

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

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**Arkansas Memories Project**

Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Interviewed by Angie Maxwell  
November 21, 2019  
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 <https://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 17th 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 and
  - annotations for clarification and identification.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

### **Citation Information**

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**Angie Maxwell interviewed Hillary Rodham Clinton on  
November 21, 2019, in Little Rock, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Angie Maxwell: Today is November 21, 2019, and we are here interviewing Secretary Hillary Clinton about her years in Arkansas. My name is Angie Maxwell, and I'm the Diane Blair Professor of Southern Studies at the University of Arkansas. So I'm gonna jump right in because we have so many questions.

Hillary Rodham Clinton: We should. [*Laughs*]

AM: And I wanna ask you first about—you would've been nine years old, maybe about to turn ten, when Little Rock—when the Little Rock Nine were barred from Central High School.

HRC: Mh-hmm.

AM: And did you see any coverage of that, have any conversations, were aware of what was happening? And if not, what early impressions did you have of the state, if any?

HRC: I do remember seeing that, and I remember not knowing what to think about it. I didn't understand it. I grew up in a suburban community outside of Chicago, and it was an all-

white community. I went to an all-white school. I went to an all-white church. But I knew from my faith because we were very active in our church, we were very committed to—you know, my mother was very committed to making sure we grew up in the church. We were Methodists. I knew that what I was seeing wasn't right. There was something wrong—the crowds that were so angry at these kids who wanted to go to school. So that was the first I'd ever heard of Arkansas was the Little Rock Central High crisis that captured the attention of the nation.

[00:01:34] AM: But—and then you are gonna have two significant kind of experiences in the South before you ever get to Arkansas, and that would be traveling to Alabama to do the investigation into the, you know, kind of white-flight academies and posing as a secret-agent mother.

HRC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. That's right.

AM: Incredible. And also your time in Texas doing voter registration on McGovern's campaign . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . in the summer and fall of [19]72.

HRC: Right.

AM: What di—did you learn anything from those experiences about

the region that, you know . . .

HRC: Hmm.

AM: I don't know if it changed your opinion or—good or bad  
[HRC laughs], but that prepared you for Arkansas.

[00:02:13] HRC: Well, I had a few other experiences leading up to that. I remember really clearly driving from Chicago suburbs, where I lived, to Florida. And I was probably ten, eleven, twelve. And I remember we spent the night in southern Indiana, as I recall. I think it was Vincennes, Indiana. And they had a little black-and-white TV in the motel room, so my brothers and I, of course, turned it on. And there was a TV show I had never heard of, never seen before, called *Gray Ghost* about a Confederate officer. And it was the first time that I saw someone being portrayed in a positive, even heroic, way who was on the [laughs] other side of the Civil War. I was really quite surprised by that, and I remember talking to my parents. I couldn't understand, you know, why that would be a TV series. And it was certainly nothing on my TV [laughs] that I had seen in Chicago. Maybe it was there, and I never watched it. And you know, my father saying, "Well, people down South, they just have a different view. They just believe different than you do." Didn't know what that meant. But that

had a big impression on me. And then, of course, going down to Florida and stopping, particularly in the panhandle and along the way, we had funny little adventures like sitting in a little coffee shop having breakfast one morning, and a man walked in with a—an alligator on a leash. And so *[laughs]* I was surprised by that. And you know, I just didn't have any experience because—born in Chicago, raised in the suburbs, and spent every summer going to Northeast Pennsylvania, where my father was from. So that first trip when I was a young girl to Florida was a bit of an introduction. [00:04:15] But then when I was in law school and starting to work for the Children's Defense Fund in the summer of 1970, I was sent to two places. I went to South Carolina to investigate children being held in adult jails. And I went to Alabama as part of a broad investigation into what were called segregated academies that were trying to get tax-exempt status from the Nixon administration. And in both of those instances, I was for the first time, you know, being in the South in a way that was an—a real eye opener. So in South Carolina I was guided around by some longtime civil-rights lawyers, in particular one who had tried cases across the state who was working with the Children's Defense Fund to try to end the plan that had come

into being of putting kids into adult jails. [00:05:19] So I traveled around the state, met a lot of people, found it to be, you know, both that contradiction of incredibly warm, welcoming, and very different from what I had experienced before. Then in—when I went to Dothan, Alabama, I flew into Atlanta, I rented a car, I drove by myself, I got there early, I had an appointment. I was posing as the wife of a corporate official who'd been transferred down to the area. We were looking for a school for our child. And I got to Dothan too early to go to the appointment, so I went—you know, I was looking for a place to get something to eat, and I—you know, there was a place—basically said Eats and so [AM laughs] I parked, I went in. And I was the only white person there. And it was, I think, more surprising, I couldn't tell, more surprising to me or to them.

AM: To them.

[00:06:14] HRC: But had—sat down, had a great meal, and you know, I was tryin' to get directions from where I was to the school that I needed to get to. And they said, "You goin' there?" and I said, "Yeah, I'm goin' there," and they, "Okay." They told me [laughs] how to get there. So I went, did the interview, and I was assured in the interview that there would



be no black children in the school. So I had what I needed to contribute to all the information that was being compiled, so I left. Now the following spring is when I met and got acquainted with Bill. So these experiences working for the Children's Defense Fund that first summer after my first year of law school didn't exactly prepare me [*AM laughs*], but I was really intrigued when I did meet Bill at Yale Law School.

AM: And have that Arkansas, you know, background.

HRC: Yeah.

[00:07:14] AM: So that brings me to your—I think one of your first trips to Arkansas . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . would've been in the summer of [19]73 when you come to Hot Springs, and you're taking a bar prep course.

HRC: Right.

AM: And taking the bar.

HRC: Right.

AM: And I just—I know y'all took a long day [*HRC laughs*] driving from the airport to Hot Springs, but is there any way that Arkansas could have lived up to . . .

HRC: Oh.

AM: . . . all that you'd heard about it? [*HRC laughs*] And what

were your first impressions of the state?

[00:07:41] HRC: Well, my first impression was really the first words I ever heard out of Bill's mouth in that spring of [19]71 when I heard this voice—I was cutting across the student lounge in the law school. And I heard this voice sayin', "Not only that, we grow the biggest watermelons in the world." [Laughter] And I said, "Who's that?" and they said, "That's Bill Clinton. He's from Arkansas, and that's all he ever talks about."

AM: ". . . ever talks about."

HRC: And it—in fact, there was a lot of truth to it.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: He was so proud to be from Arkansas.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: He loved the state. He loved the people. He'd been born in Hope, raised in Hot Springs, went to high school there, then off to Georgetown, but he literally could not wait to get back to Arkansas. It was his, you know, just his heart home.

AM: Yeah.

[00:08:31] HRC: And so once we, you know, made acquaintance, and then we started dating, he would tell me story after story about the people that he knew from Arkansas, and it was very clear he knew what he was going to do. He was going to

graduate from law school, and then he was going home to Arkansas. And so when we started to date, it was very clear that this relationship would really be dependent upon whether or not I would live in Arkansas. And that—it was hard enough figuring out whether I wanted to get married but also move to a place where I didn't know anybody besides him. So he was very committed to introducing me to everything and everybody that he could who had any connection to Arkansas.

[00:09:21] AM: Your s—I think one of your second trips to Arkansas—you come in January of 1974, and you know, Bill Clinton takes you to see Orval Faubus . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . and his wife Elizabeth.

HRC: Right. Right.

AM: Could you tell us what you . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . remember from that experience?

HRC: Well, the first time I came, as you mentioned, was in 1973 because we had graduated from law school. We had gone to Europe, where Bill had spent two years as a Rhodes Scholar in England but had traveled around Europe, and he wanted to show me the places that he had grown to love in England, and

then we would travel to Europe. So when we came back, I'd decided—well, I hadn't made a decision to get married. He'd asked me to marry him on that trip. We were in the lake country of England, and he asked me to marry him, and I said, "You know, I just have to have more time. I can't make that decision." [*Coughs*] Excuse me. But I knew that if I wanted to marry him eventually, I would have to take the Arkansas bar.

AM: Right.

[00:10:32] HRC: So that first trip he picks me up at the Little Rock airport and literally does take a whole day [*AM laughs*] to get to Hot Springs, which, as you know, is [*laughs*] an hour away. So we went through the Arkansas River Valley, we stopped at favorite places of his, we just made a big circle and then ended up back in Hot Springs. And then of course we looked all over Hot Springs before we ended up at his mother's home. And we did have to study for the Arkansas bar because it was, I think, in July that we took it.

AM: Right.

HRC: And so I—you know, I had never—and he hadn't either—gone to law school in Arkansas. We didn't know any Arkansas law. So we had to learn Arkansas law plus get prepared for the

national part of the exam. We took the bar exam at the state hospital in Little Rock, which was kind of an interesting place to take a bar exam [*laughter*] because we were all going crazy anyway and thought . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . "Oh my gosh, are we gonna pass?" [*Laughs*] I remember we broke aft—there were several parts to the test. We broke after one part, I think maybe for lunch or a break 'cause I think it was two days we were there. And I came back to sit in the same seat we had been assigned for the test. And a different man sat down next to me and started talking to me about the test. And I said, "Well, you know, we're gonna have the next, you know, the next session" . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . "of it right now. We're gonna take it." "Well, what was the first one like?" And I realized he hadn't been there. And then I realized that he either worked or lived [*laughs*] at the state hospital because somebody came in the back and [*AM gasps*] guided him away. I mean, it was a really odd experience. But we did. We took it in the summer of [19]73. [00:12:20] And then I was working for the Children's Defense Fund in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And Bill had come back to

Fayetteville where he took a job at the law school. And I had, you know, been very committed to the work of the Children's Defense Fund. So he came up to see me, as I recall, maybe in November of [19]73, and then I went down to see him in late December, early January. And while I was down there, Bill said, "Would you like to go visit Orval Faubus?" I said, "Orval Faubus? No, I don't wanna go visit [AM laughs] Orval Faubus." He goes, "It'd be really interesting." I said, "Well, okay, but I mean, gosh, I mean, everything I know about him is so negative because of what he did during Little Rock Central High." And Bill said, "Yeah, but he's a really smart guy, and he did other things that were actually good for the state, and then he got totally caught up in the opposition to *Brown v. Board of Education*, and that's how he's gonna be known. But it would be interesting to talk to him." "Okay." [00:13:33] So we go to Huntsville in Madison County, and Orval Faubus and his second wife, Elizabeth, were living in this incredible modern house. It may have even been designed by Fay Jones . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . the famous arch—Arkansas architect, right. And it was up on the side of a mountain overlooking the valley. It was an amazing place. So we came in, we sat around a table, and

Faubus started talking and talked for hours. And Bill would interject and ask him a question. I didn't say anything. Elizabeth didn't say anything. She was a much younger woman. She was very attractive, had, you know, lots of very well-applied makeup and a mass of black hair, as I remember her, in curls and the like. And she sat there. I sat there. We listened to Orval Faubus talk about everything. And what was so interesting was how—it really was clear to me he knew better.

