .

DB: You know, Betty is a much—I don't know exactly what to call it, but she is a hardnose. She doesn't—people who start those stories—that doesn't mean a thing to her. None of the stories that were ever told about me, as they are about every politician—none of those things affected her for one minute. And what had happened [*back-up alarm on vehicle in background*] was—or what we could only assume happened was we took Brooke to Boston, as I had promised, to see the doctor and get a clean bill of health. And, course, she turned out just fine. But in going back to Arkansas, I had planned to and did, in fact, go through Cleveland, where my sister lived. I hadn't seen her since . . .

TM: I'm—excuse me, Senator.

DB: . . . any of these campaigns started.

TM: Can we stop for one second?

DB: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:33:23] ED: All right, let's move forward to 1974, and you run—you decide to—in the spring of 1974 to run for the Senate. And Bill Fulbright is running for his, I guess, sixth term. He'd been in the Senate for thirty years, running for a sixth term, and you decided to challenge him. Talk a little bit about your—the thought processes and when you decided to do that 'cause in some ways he'd been not a close friend, but—and he had—maybe had helped you a little bit behind the scenes in your first race for governor . . .

DB: That's true.

ED: . . . in 1970. Was that a difficult decision about . . .

DB: Very difficult.

ED: And what decided it for you? What would the . . .

[02:34:15] DB: It was a—I have to admit there was a great deal of selfishness involved in it because I didn't want to go back to Charleston and retire. And in order to run for anything else—you know, the governor's position was out. I'd been governor. And

John Paul Hammerschmidt was probably unbeatable. And so for all those reasons, I felt that I had to make a decision either to quit politics or to run for the Senate because that seemed like the only option. And we did a poll, and of course, the poll was so lopsided you wouldn't believe it. It was just that Senator Fulbright really had not taken care of his constituents. He had such a low rating—it—you know, to me it was almost impossible not to look at the ratings and how far ahead I was of Bill Fulbright. And I can't remember precisely what the figures were. It was close to, like, sixty-two to . . .

ED: Did the poll match him up against other people, like, who were prominent in politics at that time like . . .

DB: I can't—I don't remember whether we did that or not, you know.

ED: Whether Jim Johnson. There was a lotta talk about the Jim . . .

AS: I don't remember that any of the polling we did included Jim Johnson. There may have been some other independent polls but . . .

[02:35:38] ED: But there were—Jim Johnson had run against Bill Fulbright in . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . six years earlier, in 1968 and it—he did not come—but there was nearly a runoff. I mean, came pretty close to gettin' in a



runoff. I think . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . there were three or four candidates in that race, and the others polled enough that it almost got in the runoff. So there was a lotta talk then that Jim Johnson might be—and I suspect if you had not run, Jim Johnson probably would've. There was at least some talk about it.

DB: That's the general opinion, and I don't know how strong that opinion is.

ED: There was some talk that Sid McMath might run as well.

DB: Yes, that's right. And a lotta times, you know, those people—as you pointed out, it's not that they're all that hot to run, but if nobody else is gonna run, then they're gonna do it. And that's sorta the way a lotta races develop. If—for example, if nobody runs against Bill Fulbright, somebody may beat him. [02:36:46] Sometimes politicians use that as a simple excuse to run in a race that they want to do anyway. But with Bill Fulbright, I had been a strong admirer of Bill Fulbright's. I thought he was a great senator, a very bright man. You know, maybe made a few votes that I took exception to, but for the most part he was well known, well liked, bright, and served us well. Having said that I also knew, looking at the poll numbers, that if I didn't run,



somebody that is—I hate to say this—somebody that would not have been my equal could have defeated him. And I thought if somebody was gonna defeat him, it oughta be me. Now that sounds arrogant, but I just—when I looked at those poll numbers and I saw how lopsided they were, I decided I had to do it. And I tried to make it as pleasant as possible. I mean, Senator Fulbright got a little bit raunchy at times, but—and I could see that he was—you know, he was so unhappy, and he was telling his close friends, "You know, I just can't believe that the governor would do this to me, and I thought he was my friend," and so on. But, you know, in politics, you have to understand one thing. You have to look out for yourself, or you've wound up behind the fence. I didn't want to run against Bill Fulbright. He was a friend. He was everything you'd want in a politician. But if I didn't run, based on the poll numbers I was looking at, he was gonna beat—somebody was gonna beat him, and it could've been somebody like Jim Johnson. And so I had no difficulty in finally making up my mind to run against Senator Fulbright even though it was very unpleasant.

[02:38:51] ED: You had thought about—or had you not? Running in—and two years earlier, after the end of your first term, John McClellan was up for reelection that year for his . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . sixth and last term, I guess, and David Pryor wound up—he was a member of Congress at the time running against—did you think about running for the senate in [19]72?

DB: Not much. Not much. I thought the schedule that I ultimately took was far better. I hadn't—I didn't really have the zeal to run for the Senate at that point except unless somebody else was gonna run. As I said, for my own benefit I wanted to run and if somebody else was gonna run, then I was goin' to. And if nobody of any substance ran, then I would not. It was just that simple. But I wanted—when I started running in politics, I wanted to go to Congress. I didn't really have that much interest in being governor. I wanted to be a—I didn't want to be a congressman. I wanted to be a governor. I mean, I wanted to be a senator. I wanted to be in Congress more than anything else. And so things, you know, worked out exactly the way I had planned them.

[02:40:17] ED: It was a fairly mild race. You—I think—I don't know that you ever criticized Fulbright on—directly on anything. You talked about the seniority system, and he bragged about the seniority system and the power to do good for Arkansas that he wielded because of his seniority and that we'd be losing that if

we went with you. That seemed to be about the issue in the race, is whether . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . the value of his seniority versus your immaturity as a senator if you—as a first term. That was about the only issue in the race, as I recall.

DB: That was the only issue in the race.

[02:40:55] ED: Now you later raised the issue about hunting. You were against hunting or fishing or something.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Did he not? That you had signed some proclamation about Be Kind to Animals Week or something?

DB: I don't . . .

ED: Something like that.

[02:41:09] DB: That was the ostensible purpose for the proclamation—protection of animal life and all that sorta thing. But they made it an anti-hunting thing, you know. Fulbright knew how to play—he knew how to play hardball and he—that was just one of the things that came out during that election. He'd . . .

ED: So as I recall, you had to resurrect some old picture of you . . .

DB: Holding up a duck.

ED: . . . holding a bunch of bloody ducks . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . and run some ads in the paper . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . [*laughs*] about that.

DB: And then . . .

ED: Was that a proud moment for you when you ran those?

DB: Oh, [*ED laughs*] you don't know. I remember Betty went down to Winthrop, Arkansas, when I was running against Win Rockefeller the last time. And she was gonna speak for me 'cause I couldn't get there for that rally. And she—Rockefeller—I guess he held up the—no, it wasn't that. I don't know. Rockefeller had some kind of a thing that he was using in the campaign, showing me to be anti-hunting, and Betty got up and made the best speech she ever made in her life. She said, "You know, I promise you I have cleaned more quail in one night than Win Rockefeller did in his entire life." [*Laughter*] She just really turned it on. The crowd was just yahooin'. They loved it.

[02:42:37] ED: So that election [*DB coughs and clears throat*—y'all had a debate, as I recall. Do you remember the debate with Ro—with Fau—with Fulbright?

DB: Yeah. Yeah, he won that debate pretty easily, I think. He was

talkin' about some things that I didn't—I was really not familiar with.

ED: It was nearly altogether on foreign affairs, I guess is . . .

DB: Yes, it was.

ED: . . . on international issues. But you won, I guess, almost—was it two to one? Almost two to one. It was not quite the margin of the Rockefeller . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . victory and . . .

DB: No, it wasn't. It was sixty-five somethin'.

ED: Sixty-five, thirty-five or something . . .

DB: Yeah.

[02:43:13] ED: . . . like that. Did you ever have much chance to talk to Fu—Ful—he was pretty bitter about that defeat.



DB: Very bitter. When—I never had a conversation with Senator Fulbright until several years after the election, and this came about this way. He had refused to speak to me. He didn't wanna see me. Nothing. And one time after about, oh, between five and ten years after that election, Harriet, his wife, told me that he got up every morning in a foul mood—just harrumph this and harrumph that. "This is awful, and that's terrible." And he just couldn't believe that Governor Bumpers would take him on

like that after all he'd done for me. And she said to him one morning—she said, "You know, you oughta try to make up with Senator Bumpers." "You know, you're crazy!" She said, "Well, I think he'd be happy to make up with you." And she said, "You could establish your [*noise in background*] relationship with him, and it'd work out fine for you." And he just wasn't havin' any of that. And she said, "You know, if you had your choice of people to succeed you as senator, you would've easily chosen Senator Bumpers. And, you know, you'd said nice things about him. You thought he was doin' a good job. And because you got beat, you're makin' a big deal out of it against him." And she said, "He didn't say a word." She said, "If you really were the kinda person you oughta be, you'd go get on that phone and call Senator Bumpers and ask him if he'd have lunch with you tomorrow." And he just harrumphed that one away, too. The next morning, he came downstairs from the bedroom, and she said, "Have you been?"—no, he said, "I've been thinkin' a little about what you said about calling Senator Bumpers for lunch." And she said, "Well, thank goodness! That sounds very, very promising to me." He said, "I think I'll call him today and see about lunch." She said, "No, don't you do that. That's outta your league. You let"—who was his . . .