AM: Mh-hmm. Mmm.

[00:14:39] HRC: You know, his father was quite radical, a big admirer of Eugene Debs, and was really outspoken about—you know, one might say even more sort of socialistic leaning, outspoken about consolidation of power and the misuse of power and corporate greed. And he would write letters to the *Arkansas Gazette* in those days under a pseudonym railing against powerful forces. And so Faubus was really raised to be much more progressive, much more questioning. I think I recall hearing about how Faubus's father was sort of ahead of his time when it came to, you know, integration. He'd even gone to one of the three schools that had been opened up in the South.

AM: Commonwealth, yeah.

HRC: The Commonwealth university, which some people said was, you know, communist and all of that. So that was his father's upbringing and his political philosophy compared to Faubus, who started off as a progressive, started off as a returning—you know, with all of the vets who came back like the—you know, like McMath and others, you know, they were gonna really change Arkansas and all of that. And then he sort of decided that the best way for a lengthy political career was to be against integration and stand up against the federal government, and as we know, that's what he did around Central High. But he was—it struck me as someone who had decided to be opportunistic and had basically left his political upbringing and his political beliefs behind. [00:16:30] So we were there for hours. I can't tell you. Four hours, five hours. It was a long visit. And so it was time to go. It's getting dark. And you know, Bill said, you know, "Thank you so much. We're s"—and then all of a sudden, Elizabeth pipes up for the first time. And Elizabeth says something like, "Well, this is all very well, Mr. Clinton, but what do you think about the international conspiracy against the United States?" Came out of nowhere. And like right out of a John Birch Society . . .



AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . pamphlet or the worst kind of Joe McCarthy attitude. And so I remember Bill saying, "Well, I'm against it, aren't you, Mrs. Faubus?" [*AM laughs*] I mean, what could you say? And then we left. And that sort of was a, you know, just a ring in our ears, like how odd was that? Faubus had been entertaining and in many ways quite revealing as—which is how I drew my conclusions about him taking a right turn away from what he had believed.

AM: Mh-hmm.

[00:17:35] HRC: But she just came out of nowhere. And then, as you probably know, some years later, she moved him and herself to Houston as I recall. And she was murdered.

AM: Yes.

HRC: And murdered in their apartment.

AM: Yes.

HRC: And I don't know any more than that. But you know, the visit stuck with us . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . because of how she presented herself. So that was memorable. [00:17:59] And at that—on that same visit, Bill got called by John Doar, who was the recently hired lead

council on the impeachment inquiry staff investigating Nixon. And John Doar called and said, you know, "I'm putting together a staff. You have been highly recommended along with four of your classmates who just graduated from Yale to be kind of the young lawyers on the team. Would you be interested?" And Bill said, "Well, I've decided I'm gonna run for Congress." He said, "But if you don't mind, who are the other names?" And so John Doar said the names, and one of them was my name. He goes, "Oh, well she's right here." [*Laughter*]

AM: That's great.

[00:18:40] HRC: So I talked to John Doar, and he asked me if I wanted to move to Washington and investigate Richard Nixon. I said, "Yeah, I think . . .

AM: "Yeah. I" . . .

HRC: . . . "I do."

AM: . . . "think I do." [*Laughs*]

HRC: So that was very eventful visit . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . to Fayetteville in January of [19]74.

[00:18:54] AM: Well, when I was putting together the timeline, I just thought, "It looks like maybe about three weeks pass from Nixon resigning, when you've been working on 500,000

notecards" . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: Right, for Doar . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . "to teaching a full load at the law school and moving to Arkansas."

HRC: Right.

AM: I mean, it's like a three-week difference. And . . .

HRC: I w—it was exactly . . .

AM: Yeah, exactly . . .

HRC: . . . as you described it because once I got to Washington in January of [19]74, we were working eighteen-hour days.

AM: Yeah.

[00:19:22] HRC: It was nonstop, and it was also highly professional, incredibly focused on the task at hand, and totally confidential. I mean, Doar said anybody caught leaking, talking to a member of the press, would be fired, and he meant it, and nobody did back then in those days. And—[clears throat] excuse me. And so when we made the presentation to the committee—it was July of 1974—based on materials from the grand jury, the tapes that had finally been delivered after a legal battle. And it was pretty clear that there was a factual

basis for rendering articles of impeachment against Nixon, and there were three articles presented, and there was a bipartisan vote. A number of Republican members of the House joined all the Democrats in approving articles of impeachment on abuse of power and obstruction of justice and contempt of Congress. So nobody knew what would happen next. We were expected to stay on in the job, going to the Senate for the trial . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . that would be the next process as soon as the House passed the articles. But the day the committee passed the articles to impeach Nixon, several Republican senators went to the White House and spoke to Nixon and said, "You should resign." And he did. And so he resigned August 8, as—in 1974. And so I was out of a job. There was not gonna be a trial. And I thought, "Well, you know, I really need to make this decision about whether or not Bill and I are gonna be married." [00:21:14] So I had met the dean of the law school on that earlier visit in January of [19]74. There was a dinner party. He and other members of the faculty were there since Bill was on the faculty. And as I was leaving the dinner party, the dean said, "If you ever want a job, call." So I called him. I said, "Dean Davis"—his name was Wylie Davis. I said, "I'm out

of a job [*laughter*], so do you think that I could get a position this late at the law school?" He said, "Oh, sure. Come on down. Classes start"—as I—you know, like August 20 . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . some very early period. Very compressed. I said, "So what will I teach?" He said, "I'll tell you when you get there."  
[*Laughter*] So . . .

AM: What a nightmare.

[00:21:59] HRC: Luckily I didn't have a lot to pack up, and I packed it all up. And then a good, good friend of mine named Sara Ehrman drove me—drove me down to Fayetteville, and every hundred miles said, "Are you sure about this? Don't you think you should turn around and go back?" I said, "No, no, I'm gonna go down there." I had met people in Fayetteville on my very short visit. And I really thought it was a beautiful town, and I was pretty excited about it even though I had no idea what to expect. So I arrived, and the very first thing I did, as I recall—I think I got there like Sunday morning. [00:22:35] They—somebody told me or left me a note saying there's a reception for the faculty at the Holiday Inn, and if you wanna come, it's tonight. So I said, "Sure." So I went to the Holiday Inn, and there were—you know, it was a bar association event

with lawyers and judges welcoming the faculty, including the new members. And so they were taking me around introducing me to everybody. And that's when I met Judge Butt, the chancery court judge. And the faculty member showing me around said, "Judge Butt, this is Hillary Rodham. She's a new faculty member at the law school." And he looked down at me and basically said, "I don't have any use for, you know, women faculty members" . . .

AM: Gah.

HRC: . . . "or women lawyers." And I said, "Well, nice to meet you, too, Judge." But that was my welcome to Fayetteville. So I was a little wondering, "What did I get myself into?"

AM: Wow.

HRC: But you know, I made some of the great friends of my life. I had a wonderful time teaching. I loved being there, so it worked out. But that was kind of a *[laughs]* . . .

AM: Abrupt.

HRC: . . . a bit of an abrupt welcome.

[00:23:49] AM: Did you—I kept thinking about going from that experience with John Doar and how, in a sense, he was having, you know, your team, you know, teach this narrative of Watergate, explain it to the American people.

HRC: Right.

AM: And you go straight into teaching . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . in the classroom. Do you think that affected your teaching style or—you know, what did—how did you choose how you were going to teach those classes?

HRC: Well, I was told a few days before the first class that I was going to teach criminal law and criminal procedure. I was going to run the Cummins Prison Project. I was going to teach trial advocacy, and I was going to start a legal aid clinic. And so I figured that, you know, I'd never done any of that . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . and I [*laughter*] needed all the good advice I could get. So luckily there were a lot of lawyers in town and others who were really supportive and my colleagues on the faculty as well. So when I started teaching, you know, the only model I had was how I was taught.

AM: Right.

[00:24:59] HRC: And you know, both criminal law and criminal procedure were large courses because they were both requirements. And I was really, you know, very diligent preparing and all that. But it's different standing in front of,

you know, a class of a hundred and being in some cases younger than the students I was teaching. So it took some trial and error to sort of get my stride. And I will tell you that at one point I had an experience that was really, you know, eye-opening for me. So we were parsing a statute for, you know, what the meaning was 'cause obviously in criminal law, you know, the meaning's really important, and you have to find what's called *mens rea* or intent. And I kept going back and forth with this one student. And it was a young man. And he just was sort of not getting what I was trying to pull out of him. And finally he just looked at me—said, "What do you expect? I'm just from Arkansas." I was furious. I was furious because, first of all, I'd had enough experience by then to know that I had some really, really good students. And I said, "You know, that is just unbelievable that you would say that. You know—I—some of, you know, some of you are as smart as anybody I've ever been around, and you should know that. And most of you are working really hard, and I don't wanna hear any excuses, you know. You do your work. And you know, it's not an excuse of where you are from, and certainly not from a whole state that is, you know, supporting your legal education if you didn't prepare and you aren't ready to answer the



questions." But I thought, wow, that is a really telling remark.