ED: Lee Williams.

DB: . . . chief of staff?

ED: Lee Williams.

[02:46:05] DB: Lee Williams. "You let Lee Williams handle that. He is experienced in it, and you may foul it up. Just tell Lee to see if he can arrange for a luncheon with you and Senator Bumpers." And so he did. He called Lee, and he said, "Do you think Bumpers would have lunch with me?" And he said, "Well, I think he would." "Would you try to get him?" "Yes, I'd be happy to." So I was walkin' down the hall to the elevator in the capitol and Lee—not Lee Williams . . .

TM: Excuse me. We need to change tapes real quick.

[Tape stopped]

[02:46:49] DB: So anyway, he came down the next morning and told his wife—he said, "Harriet"—said, "Harriet, I've been thinkin' about what you said, and I think I'll do that. I think I'll call Lee Williams and have him call Senator Bumpers and see if we can get together." And she said, "Don't you do that. You let Lee Williams"—he was gonna call me, and she said, "No, don't you do that. You let Lee call him." And so Lee called me and asked me about it. And I said, "Well, Lee, you know I would love to have lunch with Senator Fulbright. And he was—I've always



been a fan of his, and I've just been so sad through the years that we haven't been able to make up." So we set up the meeting at the 116 Club, and we met for three hours, and it was a really genuinely healthy experience for both of us. And we became good friends after that. As a matter of fact, they asked me to do a eulogy at his funeral, which I was honored to do. And we've been excellent friends. I came home for a couple of things before he died that we both attended. And to make a long story short, we were both really very happy that we had been able to make that détente and got along fine until he died. And I delivered a eulogy at his funeral.

[02:48:26] ED: Would you—when you ran in [19]74, he was, I guess, most famous at the time and controversial 'cause of the Vietnam War, and you—y'all kind of saw eye to eye on that.

DB: Yes.

ED: You were . . .

DB: Yes, we did.

ED: Even when you ran for governor in 1970, at the outset of that campaign, my recollection is maybe at that first announcement, you declared your opposition to the war in Vietnam . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . did you not?

DB: That's right.

ED: Am I right about that, Archie?

DB: I think so.

ED: I think that's right. So y'all were kind of together on that issue . . .

DB: Yeah.

[02:48:59] ED: . . . and on—one of the things I recall about that [19]74 campaign—I don't know how pivotal it was—was the first big rally after the filing deadline is always the Pope County Democratic Women's Club rally. And in fact you were there last fall, and you and David Pryor made a wonderful tape of that show. But in [19]74 you were—you had just filed, and you and Fulbright—this was your first [*chair squeaks*] confrontation, I guess, at that rally where everybody was speaking. All the Democratic candidates were speaking at that rally. And they had invited Bobby Byrd down as the kinda the keynote speaker [*DB coughs*], or the guest speaker for this big rally. And I guess it was—he was the majority leader at the time, was he not? Was he the—or was Kennedy the majority leader in . . .

[02:49:52] DB: I think Mike Mansfield was . . .

ED: Still the majority leader . . .

DB: . . . majority leader at that time.

ED: . . . at that time. But Bobby Byrd was . . .

DB: He was minority leader . . .

ED: But he was . . .

DB: . . . at that time.

ED: . . . a power—powerful—Byrd was a powerful figure anyway in Washington.

DB: Very powerful.

ED: Very close to Fulbright, and they might've been seatmates. I don't recall whether—but they were very, very close friends. Perhaps close . . .

DB: Oh, he came down that meeting precisely to support Senator Fulbright. There wasn't any question about that.

[02:50:18] ED: And that's what he did.

DB: Yeah.

ED: With you sitting there a few feet away, he tells the crowd about why it's important that they should elect a . . .

DB: To stay with seniority.

ED: To stay with seniority and so forth. And so you went to Washington not with great feelings about Bobby Byrd, did you not? I mean, did y'all have a good relationship?

DB: We developed . . .

ED: You eventually did but . . .

DB: We developed one. We weren't very close to begin with.

ED: But he was in charge . . .

DB: And it had nothing to do . . .

ED: . . . of committees, were he not?

DB: Pardon?

ED: Wasn't he in charge of committee assignments in the Senate—  
Byrd, at that time?

DB: Well, of course, the majority party—they have a nominating  
committee who does that. The majority leader has main say  
about who serves on which committee, but that's not a done  
deal always. You have to go to all the members of the—oh,  
what is that committee called? I can't even think of 'em.

ED: Committee on committees or something like that?

DB: Pardon?

ED: Committee on committees or . . .

DB: No, I think the House . . .

ED: That's . . .

DB: . . . has something like that . . .

ED: That's a state thing.

DB: . . . but the Senate has a different name. But in any event, the  
point is that committee makes the committee assignments, but  
that committee is certainly beholden to the majority leader.

Now if Bobby Byrd wants somebody on the HHS committee or somebody on the defense committee or somethin', all he has to do is to make it known to the members of that committee, and it's just about the same as a done deal.

[02:51:49] ED: But you didn't get committee plums at the outset.

You didn't . . .

DB: Never did. Never did.

ED: You didn't get Judiciary or any of those big committee . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . high-profile committees that . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . deal with the major legislation.

DB: Course, I succeeded Senator Fulbri—Senator McClellan and took his . . .

ED: On the appropriations committee . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . eventually. Yes.

DB: And took his seat on that committee.

[02:52:10] ED: But that would've been in—you went in [19]75, and that would've been in about [19]78 or [19]79.

DB: Yeah.

ED: And that proved to be an important committee for you but . . .

DB: Yes, it did.



ED: Well, did you always resent your committee assignments that you . . .

DB: I didn't resent it. I sort of resented the fact that I didn't warn myself and get myself wired to get the spot I wanted. What I did was just kinda mess around and think about, "Well, maybe I could get this, and maybe I could get that." I didn't really go at it right. It was my fault that I didn't get the committee assignments I wanted.

ED: You didn't know how things worked in the Senate at that . . .

DB: That's right. It was still arcane to me. I didn't understand it.

[02:53:00] ED: So the committees you got were, at the outset, aeronautics and space or something.

DB: Yeah, and it was a spacey committee, too. [ED laughs] There's the—and then there was the energy committee. I got on the energy committee, which I kinda wanted on. Later on, I realized I'd made a mistake on that one. And I enjoyed being on the energy committee, and it was a fairly important committee. We were doin' a lotta space flights then and all that sorta thing. And then, of course, I succeeded Senator McClellan and became a member of the armed services committee.

ED: And then later the small business committee and you later . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . became chairman . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . of the Small Business Committee.

DB: That's right.

[02:53:44] ED: What committee would you have liked to have been on at the outset—judiciary or health and . . .

DB: There are three or four committees that are really important.

Judiciary certainly is one of them. Armed Services is one.

Appropriations is the main committee because that's where the money's parceled out. All three of those were extremely

important. And the judiciary committee—don't ever sell the

judiciary committee short. That's a very important committee,

and I didn't realize that until too late, otherwise I would've

sought a position on the Judiciary . . .

ED: And the finance committee, where all the taxes . . .

DB: Finance is big time. If you were raising money for a race, it's especially important.

[02:54:29] ED: Would that have made a difference in your career do you think if you'd gotten different committee . . .

DB: It would have.

ED: . . . committee assignments.

DB: It would have. I didn't—I chastised myself a number of times for goin' on the energy committee. At that time, energy was a big issue in this country, but it was one of those issues that while people knew it existed, didn't really attach much importance to it. And so if I had it—you know, if I'd had it to do over again, I probably would've gone on appropriations and maybe defense or finance.

ED: Health, education, and welfare would've been another—well, it wasn't . . .

DB: No.

ED: Lot of the health legislation. Kennedy was always on that one.

DB: Yeah.

ED: That was one of his . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . [*unclear word*].

DB: Kennedy did well with that.

ED: Yeah.

DB: He did as well as you could do. And let me say one other thing, Ernie, and that is those committees are only important after you've been on 'em a while or if you replace somebody that is—has been a sterling player on a committee, and you're replacing them. That makes it much more important. If you have to go to



the end of the line, that's another matter. But if you're replacing somebody that's fifth in seniority, and you're taking his place, which happens all the time, that's a bigger deal.

[02:55:59] ED: Gerald Ford was president when you took office, right? Nineteen—he'd succeeded, I guess, a year early—a year earlier, he'd succeeded Richard Nixon after he resigned. Did you have any dealings with Gerald Ford?