AM: They don't know how smart they are.

[00:26:59] HRC: They don't know how smart they are. They don't believe it. They don't have the confidence about it. And I w—I remember talking to Bill about it because, you know, having gone to Yale law school, and obviously people there are smart, but my students at Fayetteville, you know, were already as smart or on their way to being as smart, but they didn't have the confidence in their intelligence that often makes the difference between . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . where you are and where you end up. And I thought, wow, that is something, you know, the state has to deal with. So you know, fast forward a number of years when Bill becomes governor, one of the things we, you know, really focused on was education, and that was one of the root experiences that I carried with me.

[00:27:48] AM: Now talk about a quick jump, too. You go from being tasked with running, you know, the lee—setting up a brand new legal aid clinic . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . to, five years later, you're chairing the Legal Services . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . Corporation [*laughs*] Board.

HRC: Right, right. Right.

AM: And I just wondered—I mean, I think that would be an unusual that someone had been tasked with that and so quickly have the chairmanship kind of experience. And what in setting up the legal clinic, you know, opened your eyes about reforms, policies, or whatever that needed to be done?

[00:28:23] HRC: Right. Well, setting up the legal clinic at the law school was a really important experience for a couple of reasons. You know, one was the commitment I had to providing representation to people as just a simple matter of fairness and justice because, you know, having worked with the Children's Defense Fund, having done legal services when I was in law school, having worked in a law office one of my summers, I knew how critical it was that people get good legal assistance in order to work themselves out of the problems of life, whether it was being evicted, or a domestic dispute, or a consumer problem, whatever it might be. And if you couldn't afford it, which many, many people can't, and even now more because it's so expensive, what were people gonna do? And we had had a Supreme Court decision which said if you're

charged with a criminal violation, you have the right to counsel even though we don't do it the way it should be; nevertheless, there are public defenders. But for civil matters not. So I thought it was a great opportunity, and I wanted to expose our students to having the chance to actually represent somebody in court. So we set it up, and it was, you know, goin' pretty well, when all of a sudden, the students that we were pairing with clients were telling me that they were getting kicked out of chancery court, and that was my old friend Judge Butt.

AM: Judge Butt.

[00:30:02] HRC: *[Laughs]* So I went to see Judge Butt, and I said, "You know, Judge, this is part of the teaching process. This is what you do in" . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . "law school. It's practical experience. And besides, we need to provide legal assistance to poor people."

AM: Yeah.

HRC: He said, "Well, there's a statute"—and the statute is like from the 1870s . . .

AM: Of course.

HRC: . . . and he said, "There's a statute in Arkansas which says you can't get free legal representation unless you're worth no more

than ten dollars [*AM laughs*] and the clothes on your back.

And these people—they have cars, they have TV sets, they're not—you know" . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . "they don't fit the standard." I said, "Really, Judge. I mean, come on."

AM: Right.

HRC: He goes, "No. They don't fit the standards." He was adamant.

AM: Gah.

[00:30:42] HRC: So then I had to go and convince the Arkansas Bar Association to lobby to change the legislation. Because I knew I wasn't gonna get by him, and he . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . was adamant and probably gonna be there for the rest of his natural life. [*AM laughs*] And so I met with the Arkansas Bar Association, their executive committee. I persuaded them to lobby the legislature.

AM: Amazing.

HRC: But they also invited Judge Butt. So I had to go and make my presentation, and then [*laughs*] Judge Butt went in and made his presentation. End of the day, they voted to support the legislative changes I wanted. So they changed the law, and so

my students at least could go to court. They often were still harassed by the judge.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: But nevertheless, they went. Because the way that the court system was, there was criminal jurisdiction and then civil jurisdiction in chancery court, which was the only . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . place we were gonna be taking clients 'cause we weren't gonna take them to criminal court. Anyway, we finally got it up and going. And it was a great experience. You know, the students loved the opportunity to really try out their skills. I loved mentoring them. I loved taking some, you know, of the bigger cases that were beyond a student's expertise at the time. So I got involved in the legal aid world and got to know a lot of the people providing it around the country. [00:32:12] So fast forward—in the 1976 campaign, Bill ran Arkansas for Carter, and Carter asked me if I would run the field campaign in . . .

AM: Indiana.

HRC: . . . Indiana, which a Democrat hadn't won, except for Johnson, you know . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . in decades, but he thought as a Southerner, he'd have a chance. Turned out he didn't, but I got to know a lot of people in the campaign, got to, you know, meet Carter. So after he was elected, much to my delight, he asked if I would accept an appointment on the Legal Services Corporation that had just been formed a few years earlier under the Nixon administration. And it was just getting up and going, getting its institutional presence around the country. So it was a great, great opportunity, and I served on the board, then I was elected to chair it. I had to be Senate confirmed to get the job. And then we, with the full support of the Congress and the bipartisan board because some were Republican appointees from the Congress, plus the presidential appointees—you know, we worked to expand legal services.

[00:33:23] AM: So when you moved to Arkansas, it's also right in the middle of the battle over the Equal Rights Amendments.

HRC: [*Laughs*] Oh, yes it was.

AM: And I thought, too, that, you know, sometimes it's a difficult time for women to make friends once they're kind of out of school and in that environment, particularly working women. But you seem to have made some very close . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . female friends in the middle of such a . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . difficult time that divided a lot of women . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . particularly in the South. You note, obviously, Diane Blair, who's another outsider, but also longtime Arkansas residents like Ann Henry . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . and Margaret Whillock and stuff and . . .

HRC: Right. Right.

[00:34:04] AM: Did those conversations come up often in early friendships? Was it that big on the horizon in Arkansas?

HRC: Well, the ERA had been moving along quite smoothly until 1977 or so when the Women's Conference was held in Houston. You had two first ladies. You had Betty Ford and Rosalynn Carter supporting the ERA. The ERA was in the Republican party platform until 1980. And so people thought that finally the ERA, which had been introduced right after the 19th Amendment passed and women started to vote in 1920—the right and, you know, the sort of political strategists of the Republican party had already begun to use race as a political tool. And I think they decided that using women and women's

liberation and feminism and all of that as another political tool would work to their advantage. So in 1977, as I remember, the Phyllis Schlafly forces—the Stop ERA was in full force in a counterdemonstration or countermeeting against the Betty Fords and the Rosalynn Carters and all the other people gathered on behalf of the ERA and a Woman's Agenda to make the case that it had to be stopped.

AM: Right.

[00:35:59] HRC: And this all really materialized quickly. It was something . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . that was devised and designed and implemented fairly quickly. And so Phyllis Schlafly, the housewife who was never in her house . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . became the leading advocate. And you know, it was so ridiculous. This woman dressed to the nines, beautifully coiffed and made up and, you know, with, I don't know, five kids on the road, constantly talking about how it was gonna undermine womanhood and deprive women of their privileges and all that. [00:36:40] So my good friend Diane Blair was asked by the Arkansas legislature to debate Phyllis Schlafly [*laughs*] in the



legislature on Valentine's Day, as I remember. And you know, Diane eagerly accepted. And she and I and other of our friends, you know, would meet and talk about it and help prepare her for what might take place at the debate. And there's no doubt that she won on points, but it was clear that there was this big, cultural, political move to raise all these issues that would be helpful politically for the Republicans, particularly, but not exclusively, in the South.

[00:37:37] AM: Right.

HRC: You know, the shared bathrooms, the mandated military combat, all of that. And so I think that for those of us living in Fayetteville at the time, it all seemed just surreal. You know, the ERA putting women into the constitution didn't seem controversial to us, but we didn't realize the potency of the argument that was being constructed to really make women's place in society part of the Southern Strategy, part of the Republican strategy that, you know, was in the making and that we saw really come to fruition in the Reagan administration.

[00:38:23] AM: And you know, Arkansas is the only state, I think, that passed the 19th Amendment in its day. I mean, it was the twelfth state in the country to vote for women's suffrage, and

then does not pass the ERA. And there's all those questions . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . about how do we have a Hattie Caraway? How do we have the petticoat governments that we had at the city councils and things that were run all by women in Arkansas and then get to this moment? We even had men for ERA with some powerful people in . . .

HRC: Oh, sure.

AM: . . . it like your husband . . .

HRC: Yes.

AM: . . . and Jim Blair, and David Pryor had been elected governor and was, you know, supportive. What do you think happened?

[00:39:01] HRC: Well, I think it's part of the larger story about what happened in our politics that we are now seeing played out with, you know, the Trump administration being almost the avatar of those worst instincts and being used to try to win votes and keep a minority in power. It came as a surprise because—I think it probably surprised everybody but Lyndon Johnson who predicted after the civil rights act and the voting rights act was passed that we'd—you know, in his words, the Democrats had "lost the South for a generation." I think we're

on our second generation, maybe our third. [*AM laughs*] So Johnson understood the—just the crass politics of it. And Nixon understood it, which is why he transitioned into using the silent majority and talking a lot about law and order, which was a double-barreled reference both to the student protestors and demonstrators and to the uprisings in 1968 in urban areas in response to, you know, Dr. King's assassination, Bobby Kennedy's assassination. So the, you know, the view on the part of the Republican party, their allies, and the both political and financial forces that supported them was forget about the merits, forget about the, you know, what politics should be about, conflicting views of policy, and the like, let's just scare people, and let's scare them that, you know, they're not going to get the advantages they deserve because blacks and women and other people from the outside—and it's all aimed predominantly at white men, but it's also aimed at regions of the country, in particular the South but also the upper Midwest, where there's been a decline in noncollege jobs. [00:41:20] So they understood what they had to do to try to, you know, keep political power. And Reagan, who was just the nicest, most affable person, was more than willing to support that. So going to the Neshoba County Fair to open his campaign where

three white civil rights workers had been murdered was a mixed message at best. And you know, the Willie Horton ad that George H. W. Bush ran. Again, a really nice person, became a, you know, a good friend to my husband even though he was defeated by Bill. You know, these were the subliminal messages, like you know, "We're the people who are going to build the wall."

AM: Right.

HRC: "We're the people who are going to protect you from all of these changes." And it distorted reality. It distorted history. It turned a lot of people into scapegoats. Now it's immigrants on top of all the other categories. So the ERA was part and parcel of that. [00:42:35] Now, I think Virginia's gonna pass it because they now have a Democratic legislature, and then we'll see what happens. And I don't know what the legal constitutional arguments are as to whether if—i—you know, I think it's, what, one or two more states have to pass . . .

AM: We just need one more.

HRC: One more after Virginia. So two to go, Virginia does it, then one more, and then is the long delay in years going to be used as an argument to prevent it from joining the constitution?

AM: Oh, they'll fight it out.

HRC: But wouldn't it be great . . .

AM: Ah!

HRC: . . . if in 2020, the hundredth anniversary of the 19th Amendment . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . the Equal Rights Amendment was actually ratified?

[00:43:14] AM: And there's legislation right now in the House to change the timeline because they put it in the procedural part and not in the content. Have a good legal argument to change that. But I'm sure they will . . .

HRC: Oh, I'm sure, yeah.

AM: I'm sure they will duke it out.

HRC: Yeah, it'll be . . .

AM: For as long as they can.

HRC: . . . a moral victory . . .

AM: Oh!

HRC: . . . anyway.

[00:43:29] AM: Oh. It would be a huge moral victory. I think they can win it legally, but [*HRC laughs*] we'll see, you know. Or maybe that's wishful thinking but—when you moved from Fayetteville to Little Rock and you go into private practice, I know that that was a big shift from like running the legal aid

clinic.

HRC: Right.

AM: And another place where you were kind of a female first or one of the first couple at the Rose Law Firm—how was that experience different from being one of the first, you know, kind of female professors? Similar? Harder?

[00:44:14] HRC: It was—it—similar in some ways, different in others. You know, it was hard to leave Fayetteville . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . because I had made such great friends. You know, Ann Henry, Margaret Whillock, Diane Blair, wonderful friends, great women. So I was starting over again . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . because I knew some people in Little Rock but not in the same way that I'd gotten close to people in Fayetteville. So when I joined the Rose Law Firm, I was the only woman there as a lawyer. I became the first woman partner a few years later. So it was a different set of challenges, you know, representing clients. You know, some of them had never had a woman lawyer.

AM: Right.

HRC: So there was a little bit of, you know, kind of jockeying like,

"Oh, I don't know, a woman lawyer. I don't know." Some of them had litigation, which is what I was interested in doing. And they worried about judges, you know, who hadn't had many women lawyers in the courtroom . . .

AM: Sure.

HRC: . . . or juries, who hadn't seen many women lawyers. So it was a rather constant proving ground.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: I could represent the clients. I could, you know, appear in court. I could, you know, speak to juries and judges. But it was a great professional experience. I had a lot of, you know, lawyers with, you know, really great expertise in the areas that I was, you know, working in. And I was also still interested in women and families and children's, and there wasn't much practice in, you know, what we would call domestic or family law. But I still wanted to do that, so that was something I kind of took on myself. But it was a small firm, and it was a well-regarded firm, and we had really interesting work, so you know, over time you just kinda kept going. [00:46:26] And you would have these—I remember walking into court one day with one of my senior partners, a wonderful man named Phil Carroll who'd actually been a prisoner of war during World

War II . . .

AM: Wow.

HRC: . . . in a Nazi concentration—or Nazi prisoner of war camp.

And we walked in the courtroom. We were representing one of three defendants. And the judge, you know, had been put under investigation by the attorney general's office. The attorney general happened to be my husband. One of the reasons why I was using my maiden name was to have a distinction between . . .

AM: Sure.

HRC: . . . my profession and Bill's, you know, government service.

So we start the day with the judge announcing—it was a trial—to the court how pretty I looked, and would I stand up and just swirl around and show everybody . . .

AM: Oh my God.

HRC: . . . my pretty outfit. Course I had on a dress and all that.

AM: Ahhh.

HRC: And ended the day by him dismissing the case against our client. So my part—my senior partner and I left, only later to learn that he was sittin' around talking to the other lawyers cursing out my husband 'cause the attorney general was



investigating him, and one of the lawyers popped up and said, "Well, that girl lawyer that you said looked so pretty this morning, she's married to the attorney general." And the judge, "Whoa, if I'd known that I wouldn't've dismissed the case against them." [*AM laughs*] So there were adventures like that.

AM: Yeah.

[00:47:53] HRC: I mean, I was trying a long case one time down in Rison, and the judge wanted to get it over with, so he wouldn't break for lunch, so he called up his wife and told his wife to bring over some fried chicken, and we just ate the chicken while we were tryin' the case. [*Laughs*] Put the chicken on the, you know, on the lawyer's table. Just kept tryin' the case. Another time I was up in Batesville, and I was trying a case up there, and all of a sudden out of nowhere, about six men in camouflage walked in. And I didn't—you know, they sat in the front row, and they were just lookin' at me. And so we break, and I said to the bailiff—I said, "Well, you know, where'd those men come from?" He said, "Oh, they were out, you know, they're out in the hunt—they're out in the deer camp."

AM: Yeah.

HRC: "And they had to come in for supplies, and they heard a lady

lawyer was in town, so they thought they'd come over and watch." So it was kind of a—it was a very [*laughs*] interesting experience, but I loved it. I loved what I did, and I loved, you know, everything I learned, and I loved traveling around the state. [*Laughs*]

[00:48:54] AM: Well, see, that's what I was gonna ask. Were you able to keep your sense of humor about it in the moment?

HRC: You had to! Well, you had to! You know, in those days . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . you know, it was so different when you were a woman . . .

AM: Yeah. I can't ima . . .

HRC: . . . in the, you know, public arena. If you had stopped—if I'd said, "I—Judge, I'm not turnin' around. I mean, you're sexually harassing me."

AM: Right. You couldn't do it.

HRC: Goodbye.

AM: Yeah, right.

HRC: Good luck. Thank you very much, you know. And you kinda went, "Okay, this is weird, but all right."

AM: Yeah.

[00:49:20] HRC: So you just, you know, you didn't have a lot of role models, you didn't have some supportive environment where

everybody was saying, "Well, that's out of bounds," or "That's inappropriate." Nobody knew.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: And you had no—you had very few role models. And so men lawyers came in all sizes and shapes.

AM: Right.

HRC: I mean, I tried cases with tall lawyers, short lawyers [*laughs*], fat lawyers, thin lawyers, lawyers dressed impeccably, lawyers all sloppied up because there were different styles that they were . . .

AM: Allowed.

HRC: . . . conveying to a judge or a jury. And different styles worked. We all wore, you know, little navy blue suit skirts and white blouses and jackets and a little ribbon tied around our neck. We didn't know what else to do.

AM: Right.

HRC: There was no like, you know, guidebook. Like, "Okay, you're the first woman lawyer that will have appeared in this court. They don't know what to expect." [00:50:14] I remember one time I was trying a case in Little Rock, and we had an expert witness come, and one of the senior lawyers I was trying it with made her go out and buy a wig because she had real

short, spiky hair. She was an expert in whatever it was. She came from California, which was immediately suspect. Didn't wanna . . .

AM: Of course. Yeah, right?

HRC: . . . you know [*laughter*], didn't wanna have to worry the court about that. Made her go out and buy a wig, and she had to buy a big . . .

AM: Unbelievable.

HRC: . . . you know, a big, curly bunch of hair wig.

AM: Southern wig. [*Laughter*]

HRC: So those—you know, it was a very different time. It's hard to tell young women today, like, hmm, yeah, well, you know, a lot of the stuff you take for granted now . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . and you get offended by now, we had to go through it and overcome it so you could . . .

AM: Exactly.

HRC: . . . get offended [*laughs*] by it, you know.

[00:50:59] AM: Absolutely true. And that—I mean, you had no role model either in the work you were doing and trying to insulate it from your husband's position as attorney general. And I was struck by the small thing about the, you know, the boundaries

that you set in that job financially . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . specifically.

HRC: Right.

AM: So that any state work that the Rose Law Firm did did not in any way . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . affect your salary, a bonus, anything like that. And you had no role model for such a conflict of interest line.

HRC: No. Hm-mm.

AM: And I just was wondering, were you just always thinking ten steps ahead?

HRC: Well, in that particular case, you know, the Rose Law Firm was the or one of the oldest law firms . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . west of the Mississippi. That was one of the historic facts about it. And so they'd been representing, along with two or three other of the leading firms in Little Rock, the State of Arkansas for a hundred years or so, I don't know—long time. And so when Bill was attorney general and I joined the firm, I wasn't a partner, so I wasn't sharing in the profits of the firm. I was paid a salary.

AM: Yeah.

[00:52:08] HRC: But when I became a partner, I said to them, "You know, I don't think this will happen"—little did I know. "But I think we should segregate any money that you—we earn from the state and put it in a pot that I don't share in. And so I will only share in the profits that have already excepted the profits from work on the—on state business." And it, you know, it seemed like a reasonable thing to do, and I didn't want any questions raised. I mean, you know, the irony of my, you know, my long career in and around public service is that I get attacked for anything and everything, and I didn't back then understand that that would be a pattern, but I did think it was appropriate 'cause I didn't want anybody even imagining it. And so we did it. And then when years later people made those accusations, I said, "Well, you know, it's not true. I never earned a penny from any work done for the state." So it was something that made sense to me at the time and turned out to have been a wise precaution.