DB: Virtually none.

ED: Have occasion to judge him up close?

DB: [*Laughs*] As close as I wanted to. [*Laughter*] He was a—Gerald Ford was not a rocket scientist by any means. He was a nice man, and he just—there's no way to phrase my description of him in a way that would look unkind on my part. But he was not an intellectual. He was not an internationalist. He didn't understand foreign affairs. He didn't understand the military system. And there was just not much about his position then that made him important in any sense.

[02:57:15] ED: And then Jimmy Carter in 1976 is elected. You and he had served together as governors, as kinda the new breed—celebrated new breed of southern governors . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . back in the early [19]70s. Did y'all have a relationship when

you were governors as . . .

DB: Not much.

ED: Not much?

DB: No. We had never been close as governors. Now Jimmy and I were friends. Don't misunderstand me. We were not enemies. We didn't—he hadn't—he never hesitated to call me, nor I ne— never hesitated to call him. And on two or three occasions, I called him for favors and got 'em. And he wanted at one point to kick my sister off the Export-Import Bank board, and I called him and told him I wished he wouldn't do that, that she had been a Republican. She was appointed as a Republican, and that she was extremely well liked by the members of the Export-Import Bank, and she was doing a perfectly good job, and in another year she'd be eligible to kicked off anyway. But I asked him, "Please don't do it now because it would really hurt her feelings badly, and it wouldn't accomplish anything for you. And you're gonna get that appointment anyway."

[02:58:42] ED: And in nineteen—when he runs for president in 1976, did you think—you thought a little about running for president, although you had just been in the Senate for two years. You toyed with the idea of running then, did you not?



DB: If I had run for president, it would've been—if I had run for

president seriously and thought that I had a chance, it would've been in 1976 when Jimmy Carter ran. I hate to say this because this really sounds pretty egotistical, but I thought that 1976 was an ideal time to run. I could've run then and maybe been elected. People didn't much care for Jimmy Carter. He didn't manifest the things they were looking for, and Jimmy Carter was not ever a member of Congress, so he wasn't—he had no experience in the job. And it was a wonderful opportunity. I could've run for president in [19]76, or I could have run for president in 1980. The only thing is in 1980 it would've been almost impossible to beat Ronald Reagan. I wanted to run in [19]84, but Reagan was running for a second term then, and I couldn't—I didn't feel up to it—didn't feel I could beat—that I could beat Reagan in [19]84. So—and sometimes I think, "You've just thought up a bunch of excuses not to do it," but the—but I have no hesitancy in saying I think I could've been elected president in 1980 and might have been elected in 1984, but I doubt it.

[03:00:36] ED: You mean 1980, when Reagan was elected the first time? But you would've had to beaten Jimmy Carter . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . in the primary.

DB: But I don't—that's what I'm saying.

ED: And Ted Kennedy.

DB: I don't think it'd been too big a chore to have defeated Carter in [19]84.

ED: And in nineteen . . .

DB: As a matter of fact, strike that. It would've been easy to defeat Carter in [19]76, when he was elected president. That was the golden opportunity I missed.

ED: Yes.

DB: He just—people just could not get ready for Jimmy Carter.

ED: How do you . . .

DB: He's a nice man. I don't mean to be all that critical of him. I mean, we were friends and . . .

[03:01:14] ED: How do you evaluate his presidency—that four years?

DB: Pardon?

ED: How do you evaluate Jimmy Carter's presidency? He's generally ranked now as a very poor president in those kind of rankings. But how do you evaluate him?

DB: Very, very mediocre. I don't think he—I—you know, the effort to rescue our hostages in Iran was a disaster. There were two or three other things where we could've invaded Iran without

much ado. But I just don't think Jimmy Carter really ever understood Far Eastern affairs. You know, Iran is an old, old society, and they're not like Iraq. Iraq—that's a different story altogether. But Iran—they have a culture, and they've clung to it to some extent, and I just think that we could've gotten along well if we had taken Iran on then.

[03:02:30] ED: So Reagan—Reagan's elected 1980, and in [19]81 he—I guess his first initiative was to remake the fiscal system, reducing the budget and reducing taxes. And you were in a fairly small band of members of Congress from either house who voted against those tax cuts in 1981. I think your position was you voted for many of the budget cuts but against—also against the tax cuts. Not a popular thing to do, was it, in 1981—to vote against tax cuts?

DB: It wasn't. But Ronald Reagan—I can't remember this as well as I wish I could, Ernie. But Ronald Reagan was as inept as anybody who ever served as the president of the United States. He didn't have a clue as to what he was doing there. And he couldn't put anything together. He—I just—and all he could think about was more and more money for defense. And, of course, you know, you don't lose many enemies in Congress if you're strong on defense. And if Reagan was anything, he was

strong on defense. And as a consequence, of course, the deficit just went completely outta sight while Ronald Reagan was president, and he could find more new tinkers—toys to tinker with and money to spend. But he really—he served no sophisticated purpose that I could ever discern. [03:04:24] He's a big space addict, which serves very little purpose. I was on the space committee when I first went up there—learned a little bit about space, not as much as I would later learn. But he was just a—space doesn't serve much purpose today. And we—if I were president, one of the first things I'd do—I'd start wholesale developing a space program that made sense—that everybody in this country could understand—and would show how we benefitted from this space station or from this space program. And, you know, Reagan was incapable of that. I went to the White House one day—and I don't mind saying these things now—I said 'em a long time ago and quit saying it, but it's—I remember goin' over to the White House on a matter—has nothing to do with anything we were talkin' about here today—but by the time I left, I never felt so futile in my life. He didn't have a clue as to what I was talking about, and he wanted to talk about the motion picture business and how they first—how labor first took over the motion picture industry—and, you know,

unrelated things. [03:05:48] And he started telling me—there was another facet to it, but anyway, it led to him talking about people using the military to make us the most powerful nation on earth, even though that was really not much part of the visit or what we were talking about. He could go off on a tangent faster than anybody you ever saw, and he would talk about things that were totally irrelevant. He mispronounced the names of them. He didn't really know what they meant. And by the time he was up for—the time he was up for his last year—not to run, just serve his last year, he didn't know where he was. He was hopelessly—he was a hopeless—what am I trying to say? What's the term we use? Well, I can't—I'll think of it in a minute. But he couldn't translate something that was serious or something that was foolish into something serious. He just—I don't know how to describe it. I served with him for two years in the governor's office—maybe four. I can't remember. And we'd go to these national governors' conferences that were just as meaningless as anything could be. You couldn't bring up a subject that he had any knowledge of to speak of. And so we'd just talk about it in general terms, you know, and drop it and go to something else. But he—when the Defense Department—the secretary of defense comes over and tells him, "You know, we've

got a big problem"—unless he knows somebody to bring with him that he can relate to, it just goes undone. He doesn't—he has no capacity for developing an idea about it or how he feels about it or where it fits in—nothing. And in short, he was stupid.

[03:07:55] ED: [*Laughs*] You talked about space. One of your big fights, as I recall, in the—was to limit funding for the manned space station or the . . .

DB: I hope you'll forgive me for what I'm about to say, but you're right. I was the leader in the Senate to kill the space station. Spent a lot of hours on it. Got to be rather expert on the space station—its purposes, how it worked and everything. And I cannot remember very much of what I said during those debates. John Glenn was over here, you know. He was hot for the space station. And John's a wonderful man, but he didn't really know what that was all about. But, anyway, the space station started being built. I made speech after speech after speech about how this was absolute folly—how it served no purpose—how we were gonna be spending money uselessly. The Russians were gonna be even with us or ahead of us, not for any particular reason except to stay even with us. Not to get ahead of us. Not to show that we're smarter than everybody else, and this is gonna be our shtick. And so what we had was a



space station—and I wish I had saved all the speeches that people have made on the space station just in the past year to two years. Every single thing I said tryin' to kill the space station has been repeated over and over and over again, and yet we never slowed down for an instant. We just kept buildin' that damn thing as fast as we could go. And it's serving no purpose whatever right now, and it's not gonna serve any purpose.

[03:10:15] ED: A couple of other scientists—you said the—you remember the Clinch River Breeder Reactor?

DB: Oh, my. Yes.

ED: You were—I guess that was—rose out of your service on the Space Committee, right?

DB: Yeah.

ED: They were—and you eventually killed that one.

DB: Yeah.

ED: I think you were kinda the force that killed the [*DB coughs*]—finally killed the fund—federal funding for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor.

DB: Pardon?

ED: You finally killed the funding for that . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . for that project.

DB: Right.

ED: Which was dear to heart of Senator Baker from Tennessee, who was the Republican leader of the Senate and . . .

DB: You know, Howard was a graceful loser in that. He really tried to defeat me. He—well, it was just a—it was a simple thing that he wanted to do for—what am I saying? The purposes of his constituents.