[00:53:22] AM: In addition to your work at the firm, I mean, you just were starting all kinds of organizations that have just changed Arkansas for the better, many of which are still going. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Family I know was dear to

your heart. What was your kind of dream for it in the beginning and as you watched it evolve?

HRC: Well, because of the work that I was interested in and had done in law school around children's rights and needs—and I'd done a lot of work around child abuse and neglect, and some of the early work I'd done as a legal aid lawyer, as a student in legal aid, had been around children, foster kids, abused and neglected kids, I was really interested in seeing what I could do to help on that front. So there were a few things. One was starting the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, which was trying to focus political and public attention on, you know, some of the challenges that faced Arkansas kids. And it was a great organization still going today. People really understood the importance of it. I was motivated to start it by my own interest, but also by Dr. Bettye Caldwell, who was a pioneering researcher into children and families and worked for many years at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. [00:54:51] I also became very involved in supporting Arkansas Children's Hospital. That was also very near and dear to my heart. And when I moved to Little Rock from Fayetteville, the hospital was in a very small building totally inadequate for the purposes that it was trying to fulfill.

Literally there was no burn unit, there was no—there was very little room for kids coming in and out of surgery. It was just not what it needed to be. And so I teamed up with another terrific Arkansan named Dr. Betty Lowe. And we worked really hard to convince both the legislature and, you know, funding sources outside of Arkansas to support its expansion. And I think I'm still right that it's like the sixth-largest children's hospital in the country. So my—and then I also served on the board of the Children's Defense Fund still. So those were all areas of particular interest to me. [00:55:52] And then later I brought the program HIPPY to Arkansas to try to help convince mothers that they were their child's first teachers. That's something I literally imported from Israel. And Arkansas in many ways became the leading site for the HIPPY program, which stands for Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. So my interest was really focused on children and families, and that's what I cared about, and that's what I worked on when I was First Lady.

AM: And that dates back all the way to your year—years at Yale.

HRC: It does. Yeah.

AM: The Yale child center.

HRC: Yeah. I took an extra year at the Yale Child Study Center and



at Yale New Haven Hospital working on children's issues when I was at the law school.

[00:56:43] AM: As you mentioned, you also were tasked with such large problems as rural health kind of access. And I thought about that one in particular because you had not lived in rural— or spent a lot of time in rural areas. And so I th—I wanted to hear you talk to us about that challenge. And also just when you're given a problem that you don't have personal experience with—like what is your process for how you go about figuring out a solution?

HRC: Well, by the time Bill was elected governor, I had traveled pretty extensively across the state, both with him and on behalf of, you know, law cases around Arkansas. And I also, through my friends and through a lot of the interests that I had, had been meeting people from all over the state.

[00:57:44] And one area that was particularly challenging was getting good medical care into rural areas. There weren't enough doctors in rural areas. There certainly weren't enough ob-gyn professionals, so that a lot of people were trying to go either to Memphis or to Little Rock when they had babies. There was just a dearth of medical care. And it was an area that Bill had talked about when he first ran for governor, so he

asked me to help work on a rural health advisory committee. And he had a young man, a young doctor, who was the head of the Department of Human Services who was all in on trying to expand health care into rural areas. And the administration passed legislation to provide financial incentives to doctors to go into rural areas. It wasn't just about retiring debt. It was actually about, you know, financial subsidies so that they could sustain a practice. And you know, we did wanna do some—and the medical profession seemed to approve of a lot of that, the kind of incentives for getting out into rural areas. But we also wanted to do some things that were not so popular, like license nurse midwives so that where there were no ob-gyns, there would at least be a licensed nurse midwife. And the medical society really didn't like that because they thought that was cutting into medical practice. But we were kind of between a rock and a hard place. You know, you won't go to these places [*laughs*], and we don't have any alternative.

AM: Right.

[00:59:30] HRC: So it became controversial when he ran for reelection, among many other things, in 1980. And when he lost, one of the first bills that the person he ran against, Frank White, introduced was to do away with everything we had done

to expand rural health care. And I'll never forget they had a hearing at the capital, and it was flooded finally, finally, by people who said, "Wait a minute. You know, we're just getting started having health care that we need. We're just beginning to try to attract doctors with these financial incentives." So they were able to repeal some but not all of what had been done. And then when he came back as governor in [19]82, you know, his administration tried to build on that so that we could get clinics and keep open rural hospitals and recruit doctors and nurses to areas that didn't have them.

[01:00:29] AM: And you also tackled education . . .

HRC: Yes.

AM: . . . standards . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . which—and which worked . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . but was controversial. I mean, over just a very short period of time, salary—teacher's salaries go way up in Arkansas.

HRC: Right.

AM: Performance rates . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . on the eleventh-grade test go, you know, over the national standards.

HRC: Yeah. Yeah.

AM: But it was a battle.

HRC: Yeah.

AM: And it seems to me to be a battle, particularly the part about teacher testing.

HRC: Right.

AM: It was about helping—convincing people to let go of a short-term fear for a long-term good.

HRC: Yeah.

AM: Which is so hard to do.

HRC: Yeah.

[01:01:03] AM: And so I'd love to hear anything about how y'all did that.

HRC: Well, when Bill got reelected, he was determined to try to improve the quality of education for everybody in Arkansas. And I'd seen the disparities first hand, not only by traveling around, but starting in 1979 I said to Bill, "Look, you know, we should invite every valedictorian or salutatorian or honor graduate of every high school in Arkansas to come to the Governor's Mansion." And because there were so many school

districts, that was a lot of people.

AM: Yeah.

[01:01:45] HRC: And they could bring their parents or their grandparents, whoever they chose. So we opened up the Governor's Mansion that first summer in 1979, and it was enormous. And I mean, it lasted for many, many hours. But for a lot of these kids, it was the first time they'd ever been to Little Rock, certainly the first time they'd ever met at a governor's mansion, first time they'd ever met a governor or a first lady. And we stood in the living room of the Governor's Mansion, and we shook everybody's hand, and then they'd go out the doors onto the sort of balcony, down the stairs, into the yard where we had, you know, food and entertainment and stuff. And it was so moving to me because, you know, I started not only shaking everybody's ha—all the graduate's hands, but I would ask them, "So what's next for you?"

AM: Mmm.

[01:02:31] HRC: And there were so many instances—remember this was 1979—when kids would say, "Well, I don't know. I don't know." "Well, are you thinkin' about college?" "Well, I, you know, I don't think I can go to college." And these were the top graduates from their high schools. I member one young

black man from east Arkansas had been first in his class, and I said, "So what's next for you?" and he goes, "Well, I really wanna go to medical school." I said, "Oh, that's great!" He said, "But I talked to the university, and they told me I didn't have any credits 'cause, you know, my school doesn't—didn't provide, you know, chemistry or" . . .

AM: Oh!

HRC: . . . "biology beyond just the rudimentary courses, and so they don't think I can make it." And I said, "So what are you gonna do?" He goes, "Well, they ah—they told me if I enrolled in a better high school somewhere and took my senior year over again and passed those courses, then I could apply to go to the university and do premed." I thought, this kid has done everything . . .

AM: Everything.

HRC: . . . right. This kid has studied, this kid has worked hard, this kid thought that this would be his ticket to do what he wants to do, and because his school couldn't provide that kind of academic curriculum, he can't compete with somebody from Central High School or Fayetteville High School or Jonesboro High School. You know, he just can't. And I thought, boy, that is just wrong. [01:03:51] So there were so many instances—

'cause we did it again in the summer of 1980. Then obviously Bills loses. And so when he asked me to do the Education Standards Committee, I immediately said yes, and we had a great committee, and we held hearings in all seventy-five counties. We traveled the entire state. And we saw that, you know, there were lots of political obstacles to raising teacher salaries because at that time in Arkansas, fewer than 10 percent of the adult population had a college degree. So teachers were a big proportion of that, but 90 percent of the people in the state didn't have a college degree, and they're workin' hard, and they're wonderin' why teachers, who in their view get three months off . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . and work a short day, why should they get more money? So we had a lot of explaining to do and convincing to try to undertake. And then we had a problem with all the complaints about teachers. So as we would travel, people would say, "Look at this note that this teacher, you know, sent home. Those words are misspelled." I mean, you know, there was lots of, you know, mixed feelings. Yeah, we need good teachers, but we don't have them. Or . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . they shouldn't get paid more than, you know, somebody who works hard gets paid. Lots of conflicting views.

[01:05:10] And then of course we had too many school districts, but trying to consolidate schools was . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . like a third rail. That was really difficult. And then what was the curriculum gonna be? And curriculum is always controversial. So we kind of, you know, winded our way through all of this obstacle course and made our recommendations to legislature. And in it we recommended a sales tax increase combined with a teacher test. So you know, the teachers were really upset, and they were mad at me, and I was saying, "Well, I don't know how else to get you a raise. I don't know how else to raise the sales tax."

AM: Right.

HRC: "Because I can make the case that teachers need to be paid more, but of course every teacher needs to be qualified."

AM: Right.

HRC: And they rightly said, "That's humiliating. I graduated from college." I said, "Well, then the test should be no problem." It's just the principle of the test . . .

AM: Yeah.



HRC: . . . that they, you know, then said was the issue. It was very controversial. However, we got the sales tax increase.

AM: You did.

[01:06:06] HRC: And within a few years the teachers had \$5,000 more in their pockets. And we had gone from being one of the lowest scoring states in the country to a few years later having our eleventh graders score above the national average. So we could point to really positive . . .