ED: Yeah.

[03:11:07] DB: It was big money spender in Tennessee and would be for a very long time to come. But anyway, when he and I would get into a brawl on the Senate floor, he would kinda smile and go sit down. And I could tell you that he had not much use for that either except for constituent purposes—didn't serve any purpose.

ED: So he wasn't terribly unhappy when he got defeated.

DB: No.

ED: 'Cause he'd . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . he'd made . . .

DB: He was not. He never tried to resurrect it again.

ED: . . . he'd made the fight.

DB: Yeah.

ED: The good fight for him.

DB: That's exactly right.

[03:11:45] ED: And another one was the Superconducting Super Collider in Texas, which was gonna cost a fortune, and you fought that for years and finally, I guess, beat that thing at the . . .

DB: Yeah, finally beat it to death.

ED: And now they're building it in Europe, I think.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Someplace in . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . Europe over there.

DB: And it's gonna cost the Europeans an arm and a leg. I saw some of the cost figures on it the other day.

ED: It was . . .

[03:12:09] DB: You know, the thing about it that sort of was exasperating was my fight was not, you know, to deprive Tennessee or the space station or any of those things. It was simply to save that money for things that had more noble purposes—more practical purposes. Everybody else, you know, had a military purpose. If they wanted something badly enough, they'd tie some kind of a military purpose to it. Nobody tried to

make anything out of this except just a boondoggle. Do you know the Russians—by the time we started building our first space station, the Russians had already completed seven? Seven space stations. And here we are, gettin' ready to build a bunch more—and for no reason. They serve no purpose whatever. They can tell you maybe when it's gonna rain or somethin' like that but [*laughter*] . . .

[03:13:05] ED: All right. Any other fights in the—I mean that's—a lotta your accomplishments in the—or big fights in the Senate were on spending although you were kinda considered a liberal, but—member of the Senate, but you were a—your biggest fights were to cut spending.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Space station, Super Collider, Clinch River Breeder Reactor—some of the others. Another one of your fights was kinda close to home, that you never won that fight, and that was over oil and mineral leases in national forest land.

DB: Over what?

ED: Mineral leases. Federal mineral leases on federal lands.

DB: Yeah.

[03:13:48] ED: Talk a little bit about that. That kinda started from Fort Chaffee, I guess.

DB: It did. It's hangin' fire right now incidentally. That thing has arisen again. I haven't kept up with it, you know, the way I used to when I was involved in it but—I'm gonna have to go back and look that up, but there's a fight goin' on right now about mineral leasing. And it's not military lands, which was what it was then. It's oil and gas lease lands—everything in the world except military lands. I saw that the other day, but I'd lost so much interest in—and I didn't read it all.

ED: But you were tryin' to get the federal government to do competitive bidding . . .

DB: Absolutely.

ED: . . . for the . . .

DB: Yeah. Absolutely.

ED: . . . leased-out federal lands and the—particularly across the West, to big mining companies and so forth or speculators. And those things would go for a few dollars for a . . .

DB: Hmm.

ED: . . . for years. And you've fought that fight for years and all the Western senators on the other side, and they've—they pretty much beat you down on that, didn't they?

DB: Yeah.

ED: For twenty years.

[03:15:05] DB: Those Western senators will win almost every time, and the reason they win is because they don't care how it comes out if they can get other senators to help 'em. And let me—that's not the right way to put that. They—the Western senators don't have much trouble in recruiting non-Western support. And the reason they don't is because the Westerners know that they can call on these people anytime they're gonna need 'em. And it's kind of a thing that they just trade everything off on. Right now, Utah is in a big battle to get the right to drill on federal lands. I don't know how that's gonna come out. They're probably gonna get the right to do it. And I'm not sure exactly what that's all about. I just have not kept up with it. But I'm telling you, when it comes to boodlin', those Western senators make everybody look like pikers. They just don't quit until they win, and they don't quit until they get all their stuff put in one place.

[03:16:35] ED: Do you remember any other memorable—well, here's a memorable fight that you've talked about—you've recalled from time to time, and that was the Manassas battlefield. Was it Manassas—preserving the . . .

DB: You know, there's a big . . .

ED: Or Gettysburg? Which . . .

DB: Yeah. No, Manassas.

ED: Manassas.

DB: There's a big battle—not a big battle—there's a big celebration gettin' ready to take place in Washington in the next three weeks, and yours truly has asked to be one of the lead dogs in the whole thing. And I—I'm tempted to go up there because I loved winning that battle so much, but I don't think I will.

[03:17:22] ED: Let's—tell me about that battle—the Manassas—that would've been . . .

DB: In 1980 we started to use some federal lands, which belonged to the battlefield at Manassas. And we were gonna use those lands to sort of rebuild Manassas. We were gonna add to the park lands. We were gonna do this and that and the other. And there's a man in Virginia named Til Hazel, a very wealthy man. And Til wanted to buy that land to develop it in golf courses and housing and condominiums and you name it. And long before that—I'm gettin' ahead of myself now. [03:18:19] Anyway, Til Hazel wanted to buy that, and the government didn't wanna sell it. They wanted to keep it, and they wanted to get so many millions of dollars for it. I've forgotten what the price tag was they had on it. And they couldn't—the government and Til couldn't agree on what it oughta bring. And so they finally put

together enough clout to sell what Til wanted, and they were gonna sell it for, I think, \$200 million. Now the government had offered it for sale in 1981 for 2 million, but the price had gone up to over two hundred million. And so the fight began, and all the Civil War buffs were goin' berserk. And I decided to take that on because the Civil War had been one of my things. And I'm not sure I can give this to you as precisely as I want to, but Til Hazel wanted to buy this property in 1981, and they wouldn't sell it to him. In 1984 or [19]87—I forget—somewhere along in there—Til got enough help from John Warner and some of the Virginia senators to sell it. And I forget who all was involved besides the Virginia senators, but a lotta senators who were not Virginia senators also wanted to sell it. Wanted to get rid of it. Now we had tried to sell it for a million or \$2 million back in [19]81, as I say, and never got to first base with it. So, anyway, Til Hazel somehow or other got enough clout to—for the government to sell that property. And—but the sale was stopped for the time being, and they decided that they'd put it on the market. They were gonna put it on the market and sell it at an appraised value. [03:21:22] And so they got it up for—on sale, and we got a bill passed to stop the sale. Then they came back and said, "Well, we will sell it, but we'll sell it at an appraised value.



We're gonna hire all these appraisers, and we'll sell it for whatever they decide." And so they came in and said, "Okay, let's sell it." And so John Warner and I agreed that we would take alternate times. He could make the argument, and I'd make the argument not to sell it. And I guess we started at about midnight debating it. And they decided to sell it, but it wasn't really clear on how they were gonna sell it. But to make a long story short, they have now decided to sell it for something like 100 million. I forget exactly what it is. Somethin' like 100 million. And that's what the deal is right now, to sell this Manassas battlefield for a hundred, maybe 200 million. I forget what it is. And the Civil War people are still very, very upset about it. They don't wanna sell it at all. But anyway, when the appraisers got through with it, I think they had put a price of 200 million on it. And I'm not sure where it is now. I'm gonna have to find out because I got this long, fancy invitation the other day to this big brouhaha they're having down there to—but I tell  
you . . .

[03:23:19] ED: But you won that battle with John Warner, didn't you?

DB: Yeah, the . . .

ED: And the Senate eventually—and during the night voted with you . . .

DB: That's exactly right.

ED: . . . not to—yeah.

DB: Nobody was more shocked than I was.

[03:23:30] ED: Do you remember what the vote was?

DB: Yeah, seventy-five to twenty-five. I felt, you know, vindicated that I was able to do that. But I tell you, Ernie, that's interesting to me because I've forgotten some of it. I'm gonna get a hold of a couple of guys on the Energy Committee, and I'll send you the details of that exactly how it happened. All I know is we could've sold it in 1981 for \$2 million—I believe that's what it was—and we wouldn't sell it. And later on, they got a higher price for it and so on. [03:24:13] DB: Incidentally on federal lands—you know, we finally made 'em sell the lands at Fort Chaffee. Charleston High School got some money outta that. It's now the Dale Bumpers . . .

ED: All the mineral rights to that.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Yeah. It made a lotta money out of it as I recall. Before that it would've been a few dollars an acre or something.

DB: An acre. That's right.

ED: Yeah.

DB: You just can't imagine why those people do that, can you? Why are they willing to give their heritage away? It just—it drove me crazy. It was not just mineral rights. It was—the federal parks were a disaster. Did you know that the federal park concession stands are given out almost on a first-come, first-served basis? And they make scads of money out of 'em. The first year—it took me sixteen years to get the federal park system added to the—what do I want? Competitive bidding . . .

ED: Competitive bidding.

DB: . . . process.

[03:25:23] DB: And they finally got it on the federal billing process, and now after sixteen years, I was able to get all of that land put up for bids. And the first bid was land that belonged to the Japanese—the concession. The land belonged to the United States, but the concession belonged to the Japanese. No, strike that. The Japanese bought it for a concession stand. They bought it for concession purposes. And now there's a big fight over the Japanese takin' over that land, but the Japanese now have it. They don't own it, but they have it for concession purposes. The first year the Japanese had it, I believe they made sixteen dollars per acre in concession profits. The

preceding year they had made somethin' like a dollar and a half. That had been goin' on for [*someone coughs*] a century. I could sit here and regale you with those stories all night about how that's happened. That's nothin' in the world but those guys, you know, who live in those states—the guys back home come up here en masse and say, "We wanna talk to you about this and what you can do for us," and they do it for 'em.

ED: I . . .

DB: I don't know why no president has ever taken that on but, you know, it's just one of those—it's just one of those things that you lobby back and forth on stuff like that.

[03:27:16] ED: Let's go back to your—at the end of your—toward the end of your first term as senator, the Panama Canal—the United States for some years, going back a couple administrations, I guess, [*DB coughs and clears throat*] had been negotiating a treaty with Panama to give the Panama Canal back to the Panamanians after, what, Teddy Roosevelt arrested it away from . . .

DB: Mh-hmm.

ED: . . . the canal. So—and Jimmy Carter submitted that treaty to the Senate for ratification, and it was a dynamite political issue that nobody I . . .

DB: The hottest issue I ever faced in twenty-four years.

ED: Yeah, I don't think anybody really anticipated what kind of issue that was going to be. And let's see, David Pryor had appointed—he was governor at the time—he had appointed Kaneaster Hodges to fill out the—John McClellan's term, and so you and he both voted for that—ratify the Panama Canal Treaty. Were you already getting heat? Were you hearing from people before you voted on that?

DB: Oh, Lord, are you kidding? We were gettin' three thousand letters a day.

ED: All opposed to the . . .

DB: All opposed to . . .

ED: All opposed to the treaty.

DB: All opposed to the sale of the Panama Canal.

[03:28:39] ED: And what generally was the idea? What—why were they objecting to it?

DB: The idea was that—it really—while the Americans built it and owned it—really essentially owned it—they didn't think it was fair to take advantage of a poor, little country like Panama. They oughta have it out there in the open. Let Panama charge fees for ships to go through and that sort of thing. And that was pretty much what it was all about.

[03:29:14] ED: And the people who were upset about it thought this was giving away American property.

DB: Oh yeah, you know . . .

ED: And so it just . . .

DB: . . . Jesse Helms just knew the Russians were gonna come and pick us up one at a time if we didn't stop that.

ED: So it—I've forgotten—it was a fairly close vote, was it not? I think it was a pretty . . .

DB: Yeah, very close.

ED: Pretty . . .

DB: I think it was sixty—maybe sixty-six, thirty-four or somethin' like that.

ED: You had to get a two-thirds vote, I think, to . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . to ratify a treaty in . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . in the Senate. So the next election, you had a . . .

DB: I had sixty—or sixty-seven, I guess.

[03:29:49] ED: Sixty-seven probably. Yeah. So the next election in 1980, you had a tough fight after all although you had—the guy that ran against you in the Democratic primary was a guy named Bill Clark whom nobody had ever heard of, but—and you didn't

have a lotta money and—but he got a big vote, mainly because of Panama Canal, right? He carried your county.

DB: County. Did he carry Franklin County?

ED: I think he carried Franklin County, didn't he, Archie?

AS: I think so. [*Clears throat*] I think so.

ED: Which showed that the volume of feeling out there about this canal.

DB: That was by far and away—in twenty-four years, that was easily the most volatile thing we ever faced.

[03:30:37] ED: Could you figure it out why people were so upset about that?

DB: It was because the Republicans had convinced the people of this country that if we did a thing like that, the Russians would've been in our backyard the next day.

ED: A few Republicans came across, though.

DB: Yeah. Yeah, they did.

ED: The Republican from Oklahoma . . .

DB: Well, for example . . .

ED: What was that guy's name?

DB: He was governor of Oklahoma. What was his name? Red—I wanna to say Redmon, and it's not right.

AS: Bellmon.

DB: Huh?

ED: Bellmon

AS: Henry Bellmon.

ED: Henry Bellmon.

[03:31:06] DB: Henry Bellmon. Henry Bellmon made about a two-minute speech on why he was gonna support that. He said, "The president has called me. The last president has called me, and I've given it a lotta thought, and I think that we ought to ratify this treaty." And he sat down and he—you know, Henry had no more idea than a goon that he'd ever be elected anything again in Oklahoma after voting for the Panama Canal Treaty. And, you know, he's one of those guys that stood up for what he believed, and as I've always said, people respect people who do that more than any other single quality. And Henry goes back to Oklahoma four years later, runs for governor, and is elected. One of the finest men that's ever served in the Senate.

[03:31:57] ED: Now you said once that if you'd had a major opponent in that election and would—well financed that you probably wouldn't have been elected to a second term.

DB: You know what vote—you know the vote I got in 1980?

ED: Don't remember what it was but . . .

DB: Sixty—uh . . .



ED: Fifty-eight or . . .

DB: No, fifty-four.

ED: Fifty-four percent. Was it that low?

DB: Yeah, I think so.

ED: I thought it might've been a little better than that, but I don't remember. I mean, it wasn't—it really really wasn't a close election, but it was far closer . . .

DB: It wasn't.

ED: . . . than anybody . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . that he should have . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . expected to have. You never faced a . . .

[03:32:35] DB: And, you know, I could've weaseled that vote any way I wanted to. You know, I could've made it as ninety to ten vote so far as my vote was concerned. But I just didn't—I couldn't stand to do that. You know, I was kinda like ol' Hayakawa. Do you remember his statement?

ED: Yes, I—no.

DB: He said, "We bought it fair and square, and we oughta keep it."  
No, "We stole it. We stole it fair and square."

ED: "Stole it fair and square." Yeah. Well, we formulated a

revolution . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . down there . . .

DB: That's right.

ED: . . . and then took it over. That's what we did.

DB: Now there's—you know, they're building another canal.

ED: Yeah.

DB: Gonna have another Panama Canal. Big one. Much bigger than this one.

ED: Okay . . .

TM: Can we stop tape for a sec?

ED: All right.

[Tape stopped]

[03:33:27] ED: Let's go back and talk a little bit about the two times that you seriously contemplated running for president, and that would've been in 1984 and 1988. Now in 1984 you would've been four years into your second term. Ronald Reagan was, I get as, at his zenith. He was running for a second term. And by that time, the economy had turned around, and he was wildly popular. And you had a big field of Democrats running, and I've forgotten all the—you know, I know John Glenn was running and Walter Mondale, who ultimately got the nomination.

DB: Fritz Hollings.

ED: Fritz Hollings of South Carolina was running. And there were more than that. As I recall, there were seven or eight in the early goings thinking about running. And you went out to—you made several of these "cattle shows." Back in those days you would have these early "cattle shows," long before there were—the campaign really started where people could get a chance to look at all these prospective candidates and size 'em up early on. And you went to at least one that I went with you out to Sacramento. Do you remember . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . going to Sacramento?

DB: Sure.

ED: And there was a big—I think a cali—maybe the California [*DB clears throat*] state convention or Democratic convention, or it was a big blowout in Sacramento, and all the candidates went out there, and all of 'em made a speech. And you made a speech there and got—well received. You got all kind of great comments—lotta great press out of that speech. Do you remember that speech and . . .

[03:35:10] DB: I remember it well.

ED: Yeah. It did go well, didn't it?

DB: Went . . .

ED: It got a good reaction.

DB: . . . extremely well.

ED: I think everybody knows that as far as speech-making goes, you were the star of the show in that particular one, although Mondale was pretty good but kinda dry. But yours was—I think probably got the best reaction. [03:35:30] So at that point, were you pretty sure you were going to run?

DB: No.

ED: Was this just—you were just kinda trying it out to . . .

DB: Right.

ED: . . . see whether this was a viable thing . . .

DB: Exactly.

ED: . . . to do.

[03:35:41] DB: I thought lightning might strike somehow—not just then, but maybe a little bit later. And people—if the people were really smitten with the speech I made there, they'd be talkin' to each other about it. And, you know, like everything else, that puts you way ahead of the game if you can get people talking about you before the thing is really beginnin' to ripen, as I should say, I guess.

ED: And this was well before any of the primaries, so nobody was

really . . .

DB: It was.

ED: . . . filing.

DB: As a matter of fact, I think it was in the middle . . .

ED: Might've been the previous year.

DB: I think it was . . .

ED: Might've been . . .

DB: I think so.

ED: Might've been sometime in [19]83—maybe the fall of [19]80—  
summer or fall of [19]83 . . .

DB: Yeah. I think so.