AM: [*Unclear word*] stuff.

HRC: . . . changes. And it was an incredibly, you know, worthwhile, collaborative effort. Because there were people who didn't like pe—you know, parts and bits of the program, but overall the state embraced it, and the changes were made, and you know, some really good things came from it, so I'm very proud of that.

[01:06:49] AM: Yeah. I would say. Ann Henry told me a story about in the middle of the—I guess some of that that she had been visiting you in Little Rock, and you asked her to ride along with you to pick up Chelsea at Forest Park. And y'all stopped somewhere along the way, and you were buying something like—she couldn't remember if it was bath salts or [*HRC laughs*] something. And you told her about just, you know,

when you went to the schools, because there were teachers upset, there was a lot of hard things being said. And that, you know, you had kind of a tradition with Chelsea where you would wash the day away . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . at the end. And I just—I found that, you know, a very profound, you know, parenting, you know, idea and concept. And I was wondering where that came from and . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . what other wisdom of raising a child in that—in a public arena, which, you know, not many women had done in the state . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . particularly on—when they're working on something so controversial.

[01:07:52] HRC: Well, I actually remember talking to Ann, my dear friend Ann Henry, about that. I don't remember it specifically coming from anyone else. But it came from, obviously, the way that I was raised and my mother's, you know, strong admonition that, you know, what's important is not what happens to you in life, but how you react to what happens to you in life. And obviously if you get knocked down, you've

gotta get back up. And I certainly took all of that on board and, you know, really have lived by that for my entire life. And with Chelsea, she was—you know, we brought her home to the Governor's Mansion.

AM: Yeah.

[01:08:33] HRC: She was born while Bill was governor, and then, you know the two-year hiatus. She traveled with us in 1982 when he was running again to be governor, and we started in south Arkansas and ended in north Arkansas and went from, you know, the beautiful coming of spring to snow in Fayetteville. So she was with us every step of the way. And she lived in the Governor's Mansion, but we tried really hard to make sure she never felt entitled or, you know, special because she lived in the Governor's Mansion, and so you know, she had to do chores like I think children should have to do. And she had to be respectful to every adult. That was just expected. But to try to visualize what it meant to be in the public eye when people would say things that were mean about your mom or your dad or even, when she got a little older, about her, you know, I would say, "Well, you just wash off the day, you know, just take that bath, and you wash off the day, and you get up, and it's a new day." And you know, we have been on our book

tour, *The Book of Gutsy Women*, and she's talked a few times in some of the settings about how it was tough being the governor's daughter. This was despite our best efforts to give her a normal life. You know, kids would say things at school or bully her, and then when Bill started running for president, that came from, you know, entertainment.

AM: Yeah.

[01:09:56] HRC: It came from everybody from Rush Limbaugh to *Saturday Night Live* making fun of how she looked and being really cruel to her. And she was like twelve, eleven or twelve years old. The whole thing was nuts. So I feel like we helped prepare her for the inevitable nonsense that exists in the public arena. That didn't make it any easier for any of us, but nevertheless she was, you know, prepared. [01:10:26] And fast forward from having visited Orval Faubus—you know, didn't he run against Bill?

AM: Again.

HRC: Again?

AM: He did.

HRC: He ran against Bill like in . . .

AM: Showed up again.

HRC: . . . [19]80 or [19]82 or some—I can't remember what year it

was.

AM: Sho—what was it in?

HRC: And I remember sitting around the breakfast table talking with Chelsea because we would try to prepare her. Because who knew what Orval Faubus would say for . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . heaven's sakes. And Jim Johnson, another . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . guy ran against Bill at one point or, you know. So these characters were out there, and they would say anything. They were like the precursors of . . .

AM: Yep.

HRC: . . . the Trump-type characters in politics. So we would say to Chelsea, "Well, you know, you may hear some mean things about your mommy or you—mean things about your daddy, and you know, what are you gonna think and what are you gonna say?" And she, "Well, I'm gonna say that's, you know, that's not right," or you know—she [*AM laughs*]*—*we would kind of give her little role-playing so that she wouldn't be shocked . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . you know, by what she read in the paper or what she

heard.

AM: You must be incredibly proud.

HRC: [*Laughs*] I'm incredibly proud, yes.

AM: Of her.

HRC: She's a very special person.

[01:11:31] AM: She seems to be. I was also wondering how you coped with the thing that I think most women who—I mean, you were in Arkansas I think it was like about age twenty-seven to forty-five. I mean, those are formative years.

HRC: Yeah. Yeah.

AM: And—when you're raising a child with all of the hats that switch constantly, sometimes within the hour, which is what I find that I struggle with, my friends struggle with the extremes of that. Ezra Klein wrote something about you about you in *Vox* a couple of years ago talking about your ability to compartmentalize. And I think that is—I personally think it's the biggest key for smart, successful women. Where'd you learn—do you compartmentalize? Where'd you learn that?

[01:12:24] HRC: You know, I remember that article, and yes, I do think that's absolutely the case. And I don't see how you would lead a complicated life otherwise. I mean, I remember so well when Chelsea was a little girl. You know, one day, I

wake up, I'm supposed to be in court at nine a.m., and my babysitter calls in sick. Chelsea's sick. What am I supposed to do? And I was lucky enough to have a good friend who I could call who could come over, but I still lived with the guilt.

AM: Yes.

[01:13:06] HRC: You know, but I had to go to court and represent a client, and I had to do my best for that client, even though I was worried constantly about my daughter being home and my friend taking time off to come and babysit her. I mean, you can't get through a day as a working mom [*laughs*], as a person out in the world unless you can figure out how to turn it on, turn it off, but not lose the thread. You know, just because I'm standing in that courtroom defending that client doesn't mean there's not a part of my brain thinkin', "When is this gonna be done so I can get home and see how she is?" You just have to live with all of that at the same time. And I, you know, I don't—I know some people sometimes use compartmentalizing as a bit of an insult. I don't know what the alternative is. I—you know, you can't be constantly having your mind wide open to everything coming at you all at the same time. Just like you plan your day, you know, like, "Here's what I'm doing at nine o'clock and then ten o'clock and eleven

o'clock," and you break your day into, let's say, compartments of activities. You have to be prepared to focus on what you do during that time. You have to be in the present. But that doesn't mean you're not, in the back of your head, thinking about everything else that you have to worry about. I mean, I can be in the middle of, you know, some kind of a negotiation or some, you know, other professional matter, and all of a sudden, I think, "Oh my gosh, you know, I've got to call so-and-so," or "It's time to make that annual appointment," or "What are we [*laughs*] gonna have for dinner tonight?"

AM: Right.

[01:14:51] HRC: I don't dwell on that because that breaks your concentration.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: I just sort of put it in my, you know, computer bucket list in my head. I think of your brain as kind of your phone.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: Now you have a visible, you know, tangible thing that you put what you're gonna be doing into, but your brain is working like that all the time.

AM: All the time. All the time.

HRC: Yeah.



[01:15:12] AM: But I also think compartmentalizing or women that do it well—it's also why they're often misunderstood.

HRC: It could be.

AM: Or scrutinized.

HRC: That could be.

AM: Because you can—you're in different roles. There's hostess at this thing and more mother at this, and . . .

HRC: Yep.

AM: . . . I've got to do concentrated work and don't wanna make small talk. And . . .

HRC: Well, I think that's a very smart observation, Angie, because I think we're still having lots of problems figuring out how to understand and appreciate women in the public eye.

AM: Yes.

[01:15:53] HRC: And just as I said earlier, I practiced law with all kinds of shapes and sizes of men. I've been in politics with all kinds of shapes and sizes of men. But women are still pigeonholed. You know, you can't be a strong, professional, public person and a good wife, good mother, good grandmother. Nancy Pelosi blows all those categories out.

[*AM laughs*] She had five children, she's got a . . .

AM: I mean, that . . .

HRC: . . . passel of grandchildren. She looks like a million dollars. She's, you know, basically all that stands between us and [laughs] the apocalypse.

AM: Right.

HRC: Right? And so we have enough women who we know. We know them personally. You know, I was just with Chelsea in Atlanta. One of her good friends is a doctor in Atlanta. They're trading stories about, you know, how you got the Halloween costumes together . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . at the last minute because you didn't have any time. Our lives are complicated. And there's nothing wrong with that. And it's time that the rest of society got over it and just said, "You know, women have every right to lead full lives. How they manage them and construct those lives should be their decisions, and we're not going to be pigeonholing and stereotyping women anymore." And so, I mean I hope that happens at some future time, but I am, you know, adamant that we've gotta stop this either/or, you know, conclusions about what women should or shouldn't be.

[01:17:23] AM: Exactly. I mean, Kate Manne has this new book. She's a philosopher—called *Down Girl*, where she defines

misogyny as policing women's behavior.

HRC: It is.

AM: In all these little—we know the big way—all these little subtle ways about, you know, what mood they're in, when they're tryin' to concentrate and not fully engaging in the way someone wants them to behave . . .

HRC: Yes.

AM: . . . and how it works on us.

[01:17:55] HRC: Well, it does because, you know, we are also human beings. We wanna be liked [*laughs*], you know.

AM: Yes.

HRC: We wanna, you know, have people think well of us. And the expectations are often contradictory. So just recently in Japan, the Japanese labor department said it was okay for employers to require women to wear high heels to work. And then other employers said, "You can't wear glasses to work." So where does this come from? Somebody's conception of what it means to be a woman imposed on every woman, and yes, indeed, trying to police their behavior. And you know, policing the clothes women wear, policing, you know, the timbre of their voices, policing their language, all of that is designed to try to contain and restrict women's choices. And I, you know, I see

all the progress we've made, but then I see the pushback and the rollback about, you know, expectations surrounding women's roles and rights and participation.