ED: . . . when this was going on. What in the end decided you  
against running? Was it Ronald Reagan's perceived political  
power at that point? Was he so enormously popular that that  
discouraged you? My recollection is you had some—you had a  
knee problem at the time. You were [*DB inhales*—when you  
were out there you were in agony over a . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . over a knee. And I don't . . .

[03:36:48] DB: That was sort of an excuse. It was bad. I was  
gonna have to have it operated on and get it fixed before I could  
run for president, but it was not an insurmountable problem, I

don't think. But I think that the thing that probably caused me to back out more than anything else was that—first of all, we were quite a ways off from the election, and there were a lotta factors involved in it at the time. And I thought, you know, when I left there—first of all, we were talkin' about Ronald Reagan. You know, I'd decided that it was gonna be virtually impossible to defeat Ronald Reagan. But so far as that particular time to run was concerned, I think that that would've been—there were a lotta factors, and I can't remember all of them. But there were a lotta factors involved, and I must say I misjudged a lot of opportunities. For example, you know, I had enough sense to know that the speech I made in Sacramento was a howling success. Every—you know, I had so many people come up and tell me, "I'll support you if you'll vote," "That was a wonderful speech," and that sorta thing. Course, you know, I've been around long enough to know how much that means, too. Sometimes it doesn't mean very much. But you have to—a person has to make an absolute ironclad commitment that he or she is gonna stick with it for some either decided period of time or totally. [03:38:42] And that thing in California turned out much better—I didn't go out there really with a hard intent of becoming a candidate, but it turned out to be a much better

thing than I thought it was going to. Dave Broder told me he thought it was a wonderful speech, and he also told me something else that's always helpful. He said, "You know, you talked about fifteen to twenty minutes." And Dave Broder—when I walked off the stage—it was just out in a big arena, you know, just a stage out there—and when I walked off of it, Dave Broder was sittin'—standing at the foot of the steps. And he said to me, "That was a really fine speech, but let me tell you something. Jack Kennedy says any political speech longer than ten to fifteen minutes is too long. You've lost your audience." And I said, "Well, I've heard variations of that sermon, but certainly that's an important one, and I'll try to remember that in the future," which I have. I've tried to remember that in the future and not allow myself to be smitten with my own words. [03:39:56] But goin' back to the presidency, that is just such an awesome decision. And it's not an easy thing to decide. The other thing is the money is always a big thing. And I'm a guy with perhaps more pride than I need to have or should have. And if I were to run and lose, I would be terribly disappointed, and I'm not sure what it would do to my personality. But I went to California just to survey the proposition and see if there was any possibility that that particular turn of—that particular time to

run for president was ripe. And I decided that it was not. What I realize now is if I was looking—if I had continued to look for what I was looking for then, I never would've found it. I mean, you are looking for all kinds of things, but what you're looking for more than anything else is all—everybody coming up to say, "You oughta run. You oughta run, and we'll get you the money and everything." It doesn't work that way. You simply have to—you have to make an impression on people that they really mean that they're—if they come up to you, and they say, "I think that was a wonderful speech, and I think you oughta run for president," you can kinda discard that. If somebody comes up and says, "I thoroughly enjoyed the way you expressed yourself, and I think the way you expressed yourself shows a degree of sincerity that—that's just almost insurmountable. And I don't—I think you'd be missing the boat if you don't take advantage of that and run for president." When people talk to you like that, it's very serious, and it's very difficult to ignore that—if you're thinkin' about running. So I just never could, Ernie, in all the years that I toyed with the idea of running for presidency, everything never seemed to quite fall in line, and I just—I regret now that I didn't do it. But that's just another opportunity that passed.



[03:42:14] ED: Well, 1988 was probably a much better opportunity.

DB: It can . . .

ED: Ronald Reagan had completed his presidency when that—you would not be facing a serious or a—or an insurmountable opponent in November. George H. W. Bush was going—was probably going to be the nominee. I've forgotten who else was running in the—maybe Bob Dole. I've forgotten who else was running on the Republican side, but none of them were really overpowering . . .

DB: Yeah.

[03:42:42] ED: . . . people. And the same was true in the Democratic primary that year. You had Governor Dukakis of Massachusetts, who wound up winning the nomination, and Al Gore was a serious candidate, and I've forgotten who else among—were Democrats. Paul Simon of Illinois—the senator from Illinois was running that year. And I think a number of senators had encouraged you to run, among them Paul Simon—had he not . . .

DB: Oh, yes.

ED: . . . that year?

DB: Paul Simon was absolutely adamant about it. He just—I think Paul Simon would've resigned from the Senate if I told him that

I'd run—that I would run.

ED: Yeah, he eventually decided to run himself only after you flat . . .

DB: Long after I decided I wouldn't run.

ED: Long after you said you . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . would not run. You made some feints at running, though, did you not? Did you start some—doing some organizing the year before?

[03:43:39] DB: Did a little bit. Not much. I accepted more speeches than I normally would've accepted, and I, you know, I got some praise and some words of encouragement that were really hard to resist. But I'm telling you—you know, having watched other people run, it is just such a monumental decision to make. I can remember so many times thinking that, you know, "I'm gonna announce for president tomorrow. There's no point in pussyfooting around with it. I'm just gonna do it. I'll either make it, or I won't." And—but I just never could cross that threshold. That would've been so important to me. I went to Boston—Ernie, I think I've probably told you this story—I went to Boston to a thing, and I guess that was the year John Glenn and Fritz Hollings and almost everybody was in the race. And I know Ted Kennedy was emceeding the whole thing, and I didn't

tell 'em I was coming until the day before. They didn't care how many people came. They just wanted speakers. And so things were goin' reasonably well that night. I watched—Fritz Hollings just made a—an ass out of himself. He's not good at all. And two or three other people who just didn't—you know, John Glenn's a wonderful man—one of the finest men I've ever known—but he's not—you know, he's not a convincing person. And John—I'm glad he didn't run because he—the one he ran was kind of a miserable mess, and he never tried it again, to his credit. [03:45:31] And when I couldn't—one of the things I couldn't make my mind about is if I ran and just didn't get started—couldn't get off the ground—would I have the strength and the courage to get out and not just keep pluggin' away when I knew that I wasn't goin' anyplace? Now that's one of the things, Ernie—I guess I oughta back up a little bit and say I really never worried much about that. I never—I've never spoken at an event in my life where people were less than exuberant about my words and so on. And I never really worried too much about that. What I worried about was whether or not it would be sufficient to get the money together. Could—would I make a good enough impression to get the money to make the race? And I never could really satisfy myself that I

could. And so it wasn't being a coward. It was just a case of running when you knew you weren't gonna make it.

[03:46:36] ED: And you'd never done—you never did any real fund-raising. You—I think . . .

DB: No.

ED: . . . you hated fund-raising.

DB: No, not that kind. Not that kind of fund-raising.

ED: You—fortunately you never had to do much fund-raising when you were . . .

DB: Well, that's true.

ED: . . . when you running for—in Arkansas. You know, by the time you—when you won your first election without spending much money, thereafter, you didn't need much money. You were . . .

DB: That's exactly right.

ED: So you'd—and I think you've always found it distasteful to raise money for any race.

DB: One of the things that's always discouraging is going into a community where two or three "favorite sons" are gonna make speeches, and the crowd's all juiced up for them, and they barely know who you are, and they—they're not going to pay very much attention to you. They may make more—pay more attention to you than other people will get normally, but it's still

not the kind that causes people to run for office because you've simply scored a home run one night. But in any event, you have to have not only the potential to hit the ground running and keep running—you may bomb out tonight—you may bomb out again tomorrow night, but you've gotta bet that the third night you're gonna hit a home run. And unless you're willing to take those chances, unless you're willing to face the music that you're not gonna make it—and, you know, you have a reasonable certainty that you're not gonna make it—then there's no reason not to run. And if you think there's a chance—just an outside chance that you can make it, you oughta do it, and that's where I bombed. That's where I made a mistake.

[03:48:26] ED: In 1998 you [*DB coughs*] decided not to even run for the Senate again, although most people were—when they've served that long in the Senate, they never stop running for the Senate. But both you and David Pryor quit and—when both of you were virtually certain of reelection. Wouldn't think anybody thought that you were apt to be in serious trouble in 1998. Why did you not run again in 1998?

DB: I don't have a good answer for that. I was sorta tired for one thing. It was not as gratifying to me as it had been in the past. I was becoming disenchanted with my colleagues. I'm reluctant

to say that because this'll be on the air at some point and another, and I don't like to say things that sound so denigrating of my colleagues. [*Clears throat*] But you have—as I say, you know, you just have to accept certain possibilities. The possibilities being that you're not gonna get off the ground for one. And a second possibility that you may get off the ground, and then you're gonna get side—you're gonna get derailed. There's a hundred different scenarios that you can pick out that will tell you you're not gonna make it. But I put entirely too much weight on those things. I allowed myself to be sidetracked, and I'll always regret that.

[03:50:11] ED: But was the fact that in the latter half of the [19]90s, the Republicans had taken control of—I think they were in control of the Senate, were they not, by then? The majority of the Senate—did the Republicans . . .

DB: Of [19]99?

ED: . . . have the—by 90—by [19]98, [19]99, had they gotten a majority in the Senate? I know . . .

DB: I can't . . .

ED: . . . they had it in the House, but I don't remember.

DB: I can't remember to save my life.

ED: Well, nevertheless, it was—the Senate had changed, had it not?

I mean, the politics . . .

DB: It had.

ED: . . . and the . . .

DB: In all fairness, I don't—I didn't worry about being reelected in 1998, I guess it was, wasn't it?

ED: Yes.

DB: I didn't worry about being reelected that time. My decision was whether or not I was willing to run and serve for another six years because the place had gotten a little bit nasty. It had become—it certainly wasn't very enthralling. There was not a lot going that caused me to think our future was as bright as it oughta be.

[03:51:21] ED: David Pryor had left, who was your very close friend for the last twenty years—twenty-four years, I guess, in the Senate. He had quit. You had a Republican—your colleague was a Republican—Tim Hutchinson over on the—from northwest Arkansas. And I guess y'all had a good relationship, but nevertheless it was not the same as David Pryor.

DB: That's it precisely.

[03:51:45] ED: Did that have a little effect, the fact that you . . .

DB: None.

ED: . . . some of your—and a lot of your other colleagues in the

Senate. Your old—even some of your Republican friends had gone.

DB: People didn't crowd around me pleading with me to run for president in 1998, I guess it was, and I could understand why. There were an awful lotta things goin' on. We had—I guess George W. was president in 1998, wasn't he?

ED: No, no, Clinton was still president but . . .

DB: That's right. Bill was president till 19 . . .

ED: Yeah, Bill was still president—nine—until 2000.

AS: Two thousand.

DB: Two?

ED: In 2001 he . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: In January of 2001 . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . is when he left office and George W. Bush . . .

DB: That's right.

[03:52:26] ED: . . . came in. But—which brings us to that. Your—of course, I was—I guess the [19]90s, in some way, were happy years in the Senate because you had not only a colleague that—in David Pryor that you—was a very close personal friend, you had another friend in the White House, Bill Clinton, although that



was coming to an end in the latter part of that. So he is impeached, and they have a trial, and by that time, you have left the Senate. In January of 1999 you had left the Senate. And some months after that, they have the—he is impeached, and they have the trial in the Senate, whether to remove him from office. I think there were four impeachment counts, and the Senate was to be the judge. And he asked you to make his closing speech in defense in the Senate. How did that come about that—do you recall the particulars about how you came to be the—his closer in the impeachment trial?



[03:53:42] DB: Well, Ernie, I'll shorten the story. It's not a spectacularly interesting story, but I had been to Arkansas the—on Monday I was coming back, and incidentally that Monday was a Martin Luther King holiday. And I came home that morning, got up, went to the grocery store, and came back. And as I walked in the back door, Betty was talking to somebody on the phone saying, "Just a minute. Here he is now." And I took the phone. It was Tom Harkin, and Tom was . . .

ED: Senator from Iowa.

[03:54:21] DB: . . . senator from Iowa. And Tom was—I'll shorten this story—Tom said a lotta people in the Senate wanted me to deliver the closing argument in the impeachment trial to

exonerate Bill Clinton. And I made the usual excuses. I said, "You know, Tom, I don't see how I can do that. I don't—first of all, you'd want me to do it in the next three or four days. That's not enough time to prepare for a concluding speech in a trial of this magnitude. Secondly, I don't have time to prepare. I just simply—how do you prepare for a closing argument on a trial as important as this one in such a short period of time?" He said, "You can do it. If anybody can do it, you can do it." Well, to shorten the story I said, "Well, let me think about it." And so later on, I believe Bill Clinton was the next caller, and Bill went through the same thing that I'd just gone through with Tom Harkin. And I told him—I said, "Bill, this is an extremely important case, and I just don't see how I can accept this assignment. I mean, it's just too important, and I don't have time to prepare for it." And he didn't accept any argument, you know. He just tossed 'em aside and said, "You can do it. I want you to do it," and blah, blah, blah. I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll call you back in the morning." This was Monday evening. I said, "I'll call you back in the morning and let you know." So I went downstairs in the den and began to scribble off notes that I thought would be relevant to this assignment. And the more I spent time on it, the more I thought I might do it. The thing

that was more important than anything else in the whole ordeal was that night I had not called Bill Clinton back, and I told him I'd call him the next day, but now Paul—Carl Levin called that night . . .

ED: From Michigan. Senator from Michigan.

DB: From Michigan. Carl Levin, senator. Fine senator of Michigan. And he called to tell me that he wanted to give me some information and for me to listen very carefully, which I did. And the information he was giving me was that he had some information from the grand jury hearing when—I can't think of her name now. What was the name—the . . .

ED: Paula Corbin Jones.

DB: No, the other one.

[03:57:13] ED: Monica Lewinsky.

DB: Monica Lewinsky had been on the grand—well, she was being questioned by the grand jury. And what she was doing was they were saying—for example, it started off like this, with the questioner from the grand jury saying, "Didn't you go to Vancouver"—I believe it was Vancouver—"with President Clinton? And you were there for some time." She said, "No, I didn't go to Vancouver. I wasn't there." "Well, did he offer you a gift that he had bought for you in Vancouver?" And she said,

"Well, I suppose he did. He gave me a gift, and it was a bear. A marble bear, fairly small, and he handed—and when he handed it to me—after he came back from Vancouver, he handed that to me one day at the White House and said, 'Take good care of this. This is very meaningful. A bear in Vancouver has a very, very significant meaning. And what I want you to do is to take good care of this bear and make sure that you have it when you need it. And remember this. The bear is the symbol of strength. In Vancouver and all over Canada, the bear is a symbol of strength. And so I'm presenting this to you because we both have to be strong.'" [03:58:59] Now Carl gave me all this, and I embellished it just a little bit but hadn't really told the full story either. What happened after that was Carl says that she was asked by the chief prosecutor, "Do you remember him giving you this bear?" "Yes." "Did he tell you that the bear is a symbol of strength when he gave it to you and that, therefore, it would mean that you all had to be very strong to get through this ordeal?" And she said, "No, he didn't say that." "He didn't give you any lecture about the bear and the meaning and the importance of the bear and so on?" "No, he just gave me the bear and told me it was—in Canada it was a symbol of strength." And that was pretty much it. [04:00:03] And so, anyway, I'm

gonna skip a lotta this and just tell you that I made up my mind that I would do this for Bill—make this closing argument for him. And I—Carl Levin sent me in writing this stuff that he had, which was really kind of him and terribly powerful. And so I came back and started making this argument. I said, "You know, Bill Clinton"—I said, "The grand jury"—not the grand jury, but "the House judiciary committee had the grand jury testimony before them. And they had the testimony that said that Bill Clinton bought a stone bear—a marble bear—to present to her as a gift and also to show and to tell her that this was very important as a symbol of strength." And they go on with this, and when the prosecutor asked her, "Was that your understanding?" And she said, "No." "You didn't understand that this bear was a symbol of strength?" "Not until President Clinton told me." "Did he tell you to be very cautious about it, because it was symbolic but it was meaningful and for you not to lose it or misplace or anything?" And she said, "No." "And—but you still understood that it was a symbol of strength." "Yes." And so the House chamber came over to the Senate with these articles of impeachment which ignored all of that. They—it was as though no—it was as though Bill had never said a word to Monica Lewinsky. And they said that Bill told her these things, that it

was a symbol of strength. It was this. It was that. It was this, and it was that. And she said she didn't think it was that at all. She didn't pay any attention to it as being a symbol of strength. She was pleased to get it, and it was—after he talked to her, it was a symbol of strength, but he never one time said, "This is something that—just between you and me—and this is a symbol of strength, and we must not forget that in this trial, all the meaning is out there in the open. You and I both know what the meaning of it is, that we have to be strong. He didn't say that, but I felt that way. But there was nothing more to it than that. It was just a simple gift," and yet here it is in the House articles of impeachment. Here it is in the Senate articles of impeachment. And her saying four different times that, no, it didn't have that significance. It was not that at all. Now I thought that was probably one of the most powerful arguments I could make, and I just got those twenty-four hours before I made this speech. [04:03:27] So, anyway, that was—you heard the rest of the speech, and that was essentially the main thing. And the rest of it was, accordin' to Bill when he talked to me and accordin' to her when he told me what she said, it was all just exactly as I've portrayed to you. And that was the most important part of the whole trial. Now, Ernie, I've sorta lost

track. Where were we when we got off on this?

[04:03:57] ED: Well, we were just talking about that speech which was a—acknowledged everywhere as a powerful speech. I think it led the paper, *The New York Times*, the next morning—I can remember reading the *Times* and the lead sentence in the lead story in *The New York Times* was almost . . .