[01:19:14] AM: My mom always says that women make Christmas happen. That's her phrase for all of the planning and the labor, the emotional labor, the "we're moving from one house to [HRC *laughs*] another." Bill paying. I mean, I look at the time line of your years in Arkansas . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . and just the sheer volume of that kind of labor that you can see from moving and houses and finding schools and just all of it. And I wondered how did you cope, how did you take a break? Where did you go to take breaks?

HRC: Yeah. Yeah.

AM: Do you have any advice [*laughter*] for, you know—or anything that you found . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . that works as people try to keep apace of doing that kind of emotional labor for families?

[01:20:05] HRC: I think your mom is absolutely right. It is still the case that women make Christmas happen, make families happen, make, you know, life happen because it's something

that we both choose to do and we're expected to do. So I totally get where your mom's comin' from, and tell her she's right on. [AM laughs] But that doesn't mean you can do it endlessly . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . with no break and no support and no gratitude. You know, sometimes the work that women do is so expected nobody says thank you, including members of their family. So that tree gets put up. [01:20:47] I remember one time Bill was I don't know where. I was sick as a dog. I was trying to get the tree up. Chelsea was a little baby. We were living on Midland Avenue, so we weren't in the Governor's Mansion. I was trying to get the tree up. I was coughin' and hacking, and you know, I thought I had it in the stand. I thought it was up straight. And bam, down it comes. I was just like, "I can't believe this." It was so . . .

AM: Defeating.

HRC: . . . overwhelming.

AM: Yes.

HRC: Just the feeling like I can't keep doing this. And you know, I have a husband who is, you know, more than willing to

help . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . in every way, but that doesn't mean that he gets everything that needs to happen in order to end up where we need to end up. And so my friends, you know, just having the friends that I've had over the years of my life, you know, taking breaks. In this case, when the tree fell down, you know, I called, you know, the retired man who lived across the street. [Laughter] I said—his name was Sarge. I said, "Sarge, you gotta come over here and get this tree back up because . . .

AM: Oh my God.

HRC: . . . it's all over, and I can't lift it." I mean, people who you can count on . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . people who are in your life, close neighbors, all kinds of folks. [01:22:00] And then, you know, we had good friends. Like Diane Blair was, you know, one of the best friends I've ever had. And you know, she and Jim had this lake house out on Beaver Lake, and we would go up there sometimes. And it was so restful. I mean, it really was just a haven. And I still to this day think of a time when I got up really early in the morning, you know, went down to their dock, dove off into the

lake. It was black on—underneath the water, and it was just so out of body. It was a wonderful, restful, memorable time. So you just have to make that time. You can't—especially if you're working outside the home as well as working inside the home. You cannot drive yourself to the point where you are exhausted and just ready to, you know, scream and run away. And a lot of times women impose a—an expectation of perfection on themselves. So it's not enough to get the tree up . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . you have to make all the ornaments. And it's not enough to have Christmas dinner, you've got to invite fifty of your family and friends so that you literally don't enjoy a minute of it. No. You gotta stop that. You've gotta take a deep breath and be realistic and do what you can do but not go so far that you are wearing yourself out. And oftentimes I've had lots of, you know, lots of friends over my life now. You know, lots of times you have to almost stage an intervention with a friend because she's getting so, like, wrought up about everything. And so, you know, "No." You know, just, "You don't have to do that. You don't have to do all of that." And that's an important message.

[01:23:52] AM: It is an important message. Thank you for that. I keep thinking also about in the middle of all this, too, you're workin' on campaigns.

HRC: Yeah.

AM: I mean, a lotta campaigns.

HRC: Yes.

AM: You know.

HRC: It's true. Arkansas used to be every two years.

AM: Every two years! And then . . .

HRC: And it was often three elections: a primary, a runoff . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . and a general election every two years. [*Laughs*]

AM: It's ex—it was exhausting. Ma . . .

HRC: Yeah.

[01:24:16] AM: And I thought, you know, what role did you play in those campaigns, and what's your strength in campaigning? Optics? Messaging? Is it just big-picture strategy? You know because I . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . see those as such different skill sets.

HRC: Yeah.

AM: And I was wondering as you went through that many of them,



what became the parts you liked and what became the parts that you felt you were . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . the strongest at?

HRC: You know, my favorite parts of campaigns were actually getting out and meeting people . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . and spending time with them, listening to them. I loved the campaigns in Arkansas. Didn't love the one he lost in 1980 . . .

AM: Sure.

HRC: . . . because that was so bizarre on so many levels, but I loved every other campaign. And I loved the [19]92 campaign. I thought it was a great campaign. [01:25:10] And you know, when it was just Bill and me in a car being driven around by a great guy named Jimmie Red Jones in 1982, who had been the adjutant general of the National Guard when Bill was there before—I mean, it was just us in Jimmie Red Jones's old beat-up car, and so it was like, "Well, what am I gonna say here? What should we do there?" It was just very personal. There was no campaign apparatus or any of that stuff. To, you know, the complexities of a presidential campaign, which is so

complicated in every aspect. So my favorite thing is, you know, where do I go, who am I talking to, what are we gonna say? That's what I love. And so I liked that in my own campaigns. I loved my senate campaign in New York. It was a great campaign. And it was just travelin' around. I mean, really, it wasn't—I mean, I had a campaign headquarters. I had people working there, but it was mostly just being out there.

AM: Being out on the road.

HRC: Yeah, bein' on road. That's what I like.

AM: That's the part you like. [01:26:13] I wanted to ask you 'cause I'm on the board of the little Clinton House Museum in that house you lived in . . .

HRC: [*Gasps*] Oh, thank you for that! [*Laughs*]

AM: Yes. Oh, it's a privilege.

HRC: Oh.

AM: And you know, it's funny because when we were at a board meeting a few months ago, the director, Angie Albright, told us that when the little kids come in now, they go, "Who's that man with Hillary?"

HRC: Oh my gosh. [*Laughs*]

AM: Meaning your husband.

HRC: That is funny. [*Laughs*]

AM: And they—because it's what they know.

HRC: Yeah.

AM: And . . .

HRC: It's what they've seen on TV, right?

AM: Right. And that, you know, tickled me. But I—they also mention, you know, they didn't know as many of your memories in the house, you know, when it was being preserved. You were living this whole life and doing all of these extraordinary things in the state. And it kind of—some of it kinda starts right in that . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . space. What—I know you were married there.

HRC: Right. Right.

[01:27:08] AM: What are some of your other favorite memories of that house? Where'd you work in that home?

HRC: Well, that house is really meaningful to me, and I'm thrilled that it's a museum.

AM: Yes.

HRC: And I visited a few years ago, and I thought that it was so well presented. You know, that house was a house that literally I

drove by. Bill was taking me to the airport, and I saw a for sale sign. All I said was, "You know, that's a sweet-looking house. It's a cute little house." That's all I said. So I was gone for a couple of weeks, and Bill picked me up at the airport. And by this time, he'd asked me to marry him twice. [AM laughs] And he said, "I'm not asking you again until you're ready to say yes."

AM: Ah.

HRC: So we're driving from the airport, and he goes, "Well, I bought that house you liked, so now you're gonna have to marry me." I said, "What house?" He said, "You know, the one you liked near the university."

AM: Wasn't it [*unclear word*]

HRC: I didn't remember it, but when we pulled up, I thought, "Oh my God, I do remember it now." And he had bought the house. And he had furnished the house.

AM: No.

[01:28:12] HRC: He had gone to Barbara Pryor's mother's antique store . . .

AM: Antique store.

HRC: And he had bought an old, white, iron bed that he had, you know, put together in the bedroom. And he'd gone to, I don't

know, Walmarts or Kmart at that time, somewhere, and bought sheets, and that's what he thought furnishing the house meant. [Laughter] There was no other furniture, but you know, there was a place to sleep. [01:28:44] And it was so touching, so you know, some weeks later I said, "Yeah, we should get married." So we did get married in the house. And we had all of our friends come over for the, you know, like—I—so I told him we should get married, and he said, "Well, let's get married next Saturday before you change your mind."

[Laughs]

AM: Oh my gosh.

HRC: So we literally got married in a week. And so that week we had a lot of our friends, like some of our law faculty and other friends, came over and helped us paint, which we hadn't done yet. And you know, we put up a little wallpaper in a few places just to try to get it ready to be married in. And it was a great, as you know from being in the house, it was a—they had a great room in the very front, which was a story and a half tall. So it was a beautiful place with the . . .

AM: Those beams.

HRC: . . . floor-to-ceiling windows. It was a great place for something like that, a wedding. So we called our families and

called a few close friends, and said, "Okay, come on down. We're getting married [*laughs*] on Saturday," and we did. [01:29:46] And you know, the house was small but, you know, the—we—I worked in the kitchen on the kitchen table.

AM: You did.

HRC: We had—and then we also—we came down to what was then Brandon's Furniture in Little Rock and bought some furniture. And we bought a big parson's table made out of pecan wood and, you know, eight chairs and transported them back up to Fayetteville, and so that big dining room table we . . .

AM: That's right.

HRC: . . . I worked on that. So we had a little kitchen table, then had a dining room table. You know, it was just a—it was a really sweet place. We loved it.

AM: It's got a special vibe to it.

HRC: Oh, it . . .

AM: That house does.

HRC: I love that house.

AM: I know. I know.

HRC: I mean, it's a—it's really just charming and cozy and very—a very sweet place.

[01:30:34] AM: It is. When—after the 1992 campaign, I mean,

you're gettin' on a plane.

HRC: Oh, I know. I know.

AM: And going to DC—and I mean, and it really struck me because you have made good friends, you have done so much, this is where you've raised, you know, your daughter. I mean, those . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . those things—I can't even imagine selling my house just because it's all my memories of my child. And it was abrupt . . .

HRC: Yes. It was.

AM: . . . to have to go. And did you at any point ever feel some sense of closure with Arkansas?