DB: That was a wonderful, wonderful article.

ED: Yeah, and it praised the speech, as news articles rarely do, as a—for its eloquence and so forth. And so it was a big—I think it was a—at the moment anyway a . . .

DB: It was. Those . . .

ED: . . . a nice factor for a time. I don't know whether . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . it had any effect or you may have some idea of whether it had an effect on the vote in the Senate. I think you told me once maybe that . . .

DB: I know of one vote I changed.

ED: . . . the senator from Rhode Island . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . that it might have changed.

DB: Yeah, John Chafee.

ED: John Chafee told you that . . .

DB: Yeah, he changed his vote.

ED: . . . it changed everything.

[04:04:54] DB: There was another—there was one other vote which I won't—I've got—that I was quite certain was changed because of the speech. But I . . .

ED: Republican?

DB: But I believed all along that Bill Clinton was not gonna be impeached. I thought that . . .

ED: Well, he was impeached but not convicted. Yeah.

DB: I'm sorry.

ED: Yeah.

DB: Not be impeached.

ED: No.

DB: I mean, not . . .

ED: Not be convicted. Yes.

DB: Not convicted. And I'd—I—I've really felt perfectly comfortable about that fact, and it turned out that way, and it was just—it couldn't have turned out better. And I got hundreds, maybe thousands of letters from all over the United States from people who were extremely kind in their comments about the speech.

[04:05:44] ED: Let's—one thing that we haven't talked about very much is your family. I don't think we've even mentioned that



you had three children, and all of them were born before you were [*DB coughs*]*—well, they were nearly teenagers by the time you became governor. Brent Bumpers is your eldest son. Bill Bumpers was the middle son, and then Brooke was the daughter. And all of the—they were still in school when you became governor, right?*

DB: Yes.

ED: How was all of this ordeal on them? How did they handle . . .

DB: It was very . . .

ED: How did they handle being—your being governor?

DB: Yeah, it was very difficult, Ernie, and Betty is a very strong woman, and she—I sorta left that to her to pick the school, consult with the children about everything. And that turned out much better than I thought it would. And they—Bill and Brooke were both still in school. Brent was a freshman at Hendrix College. And I can shorten this story by simply saying they adapted quickly. They adapted well. They all made good grades. Brooke is just a—you know, her grades are superlative. Brooke's are superlative. Brent has a business acumen that's second to none. He will be a very well-to-do businessman when he retires. He just—he likes it. He loves the business world. He likes to come up with plans and plots and so on. And so moving

down here—Bill had a girlfriend. It made it a little tougher on him than it did the others. But everybody was reasonably well adapted in short order, so I couldn't—you know, I couldn't have been more pleased. Now Bill was enrolled in Catholic—Brooke—Betty enrolled Bill in Catholic High School, and that worked out just fine, too, because the discipline is pretty tight at Catholic. And when you move into a place that's a little new and different, to have—what am I trying to say? The—to have the discipline that's necessary there, they had it and that made it easy for Bill. And Bill at first didn't much like Catholic High. As you know, Father Tribou, of course, he was still there, and that really fit well. So they really handled that well. And we went home—for a long time, we went home every weekend to Charleston.

ED: You kept your house at Charleston . . .

DB: Yes.

ED: . . . while you were governor.

DB: Yes. We sold it later, but we kept it for a long time.

[04:09:06] ED: All—you know, your dad wanted you and your brother to be attorneys, and you were. Did you shape your children that way? Did you want—all three of them became lawyers as well. Did . . .

DB: Yes, I did.

ED: . . . did you encourage 'em to do that?

DB: I didn't encourage 'em to, but I wanted them to be. And I thought by the way we talked at the dinner table and the subjects that we carried on at the dinner table would be enough to cause them to want to do that. And none of 'em ever had another thought except to be attorneys. And they are all extremely—Secretary Baker—Jim Baker told me that when Bill joined Baker Botts, which is the big Texas firm—that he could—he had no idea that Bill could have such an impact on the firm and said it's been magnificent to have him there. And then there's Brooke. Brooke was cum laude, beautiful writer, great historian. She's just—she is my idea of a perfect child. Course, you know, it's easy for me to say that. But I'm talking about adjusting. And, finally there was Brent. Brent was not nearly as well acclimated as the others were. But he is essentially a businessman and has been unbelievably successful. He's only—I guess Bill's—Brent's fifty-two years old now, but he's already been a fabulously successful businessman, and he loves it. That's what he loves. So I just—my family could not have been a—adapted better than they have been.

ED: You have grandchildren now.

[04:10:57] DB: Incidentally, I'll tell you one other interesting thing.

ED: Okay.

DB: One time Dan Quayle—Dan was a friend of mine and something of a fan. And one day he said to me—something—he says, "Dale, we talk about your children a lot, but what about your children? What do they do, and what's their education?" And I said, "Well, Dan, to tell you the truth, they're all three lawyers." "Oh," he said, "Dale, you're the problem." He said, "I gotta tell that to the president, that you've got three lawyers and that you—you've become immediately a part of the problem when the whole family are lawyers." And so . . .

[04:11:41] ED: The president, being George H. W. Bush at the time, right?

DB: That's right. No, George H.

ED: George H. Bush.

DB: Yeah.

ED: Yes, yes.

DB: And so he goes rushin' over to the White House and said, "Mr. President"—no, I'm gettin' those stories mixed up. I'm sorry, I'm tellin' you two separate stories. The story was—with Dan Quayle was that all of my children were lawyers, and he asked me then—Spike, do you remember this story?

AS: No, I don't.

[04:12:20] DB: Anyway, he—I know what it was. I was tellin' him about bein' a lawyer, you know, and I said, "Dan, you make fun of lawyers, but let me ask you a little thing. My mother had a baby, and it wasn't me—it wasn't my"—I'm sorry. "My mother had a ch—baby." You know this story, don't you?

ED: I've heard you . . .

DB: I'm not even gonna finish it.

ED: Well, I've heard you tell that story, but I [*laughs*] . . .

TM: We have that one from Russellville.

ED: Okay, that's right.

DB: Do you?

ED: That's right.

DB: Good.

TM: [*Unclear words*]

ED: That's right.

DB: Okay.

ED: I—that's where I heard it, that the . . .

AS: Yeah.

DB: You know, it's been so long since I've told it, I've forgotten it.

[*Laughter*] Dan Quayle would just you know what if he knew I was tellin' that story, but I'm tellin' you, that just cracks crowds up.

[04:13:11] ED: *[Laughs]* Now is that apocryphal or did that really happen? Did they . . .

DB: Oh, of course not. *[ED laughs]* It's pure apocrypha. *[Laughter]*

ED: Well, it's credible with . . .

DB: Yeah.

ED: . . . with Danny Quayle. All right.

AS: All right. Well . . .

ED: Well, all right. Is there anything else, Archie? You . . .

[04:13:24] TM: Can we just—one thing about your . . .

ED: Okay.

TM: . . . your partner over these last—you know, with Betty. I mean, how she helped you just through everything. Just maybe a little touch on that possibly.

DB: About being in the Governor's Mansion or somethin'?

TM: Just helpin' you through the entire thing up till now.

[04:13:39] DB: Yeah. Well, let me say, first of all that Betty adapted to a candidate—a governor's wife being a candidate very quickly. And everywhere she went, people didn't know her—nothing. But I said this many times, and I meant it as sincerely as anything I've ever meant in my life. As I began to become more known in the state and I was out campaigning, people would stop me, and we'd talk, and they'd say, "Well, you're married, aren't you?"

"Yes." "Well, how 'bout your wife?" And I said, "She's a wonderful wife." And I said, "People who know us both like her a lot better," which is a nice political thing to say, you know. And that went over extremely well. But as they got to know Betty, it was realistic. I mean, they really liked her. And I would say a lotta times, "She's much more popular than I am. People would rather be around her than be around me, and that's—I'm not just being nice, that's true." And so we used that an awful lot during the campaign, that—I never will forget—first time we had a family television show on Channel 7, Deloss Walker was emceeing it, and he was interviewing the children. Then he got around to Betty, and he said, "Betty, how old are you?" I believe he said, "How old are you?" She said, "Oh, do I have to tell?" Which is a sort of a simple response, but one that people relate to, you know. And she pulled off two or three little things like that that night that endeared her to people, and during the campaign when people would say something about Betty, I'd always say, "You know, people that know us both like her much better." I'd think of anything I could think of to make people sort of anticipatory about what she was really like, and whether they'd like her or not, and she has fulfilled all of that, of course. Okay?

TM: That's great.

ED: Arch?

AS: Good.

ED: You think of anything?

AS: No. Let's quit. It's a wrap. It's a wrap. Isn't that what you're supposed to say, Trey?

TM: Then it's a wrap.

AS: It's a wrap.

[04:16:07 End of Interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]