HRC: Oh . . .

AM: Or do—and what do you still . . .

HRC: I just miss . . .

AM: . . . miss?

HRC: Yeah, no, I mean it was really—it was not only abrupt, it was really wrenching.

AM: Yeah.

[01:31:27] HRC: You know, Bill gets elected in November, and we have to move, we have to get a school for Chelsea, we have to

get organized, all within, you know, two months basically, and it was so difficult. It was really hard on Chelsea because . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . you know, this was the place where all her friends were, where she'd gone to school. It—and we took a bunch of her friends with us on that first trip to Washington . . .

AM: Smart. [*Laughs*]

HRC: . . . so that she wouldn't be alone without her friends. And yeah, it was really, really hard. [01:32:01] So I, you know, I missed my friends. I missed a lot about Arkansas. I missed the ease. I mean, you know, I just—I would, you know, I would drive myself to work. I would . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . drive Chelsea to school. I would, you know, take Chelsea to dance lessons. We'd go out with our friends. You know, it was just such an easy life. And then, you know, once Bill got the nomination to be president starting in the summer of [19]92, we were surrounded by Secret Service, you know. Couldn't drive ourselves. Couldn't go anywhere without them. And you know, they're wonderful people, and obviously they've been in our lives for a long time now, but what a mind . . .

AM: Yeah, you can't conceive of that . . .



HRC: . . . you know . . .

AM: . . . before that happens, I'm sure.

HRC: . . . change that requires. I mean, you know . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . I don't get to walk out the door, get in my car . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . drive myself somewhere? It really was a big adjustment.

Everything about it. [01:32:55] But what I hadn't expected, Angie, was that, you know, the work I had done for Bill when he was governor, the work on health and education in particular, and the nonprofit work I had done on Arkansas Advocates and the Children's Hospital, things that I loved and thought, you know, were sort of my opportunity to contribute—when he asked me to head up the Health Care Task Force when I got to Washington, which seemed to me very similar to what I had done on education—oh my gosh. Ar—you know, Arkansas turned out to be a much more welcoming . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . accepting place for people who wanted to do their part . . .

AM: Right.

HRC: . . . to help the state. I was just hammered from the beginning, you know. Washington turned out to be much more

rigid and judgmental. So I missed a lot about Arkansas. I missed the collaboration and collegiality and the feeling that we were really making a difference in the state, and just—it was a hard move.

[01:34:00] AM: You know, I was struck, too, by how, you know, you seem to be one of those—I mean, just from what we see and read [*HRC laughs*] and all of your accomplishments, you seem to be someone who, even when you would hear an individual problem like from the young man who came as this top of his class and didn't know what he was gonna do next. Even when you—at—you know, some people would solve the individual problem like casework almost. But you seem able to see the systemic problem. And I don't think that's common to everyone. And I just—have you always been able to see, you know, the big picture?

HRC: Well, I like to do both.

AM: Yeah.

HRC: I mean, it really is satisfying to me to actually solve the individual problem. But it's like that old story, you know, where people are standing by the side of the river, and the babies are floating down the river, and you're tryin' to . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . rescue each baby, and then finally somebody says, "I'm gonna go up and see who's throwin' babies in" . . .

AM: Yes.

HRC: . . . "you know, further upstream." So for me, it's really important to try to solve the individual problem if you can, but to try to figure out why isn't this working right?

AM: Right.

HRC: What's wrong? You know, we just had a conference at the Clinton Center on work that was done when Bill was president to try to provide more financial access for poor and middle income people. Like Bill likes to say, you know, grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out. And this was something that, you know, he started as president. It's because, yeah, I mean, you can't lend money to every worthy person who shows up unless you have an institution that is willing to evaluate that person and support that person, and that's what this whole conference was about: what had been accomplished, what more needed to be done. So on so many issues—I saw that when I, certainly, was First Lady in the White House. I saw that when I was a senator for eight years. I saw that when I was Secretary of State. If you only focus on the individual problem and don't see what's the causes, what's

the context, you're just gonna run into more and more individual problems. And maybe if you spend some time tryin' to figure out, okay, what can we do about that, then people can have their problem solved in a more systematic way. That's how . . .

AM: Yeah.

HRC: . . . I try to approach things.

[01:36:32] AM: Well, I mean—and I ha—this hadn't even come up yet, but I also know that you served on Walmart's board.

HRC: I did. I did.

AM: And I kept thinking about, you know, how Arkansas kinda translates on a national and global stage. Because I mean, Walmart and the Clinton, you know, family, and the Clinton Initiatives and all that stuff. And you know, there was a journalist once that said that, you know, in Arkansas—if you can make it in Arkansas balancing, particularly in public life, balancing the wealthiest of the wealthy companies with some of the poorest of the poor, then you get a good kind of understanding of the country at large. What from Arkansas allowed you to make the national and the global impact that you, the individual, has had?

[01:37:28] HRC: Well, I had so many formative years here. And you

know, I was privileged to see just about every aspect of Arkansas life across the state and to work with some of the successful companies that were born right here in Arkansas. I remember when we were working to raise the corporate income tax, raise the sales tax, try to get more funding into education, I talked to Sam Walton about it 'cause I had gotten to know him. And I made the case to him that, you know, we were really proud that, you know, they had started this humongous company in Arkansas, but they had to recognize that we wouldn't have the workforce, we wouldn't have the educated people who would actually stay in Arkansas, commit to Arkansas, unless we improved education. It was really so interesting, then, when Sam Walton formed a group called the Good Suit Club. And the Good Suit Club was a bunch of the executives of the most successful companies in Arkansas who actually came together at a press conference, where I was present, to advocate for increasing taxes on them because they thought that it was the right thing to do for the state. Now it's almost impossible to imagine this happening today.

AM: Right.

HRC: Because so many corporate executives have no social responsibility. They don't care about the places that they are

rooted in and have grown in. They don't care about communities. All they care about is, you know, making huge profits that can then benefit their shareholders and themselves. But in that Good Suit Club, you know, these guys—you know, they obviously were successful businessmen, but they also really cared about Arkansas.

AM: Yep.

[01:39:18] HRC: So I learned a lot. Now some of those lessons are having to be, you know, rethought because we're living in a different time of so much ideology and partisanship and greed and just the pure use of naked power to try to, you know, force people to do things. Things that were not part of the culture in Arkansas. Frankly, I don't think were part of the culture in the United States until relatively recently where people disregard the rule of law, disregard the norms that are supposed to govern our behavior with one another. And you know, I learned a lot about how it should be when I was in Arkansas. And how I hope it will be [*laughs*] again, where people are gonna work together, where they're gonna cross the lines that divide us, where they're going to be listening and trying to seek common ground and necessary compromise to get things accomplished.

[01:40:15] AM: I feel like there's—there is sense of, like, Arkansas pride. And to me what's missing is the—or in our current kind of reality is—you know, so much of our system operates assuming that people would have a sense of shame . . .

HRC: Yes.

AM: . . . if something went a certain way.

HRC: Yes.

AM: That they would feel compelled not just by the strictest, narrowest legal interpretation of what you can and cannot do. And you know, I still think that kind of shame, you know, is very present in Arkansas in the sense that there's a—there's an ethical core among, you know, a lot of folks. What do we do to [HRC laughs] foster that . . .

HRC: Yeah.

AM: . . . or to raise children that, you know . . .

HRC: Right.

AM: . . . have some sense of moral responsibility in the public sphere? I mean, it was Diane Blair that always said you had to be a good citizen to be a good person, you know.

[01:41:18] HRC: Yeah. Look, I think that we're in a period of time where the loudest voices, the most outrageous behavior gets the most attention. It gets the most, you know, clicks on social

media. It dominates the news. And it's really troubling because, you know, we used hope that children would, you know, have good role models and feel like they should be kind and empathetic toward each other. And now bullying is on the increase, and a lot of the bullying is directly related to Trump's behavior and how he treats people and what he says about people. And that is a very dangerous development in a pluralistic, diverse society like ours, which I think still is one of our greatest strengths. And so it needs to be in the family, but the family's lessons about kindness and empathy and responsibility and all of that need to be reinforced and echoed in the media and in the larger community because, you know, we need one America. We can't allow ourselves to be so polarized and divided. And look, as somebody who spent four years traveling around the world as Secretary of State, I know how much what is happening internally to us right now, the way that we are divided and the way people are treating each other, delights our adversaries.

AM: Right.

[01:42:57] HRC: Absolutely lights them up with joy because if we are divided within ourselves, then we are weaker, and it's to their advantage that we are. So this has personal as well as



political and social and cultural and economic consequences, and it certainly has a big role to play in whether the United States remains the strong leader that I want it to be because otherwise others will take the lead.

AM: Yes, they will. Well, you have been been to the four corners of the globe.

HRC: [*Laughs*] Yes, I have.

[01:43:36] AM: And now kind of with the hindsight, you know, which is always 20/20, what do you think Arkansas's, you know, greatest strength is?

HRC: Mh-hmm. You know, I think Arkansas has always, to me, you know, been a place of grit and grace.

AM: Yes.

HRC: A place where, you know, people did the best they could, sometimes under very difficult circumstances, but also were warm and hospitable and gracious and, you know, that combination's a good combination. And I would hope that it continues to mark the state and the people in it so that there can be, you know, not only, you know, Arkansas pride but that sense of welcoming and belonging that I certainly felt when I first came to Arkansas and all the years that, you know, I was privileged to live here.

AM: Well, we could talk to you all day [*HRC laughs*] about a thousand things, including things going on now, but you—the things you started in Arkansas have just continued and improved the state so much, and it owes you a great deal of gratitude, and it's an incredible legacy for all of us.

HRC: Well, I owe Arkansas a big debt, so it's mutual. [*Laughs*] Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you, all. Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

[01:45:10 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]